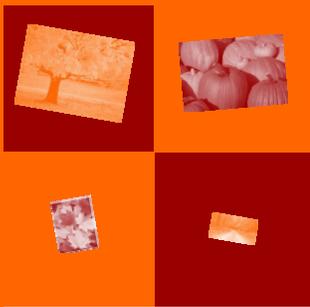


Mustard Seed

October 2011



Living in the Present

I heard an interview the other day with Mike Ditka, the former coach of the Chicago Bears. When asked about his coaching successes and struggles, Mike commented that he wishes he would have done some things differently as a coach, but he also quickly said, "I do not live in the past. I take what is, and look forward to a new day."

Hearing Mike's comment about not living in the past made me aware of how communities, churches, church leaders, and individuals can live in the past instead of focusing on the present and future. As we look at the past we can quickly see where we would have done some things differently. However, it is also important to focus on what we can do now and what we can plan for in the future.

At our annual church reporting and budget



meeting a few days ago we had the opportunity to praise God for the past year, but we were also challenged to focus on the present and future. In this new church year we have taken a step of faith to plan for some new, "multigenerational" ministries in the area of young adult, children, music, etc. Along with this we have set aside some money to help fund some of these possible areas of ministry. May we all continue to pray and work together for the expansion of Christ's Kingdom here in Kalona and beyond.

Scott Swartzendruber

Inside this issue:

In Pursuit	2
In Pursuit, cont.	3
Sunday School Missionary Project	4
MYF Is Back	4
What's Happening	5
Library Notes	6

Special points of interest:

- ♦ *It is also important to focus on what we can do now and what we can plan for in the future.*
- ♦ *Because the focus of the watchmen is on God they are some of the first to see the many blessings of God.*
- ♦ *Missio Dei is an intentional community in the most densely populated square mile between Chicago and Los Angeles.*
- ♦ *The days are shorter and the chilly nights call for a warm afghan and a good book.*

In Pursuit

It is not unusual for children who have siblings to wish they were an only child or for only children to wish that they have siblings. I have 3 sisters. I can remember wishing I was an only child when I would be in trouble, not because I had done something wrong, but because my younger sister had done something wrong. It just didn't seem right to me. My parents held the belief that I should have guided her out of trouble. I was the older sister. It was my responsibility. That was not an idea I wanted to accept.

Ezekiel was a watchman for the Israelites. In Ezekiel 33:7-9 God gives him direction about this position. *“Now, son of man, I am making you a watchman for the people of Israel. Therefore, listen to what I say and warn them for me. If I announce that some wicked people are sure to die and you fail to tell them to change their ways, then they will die in their sins, and I will hold you responsible for their deaths. But if you warn them to repent and they don't repent, they will die in their sins, but you will have saved yourself.”* That is quite the responsibility.

First and foremost the watchman must listen to God. Then the watchman is held accountable to relay what God has told him to the person or people God wants to hear it. For me the telling part is the scariest part of the command. First you need to be 100% sure of what you are saying and 100% sure of who you are to tell it to. Even then, you have absolutely no idea how they will respond.

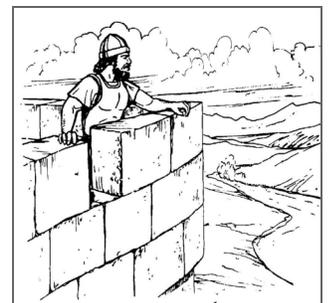
Isaiah 62:8 tells us that God has posted watchmen on our walls and they will pray day and night, continually. God commands them to take no rest in praying to Him. So God chooses who the watchmen are in each situation and then God does His part in communicating with them. The watchmen are responsible to do their part. (ie. praying to God, spending time with God, praising God, talking to God, etc.)

Habakkuk 2:1 shows Habakkuk doing his job as watchman. *“I will climb up to my watchtower and stand at my guard post. There I will wait to see what the Lord says and how he will answer my complaint.”* One of the things I love

about the verse is that Habakkuk is willing to wait for God's response and he seems confident that God will answer. It is a faith that I definitely want in my life. Earlier in Habakkuk God tells him something that is a true treasure for all Christians to hold on to tightly. Habakkuk 1:5 *“The Lord replied, ‘Look around at the nations; look and be amazed! For I am doing something in your own day, something you wouldn't believe even if someone told you about it..’”* God is working around us in such amazing ways that we wouldn't believe it even if someone told us about it! God is beyond our wildest imaginations!

Even though the watchmen's job sounds difficult, there are benefits. Isaiah 52:8 tells us *“The watchmen shout and sing with joy, for before their very eyes they see the Lord returning to Jerusalem.”* Because the focus of the watchmen is on God they are some of the first to see the many blessings of God. What a joy that can be! Just think about all that God does and how wonderful it is to see the power of our loving God! That is a gift from God that no one would want to return. So this brings some questions to my mind. Were there times when I was to have been a watchman to my younger sister? If so, then I should have been held accountable when I didn't do it. Are there other times when God has or is calling me to be a watchman? How have I responded in the past? Also, having studied these verses, how will I respond in the future? Am I willing to commit to taking the time with God to be a good watchman? How will I feel standing before God if I knowingly didn't do a good job of being a watchman?

So this brings some questions to my mind. Were there times when I was to have been a watchman to my younger sister? If so, then I should have been held accountable when I didn't do it. How have I responded in the past? Also, having studied these verses, how will I respond in the future? (Cont. on page 3)





(Cont. from page 2) Am I willing to commit to taking the time with God to be a good watchman? How will I feel standing before God if I knowingly didn't do a good job of being a watchman? Are there other times when God has or is calling me to be a watchman? How have I responded in the past?

Then what about the other side of the coin? Have I been willing to listen to the watchmen in my life? In my work? In Kalona Mennonite? Have I done more than listen? Have I changed my life based on what the watchmen have told me? Am I going to look more actively for the watchmen of God in my life, work and Kalona Mennonite? Am I going to be more willing to apply what they are telling me from God to my life?

I know some people will say that it is difficult to know when people are speaking from God rather than their own selfish self. The Bible tells us to solve this by looking at the fruit of the people. Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:17-21 tell us some things to look for in helping us to tell if God's Spirit is involved in what is being said. *"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants-men and women alike-and they will prophesy. And I will cause wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below-blood and fire and clouds of smoke. The sun will become dark, and the moon will turn blood red before that great and glorious day of the Lord ar-*

ries. But everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

Is God's Spirit visible? Are people being led by God? Are people being saved? Are we seeing the wonders of God around us? If so, then praise be to God! If not, then are we being disobedient? Are you or I called to be a watchman, but not doing our job? Or am I or you not looking for the watchmen in our life to give us direction? Or worse yet, are we hearing our watchmen, but refusing to act?

My faith depends on my answers to these questions. They are life and death questions. Either I am obedient to God or I am not. I cannot answer these questions for anyone else but myself. But they are questions that I must answer prayerfully and thoughtfully.

Should I have been made accountable for my sister's actions? I still can't bring myself to say 100% yes (my hard head gets in my way), but I am willing to say that at times I should have been accountable. There are times when I should have spoken or acted but I didn't.

My challenge in my pursuit of God is to repent for the times I didn't act as a watchman when called to do so and to repent for the times that I didn't listen and act accordingly to the watchmen in my life. Thank God for His abundant forgiveness of our sins. Going forward I commit myself to be a better watchman when called to do so and also to be a better listener and follower of the watchmen in my life.

As always, in pursuit, Dawn Wyse

Sunday School Missionary Project

The fall missionary project for the primary department will be going to Missio Dei in Minneapolis. Missio Dei is an intentional community in the most densely populated square mile between Chicago and Los Angeles, containing close to 9,000 economically and ethnically diverse residents. More than two thirds of the neighborhood is low-income or below the poverty level.

Since their beginning in 2003, Missio Dei has affirmed the centrality of hospitality to the Christian way of life. To that end, they have welcomed dozens of homeless people to stay with them for periods of 1 night to 1 year. They

desire to invite more guests in but in the past have had to turn people away because of financial limitations. They also provide meals to the poverty stricken in their neighborhood.

Missio Dei is a member of Central Plains Mennonite Conference. If you would like to learn more about them and how they encourage others to live as Christians, their website is <http://www.missio-dei.com>.

I encourage you to help our children raise money to help inner city children affected by poverty. *Marlinda Beachy*



MYF IS BACK

Well, it's that time of year again! Fall has almost arrived, and with it, the beginning of another year of MYF. While it's hard to believe that this year didn't start off with signup sheets for the Chicken-and-Biscuits booth, I still believe we're off to a great start!

We began our year with the annual MYF Campout. This year's had a bit of a twist, however, as it was raining and we ended up camping out at the Murray's house. Everyone arrived and quickly filled the living room with sleeping bags, and the kitchen with plenty of snacks. The remainder of the evening was spent hanging out and enjoying the ping pong table and a campfire. In the morning, we had breakfast around the fire and then moved on to some fun group games.

One of these games was a twist on wiffle ball in which we were all paired up and one partner was blindfolded. The pair then had to bat and play outfield with one person "blind" and the other person leading them around. Needless to say, that got interesting when the seeing partner forgot to tell the other they were running. We even had a few times when the blind partner

was hit instead of the ball! Thankfully, no one was seriously hurt and we all had a lot of fun.

After playing those games and having our first Bible study, it's clear to me that we have a wonderful group of youth this year. Everyone seems to blend well and it's exciting to continue seeing new faces in the crowd. I'm also looking forward to the series we're starting, and it sounds like many in the group feel the same way.

The series is called "Underground Reality: Vietnam." It's put on by Voice of the Martyrs and it follows a group of teens who smuggle Bibles into Vietnam. Our big question last week was, "What's keeping you from living a life totally devoted to Christ?" Through the weeks, we will look at many more questions like this and discover what's so amazing about the Christian faith, and why there are people literally willing to die for the sake of one more person knowing about Jesus.

Nicole Murray

Our big question last week was, "What's keeping you from living a life totally devoted to Christ?"

WHAT'S HAPPENING!!!

Well, Fall Festival is over and as usual it seemed like one big homecoming again. I did miss the chicken & biscuits this year, but thankfully there were still apple fritters. Now for the news.....

Dave & Mary Groh will be leaving on Tuesday, October 4th to return to Canada. They have been here at KMC about 24 years. Dave pastored our church the first 8 years of their stay. This is their new address: Leamington Mennonite Home, 33 Pickwick Drive, Apt. 211, Leamington, Ontario N8H4X5. We wish them God's blessing as they move closer to family.

Congratulations to Joel Koerner & Maria Blough, who were married in Columbus, Ohio on September 24th. They plan to live in Louisville, Kentucky for now. Congratulations also to Dave & Rosie Koerner.

Cal & Shirley Hochstedler took a long road trip to Portland, Oregon to see their son, Tim & family. They spent time in Northern California and visited friends in Utah and Colorado. They were gone four weeks and drove over 6300 miles. Needless to say they were glad to get home!



Jack & Glenda Seward are grandparents to a little girl named Raeghan Lynn Seward. She weighed 8 lbs. 14 oz. Raeghan's parents are Jed & Kailee Seward. Congratulations.

Ed & Carol Miller took a week off and drove to Kansas and visited family and friends. They delivered a box of tomatoes from Dolores Miller to Forrest Miller's in Newton, Kansas. There were few tomatoes in Newton due to the drought. Then on to Oklahoma to visit Ed's 94 year old aunt in Enid, OK. They also saw Johnny Cash and Noah and the Ark in Branson, Missouri. OK, they were just both acting their parts in different shows.

In the most recent issue of "Rejoice", the daily devotional, is a very nice story about Julie Gingerich's mother. They all called her "Beppe" and she hosted friends and family every Wednesday after work for coffee, Dutch goodies & fellowship. Please read the article about this incredible woman, who welcomed family & strangers to her table with warmth & hospitality.

Enjoy the Fall Season.

Blessings to all. Ed V. & Carol Miller



Kalona Mennonite Church

902 6th St.
P.O. Box 819
Kalona, IA 52247
Phone: 319-656-2736
Email: kmcjanice@kctc.net

Editor: Shirley Hochstedler
Design & Layout: Janice Hostetler

Articles for the Mustard Seed may be submitted to Shirley Hochstedler at shirleyh@kctc.net or placed in her mailbox.

Our Vision is to be a life-giving church: Presenting the life-giving message of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior to the people of the Kalona area and the world, challenging them to accept Christ, worship Him, and serve Him.

Our Mission is to fulfill the Great Commission: Leading people to Christ, discipling them in the faith; equipping them to witness; and sending them out to serve.

We are on the web:
kalonamennonitechurch.com



Library Notes

The days are shorter and the chilly nights call for a warm afghan and a good book. We've got just the right one for you in the library! Stop in and find yourself a good read for the week.

A number of new books and two DVD's have been added recently. Look for them on the book cart and on the shelf marked new books. Below are lists of the books.

Kids Books: If You Give a Moose a Muffin; Amazing Grace; Little Bear's Friend; The Grouchy Ladybug (boardbook); Dick and Jane and Friends; The Kissing Hand; I Spy Treasure Hunt (picture riddles); two Arthur Maxwell Bible Story Books; and a Shalom Readers Club book for the older grades: Thin Wood Walls.

Miscellaneous titles include: Mennonite Your Way Directory #11; Walking With God on the Road You Never Wanted to Travel by Mark Attebury; What Difference Do it Make by Ron Hall and Denver Moore; and 12 Great Choices Smart Moms Make by Robin Chaddock.

Fiction titles include several Guidepost

hardcovers: Reading, Writing, and Riddles; The Time of Their Lives; They Also Serve; Never Give Up; The Regrettable Rumors; Plots and Pans; Talk of the Town; and Steady and Slow. Softcover fiction titles include; The Hope of Ref-



uge by Cindy Woodsmall; Reason and Romance, and First Impressions by Debra White Smith (Books 1 and 2 in the Austen Series); Sarah, My Beloved by Sharlene MacLaren, and A Daughters Inheritance (Broadmoor Legacy, Book 1) by Tracie Peterson and Judith Miller.

The Treasure Seekers is a DVD for the whole family. Joseph and His Brethren is an older movie, recently digitized.

See You in the Library!

Shirley Hochstedler, Librarian