

sbc family news

• www.spencerportbiblechurch.org • volume 2 • issue 6 • sept 2008 • pastor tom balentine •

Exciting days ahead!

Fall is just around the corner, and this season is shaping up to be full of great opportunities for ministry and fellowship. It is always nice when vacations are over and all our church family is back together again. Preparations for the start of **Clubs for Kids** are in full swing. We will hold the *Kick-off* earlier this year than we have in the past. It is scheduled for Saturday, September 6th at 4:00 pm.

Families are welcome to join the Leaders around our great big bonfire with tube steaks (hot dogs) and lots of fun activities. The actual *start date* is Sunday, September 21st at 5:45 pm. Fall campouts for the Boys Brigade will come very soon. There is one planned for September 19-20 as well as the annual Father-Son at Camp Hickory Hill on October 10-11. As always, there will be seasonal activities planned for the Pioneer Girls as well as their weekly meetings. Brochures are now available! Take yours and more to pass along to family and friends.

There are presently three BLG meetings during the week. Jim Read's and Joe Morgigno's BLGs will begin on Friday, September 12th. Larry Smith's starts September 25th. Maybe you aren't very familiar with what a BLG is all about. SBC designed these small group ministries, called **Body Life Groups**, to provide a small, intimate setting for believers to fellowship around the Word of God. We encourage all our attendees to take part. In fact, there

... full of great opportunities for ministry and fellowship

will be a special *introduction* to them on Sunday evening September 7th at 6:00 PM. You will have an opportunity to sample each one to see which one you like.

The **BIOS (Bible Institute of Spencerport)** will start its second year this month with two classes offered. Tom Clement will teach *Old Testament Survey* for both semesters and Pastor Tom will teach *Bibliology* first semester and Pastor Lee will teach *Church History* the second. It was a great year last year and we are looking forward to a wonderful time of learning and encouragement. All

are welcome. Registration forms are available.

In just two short months we will be having our annual **Missions Conference** (Oct. 25-26). It is always a great time to renew our commitment to world evangelism and get updates on our missionaries. Keep your ears open for more details.

Something new will happen here in November. We are the site for voting in this district this year. **Voting machines** will be delivered and set up, and our church will be open from 6 AM to 9 PM on November 4th for the election of our



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... for youth, too

The summer was a wonderful time of challenges and refreshment as many of the youth were able to attend and serve at different camps in the area. We want to encourage each other and help hold each other accountable throughout the school year to the commitments we made during these camps, so we will be having a **praise and testimony time** on Friday, September 12th.

Many of the youth are also excited about the **Italy trip** coming up next year and are looking forward to getting ready for this wonderful opportunity. In October we will be hosting a **dinner** to raise funds for the trip. A **Christmas program**, hosted by the youth and hopefully involving the whole church, will also be given on December 21st for this purpose. Vince, and the worship team, are looking forward to lending their voices and experi-

ence to this event as they are also looking forward to continuing the **evening praise services** we began this summer. One of these services is scheduled for October.

As we begin the school year you can also be keeping in your prayers a new ministry beginning at SBC. We are hoping to kick off a **college age small group** beginning with a party on Sunday the 21st. Some of our current college students and I will be visiting Robert Wesleyan College on September 11th inviting people to attend. We have a lot planned for the fall. Please pray for this new ministry and all the ministries happening over the next few months.



Snapshots of Vacation Bible School

Pigs and People: The VBS Picture

An interesting photo mosaic puzzle was displayed in the Tasting Tent every day at VBS. While enjoying refreshments, one could glance over and a rather large face of a pig was staring right at you. Upon closer inspection, each puzzle piece had a farm animal and/or farm scene on it. The details were amazing!

Our VBS staff is like that terrific puzzle! Taking an overall view, one sees a collective group of devoted adults and teens working and sticking together for the common goal. But without the individual contributions made by everyone, VBS would not have run as smoothly.

How frustrating to labor over a puzzle and ultimately find a piece is missing from the box. What a joy, on the other hand, to satisfactorily snap the final piece in place. In a similar way, God blessed us by providing all the necessary pieces to make a complete VBS picture this year! Thank you to EVERYONE for serving!

— Mary Jane Clement, co-director and driving force

An Unexpected Blessing

Teaching in VBS this year was an unexpected blessing for me.

The Lord enabled me to set aside time for studying the lessons, and the kids were so attentive. They were excited to share examples from their lives each day as I shared about the Fruit of the Spirit. It was encouraging to see how many of the kids seemed to truly be learning from what they were very obviously being taught at home. I felt as if I was a partner with the parents in sharing the Lord with them. There were also many new faces, and it wasn't always clear what their spiritual background was, but they all listened intently. One little girl, on the first day, was leaning in toward me as I was teaching the lesson. The farmhands commented on her too—what a blessing to see such hunger for the Word of God! My farmhands were a great help and the week was, in my opinion, a fantastic success.

— Janet Collins, teacher



A First-timer's Impression

Details, details, details. When you first look at the preparations for VBS, you might say, “some decorations, kool-aid and cookies, some songs and some classes—how tough can it be to put together?”

I can tell you the details involved are endless. Coordinating the people to run the classes, usher the kids to their classes, making sure the fire doors remain closed between classes—this all takes organization. How about the food provided for the kids? You have to have food for all the kids, including the kids with specific allergies. How do you decide when to schedule classes—trying to avoid traffic jams in the halls between classes is more complicated than you may expect. Helpers to assist the teachers in classes, crafts and recreation. What do we do if it rains? What curriculum do we use?

The details involved are too many to list, but the most important aspect of VBS is introducing the children to Christ and the dedication of the people who give their time to the program—that's what these details add up to. So next year, give a day or a week of your time to help support VBS—it is a very rewarding experience.

— Henry Anderson, photographer

The Joy of Farming

A favorite moment of each morning was waiting for the stampede of excited kids heading down the “farm path”, looking for their sign to see which part of the “SonRise Acres” farm they would be in for today's Bible lesson.

That waiting to see what the day would bring is a part of the fun of teaching, just as it is part of the joy of gardening. A farmer works hard, but never knows exactly what will happen, because the decisive work is not his but God's—the miracles that happen deep down inside the soil (or child), and the sun and rain (the child's environment) on the outside that shapes what it will become.

As teachers, we try to provide the nutrients each child needs, giving them an opportunity to soak it up, each in their own way; the rest of VBS (and life) provides opportunities to interact with one another and with adults to bring those seeds to fruition. After our “planting time” was over, the teachers met briefly to share things we'd learned, then headed out to join the kids, where the “farmhands” were guiding them from site to site for fun and feeding, helping to build relationships.

Working, waiting, and watching — that's what it takes to grow kids God's way.

— Dave Peterson, co-director and teacher



What's new in the church library

LIBRARY



Ginnie Peterson

New books and videos have recently been added to the library. Here are a few descriptions. A complete list is posted on the library bulletin board.

DVDs:

- *Unlocking the Mystery of Life* - about design in biology
- *The Privileged Planet* - how the earth and universe are designed for life
- *The Case for a Creator* - scientific evidence that points to the Creator

Books:

- *Can We Trust the Gospels?* by Mark Roberts
This short and easy to understand book answers questions like these and more:
 - Can we know what the original Gospel manuscripts really said?
 - What sources did the Gospel writers use?
 - Are there contradictions in the Gospels?
 - Why do we have only four Gospels in the Bible?

- *Secret Believers* by Brother Andrew
A long time missionary to persecuted believers, the author here gives a fictionalized story of the typical situations Muslim background believers face once they become Christians. (See also the website <www.secretbelievers.org>.)
- *Love Your God with all Your Mind* by J. P. Moreland
This book advocates for the deliberate use of the intellect in our personal growth as Christians and as members of a local church. It contains specific examples, suggestions, and resource lists for helping to develop a Christian worldview in all areas of knowledge.

For Children:

- *God's Creation* series by Michael Carroll
This illustrated series of four books is for ages 6 and up.

Michelle Gerringer: Walking Humbly

Michelle Gerringer remembers as a very young girl sitting in her mother's lap in a rocking chair and listening to her pray. Just the two of them as her mom talked, it seemed, for hours to God.

It's no wonder that Michelle, now 17, credits her mother with being the greatest influence in her life. "My mother is a wonderful Bible teacher," she said. "I learned so much from her."

Michelle's goal isn't to save the world. She just wants to lead as many people to Christ as possible.

If you don't know this young lady, there is plenty to learn about her.

Michelle is the daughter of **Craig and Rebekah Gerringer**, and the granddaughter of **Cress Bloss**, who with her late husband, **Skip Gerringer**, was among a couple dozen people who founded Spencerport Bible Church in 1984.

Michelle is a recent graduate of Spencerport High School, and now is off to Nazareth College with a few scholarships in hand. She will study communication sciences and disorders "which will hopefully lead me into a career as a speech language pathologist."

In talking with Michelle, it is evident she treasures her high school experience.

"I really enjoyed getting to know people and being able to freely share my faith," she said. "I found a solid group of Christian friends in school, and our church youth group made difficulties much easier to bear, through their comfort and edification in Christ.

"Spencerport is a very community-minded school, and



SBC Family Portraits

by Frank Cardon

I found all teachers really cared about their students. I enjoyed studying under dedicated teachers who strove for your success."

Michelle's favorite high school subjects were band and AP English. She has played French horn since the fourth grade and has shared her musical talent a number of times during Sunday morning services at SBC.

But French horn wasn't her original musical choice. "Actually, I wanted to play the oboe, but my fingers were too short at the time, so my band director, Mr. Rossiter, told me that only smart kids could play French horn," Michelle said. "Naturally, I wanted to be smart so I figured that was an easy way to take care of it," she laughed.

Michelle was a standout student at Spencerport, which led to her induction into the village's Chamber of Commerce

Youth Hall of Fame. She also won the John Phillips Sousa and Integrity awards, and several scholarships.

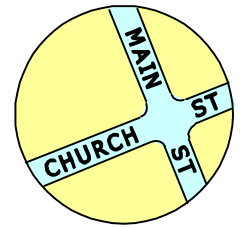
Michelle has been keeping busy this summer working two jobs. She is a pharmacy technician at Tops, billing and refilling prescriptions, counting pills, working the register and helping with inventory.

She also works with Magnetic Connections, a local jewelry company, where she beads bracelets and other magnetic jewelry, and on occasion helps sell the products at craft shows.

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Daniel vs. the history books

INTERSECTIONS



Dave Peterson

In my Sunday School class of fifth and sixth graders, we studied Old Testament history at the same time some of the students were studying ancient history in school. This was a great opportunity to help them see that the Bible “stories” they have heard all their lives are really “history”, part of the *real* story of the *real* world God created, populated by *real* people among whom God did *real* miracles. But what do you do if the history you learn disagrees with what the Bible says? We know by faith that the Bible is entirely true; but ...

Can all the history books be wrong?

The book of Daniel provides a wonderful example of how our faith in the trustworthiness of the Bible can be confirmed by historical research, side-by-side with an opportunity to exercise that same faith *without* complete confirmation.

In chapter 5, we read of King Belshazzar of Babylon, who is ruling at the time Babylon falls to the Medes and Persians. If you just read the Bible without reference to outside history, you see nothing wrong here. But if you had studied ancient history 150 years or so ago, and then read this story, you would do a double-take: the king of Babylon at that time was not Belshazzar but Nabonidus, and he wasn't even in the city at the time it was

When we allow faith and reason to meet, both benefit.

conquered. Not only that that, but there was no evidence in historical records or in the science of archaeology that anyone named Belshazzar ever even *existed*.

Was this just a made-up story?

The only way to deal with this contradiction at the time would be to exercise faith: We know for other good reasons that we can trust the Bible, and that its history is not fictional; and we know that our knowledge of history and archaeology is incomplete; so we just have to trust that the truth is hidden between the lines of history. Somehow Belshazzar *was* the king; we just haven't found the right evidence. That may seem like a weak argument (and plenty of opponents of the Bible said so); but it is perfectly valid, and sometimes that is the best we can do.

Then in 1853 an inscription written by Nabonidus was discovered that mentioned “Belshazzar, my first-born, favorite son”. So he *did* exist! That helped to support our faith in scripture; but was he ever *king*? Later, more tablets were found that showed that Nabonidus was in semi-retirement (some say he was pursuing his hobby of archaeology!), and had made Belshazzar his co-regent - meaning that although Nabonidus was still king, Belshazzar shared the throne with him and ran the day-to-day operations of government. He was indeed called king, and was in the city when it was overthrown.

Not only did this discovery answer all the challenges that had been made against this chapter, but it explained something that had not been clear previously: When Belshazzar offered to make Daniel “the third ruler in the kingdom”, it seems likely that this simply meant “first Nabonidus, then Belshazzar, and then Daniel”. The first two positions were already taken!

But now move on to the last verse of this chapter, and into chapter 6.

Here we meet **Darius the Mede**, who took over the kingdom, appointed administrators under him, and eventually was tricked into throwing Daniel to the lions. Again we have a problem. If you vaguely remember your ancient history, you may assume that this Darius was the famous Darius I of Persia. But look again: He came 18 years later! Babylon was conquered by *Cyrus* of Persia; there is no record of *any* Darius before or during his time.

The Bible must be wrong, right?

No! We know by now that we can trust that the Bible is right even when our history does not show it. We can do two things: (1) correct our understanding of the Bible based on what we really *know* from history; and (2) look for *possible* explanations in order to show that the conflict is not *proof* of an error in the Bible.

How can we correct the Bible using fallible history?

We can't - but we can correct the *misunderstandings* that many of us have when we just read the Bible and stop with our first impressions. There is no question that Cyrus came before, not after, Darius I, and that he was the ruler

of Persia at the time of the conquest; so we know that Darius the Mede in the story is *not* the ruler of all Persia, whatever our first impression might have been. We must distinguish what the Bible *says* from what we *think* it says, and be willing to change the latter.

By the way, another common misreading is found in children's versions of this story, which often depict Daniel in the lion's den as a *young* man (or cucumber). The time between Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar tells us that Daniel was 80 or 90 by this time. The Bible never says how old he is; does this fact from history change your image of the story? History can correct false impressions.

Can we offer an explanation? When we look more carefully at the Bible, we notice it does not say that Darius the Mede was ruler of *Persia*, only that he “took”, or “received”, the kingdom of *Babylon* - possibly put in charge by someone higher, namely Cyrus. So the only real problem is that the man Cyrus set over Babylon as governor was called Gobryas (or Gubaru), not Darius. Many people (like Daniel himself, called Belteshazzar) had more than one name, so perhaps this name just wasn't recorded in any inscriptions or histories. We can't *prove* that this is the correct explanation, and perhaps we will never know the whole truth; but we see that it is *possible*, which is enough to hold us for now. The final answer can wait.

Where the Bible intersects with history, we may be left with unanswerable questions due to our limited knowledge, but we will never have an outright contradiction. What we lose in simplicity by going beyond first impressions, we gain in the accuracy of our understanding of God's Word. When we allow faith and reason to meet, both benefit.

(Michelle, continued from page 3)

For many young people, that might be enough to stay busy. But Michelle also finds time for volunteer work. She has helped tutor high schoolers and adults one-on-one who are going for their General Educational Development (GED) degrees. She tutored in geometry and algebra II in high school and worked on general grammar rules and fractions with GED students.

She has participated in the Spencerport Day of Caring multiple times, and acted as an aide in a special-needs classroom learning about speech pathology. "I also worked as a counselor at Camp Hickory Hill for the past two summers," she said.

"Michelle is a jewel," said Sandy Boe, who worked with her in Pioneer Girls days. "I've been blessed to have shared stolen time with her. Michelle is one incredibly busy girl and a beautiful young lady, but I can say her most becoming feature is her love for her God. That's the sparkle in her eye. She's definitely Becky's daughter. God is surely gracious."

Last summer Michelle took a 10-day missions trip to Romania through the Word of Life's Youth Reachout Program.

How did she pay for it?

"After much prayer trying to discern God's will about my going," she said, "I sent out letters to my relatives and church family asking for prayer and donations if the Lord led them in that way. I was very moved at the support I received. The Lord provided everything I needed."

The Romania experience has left lasting memories.

"When we got off of the plane and found our bags, we had to take a long walk with our luggage to find our bus," she said. "And we were all looking around and then we saw this little off-white bus with dark crimson curtains that looked more like a trolley than a bus. We walked on and found this dark red Egyptian carpet everywhere and we fondly named our little bus the 'gypsy bus' for the rest of the trip."

Michelle said her team stayed in the capital city of Bucharest for six of the 10 days, passing out tracts, holding programs in local churches and orphanages, and even some in the open marketplace.

"Each time, we did a program of singing, group skits

that portrayed Christ's sacrifice, and personal testimony," she said. "At that point the group leader gave a gospel message and then we went into the crowd and, using translators, spoke individually with all those who had watched our performance. For the last few days we went to a Word of Life camp in the Carpathian Mountains called Camp Hope and ministered to the counselors and campers."

What did she like most about that experience?

"I think the most important thing I realized on my trip was the true significance of the Word of God," Michelle said. "So many times speaking with someone was so difficult due to translation, but being able to quote verses and look them up in a Romanian Bible and have the other person read God's words for themselves was always clear and sure."

"I realized how much value is found in knowing the Bible and memorizing verses. I also realized just how many people in the world are wandering lost without a savior, and we all hold the simple answer to all of their problems. It shames me how little I share the gospel considering the eternal value it holds, and the longer I stayed in Romania, the more I was convinced of this fact."

What does she like most about Spencerport Bible Church?

"I enjoy the emphasis put on discovering truth that our church upholds," Michelle said. "We are committed to discovering what the Bible truly means, not just hearing what others say about it. And that is a lifestyle and an attitude toward the Bible that I greatly appreciate understanding while I'm young."

And now she intends "to follow God's leading in whichever direction He points."

Her favorite Bible verse is Micah 6:8:

*"He has showed you, O man, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with God."*

Michelle said this verse stands as a command and a challenge for her own life.

"To act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God are all things that exemplify the life of Christ," she said, "And I desire to follow these instructions."






(Fall ... continued from page 1)

next president as well as other offices. We feel honored to be able to provide our facility for this important day.

One of the highlights for 2007 was our joint Thanksgiving service with Clarkson Community Church and Evangelical Church of Fairport. We will again have the meeting here, but Clarkson will act as the host church and Fairport will provide the music. I will be preaching this time around. It was such a blessing for the three churches of like faith to meet together last year and we so look forward to this year. It will be November 26th at 7:00 PM.

A lot is planned for the next few months. Mark your calendars and jump right in.

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

September 2008

Spencerport Bible Church Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6 4:00-6:30 PM Clubs for Kids Kickoff
7 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Morning Service 6:00 PM Body Life Group Kickoff	8	9 7:00 PM Elder/deacon meeting	10 7:00 PM Missions Committee meeting	11 7:00 PM Fellowship Com- mittee meeting	12 7:00-9:00 PM Youth Group 7:00 PM Morgigno Body Life Group 7:30 PM Read Body Life Group	13
14 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Morning Service 6:00 PM Quarterly meeting	15 6:30-8:00 PM Bible Institute	16 7:00 PM High School Bible Study	17 9:30 AM Ladies' Bible Study	18	19 7:00-9:00 PM Youth Group 7:30 PM Read Body Life Group	20
21 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Morning Service 5:45-7:15 PM Clubs start 6:00 PM Evening Service	22 6:30-8:00 PM Bible Institute	23 7:00 PM Elders meeting	24 9:30 AM Ladies' Bible Study 7:00 PM Heart to Heart	25 7:00 PM Smith Body Life Group	26 7:00-9:00 PM Youth Group 7:00 PM Morgigno Body Life Group 7:30 PM Read Body Life Group	27
28 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Morning Service 5:45 PM Clubs 6:00 PM Evening Service	29 6:30-8:00 PM Bible Institute	30 7:00 PM High School Bible Study				

Boys Brigade Campout