

THE Messenger



Pastor's Pen

Take and Eat

Recently, while at the *Together for the Gospel* conference, I was reminded of a remarkable aspect of redemption and reversal accomplished by our great God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is this insight, from a message by Ligon Duncan entitled “The Whole in Our Holiness,” I wish to dwell on this month.

Ligon directed our attention to events of the fall as related in Genesis chapter three. There we find the serpent tempting the woman to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—“the tree that is in the midst of the garden.” Despite the fact that the Lord God had freely given all of the trees in the garden from which the man and woman could eat save one, the serpent draws Eve’s attention to this singular prohibition. He tells her that God has jealously kept a good thing from her to her harm. He tells her that rather than dying when she eats, she will in fact become like God. Tragically she chooses to believe the serpent rather than the Lord who made her, and we read the dreadful words “She took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate” (Gen 3:6). She and her husband took and ate, and in this ‘taking’ and ‘eating’ untold misery, pain, and suffering were unleashed upon the world. Now, for the first time, death entered God’s good creation. Worse yet, in this one act all of mankind became the enemy of God, a

willful rebel, guilty of cosmic treason, and abiding under His just wrath (Eph 2:3).

Amazingly the Lord God responded to their treachery with grace. Yes, Adam and Eve would die, but not for many years. They and the earth itself would suffer a dreadful curse, yet even in the act of pronouncing this curse the Lord foreshadowed His coming plan of redemption. He promised the woman that one day her offspring would crush the serpent under His foot (Gen 3:15). And so humanity began to look for a coming one from the Lord. And as all creation groaned, and death reigned through Adam (Rom 5:17) the world waited for the one who would come and make all things right.

God kept His word, and at the right time He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus, into the world (John 17:18) to take on flesh and live among us. This “last Adam” (1 Cor 15:45) would succeed and triumph in all the places where the first Adam failed. He would persevere under temptation from the devil and prove utterly obedient to the Father (Luke 4:1-13). He would bear in His body the curse of our sin on the cross and die on our behalf, that in Him we might live (Gal 3:13).

And He has done more than this! Consider the meal by which Jesus’ disciples would commemorate His death. The apostle Paul describes the institution of the

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May 2018

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Martensdale
COMMUNITY CHURCH

P. O. Box 200
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Senior Pastor: Jeremy Kidder
Associate Pastor: Daniel Moore

Sunday Service: 9:00 A.M.
Sunday School &
Adult Bible Fellowship: 10:30 A.M.

May Birthdays

2	Shari Ellis	27	Oliver Mancuso
	Emmalyn Willey	28	Jacob Hopper
3	Bonnie Moyer	29	Stacy Moore
	Breanna Sammons		Bria Sweet
	Seth McVay	30	Andy Doss*
	Dania Miller		
4	Christina Meyer		
	Amanda Septer		
5	Kori Vos		
	Merril Tuttle		
	Dax Frazer*		
6	Isaac Greene		
8	Dwayne Frazier		
	Albert Ostrander		
9	Doug Johanson		
	Zadok Kidder		
	Linda Lampel		
11	Irene Wheeldon		
12	Philip Hopper		
	J. Ransom*		
13	Dave Kingery		
	Christian Ostrander		
	Lois Sweet		
14	Alaka'i Moore		
20	Johan Conradie		
	Brooklyn Kinzenbaw		
23	Barb Winters		
24	Carroll Hardy		
26	Anna Littlejohn		
	Malena Krogman		

Happy Birthday!



* Denotes MCC Supported Missionary

If your birthday is this month and you do not see it listed, or if your birthday is incorrect, please contact the church secretary.

Important May Dates

Awana Workers and Spouse Steak Fry	Wednesday, May 2
Coffee House	Friday, May 4
Ladies Afternoon Tea on the Lawn	Saturday, May 12
Mothers' Day	Sunday, May 13
New-attender Luncheon	Sunday, May 20
Memorial Day.....	Monday, May 28

R.O.M.E.O. (Retired Old Men Eating Out)

May 17, 9:00 A.M.

R.O.M.E.O. meets the third Thursday of each month at 9:00 A.M. at *The Social Station* in Prole. Any retired man of MCC who enjoys a good breakfast and good fellowship and camaraderie is invited.

If you are not an "old guy" over 50, or not retired and want to attend



anyway, feel free to do so. However, be advised that this is an informal get together of "old men," there is no agenda, and probably nothing will get accomplished!

Contact Wendell Starmer for more information.

Pastor's Pen (continued from page 1)

Lord's Supper in this way:

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Jesus took, and Jesus ate, and now He bids us do as well. Our great God and Savior has taken the very acts that produced the need for our salvation and caused them to become permanent parts of the sign of our redemption. Bible commentator Derrick Kidner speaks of this amazing reality in this way: "So simple an act, so hard its undoing. God will taste poverty and death before 'Take and eat' become verbs of salvation."

How wonderful and complete is the salvation that He has wrought! How great is our God!

Pastor Jeremy

Commander's Corner

April has come and gone. It seems as if it was just yesterday we were talking about all the exciting things on the schedule for the last month of the 2017-2018 Awana year. April was to be *filled*—and indeed, it was: two Camp nights, Week #2 – No Cooking for You, Awards Night, and finally the annual Leaders Steak Fry!

All that is left for this year of Awana is to review the suggestions for improvement made by leaders and helpers, and reflect on how the year went. From that, we can start planning and arranging next year—*wow*, where did this one go!

Our Camp nights were terrific, as usual. Camp Appanoose was our first camp night. Pastor Pat Amsden came along with the Stufflebeems who are taking the lead this year on marketing, promotion, and coordination of the many camp functions. They performed a skit and gave a slide presentation, showing all the exciting things that they do at camp. They also offered fresh-baked cookies at the end of the night for all clubbers and any leaders so inclined to increase their caloric intake

at 8:00 in the evening! If you didn't already know, MCC is in its third year of partnering with Camp Appanoose in counselor training.

I will have one more Commander's Corner for this year, in the June *Messenger*, to wrap up our season. Then I will take a couple of months off for a summer break. In the midst of the hubbub of wrapping up this year of Awana, I cannot help but be so thankful for all the help and support contributed by the directors, leaders and volunteers that help to make this program such a success. Of course, the success of this ministry is solely due to the blessings of our Lord Jesus, but He has ordained human agency to be a key part in His salvation plan. Therefore, it is our honor to help in a small way, sharing His word and partaking in His work in our little country church right here in Martensdale, Iowa. Bless His holy Name!

*For Christ and His Kingdom,
Commander Jeff*

Awana

Youth

May Youth Activities

Wednesday, May 2	6:30 P.M.	JH Youth Group
Friday, May 4	5:00 P.M.	CoffeeHouse
Sunday, May 6	6:00 P.M.	HS Youth Group
Wednesday, May 9	6:30 P.M.	JH Youth Group
Sunday, May 13	6:00 P.M.	HS Youth Group
Wednesday, May 16	6:30 P.M.	JH Youth Group
Sunday, May 20	6:00 P.M.	HS Youth Group
Wednesday, May 23	5:00 P.M.	Final JH YG @ Windflower
Sunday, May 27	6:00 P.M.	HS Youth Group

Youth Formal Dinner

On Friday, March 23, we held our third Youth Formal Dinner. Fifteen youth were present (at table), and over forty adults (working and serving). The dinner included six courses, and took place over three hours, with no other activities than eating and conversing—not your typical Friday night lineup for a room full of teenagers. So, what’s the point? Why put so much work into a single evening? Let me suggest six biblical principles which are the foundation for our Youth Formal. As you read, consider how these same principles might play out in your own life.



1. Every human being has been created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27; 9:6). The weight and glory of that statement is felt at a formal dinner in a way it is not felt at a fast food restaurant. A formal setting helps us take one another as seriously as we should.

2. Common customs and values in our culture should be learned and appreciated (2 Corinthians 8:21; Philippians 4:8). Using the correct fork, keeping your elbows off the table, and holding the door for a woman are not matters of biblical morality, but they do have significance in our culture. A formal meal helps young men and women learn and appreciate these customs.

3. Looking out for the interests of others is an essential aspect of life in the body (Philippians 2:3-4). It is too easy for the youth (or any of us!) to group up and talk with only those people who are like us and share common interests. The formal nudges the youth to talk with people different than themselves, and consider what is important to others and not just themselves.

4. Evangelizing the nations requires the courage to face things that are new and unfamiliar (Acts 10:9-16; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Philip-

pian 1:21). Exposing the youth to unfamiliar foods has more to do with global missions than culinary maturity. Sticking with what we know and are comfortable with is necessarily prohibitive in foreign ministry. Learning to try new foods and appreciate them is a small but significant step in preparing for cross-cultural missions.

5. Delicious and diverse food cultivates gratitude for the manifold blessing of God’s creation (Gen 2:9, 16). The Lord could have given us a single form of food, but the thousands of unique combinations of textures, tastes, sights, and smells point to the multifaceted splendor of our Creator. The variation and quality of food at the Formal is designed to increase appreciation for God’s creativity.

6. The diversity of the local church displays the wisdom and glory of God (1 Corinthians 12:4-26). Some decorated, some designed, some served, some ate, some played, some cooked, some baked, some led, some cleaned, some washed. The individual members of the body worked in orchestration and unity toward a single aim, and that puts God’s wisdom on display.

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Youth Formal Dinner (continued from page 5)



Remembering Don Phillips

My mind and heart are filled with thoughts of my best friend of sixty-seven years—Don Phillips, who recently (January 31) went to be with his Savior Jesus Christ at the age of eighty-four.

We met when I was fifteen and he eighteen. Don was working at PDM Steel, waiting to head out with the army in Ft. Riley, Kansas. He had just lost his father and his mother two years earlier. After he finished Basic Training, he came home to Des Moines and we were married—just a couple of orphaned kids who had a lot to learn without much help. Over the next few years we had four children. Don was a good dad to his three boys and one girl, and a good husband; he kept busy with work and semi-pro baseball. But we both realized there was something missing in our lives, and in 1974 we found out what (or Who!) it was, through a pastor in New Orleans.

Mike, our eighteen-year-old son had gone there to find his friend's sister, whom they found at the pastor's home. He and his wife shared the gospel very clearly with Mike, and he put his trust in Jesus Christ. Mike came home from that trip and Don and I were both amazed at what had happened to him. We had many questions for him, and when Mike told us that we could have a "new life" in Christ, we were very excited. In a few weeks we both trusted Christ Jesus as our Savior

to forgive our sins. I am very thankful to the Lord that we both got saved about the same time.

Well, our lives were turned right side up. Christ changed us as we studied God's word and attended church at MCC. And as our pastor, Joel Andrus, taught through the book of John, we both realized God was calling us into overseas missions.

No matter what Don was doing, building our own homes or helping someone else, he never missed church services, prayer meetings or Bible studies. I admired him and am very thankful for his example of never giving up. He was a kind man, and humble. He never took credit for a building project, no matter how small or large, from a little office in Zaire to a whole compound in Davao, Philippines. He gave God the glory for it all. He really took good care of me, as it was not easy flying all over the world when we are really home bodies. Everyone, nationals as well as other missionaries, respected him. Don worked overseas until he was around 78. It was hard for him the last few years of his life because he really wanted to continue working for Bible Translation.

I am so thankful that Don is with our Savior, and I am looking forward to seeing him again when I get there!

Connie Phillips



a wretched condition

Reflections

IT HAS LONG BEEN MY LAMENT that God in His wisdom did not include ascension and resurrection along with salvation, that in the moment that we are regenerated, converted from a being of solely flesh to a spiritual being residing in flesh, He would also lift us from this earth and into His literal, heavenly presence.

Oh, how much easier and pleasant life would be if that were the case. To not be limited in our worship to imagining His throne, but to bow down in worship before His *actual* throne. To rejoice with the redeemed in a new and perfect body void of any and all disease, injury, weakness. To never again feel the dull ache of loss, the sting of regret, the debilitating shame of sin.

But in His sovereign wisdom, for His perfect reasons, God has determined that regeneration does not immediately open the portal to heaven, but grants instead to the individual believer the *promise* of heaven. That day will indeed come, but for most of us not right away. There will be assigned to us many days, many more years upon this earth. For the one who comes to Christ as a youngster this will probably mean many decades of spiritual life in constant struggle against the Siren song but leaden weight of the flesh.



The apostle Paul paints an alarmingly familiar picture of what life is like, left in this bifurcated condition.

For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

It can be a jarring revelation for the new Christian to hear the venerable author of much of the New Testament declare so honestly—and note the verb tense throughout this passage—that even as a disciple of Christ Jesus he remains “of flesh.” Because of this, because of the heritage of Adam in Eden, this flesh is “sold into bondage to sin.”

This is how we are born. It is the legacy, to this day, of Adam’s rebellion against a holy God.

The earth mourns and withers, the world fades and withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away. The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes,

broke the everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.

Isaiah 24:4-6

Pay no heed to a society that declares in its ignorance, or calculating deceit, that we are born innocent, pure, righteous. It is a lie from the tormented bowels of hell. We are born with the blood of our father Adam—his rebellion, his lying, his anger. Need proof? Go live with a teenager who has been raised with no parental guidance or discipline. Absent any instruction for good, which way does he go on his own? What is his natural inclination? That young man will be, at the least, self-centered and self-absorbed. He will want everything *his* way, and if things do not go his way, he will blame everyone but himself.

Just like his forbear Adam.

Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” [Adam] said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.” And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.”

Genesis 3:9-12



The pull of our fallen flesh is insidious and persistent.

For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.

Is there any Christian in the world who has not experienced this frustration voiced—either for himself, or as “every man”—by the apostle Paul? In our heart and soul, in our mind we *want* to do good, to *be* good, to live righteously. But then that desire is not always evidenced in our behavior. We

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do not *want* to sin, but then we do. We want to live obediently to our Lord and Savior, but then we do not.

Paul's conclusion was that this sorry state of affairs was because sin still had a home inside him—in fact, in him there was *nothing* that was good.

So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

How does he know this? How is he able to draw this conclusion? Ironically, he identifies the presence of sin in his flesh by means of the auspices of God's indwelling Holy Spirit! Just as the Mosaic Law, given by God Himself, defined and revealed sin, it is the Spirit—again, given by God—who informs us of our fleshly condition, testifying to the absence of any righteousness in our natural selves.

Beyond that, the apostle knows it in the same way we know: experientially. We live with this agonizing, maddening situation day in and day out.

For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law

in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

We *know* we are redeemed. We *know* that in Christ we are justified before a holy God. But still we sin against Him. It is enough to drive one mad! We hear our mind and our spirit crying out with the tormented Luther, "Oh, my sin! My sin! My sin!" We yearn, we plead for holiness, but time and again our flesh, with its base desires, seems always to prevail.

Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

This is our condition at times: wretched. There are days we feel almost *entombed* by our flesh. There are days, ironically often immediately after a spiritual high, when it feels as if that "roaring lion," Satan, has sniffed out our godly ecstasy and come to devour it, to eradicate it, to squash it like a bug. That old serpent cannot permit the righteous fruit of the Spirit to stand, so he pulls out every trick from his voodoo bag to squelch it. And suddenly our rejoicing is turned to despair as we are overwhelmed with doubts and temptations.

It can feel like death.
Spiritual death.

But we are *not* dead. The Spirit is *not* dead to us. We have *not* lost faith, but our faith has been momentarily overwhelmed by the base desires of our flesh.

This is not the same as the contrast between the regenerate and unregenerate; it is not the same as the difference between the saved and unsaved. The unregenerate do not feel the anguish of sin, for it is their natural, customary condition. To the unsaved and uncalled, sin feels right. Only those in possession of the Holy Spirit feel the anguish from sinning against a holy God.



So then, what is the answer to this maddening conflict?

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Romans 7:14-18, 21-25 NASB

The answer begins, not surprisingly, with Christ, and accepting the fact that this conflict will persist, in varying degrees, until the day we meet Jesus face to face. It begins not just with the future *hope* we have in Christ, the promise of a glorified eternal life with Him, but with the promise we have in Him in the here and now. ◆

It is reported that near Tarsus, where Saul was born, a tribe of people lived who inflicted a most terrible penalty upon a murderer. They fastened the body of the victim to that of the killer, tying shoulder to shoulder, back to back, thigh to thigh, arm to arm, and then drove the murderer from the community. So tight were the bonds that he could not free himself, and after a few days the death in the body communicated itself to the living flesh of the murderer. As he stalked the land, there was none to help him. He had only the frightful prospect of gangrenous death. He could well cry in horror, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Donald Grey Barnhouse

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