In a recent Fox News article, Eric Metaxas, author of the newly released book, “Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy” had this to say concerning the legacy left by two Germans:

“[Recently] billions of Christians around the world...celebrate[d] Easter. But [April 20th] is a special day too. ...April 20th—is Hitler’s birthday! Have you forgotten? The Fuehrer would have been 122 years young. [Did] you celebrate it? As [Eric Metaxas] explain[s] in his book “Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy” during Hitler’s 12-year reign, people across Germany twisted themselves in veritable pretzels to praise the Fuehrer on his birthday! It was a day of national celebration. How things change! Today Hitler’s name is synonymous with evil. What a spectacular reversal of fortune.

Hitler’s last birthday—his 56th—was already a harbinger of things to come. Ten days later he would commit suicide, so the mood in the bunker on his last “Geburtstag” was not exactly festive. He was a shattered man, hiding like a rat beneath the shattered city that was to have been the capital of his new Germany. His die-hard bunker-mates held a small celebration for him, but Herr Hitler had to be sedated before he would make an appearance. Can anyone dream up a more depressing birthday party? What’s the German word for “bummer”? 

Contrast Helper’s bleak ending with that of another German of that era, Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer was a brilliant young pastor and a theologian, whose deep faith in God led him to get involved in the plot to kill Hitler. When Hitler learned of Bonhoeffer’s involvement he flew into a typically violent rage. As one of his final acts of revenge—just three weeks before he committed suicide—Hitler condemned the young pastor to death. Bonhoeffer was hanged on April 9, 1945 at Flossenburg Concentration Camp. But by all accounts Bonhoeffer went to his death with the peace of God, with no regrets. How can that be?

He was 39 years old, widely reckoned a theological genius. He had already written two of the classic books of the 20th century, “The Cost of Discipleship” and “Life Together”. He was engaged to be married to a wonderful young woman. He had such a terrifically bright future! Bonhoeffer even had an opportunity to escape his fate.
In his book, Eric Metaxas] tells the story of how [Bonhoeffer] had fled to America, but then decided to return to Germany, to face the horrors that lay ahead with his people. Why did he return when he didn’t have to? And why didn’t he have any regrets for doing so, even after he knew he would pay the ultimate price?

Just before he died, Bonhoeffer told a fellow prisoner, “This is the end. But for me, the beginning of life.”

How is it that one man slunk to his death defeated and is today despised by the whole world, while another man went to his death with God’s peace and is today everywhere hailed as a hero, as one of the few Germans with the courage to see what was happening and to speak against it and act against it, even at the cost of his own life?

There’s much to say by way of an answer, but since the Easter season is upon us, let’s start there. Bonhoeffer believed the Easter story. He actually believed the unbelievable story of God’s coming to earth and dying and then rising from the dead to defeat death forever. He believed that because this was true, he need never fear death. All he needed to worry about was doing the right thing and trusting God with the results. And that he did.

Because Bonhoeffer believed these things he had the courage to do what almost no one else around him could do. He stood up for the Jews of Europe and today he is celebrated and cherished, while Hitler, who condemned him to death and who only believed in himself, is reviled as a monster. That day in the bunker 66 years ago, as the drugged up Fuehrer celebrated his last birthday, he was alive and Bonhoeffer had been dead for eleven days. But on that day — April 20, 1945 — who was happy and who was at peace, Hitler or Bonhoeffer? For that matter, which of them is happy and at peace today? It’s something chilling to think about, the contrast between these two Germans, between these two lives and these two deaths. But at this time of year especially, it’s appropriate that perhaps we do think about it.”

May Elder Report

With Pastor C.J. accepting a career expanding position in Iowa, the elder board decided to be patient and listen for the Lord’s direction before going forward in adding a staff position. As elders, we continue to pray and ask the congregation to pray for wisdom and discernment in regards to this issue. We feel the Lord will show us the way to further His work at Maranatha, if we all remain close to Him through prayer.

We also ask your continuing prayers for the nominating committee as they look for candidates to replace three elders whose terms have expired. I am one of those elders and would like to express my thanks to the Lord and to the Congregation for allowing me to serve. I have felt the emotional highs and lows of the position, but have grown spiritually through your prayers and fellowship. We must continue to work towards our VISION to Reach All Generations for Christ. This can only be done through prayer and serving Him through His church.

In Christ,
Bill McClain
God’s Cosmic Theater

Last February, my family visited the USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor, Hawai’i. On December 7, 1941, 1177 sailors lost their lives when the ship’s magazine was blown up during a Japanese “surprise” attack. Later this month, our nation memorializes the loss of life from all of our military conflicts on Memorial Day, nearly 1.333 million lives in all.

In Genesis 4:10 the Lord said to Cain, “Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.” (NIV) Our personal anguish over the loss of life cannot possibly compare to the anguish of our Lord over the destruction of multiplied millions of lives, all created in His image, during the course of world history. In Genesis 6:5-6 we read, “The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.” (NIV) It was this grief that brought the Son of God to the cross.

The true horror that is represented in the destruction of war and disease and pestilence is very difficult for us to see from our earthly perspective. Jesus said, “All these [are] the beginning of sorrows.” Matthew 24:8 (KJV) He remarkably told his disciples. “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.” Matthew 10:34 (NIV) There is a great cosmic conflict between those who serve the Lord and accept His rule, and those who rebel and seek to destroy what He has created. Our earthly wars and struggles are but a part of this conflict.

Paul’s letters give us a vision of the scope of this conflict and of our place in it. “For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle [literally, theater] to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men.” 1 Corinthians 4:9 (NIV) Amazingly, we also are included on the theater stage in this great conflict. “[God’s] intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purposes which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ephesians 3:10-11 NIV)

Unprepared, Pearl Harbor and 9/11 caught us by surprise. Let us not be surprised by the destructiveness and ingenuity of evil in this conflict between the King of Kings and all who rebel against Him. “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV) Our choice is simple. Join the side of the victor or remain in rebellion against Him. The victory has already been won. (Romans 8:37-39; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57) Our Lord has promised us real peace no matter what turmoil we face on this earth. (John 14:27 NIV)
**THANK YOU**

The AWANA leadership teams extends a sincere thank you to everyone who contributed to an amazing year. With the help of their parents and leaders, the AWANA clubbers collectively hid over 2,000 verses in their hearts this year! So many wonderful people working together for the cause of reaching and teaching the next generation for Christ is inspiring. Congratulations to all of the clubbers for their hard work, and many thanks to our leaders who made it all possible. Enjoy the summer break. We look forward to seeing everyone back at AWANA this fall. We’ll kick-off again Monday, September 19th!

AWANA…approved workmen are not ashamed!

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**Are You Smarter Than a Tainter Tiger?**

Pastors Dan & CJ and Ginny Proffitt represented Maranatha well in the recent competition at Tainter Elementary School. They completed all of the questions successfully, but missed the tie-breaker.

Hanging out with kids is a smart thing.

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**REMINDER: People who attend the AWAKENING services are encouraged to park in the parking lot north of the Soul Garage (Thomas Precision Engineering Parking lot) on Sunday mornings and enter through the north door into the Soul Garage café. This will allow for more parking spaces in our main parking area. Thank you.**

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**Congregational Care - Prayer Concerns**

Please include these people in your prayers:
Alexis Tomsovic, Marilyn Longseth, Lois Northey, Laura Hill, Stan Olfedahl, Darlene Stromh Meyer, Millie Bjugstad, Pat Swanson, Patricia Randall, Richard & Violet Fossum, Loni Wold, Colin Wessman, Stacey Wenzel, Travis & Brittany Ahlberg’s daughter Annika, Amanda Stariha, Marjie Peterson’s husband Lynn, Paul Green’s step-brother Tom, Jeanne Stricklen's brother Tom, Cathy Johnson’s mother Irene Vaughn, Cheryl Darrow’s mother Gladys, Craig Severud’s dad Todd, Al Davidson’s mother Pearl, Fran Reich’s son Wally, Pavick’s son Jeremiah, Kathy Fladten’s sister Vicky, Laurie Holmes, Don & Bernadette Park’s son Bruce, Marge Heinecke’s cousin Laura Roberts, Flory’s nephew Joshua, Pinkerton’s friends Mike & Joanne Nelson, Roccy Raymond’s brother Todd, Culver’s former son-in-law Rick, Ginny Proffitt’s cousin’s wife Robbie, Trevor & Melinda Zurn’s nephew Jerry Stoeklen, Julie Reid’s cousin Becky, Fenton’s friends Jerry, Shirlee Lucken’s friend Marsha Williams, Mary Potter’s sisters Dorothy & Ruth, Patsy Danovsky’s brother Perry, Mary Corton’s friend Betsy, Stan Stoeberl’s cousins-the Anez family, Fowler’s children Meghan & Noah, Marcy Graese’s sister Corinne, Nancy Peterson’s friend Nancy Erickson, Believers in Egypt, Carol Montgomery’s brother Ronnie.

**Serving in the military:** Sue Anderson’s son-in-law Alex serving in Afghanistan, and the Herrick’s friend Joe Rampson serving in the marines.

**Praises:** The birth of Grace Kargus to parents Cody & Amber Kargus on April 11th. Our Good Friday and Easter Services brought many closer to the Lord and 12 made first time decisions to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
GOING AWAY PARTY AT THE SOUL GARAGE FOR CJ & BECKY NISSEN ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 4TH: PASTOR CJ HAS ACCEPTED A STUDENT MINISTRIES/CHURCH PLANTING POSITION IN DES MOINES, IA. JOIN US ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 4TH TO BID THEM A FOND FAREWELL AND CELEBRATE THE 6 1/2 YEARS OF ADVENTURE (AND MISADVENTURES) OF THEIR TIME AT MARANATHA. THIS IS A CHURCH-WIDE EVENT SO FEEL FREE TO JOIN US BEGINNING AT 7:00 PM IN THE SOUL GARAGE.

MARANATHA COMMUNITY GARDENS MEETINGS ON SATURDAYS, MAY 7TH AND 14TH FROM 1:00-3:00 PM IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL. SIGN UP FOR YOUR PLOT AND GET THE INFORMATION YOU WILL NEED REGARDING EXPECTATIONS FOR THE NEW GARDENING SEASON. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT LEE WOHLK AT 715-458-2925.

SUNDAY, MAY 8TH IS MOTHER'S DAY.

NEW ATTENDEES “PIZZA PIE WITH THE PASTORS” ON SUNDAY, MAY 22ND. IF YOU HAVE RECENTLY STARTED ATTENDING MARANATHA AND WOULD LIKE TO MEET OUR PASTORS, ELDERS AND THEIR WIVES, SIGN UP AT THE CONNECTING POINT IN THE WELCOME CENTER OR FILL OUT THE APPROPRIATE BOX ON THE BLUE SHEET IN YOUR SUNDAY BULLETIN. WE WILL CONTACT YOU WITH THE DETAILS. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT PASTOR PAUL GREEN AT 715-234-8313.

YOUNG AT HEART (AGE 55+) WEDNESDAY, MAY 18TH: JOIN US AT THE CHURCH AT 10:30 AM TO CARPOOL TO WJMC RADIO STATION THEN HAVE A PIZZA LUNCH IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL AT NOON. SIGN UP AT THE BULLETIN BOARD INSIDE THE FELLOWSHIP HALL SO WE KNOW HOW MANY TO PLAN FOR. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT LEE & SHELBY WOHLK AT 715-458-2925.

OUR CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON MONDAY, MAY 30TH IN HONOR OF MEMORIAL DAY.

REMEMBER OUR MISSIONARIES… VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.MARANATHAFREE.COM AND CLICK ON THE LINK FOR MINISTRIES WHICH WILL TAKE YOU TO WHERE YOU CAN CLICK ON “MISSIONS.” MONTHLY UPDATED PRAYER REQUESTS WILL BE POSTED THERE. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET, PLEASE PICK UP A COPY OF THE MISSIONARY PRAYER SHEET FROM THE CONNECTING POINT (DESK) IN THE WELCOME CENTER LOBBY) EACH MONTH AS WE UPDATE IT.

AWAKENING PARKING: PEOPLE WHO ATTEND THE AWAKENING SERVICES ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARK IN THE PARKING LOT NORTH OF THE SOUL GARAGE (THOMAS PRECISION ENGINEERING PARKING LOT) ON SUNDAY MORNINGS AND ENTER THROUGH THE NORTH DOOR INTO THE SOUL GARAGE CAFÉ. THIS WILL ALLOW FOR MORE PARKING SPACES IN OUR MAIN PARKING AREA. THANK YOU.

CHILDREN’S HIDE & SEEK SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL: IN MID-JUNE, WE WILL BEGIN SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR KIDS. OUR REGULAR TEACHERS AND HELPERS WILL BE GIVEN A BREAK, SO WE ARE IN NEED OF SOME PEOPLE TO LEAD COMBINED AGES. PARENTS, PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING SO THAT WE CAN HAVE A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN HELPING ONE, TWO, OR MORE WEEKS DURING THE SUMMER, CONTACT GINNY PROFFITT AT 715-651-1405.