

S U M M E R 2 0 1 0

Lifelong

Significance

A Ministry Partner Publication of  CASA Network



God speaks. We listen.

“I don't claim anything of the work. It is his work. I am like a little pencil in his hand. That is all. He does the thinking. He does the writing. The pencil has nothing to do with it.”

—Mother Theresa

O Lord, what is man that you care for him, the son of man that you think of him?

—Psalm 144:3

“God sent three adults and two children there after the flood just to hear and see God's love in action.”



Survivor — Mexico

By Jackie Tharpe

WHAT HAPPENS when God turns your world upside down? When the things you've planned are upended. Twenty-one members of our church family who had driven to the orphanage in Rancho Santa Marta for a week of service found themselves unexpectedly thrust into the unknown when rain came down in torrents and washed out a bridge, their only link to the outside world.

Jane Ronsee had "never seen water rush like that. Immediately the small gully that separated the compound from the orchards became a ten-foot wide, six-foot deep raging torrent of water.

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“Better Together!”

Directors Bill and Kay Lawrence

The couple was invited to the Ranch. Their motor home was towed there and parked.

Life went on. Everyone kept busy repairing roofs, sheetrock, leaks. The women cleaned dorms, washed curtains, sorted material. The Canadian couple soon became family as everyone embraced them. They joined in the repairs, blending in with the community. Their four-year old son's blond hair and blue eyes were a fascination to the dark-haired Mexican children. They included him in all their games. Everyone stayed busy and happy.

When the couple spoke of "fate" bringing them together, they were told it wasn't fate; it was God. Even though they weren't believers, the husband seemed especially hungry for Christian fellowship, sharing food, listening to the devotions, praying over meals, playing games in the evening, going to church on Sunday.

When it became clear that everyone would be returning to Modesto on Tuesday, they decided to have a bonfire Monday evening with singing and sharing. During that time, a photojournalist riding through on his motorcycle pulled into the Ranch

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Roofs were damaged; one kitchen ceiling came crashing down." The floodgates of heaven were opened. Baja's yearly average rainfall fell at once. Work was suspended; the group waited.

When the rain ceased, it was clear: the bridge home was washed out. Thoughts started to wrap themselves around the possibility of being stranded for another week or two. Stunned silence, obligations stateside waiting for their return began to crowd in on them. Then one by one peace overtook them. Ross and Judi Paterson spoke of the peace that pervaded the group as they realized "they had each other, they were safe. God would take care of the details. He was not caught by surprise even if they were. There wasn't anything they could do to fix the situation. God had a reason for this. They could relax. It was a relief to get to see how God would work things out."

The next day a couple of the people went into San Vicente to buy some food. Everything, except the grocery store, was closed. Mud was everywhere. Parking the car, they walked to the bridge to assess the damage. That is when a Canadian couple approached them. They were stranded. Their motor was ruined from water intake trying to cross the swollen river. They had two small children. "Are you stranded too?" they asked. "Where are you staying?" Their immobilized motor home in a parking lot surrounded by mud and chickens was not in a safe area.

*First Baptist Church Modesto team members*

"'fate' bringing them together"

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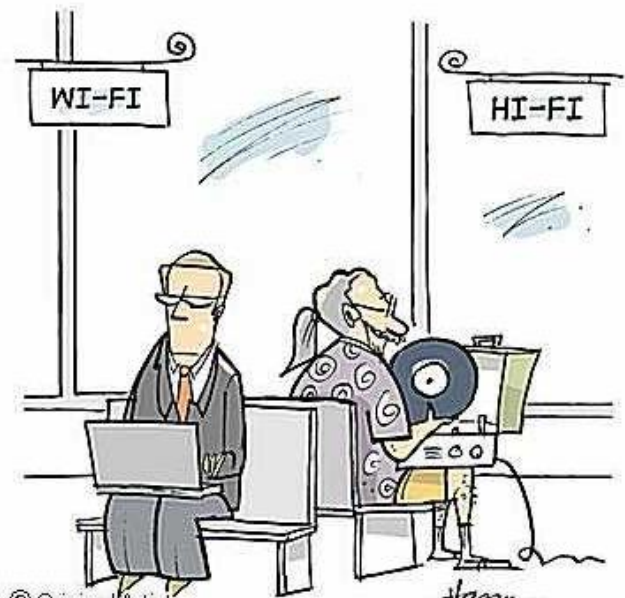
seeking a place to spend the night. He, too, joined the bonfire, taking pictures, enjoying the camaraderie. He thought it was funny that he was with a group of Christians because he wasn't a religious man but he seemed to enjoy the fellowship. He left the next morning, but not before he was given "The Daily Bread" to take with him. He was genuinely pleased because, by his own admission, he had only brought a journal along but nothing to read. And then he was gone.

Before leaving, each person wrote a short note about what this trip meant to him or her. Names were not signed but heart-felt thoughts were given. Some suggested if they had to repair, while the group was able to get it all done before they left. Others were more "grateful for what we have, almost feeling selfish for possessing so much by comparison to the people at the orphanage." Many were "thankful to be living in close community with others committed to following the Holy Spirit's leading," and for God showing them "perspective is everything." One person summed it up, saying, "I will forever be changed. I have new eyes to look closer, new ears to listen for a need and a new heart and desire to walk closer with God."

Early the next morning, before leaving, the group prayed for the Canadian couple and their children. They would be stranded at Rancho Santa Marta for another week or two until a new motor arrived for their motor home. One member of the group gave him his personal Bible before leaving.

The events of this trip not only showed that God is always in control, taking care of His children and

providing their needs, but more importantly, how far God will go to rescue the perishing. Debbie Hawn noted, "God sent three adults and two children there after the flood just to hear and see God's love in action." Perhaps the Canadian father says it all when he wrote, "Meeting strangers in the street. It turned out to be the saving grace for our family. The generosity and friendship was extremely good and needed. Thanks to God for all you have done."



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In Search of Wisdom . . .

Leona Bergstrom

Co-Director, Converge Worldwide 2nd 1/2 for Him

"Wisdom doesn't necessarily come with age. Sometimes age just shows up by itself."

I've said it many times: Midlife and older people should be involved in all areas of ministry in the church because it needs their wisdom.

While it is true we yearn for sage insights, wisdom doesn't come automatically with the passing of years alone. American comedian Tom Wilson is quoted as saying, "Wisdom doesn't necessarily come with age. Sometimes age just shows up by itself."

Almost synonymous with the word "wisdom" is the name Solomon. After all, he was not only a great king who governed his people with integrity and renowned good judgment; he was an esteemed philosopher, writer and teacher. Scholars widely agree that many of the words recorded in the Book of Proverbs are those of a reflective statesman and father writing counsel to the next generations. "My Son," is often the

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His father, the great King David, who through his years had lived in the finest of palaces but also in the darkest of caves. His poetry, psalms and songs reflected a level of introspection rare in most of our personal experience. Solomon must have thought long and hard about this heritage, even as he examined life around him. His confidence that God could be trusted was seared by his own disconnect between faith and reality. His personal wrestling match with knowledge, experience, faith and life are public record in Ecclesiastes. Some of his conclusions are rather dire and almost depressing, but his quest for wisdom will forever be inspiring.

The final statements in Ecclesiastes say of the writer, "He pondered and searched out... and what he wrote was upright and true." A final admonition? "Fear God and keep his commandments," (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Dr. Monika Ardelt, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Florida, has done extensive research in the area of wisdom and how it relates to aging. She states that wisdom is the rediscovery of the significance of old truths through a deeper and more profound understanding of events. She adds that while wise people do not necessarily learn more facts than other individuals, they comprehend the deeper meaning for themselves.

How are we, the Boomers and Beyond, doing at being

wise? Are we dispensing knowledge that has been marinated in God's wisdom found in deep contemplation and thought, or do we give advice similar to Job's counselors, whose words he describe as "tasteless food?" (Job 12:12).

Dr. Ardelt says that wisdom comes in old age from reflection, assimilating and seeking understanding. The great preacher Charles Spurgeon once said, "To know is not to be wise. To use knowledge is to have wisdom."

It is our obligation not to simply offer knowledge or advice to the next generations. It is to impart wisdom. This comes through knowing the Word of God, applying and praying it into our lives, wrestling with the dissonance, reflecting, seeking understanding and ultimately finding perspective in light of eternity.

May we be a generation that truly searches for and offers wisdom.



"Better Together"

Do you have a story to tell?

Send article to:

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