

sbc family news

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Joining Together

“No man is an island.” That may be a well known statement, but it sure feels like we need it sometimes. It seems like we are in this thing all by ourselves. Does anyone really care what’s going on in our lives or what heartaches we may be facing? Why is it that it feels so lonely in the church? The scriptures present a picture of a community of believers that shouldn’t feel this way. We are supposed to be a “family” joined together by the Divine power of God.

When we first came to Christ the Holy Spirit baptized us into this “one” body. He established us into a unity of body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, and God (Ephesians 4:4-6). Yet there are members of this family that still feel isolated and all alone in their own battles. If we all have the same hope, then why can’t we encourage one another in these times of discouragement? Maybe we just don’t get involved with each other as we ought?

God wants us to work together in the great cause called the Church in order to bring glory to our One God.

As we pore through the scriptures, we are impressed with the continuous reminders that we “serve” together. We are fellow servants, not lone rangers. God wants us to find a way to serve Him together and find strength and encouragement to fulfill the task before us in this service. We are to join hands with those next to us, and even with those in foreign fields. The work of God cannot be done alone. Whether you are called a fellow servant, laborer, or worker, it all means the same thing, we work together.

Think of the Apostle Paul’s words to the Philippians, “Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.” They were working together to spread the gospel to the world. If we don’t join with one another in this journey, we are doomed to feel alone and abandoned. I challenge you to find a companion to serve with.

How can we hope to grow into the mature believers we ought to be, unless we seek out fellow disciples to edify us? We need the entire body to understand what God intended for us. The process of growth demands a collection of edifiers. We find ourselves isolated at times because we haven’t developed relationships that edify. Find a fellow disciple and walk with him/her through the paths of joy and sorrow. I am reminded of Thomas’ words to his fellow disciples when Jesus left for Jerusalem, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.” We need each other to face the challenges of the enemy.

It is no wonder that we feel alone when we don’t get together. We opt out of times of fellowship. I once heard someone say we had better get used to spending time to-



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Special Missions Emphasis November 23

Bruce and Laurie Schwager will be back to update us on their work to prepare for their mission in Papua New Guinea. This will be our last chance to personally give them our encouragement and blessing before they leave for PNG in January.

They shared these praise and prayer requests just a few days ago:

Praise:

- God has been able to use us to minister while we are here in NC.
- Bruce's computer orientation is complete.
- Becca is doing extremely well with her schoolwork.
- Becca's excitement to go to PNG.
- Our flight arrangements have been made.

Prayer:

- That JAARS would find a place for Bruce to plug in now that his orientation is complete.
- Continued physical, emotional and spiritual preparation to go to PNG.
- That God would help us continue to minister to others here at JAARS.
- That we would get everything finished that we need to do before we leave.



(Continued on page 2)

Women's Ministry News

Mom and Teen Daughter Retreat

A wonderful day was shared by all of the Moms and their teen daughters who attended this one day retreat. The decorations were beautiful, the music inspiring, the messages and testimonies challenging. Food was provided by the women of our church who had already raised their own teen daughters. It was bountiful and delicious!

Throughout the day "object lessons" were presented to go along with each session. Everyone received a package full of fun items to help them remember the lesson taught. At the end of the day, mothers and their daughters were given time alone with each other to review each object and make commitments to each other and to the Lord. There were:

- red and white roses exchanged - commitments to purity and forgiveness;
- clay pots to be broken - commitment to no longer worship this earthen clay, but to worship God our creator;
- tea lights to remind us to always let God's glory shine through our lives;
- and the Wordless Book to help Moms to explain to their daughters what a commitment to Jesus Christ is all about.

The day ended at Sandy Boe's for pizza, a movie, and lots of girl giggles and fun - Moms included! Through much laughter and tears, our Moms and our daughters were provided an opportunity to grow closer together and closer to the Lord. Our women's ministry team was pretty sure the Moms would love the day, but proof of its success was when the teen girls were coming up to us begging that we make sure that we do it again! The enthusiasm of our teen girls convinced us, we will definitely be making this a yearly event.

Women's LeTourneau Retreat: November 14 and 15

Back by popular request! What a great time we had the last time we visited LeTourneau Conference Center. Remember the great food! The fun, the laughter; the food! You won't want to miss the opportunity to attend this wonderful retreat. \$80.00 provides you with a night away from cooking, three all-you-can-eat scrumptious meals that you don't have to cook; spiritual refreshment with plenty of time left over for just plain relaxation and fellowship. It doesn't get any better than this!

This year our spiritual emphasis will be presented on DVDs. We will be taught by Tara Klena Barthel from the Peacemaking Ministries. You will receive a beautiful 107-page study guide (included in the price of attending) filled with biblical insights that will bless your heart long after the retreat. The subject is "Living the Gospel in Relationships". I've already viewed the DVDs. They were fantastic!

Many women think they are alone in their struggles to live the Christian life. They have a constant sense of "not being good enough." There is no peace in their lives. And they are surrounded by broken relationships. In this video series, *Living the Gospel in Relationships*, Tara Barthel brings the hope of the Gospel to these issues of the heart.

Pick up a registration form today at the Women's Ministry Table or call Sharon Balentine in the church office to let us know that you are planning to attend.

— Sharon Balentine

Membership News

Please welcome Ron and Lori Lyon, the newest members to our Spencerport Bible community. Actually, the Lyons have been a part of the SBC family for over eight years. While being the parents of three sons and a daughter keeps them quite busy, Ron is also active in the Boys' Brigade program, and Lori can be found helping out in a number of activities.

Would you like to know more about membership? About baptism? Please see me or any church elder.



(Missions .. continued from page 1)

Sonia Ashe will be here as well, and she will tell us about the exciting things going on at SEND. Sonia is the director of development for SEND, and in that role she recruits staff and missionaries, coordinates training, and interfaces with major donors.

Sonia is in need of additional support. Please pray that God would continue to provide for Sonia's needs and that the missions committee have wisdom as we set next year's budget.

Does anyone have a car that Sonia could use while she is in the area from Nov 19 - Dec 1? Please let Jim Read know if you can help.

Acquisition and Disposal

LIBRARY



Ginnie Peterson

Getting books ...

From its beginning, the church library has acquired most of its books through donations, or by purchases at library and garage sales. To avoid having to dispose of too many unneeded donated books, we have a donation policy which is posted in the library or available on the library section of the church web site (under "Resource Links"). Also available online are lists of the books the library already owns, if you want to check if we already have something before donating.

... and getting rid of them ...

What is a good way to get rid of unneeded books? One option is Love Packages <www.lovepackages.org>. This ministry collects Christian books, study materials, "Our Daily Bread" booklets, Bibles, and other kinds of Christian literature for shipment overseas. Since English is fairly common in some areas of the world, these materials can be reused by people who may not be able to obtain them any other way. The Love Packages web site gives details on

what kinds of materials are accepted and guidelines for shipping to them, and will accept donations to cover the cost of the overseas shipments.

... and doing both

If you are a fan of used book sales, many public libraries in the area have at least one book sale each year (and accept donations). Keep your eye out for notices in the newspaper or for posters on bulletin boards in the community. (You can also ask me!) One of the biggest sales in the whole country is in Ithaca every May and October, and there's plenty left to choose from even on the last and cheapest days. See their website at:

<www.booksale.org>.

Books are the bees which carry the quickening pollen from one to another mind.

~ James Russell Lowell

How Firm A Foundation . . .

In September, the Lord answered several months of prayers from our family and friends when He allowed Lee and me to purchase a small house in Clarkson. We had been asking the Lord for some time for a new home that would allow us to offer greater hospitality to the youth group and church family. The Cape Cod with more space and teen-friendly yard was everything that we had hoped for, and we were excited to complete the minor updates that were needed to move in.

Our church family had been a huge blessing to us throughout the process, upholding us in prayer and helping with the expenses of purchasing and moving into the house. Several of our youth offered their help in preparing the house for the move, and it was one of them who removed the dated paneling in the basement - paneling which had been covering extensive structural damage to the foundation.



We began considering how to prop up the deflected walls until we had time and funds to fix the damage. Before we were able to do so, however, the Lord again worked through our church to provide for all the repairs to be completed. In doing so, He also allowed SBC to have a testimony of Christian love to the men from outside the church who were involved with the repairs.

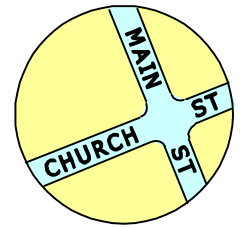
God might have allowed us to buy a house with no surprises involved. Instead, He reminded us once again to trust in His provision, not banks or markets or our own ability to make repairs. The Lord used the crumbling foundation of our house to teach us once again that the only truly firm foundation is "faith in his excellent Word". For this we are thankful.

~ Bianca and Lee Balentine



Does the Bible contradict itself?

INTERSECTIONS



Dave Peterson

My last two articles looked at cases where the Bible appears to disagree with evidence of history and of science. We saw a number of principles for dealing with such apparent discrepancies: recognize that the data is always incomplete, allow for alternative interpretations of both scriptural and external data, and don't let assumptions or biases determine your interpretation.

In particular, we saw that "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence": Belshazzar could exist though no records say so. Also, we must not jump to conclusions: Darius the Mede was not the ruler of Persia. Further, we may be making unnoticed assumptions even as we read a passage in what seems to be the only reasonable way: the Bible does not teach that the earth is at the center of the universe. Finally, we must not read Biblical language as if it were the language of modern science or history; it uses ordinary language, in which the sun "moves through the sky", regardless of whether it is actually moving!

The same sorts of things can happen when the apparent contradiction is not between the Bible and some other source, but between one scripture and another. Such internal contradictions are often cited as reasons not to believe the Bible. In many cases, however, they turn out to be powerful evidence that the Bible is just what it claims to be!

Let's imagine a courtroom scene where a young man is on trial for robbery. He testifies about what he was doing at the time of the crime. His lawyer brings in several witnesses who agree that he was not there; but there are little differences in their testimony, and it is not obvious that they fit together. We might think that the defense is lying, because their witnesses disagree. But consider the alternative. If the

witnesses came in telling exactly the same story, we would wonder if they

These variations are the mark of genuine witnesses.

had all been told what to say, and were in fact all just repeating what they had been told by the lawyer! Genuine witnesses will tell the story from different perspectives. They will not all have seen everything, nor will they think the same things are important. They will not use the same words even when they describe the same event. But these variations are the mark of genuine witnesses. Our job as judge or jury is to put the stories together into a more complete picture.

We have four "witnesses" to the life of Jesus: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Sometimes they just report different stories; often they tell the same story and agree on all the main facts (even using the same words at times, probably because they used the same sources in their research). But sometimes they give details that do not appear to fit together at all. The differences, as in our examples from history and science, do not generally concern the main teaching of a passage, which will be clear from every report, but the incidental facts: who did what, and in what order? Yet they can make readers wonder if the Bible can be trusted.

Let's look at one brief example that illustrates several useful points. Compare these three passages:

Matt 20:29-30 As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

Mark 10:46-47 Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Luke 18:35-38 As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Where did this happen? Matthew and Mark agree he was *leaving* Jericho, but Luke says they were *approaching* the city.

How many blind men were there? Mark and Luke agree that there was *one*; but Matthew says there were *two*. Only Mark gives a *name*.

What did he or they say? Mark and Luke again agree on "*Jesus*", but Matthew says "*Lord*". In Matthew, since two men are speaking, they ask for mercy "on us", not "on me".

The variation in numbers is a problem only if we read the language as if it were technically precise: saying there was "a blind man" does not mean "exactly one". Clearly Mark was focused on an individual; perhaps he knew him personally, or he was just the bolder of the two. We need to see clearly what the passage does

not say, as well as what it does say.

The variation in quotations likewise is no problem if we have reasonable expectations. Quotations in ancient records were not intended to be word-for-word and complete, but were often summaries or paraphrases of longer speeches; here it would be easy for the blind men to have called Jesus by both terms as they cried out over and over.

As for the location, I have seen several possible explanations. Perhaps there were two separate events, one before Jericho, and one on the way out. (There was a plentiful supply of blind men to be healed!) Or perhaps Bartimaeus first called out to Jesus when He was approaching, but only got His attention as He came back out (by which time another blind man had joined him).

Or what about this: maybe there were two cities called Jericho, which we might call Old Jericho and New Jericho, close enough together that an event that happened as Jesus left Old Jericho would happen as He ap-

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(Together ... continued from page 1)

gether, because we are going to spend eternity with each other. Fellowship among the house of God is supposed to be the most enjoyable feature of the church. We are joined at the hip, if you will. We have what Paul calls, "consolation in Christ ... comfort of love ... fellowship of the Spirit ... affection and mercy." Therefore we are to "fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." Find a prayer partner. Find a brother or sister who can be trusted to cry with or laugh with.

Sometimes the battle for the fellow soldier gets hard. No soldier can hope to win the battles if he tries to go it alone. In the church there is no room for the Rambo type of warfare. We need to be on guard for one another. We need to defend our brothers and sister in the war for the cause of Christ. We need to aid the soldiers who have been thrown in prison. It is true that not many in our land are thrown into prison for the cause of Christ, but many of

our fellow soldiers are imprisoned in horrible situations that need our aid just as much as the brothers in jail. Find a friend in such a case and relieve his trial with kindness and gracious acts.

When this is all over we will join the citizens of heaven. We have a joint heritage. We will share with one another the glories of heaven and eternity. Can you imagine the unbelievable experience of seeing men and women of all nations, tongues, and tribes before the throne praising our God?

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,"

It will be glorious to join that chorus! In the mean time, let's join with one another here.

Ephesians 2:19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

(Contradictions ... continued from page 4)

proached New Jericho. As contrived as that might sound, it has been found that this was true! We can't be sure this is the correct explanation, but we see that an answer is possible, even if it seems absurd at first glance.

We don't need to have a complete answer. It is the nature of truth that we will never know *all* of it, but that if we knew all, stories that seemed irreconcilable would turn out to be perfectly consistent. The *clear* fact that the gospels are independent witnesses to the truth of Jesus' great power and love overshadows our lack of certainty about unimportant details.

Our elders and pastoral staff:

- Tom Balentine  Pastor
- Dennis Burdette  Communication
(newsletter supervising editor)
- Tom Clement  Adult Christian Education
- Larry DeWolfe  Membership
- Dave Peterson  Children's Christian Education
(newsletter production editor)
- Jim Read  Missions and Evangelism
- Lee Balentine  Youth Pastor

November 2008

Spencerport Bible Church Calendar						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Morning Service 5:45 PM Clubs 6:00 PM Evening Service	3 6:30-8:00 PM Bible Institute	4 Election Day (voting at church)	5	6 7:00 PM Smith Body Life Group	7 7:00-9:00 PM Youth Group 7:30 PM Read Body Life Group	8
9 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Morning Service 5:45 PM Clubs 6:00 PM Evening Service	10 6:30-8:00 PM Bible Institute	11 7:00 PM Elders/Deacons meeting	12 7:00 PM Missions Committee meeting	13 7:00 PM Smith Body Life Group 7:00 PM Fellowship Com- mittee meeting	14 7:00-9:00 PM Youth Group 7:30 PM Read Body Life Group	15
16 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Morning Service 5:45 PM Clubs 6:00 PM Evening Service	17 6:30-8:00 PM Bible Institute	18	19 6:30-7:45 PM PG Missions Night 7:00 PM Heart to Heart	20 7:00 PM Smith Body Life Group	21 7:00-9:00 PM Youth Group 7:30 PM Read Body Life Group	22
23 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Morning Service No Clubs 6:00 PM Evening Service (Schwagers commissioning)	24 6:30-8:00 PM Bible Institute	25 7:00 PM Elders meeting	26 7:00-8:00 PM Joint Thanksgiv- ing Service (at SBC)	27	28 No youth	29
30 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Morning Service No Clubs No Evening Service						

**Women's Fall Retreat
LeTourneau Conference Ctr**