

Captive to the Word, Free in the Holy Spirit



Millbrook Messenger

July 2010

"JESUS: PITCHER OF THE COLOSSIANS III BASEBALL TEAM "

(Millbrook Field, July 4th, 2010)

The vision that has seen Millbrook EPC as a community life center continues to grow. Last Sunday we were reminded how radical our national community was called to be through the actions of the Founding Fathers and Mothers, as well as the signers of the Declaration of Independence. They were "radical" because they acknowledged that the one true God, revealed in the Scriptures known as the Old and New Testaments, is the One whose precepts must be foundational for our lives and common good. We were reminded that many of our contemporary leaders have only scorn and reject the foundation of our personal, and ultimately, national freedom.

As a faith community, our foundation is the person and the work of Jesus Christ, the son of the living God. As a national community we cherish, or should, our Constitution. As a faith community, we cherish, or should, the Word of God. There is no contradiction between these two documents. The vision of the former flows from the latter. The vision of the latter has descended through revelation from the playing fields of heaven itself.

We celebrated a great BBQ culminating in an impressive display of fireworks. Local sinners (saints yet to be revealed) came up to me and said, "PJ, thank you so much for this opportunity! We loved it!" I say, "Thank you Jesus." I also say "Thank you" to those who directly or indirectly supported this Millbrook/LOT adventure. Some weary bodies did not recline till about 10 pm. At that time, perhaps also for you these words of Thomas Paine came to mind:

***Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must,
like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it. ~***

Undoubtedly the highlight of the event was the baseball game. Slowly the vision of the "back field" is becoming a reality. We saw the "Colossians" playing out there; remember, in Christ barriers are broken down? Ethnic, social, economic groups become one at the foot of the Cross as Asians, Blacks, Caucasians, Latinos were playing out the new creation order. Those who don't desire that don't know the Gospel, no matter how many Bible verses flow from their lips. Such are like politicians and judges who speak while their hearts are not anchored in the Constitution.

While the standard of play was not quite up to MLB expectations, in its own right it was a game worthy of TV broadcasting. Several pitchers were used, and Jesus was visible through them. With young and old, tall and short at the plate, the pitching to each was according to need and

ability. No law of the Pharisees ruled this game! Grace abounded, as second base was ignored to secure a home run.

Even as foreign nations have their spies among us (what do we expect?), Satan was present last Sunday as well. LOT had been blessed to be able to purchase \$500 worth of baseball equipment. Following our meal, we discovered the equipment had all been stolen. Brian and I hopped in the truck; we prayed and drove around. Later, a number of you shared how you prayed spontaneously for the recovery. **God hears the prayers of righteous men and women.** We found the equipment stashed in the bushes ready to be sold to "celebrate" a quick fix. Truth can be sad, brutal and ugly. It is often envious and mean spirited. It resides within in more ways than one. That's the reason Jesus warns us and says, "Beware".

For the statisticians among us: some 60 people attended; approximately 90 hamburgers were cooked; all fireworks were legal; the love and joy immeasurable.

Come and play baseball with Jesus.

Because of Jesus...ruined for the ordinary.

PJ

THINGS IN JULY

The Mustard Tree reading program. A great opportunity for kids to get a "helping hand" to improve their reading skills and experience the love of Jesus.

VBS is another exciting Kingdom activity coming towards us. This too needs your prayers.

Sunday 18th; Scott Spiess and his family will be with us. Scott will be speaking that Sunday. (My best friend and I will be away celebrating our 19th wedding anniversary).

Sunday 25th; Tommy Forester will be with us, and he will share about what the Lord is doing through him and Fatimah in PA. (I will be with Christopher at an orientation at UC Irvine).

COMING TOWARDS US....A Thrift store to be opened on campus this Fall. A new exciting creative way to share the Gospel and raise funds for mission and evangelism work

Have you been thinking about October 31st yet? Really?!!

Our annual harvest festival should be another awesome Community outreach. Christian bands, Hot low rider cars (We are trying to book "Elijah's" chariot too) will make this a great event.

PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING!

PJ

I just returned from Pebble Beach where I was privileged to work at the U.S. Open golf tournament as a hole marshall. Yes, I was one of those people who stand along the hole, raising my arms at appropriate times and asking the spectators to "Quiet, please." I went with five of my friends who I play golf with on a regular basis. We rented a house in Seaside and managed to exist together for eight days without ruining our friendships. I had the opportunity to interact with some of the golfers, Nick Watney, Phil Mickleson, Tiger Woods, and others whose names are not as well known. Many of the other workers and spectators were interesting to get to know. I met people from all over the country as well as people from England and Ireland. All these people coming together to watch the world's best golfers play.

I was fortunate to be assigned to the ninth hole at Pebble Beach. If you are not familiar with the golf course, the ninth hole stretches right along the bluffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean. I spent most of my time on the ocean side of the hole where there were no spectators. Our job was to watch the golfers tee shots and locate where they stopped. As long as they stayed in the fairway the job was easy. However, many times they hit their ball between the edge of the fairway and the ocean into very thick grass. We then had to locate the ball and place a little flag by it, so that when the golfer came over the hill, he would be able to find his ball quickly. They would thank us and hand us our flag. We then would have to step back about ten feet and stand quietly while they hit their next shot.

During the practice rounds (Monday through Wednesday) there was no structure to when the golfers would come by. Things were much more relaxed, and it was at these times when we were allowed to talk, ask for autographs and pictures. It was certainly a thrill.

Since the golfers would come by at random times there were also opportunities to put down my chair and look out over the ocean. We could see from Pacific Grove all the way around to Point Sur. We watched the waves crashing on the beach below us and the myriad of blues that exist in the water. I felt truly blessed by God to be there in the first place, but to see the beauty of this view was overwhelming. I was struck as to what an awesome God we have that created such beauty for us to enjoy. By enjoying this creation we in turn are enjoying the God that created them. However, we don't need to be where I was to enjoy this, but it is around us every day and every where we are. Often times we don't take the time to see this. I have come away from this experience vowing to look for the beauty around me. Whether it is in the landscape or in the people around me, I will look. Join me in this search for beauty.

During the regular business meeting of Session on June 15, 2010 the following actions were taken:

1. Session **VOTED** to hold a BBQ on Sunday, August 8, 2010, following VBS to acquaint new VBS attendees with the congregation for purposes of becoming their choice of local community church.
2. Session **VOTED** to accept the finance report for May, indicating revenue of \$16,453, expenditures of \$21,223 for a net loss of \$4,770.
3. Session **VOTED** to change the title of Buildings and Grounds to Facilities. Tim Lockwood has agreed to be chairperson.
4. Session **VOTED** to change the door lock to the storage area inside Westminster Hall. It will be keyed to a W key.
5. Session **VOTED** to approve up to two days per year to gather for retirement and replacement of the flags when needed. The flags are provided by Roy and Patti Kelly in honor of their son.
6. Session **VOTED** to approve the use of Westminster Hall for a meeting of "Act! For America" on June 22, 2010.
7. Session **VOTED** to approve the yard sale for Saturday, September 11, 2010. It will be a joint effort between Mission, LOT and Evangelism.
8. Session **VOTED** to approve vacation requests for Judy Edmondson for June 29 and July 14 and July 15, 2010.
9. Session **VOTED** to approve vacation requests for Rev. Jerry Voss for June 29 and 30, 2010.
10. Session **VOTED** to allow Evangelism and LOT to move forward with a proposal to establish a thrift store.

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- Please pray for the families whose loved ones were called home by the Lord in June:
 - Tommy "Oleta" Anderson - The Lord took Tommy home on June 29th. Memorial service will be held at Millbrook on July 10th at 3:30 pm.
 - Marg Griffin - Jennifer Kennedy's mom was called home by the Lord on June 27th.
 - Aneiah Freeland - Lee & Norma's granddaughter from Russia - pray for a swift healing from hip/leg surgery - ball joint broke at the top of the femur, 2 pins were installed - confined to a wheelchair to keep pressure off the break until healed.
 - Norma Keck - stable, healing from surgery on July 1 to amputate her lower leg, at the Heart Hospital.
 - Rob Martin - looking for a job.
 - Norma Ault - healing from sinus surgery on July 1. Needs to be well to fly on July 12.
 - Stella Medin - healing from an allergic reaction to medicine. Also recovering from a cracked collar bone and lacerations on her legs, sore & bruised, from when she fell down the escalator.
 - Hazel Powers - has multiple blood clots.
 - Pete Torstensen (Edmondson's nephew) - needs healing of aspergillus in his lungs.
 - Barbara Hosford - discontinuing cancer treatment, on meds for comfort, hospice care at home.
 - Private David Lockwood—Scheduled to arrive in Washington State by mid July.
 - Mary Quinones—for improved ability to swallow following treatment for throat cancer.
 - Our elderly, sick and shut-in members
 - Our Missionaries
 - The Persecuted Church around the world
 - Military Personnel & families
 - Our country, elected officials and leaders.

Marcell was one of my students at California Christian College. He died in May suddenly and unexpectedly of a brain aneurysm, at age thirty-one, leaving behind a widow as well as the teenage boys in the group home where he worked. His death shocked and saddened me and caused me to reflect on life in general and Marcell in particular. It is a cliché, but it is only during times of loss that we realize just how short and incredibly precious life is. The death of another person tends to touch us deeply because it leaves us with feelings of regret over not getting to know the other better while there was time, at having wasted opportunities, of being caught up in the banalities of daily life instead of focusing on moments that matter, and so have us rethink our priorities and purpose. It is with that awareness that I wish to share my thoughts on Marcell.

Marcell discovered our small college campus one day as he happened to drive by, but it was not until much later that God spoke to him about enrolling, and that's how he ended up in Remedial English in the Fall of 2008, a quiet, unassuming young man. He was originally from L.A. where he had spent the first years of his life in foster homes and then was raised by his uncle in a three bedroom apartment along with seven cousins. His uncle gave him regular meals, a bike for Christmas, saw to it that he attended school, and whipped him regularly with his belt because Marcell had developed a passion for basketball that caused him to lose track of time and not return home from the court till late most nights. Basketball was Marcell's redemption, but his uncle had no time for such nonsense; curfew was curfew. The chastisements became Marcell's daily bread. As a teenager, Marcell resented the punishment, but as an adult he was convinced it had turned him into a functioning human being. He was actually grateful to his uncle for giving him a life of regularity and love, as he understood the term: a place to call home, generous portions of soul food, and discipline. Though his uncle drank two forty -ounces a day and belonged to a gang, he was a family man who was dedicated to his wife and kids. It was unfortunate, therefore, that in 2006 he was shot in a gang related incident; he had been such a good step parent. This, in essence, is the summary of Marcell's boyhood and adolescence, as revealed in his essays and class presentations.

It may be of interest to the reader that as an adult, Marcell came to know Christ through a complete stranger who happened to live in the same apartment complex, a man in his sixties by the name of Dale. Marcell was married by then and active in his church. "And do I know Jesus?" Dale asked one day out loud as he happened to be walking behind Marcell who had just come out of the laundry room. Marcell didn't know Jesus, although he thought he did. He had never before heard anybody ask such a strange question, not even at his church where he attended every Sunday and served with great pride. For some reason, the question made an impression on Marcell; his curiosity was stirred, and that's how he met Dale. Dale invited Marcell up to his apartment, served him coffee and pie, and talked to him about First Corinthians Thirteen. It was the beginning of Marcell's discipleship.

Initially, Marcell wasn't interested in "hanging with a white guy in his sixties", but when he noticed the warmth and genuine affection in Dale's marriage and the cordialness with which he was received, he reconsidered.. He noticed that Dale's marriage was different from the marriages he had witnessed so far; that the husband-wife relationship could actually be based on love and mutual respect instead of dominance and submission, egocentrism and power-mongering. That was new to Marcell. The experience, along with his study of First Corinthians Thirteen, transformed Marcell's life and marriage. His hang up with internet pornography stopped, he became faithful to his wife, read his Bible every day, and developed a keen desire to serve Jesus. It may explain why he became involved with group home kids and enrolled in a Christian Ministry program at the Bible College where I teach. Marcell's enrollment was the beginning of his testimony to a number of us, including his English instructor, a Christian of little faith.

Marcell attended several of my classes over the span of two years, and although I rarely interacted with him outside the classroom, I had the privilege of getting to know Marcell not just as a student, but as a human being. Probably the single most dominant impression I wish to share about Marcell is that he was a man without façade. Marcell was genuine, warm, low key, yet passionate in his conviction that true life was to be found only in Jesus. Marcell had a realness to him that made him accessible to others as a

person and that was, I believe, founded on his assurance of his salvation. Marcell knew who he was: he was a person who totally and irreversibly belonged to Christ, a person who was aware both of his struggles and his worth, and his sense of self-worth was based not on personal effort but in the forgiveness he had received through Christ, and because of it, he himself was willing and able to extend that same forgiveness and grace to others.

That included the kids at the group home where he worked. They were his mission, his life. The essays and presentations Marcell gave in class frequently touched on his experiences as a youth worker, and it was obvious just how much he loved and valued those kids. One speech he gave in my Oral Communication class this past spring may illustrate his assimilation of Christ's command to love your neighbor; it was an informative speech on how to be of positive influence to troubled teenagers. Marcell shared with us the many challenges he faced on a regular basis working with group home kids—kids who were scarred from abuse and neglect, haunted by a pervasive sense of abandonment and having been cheated somehow. Marcell was their substitute parent, a father figure to boys who grew up fatherless, and in many instances, motherless. Those boys didn't believe in getting up in the morning, he shared with us; they didn't believe in brushing their teeth, or showering, or changing their clothes, or going to school or doing their homework; they didn't believe in meal times or structure of any kind.. They didn't believe in authority, and they certainly didn't believe in their own worth. Marcell had taken it upon himself to help those boys adjust to a normal, functional life by modeling, as best as he could, the behavior he wished to see them develop. He would take them to school, supervise their homework, engage with them, share his faith with them, and, of course, take them to play basketball—lots of it. Marcell's job was not easy: "It takes a lot of patience", I remember him saying. "Above, all", he shared, "you've gotta give'em love. Love, love, love, love, love. It's a new experience for them. They've known the opposite all their lives." Those words stand out to me today as summing up what Marcell was all about—he was about passing on the love he had received, the forgiveness, the grace, the gentleness. And notwithstanding his personal struggles, he was about the love and the joy and the peace that are identified in the Bible as the fruits of the Spirit. He was about being, and his being touched me, and it touched his classmates. We were all awed by Marcell's speech—not because of smooth rhetoric, but because of the simple message of love delivered with such conviction that one couldn't help but feel its application in Marcell's personal life. It's what made Marcell a person of substance, of power, and of integrity. Though this is another cliché, there is no better way of saying that because of the human warmth, the joy, and the love he shared, Marcell was a blessing to all of us.

I said earlier that I had hardly ever interacted with Marcell outside the classroom. One small incident, however, stands out to me. It was in March of 2010, on a rainy morning, just before lunch. As I was walking across the parking lot to the cafeteria, Marcell, who was standing by his car, suddenly called out to me: "Mrs. Voss, look at the puppy!" I looked and saw a tiny black puppy run over the pavement towards us. I remember crouching down and picking it up, but it was too slippery and lively and wiggled right out of my arms. As I turned around, I saw Marcell's face radiant with joy. It is an image that has stayed with me, because it is that joy that was always there with Marcell, ready to shine forth any moment. Animals have the ability to make humans connect at a personal level, and this was one of those moments, probably the only one, that Marcell and I connected, not as professor and student, but simply as human beings. Time stood still for a moment, as if to allow us to celebrate God's goodness in the midst of our busy schedules. It is a memory that is precious to me.

Though Marcell will be missed, his memory lives on in the moments that we shared with him, memories that teach us what life is truly about—it is about sharing and celebrating the relationships that God has blessed us with. They are precious, just as life itself.

Please read: John 14:15-24; John 21:15-17; James 1:27 before continuing.

Now it appears to me that there is a theme developing throughout these passages, which represent only three of many like scriptures that permeate the New Testament. They remind us that as a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Lord measures our confessed love for him in terms of action; not words. This is not to say that our salvation is dependent on our works (Eph. 2:8,9), or that the Lord loves us less on the basis of our deeds; but God's Love can only be rightly understood as a verb (John 3:16 or 1John 3:16). And it must be expressed back to Him and our neighbors likewise.

So what is my point? It's that Jesus is an activist; and that he calls us to be active. He was and is a God-Man of action; constantly on the move. And we as His disciples also are all called to be doers of the Word and not just hearers only (James 1:22-25).

Now put down your Bible and listen up. Hypana Convalescent Hospital, located less than a mile from Millbrook Presbyterian Church, has no Sunday Christian Worship services. As the body of Christ, we cannot allow this situation to stand. So, I am asking those with a passion for the Gospel commission and who are motivated by the Holy Spirit to step forward in faith, to minister to "the least of these", our bothers/sisters at Hypana. Pray, seek, ask; and then come talk to me or Kris if you have heard this calling on your life.

For several years now, Kris and I have been conducting a Sunday Christian Worship service twice per month at Hylond Convalescent Hospital, right down the street from MPC. We have been compelled by God's Spirit to present the Gospel of Christ to those still in darkness, and to minister to the Lord's resident saints who are in prison there; yes, I said prison. Nobody wants to be stuck there, and for most it's a life sentence. Yet these dear saints are still part of our church community; yes I said OUR church community; they are our neighbors. And Kris and I are overwhelmed by a sense of the Lord's presence and pleasure every moment we spend there. Even though jars of clay, we still represent Christ to "the least of these" at Hylond in a very practical way, through loving them enough to be there with a message of hope.

Do you think I am being too convicting, harsh, or simply touting my own agenda? Now pick up your Bible again and read Matthew 25:31-46. I am personally struck to the heart by this passage every time I read it, as it appears that the Lord is defining His "true church" by how his sheep responded during their lifetime, as Spirit led activists, to the needs of the helpless saints among us. This is not to say that we all need to be preachers, or teachers, or even deacons or elders for that matter, but we are commanded by Jesus to exercise those spiritual gifts that God has given; and it is certain that you have them if you are born of God (1Corinthian 12).

Allow me to close by applauding those at MPC who have long taken up the cause of the least of these, our brethren, within our neighborhood community. Our deacons have followed this calling for decades, and they know of what I speak. Others serve the least of these within New Life for Girls, AWANA, the Evangel Home, VBS, and many unseen ministry activities off our radar screen; but God sees. And recently, through the LOT ministry on Friday nights, many have become new activists for the cause of Christ in our neighborhood community.

But who exactly are "the least of these" among us you may ask? I will write about this next month. Until then, as good Christian soldiers, get your boots in the battle!

Elder Tim Lockwood

Growing up there were times when I was an imitator. An imitator of Daniel Boone (I was a tomboy), Vic Morrow in Combat (the tomboy stage went on for awhile), Twiggy (that didn't work out very well), this friend, that friend. That kind of imitation is never meant to last.

I have a book bound in soft velvety green material. It was given to my aunt Elsie Hendrickson in South Berkeley, California on December 17, 1906. The title of the book is *Of The Imitation Christ* by Thomas A Kempis.

The first paragraph says, ""He that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness," saith the Lord. These are the words of Christ, by which we are taught to imitate His life and manners, if we would be truly enlightened, and be delivered from all blindness of heart. Let therefore our chief endeavor be to meditate upon the life of Jesus Christ."

The last paragraph of the book says, "If the works of God were such, as that they might be easily comprehended by human reason, they could not be justly called marvelous or unspeakable."

In between are chapter after chapter with titles that draw you into looking them up. "Of works done out of charity", "Of compunction of heart", "Of a pure mind, and a simple intention", "That grace is to be guarded by humility", "That we are to rest in God above all his gifts and benefits", "Of four things that bring great inward peace", "Of familiar friendship with Jesus"..... All are based in the word of God, they give voice to personal desires and the struggles to be pleasing to God.

Ephesians 5: 1-2 says "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God"

To be imitators of Jesus we must know him. If we want to be lasting imitators of Jesus we must know him.

Jane Serber

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