

Bermudian Church of the Brethren

WEDNESDAY'S WORD – a midweek thought from Pastor Larry M. Dentler
to share a word of inspiration ... encouragement ... challenge ... a smile ... in the middle of your week
January 31 in the year of our Lord 2018 - #726

Hey! What's The Big Idea?

The year was 1990. Brad Smith was a seminary intern working with the youth group of Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC. As Pastor Brad pondered what the Super Bowl football game had become in our culture ... the Lord gave Brad a **"big idea."** It started with a prayer,

"Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat."

The Spring Valley youth group loved the idea and invited 21 other churches in the Columbia area to join them. They met worshippers at the door after worship on Super Bowl Sunday with soup kettles and asked for a \$1 donation for a local food pantry. The 22 Columbia area churches raised \$5,700 for local hunger ministries. The **"big idea"** of The Souper Bowl of Caring was born!

Last year on Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday over \$10 million dollars in cash & food was collected by 6549 churches & groups in support of 4841 hunger ministries. Oh by the way ... little Bermudian Church of the Brethren was 6th in the state of PA behind the entire city of Philadelphia which does their Souper Bowl collection city wide!

How did little Bermudian get so involved in this effort? In 1992 Pastor Larry received a phone call from a Presbyterian Deacon from Philadelphia. He introduced himself as simply, "Souper Bowl John." The Lord had laid on his heart the **"big idea"** to just start calling PA churches and informing them of the Souper Bowl idea. Last year PA ranked third among states in Souper Bowl collections. I wonder if "Souper Bowl John's" **"big idea"** had something to do with that?

If you are reading this and part of a church that doesn't participate with The Souper Bowl of Caring ... get your church involved!!!! It is one of the greatest workings of the Body of Christ in the world today and crosses all denominational lines. Part of the genius remains that The Souper Bowl of Caring organization doesn't ask you to send one cent of what you collect to them! One-hundred percent of what you raise can go to whatever hunger ministry you choose. Local? Denominational? You choose. Then you simply report your totals in to The Souper Bowl of Caring headquarters and we can celebrate what the Lord has helped us do together!

Big idea!

The Lord loves to give those open to His whisper **"big ideas"** for Him! At Bermudian it was a **"big idea"** given to the Bermudian Youth in 1980 that led to the restoration of Altland Meeting House. The planting of Lake View Christian Fellowship was a 1997 **"big idea."** Starting our second worship service ... First Light ... was a **"big idea"** that has helped us more than double

the size of our Church Family. God gave Brett Miller a **“big idea”** and we were able to build The Gathering Place with our “in-house financing” plan without needing to take out a mortgage. Recently the Lord laid the **“big idea”** of a new small group home Bible study initiative upon the hearts of our Christian Education Commission and those gatherings have been such a blessing!

In Church of the Brethren history, in the days before our church was deeply involved in overseas mission, the Lord laid upon the hearts of H. Stover Kulp and Albert D. Helser the **“big idea”** of taking the Gospel to the African nation of Nigeria. Today Ekklesiyar ‘Yan’uwa a Nigeria (the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) is the largest Brethren body in the world and has blessed and inspired us all as they have faced the Islamic terrorist devastation of Boko Haram with courage and amazing faith!

God gave Dan West a **“big idea”** in 1938 and the Heifer Project was born. In 1948 Church of the Brethren young adults brought a **“big idea”** before the delegate body of Annual Conference and Brethren Volunteer Service was born. The Lord gave to R. Jan Thompson the **“big idea”** of disaster childcare ministry in 1979 and the ministry has been something even the United States government looks to the Brethren for help in times of disaster.

When His people are truly listening ... God speaks ... God guides ... God provides ... **“big ideas”** for ministry & mission! But we must be listening. That means daily time in God’s Word. That means daily time when we “shut off” life’s distractions and spend time alone ... quietly ... with God in prayer. And it means being willing to obey when God nudges us toward the **“big idea”** ... believing that if God has directed us He will surely help and provide for us to do as He asks! His **“big idea”** for you just might change the world! Or make a difference in your school or workplace. Change your community. Bless your family. Or make a difference in one life!

“I will guide you and teach you the way you should go. I will give you good advice and watch over you with love.” Psalm 32:8 NIV

“The one who belongs to God listens and responds to God’s words.”

John 8:47 NET

“Now glory be to God, who by His mighty power at work within us is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of—ininitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes.” Ephesians 4:20 LB

So grab some soup from the grocery store and join the fun of seeing God’s **“big idea”** of The Souper Bowl of Caring ... a miracle of His grace ... unfolding right before our eyes! And take some time to listen ... carefully ... quietly listen ... maybe the next **“big idea”** will be something that He lays upon your heart!

In eager anticipation! Pastor Larry <><