

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
April 18 in the year of our Lord 2018 - #737

Coincidence

Do you believe in coincidence?

“an accidental and remarkable occurrence of events” – Webster’s New World Dictionary

I often think we “write-off” too many things as “*coincidence*” and don’t give our amazing God enough credit for His Divine appointments. Consider...

Our Bermudian Church of the Brethren cemetery includes graves that go back into the 1700s. Many of those ancient stones are barely readable anymore, well-worn with the years. A few have crumbled. A couple years ago our Bermudian Church Board set aside some money for repairs to some of the very old broken stones. But you know how it goes. Everyone is busy. The matter didn’t seem pressing. So some time has passed and the broken stones went unrepaired. A couple years passed. Recently Steward Steve Harlacker decided to work on this need. He spoke with a local headstone company and they recommended an epoxy to try as a first step. Steve hauled two broken stones home to let them dry out well in his shop. Last Saturday Steve and grandson Caleb were working around the farm as always and finished the chore they were working on. *“What are we going to do next?”* asked Caleb. Steve responded, *“Let’s go back to church and see how the epoxy might work on those headstones.”*

So they loaded up the sacred stones, and some lumber to make a supporting frame for the stone as the epoxy set. They were working there when a car drove into the cemetery with four women. They explained that they were from four different states and had all flown in and planned this gathering and today’s trip to Bermudian to find the grave of their great, great, great, great grandfather. This kind of request is not unusual for us at Bermudian. I probably care for phone calls or visits of those seeking the ancient graves of long departed loved ones several times a year. Steve and Caleb were happy to help the sisters find the grave of their ancestor if they could. But then they were startled when the women told them, *“His name is Samuel Groff and we had heard that his head stone was broken.”* This was the very stone that Steve and Caleb were working on! *“Samuel Groff, born April 29, 1797 – Died October 20, 1860.”*

Well the sisters were so elated to see their ancestor’s stone and so very thankful to know that someone was caring enough to repair the broken stone. Pictures were snapped, much thanks expressed, and memories shared. On Sunday morning at Church, Steve & Caleb were both still shaking their heads in amazement at the wonder of the moment.

The timing of Steve's decision to work on the stones; the timing of Saturday after doing other chores as the time to go to the cemetery; the timing of the four sisters making flight arrangements and flying to PA; the timing of their decision to come to Bermudian at this moment ... that put them all right here at this moment! Coincidence?

Dear ones, I can allow for some random coming together of things in this busy world, but I think far too often we call "coincidence" what is in reality a Divine appointment!

"Remember the things I have done in the past. For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me. Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish. I will call a swift bird of prey from the east - a leader from a distant land to come and do my bidding. I have said what I would do, and I will do it." Isaiah 46:9-11 NLT

"We make our own decisions, but the Lord alone determines what happens."

Proverbs 16:33 CEV

If we are following Christ, committed to His ways, praying daily for His guidance ... then we can trust that every event of the day, every person we meet, every odd happening is part of His perfect plan for our lives. One wise writer has said it well,

"So a biblical definition of coincidence would be 'what occurs together by God's providential arrangement of circumstances.'" GotQuestions.org

As for me ... no coincidences ... Divine appointments!
Thanks Steve & Caleb! Pastor Larry <><