

The NEW SOUTH FOCUS



***NEWSLETTER OF
THE NEW SOUTH CONFERENCE
OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH;
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RELYING ON GOD

I've struggled all my life with being a slow reader and keeping a train of thought. In fact, my train has often been spinning in a roundhouse. I've always had to work harder than others to achieve the same result. That's okay. We all have different "thorns in the flesh." God has been so faithful, though, as this has brought on a sort of "praying without ceasing" as my day is constantly sprinkled with silent prayers like, "Father, please help me concentrate." With that background, imagine me reading 1st and 2nd Chronicles as part of my daily devotions. More than once I've felt it was simply an act of obedience. Then, something happened.

In my computer work, I was presented with a quite complex program in a very unfamiliar environment. Think of it as if you're in a foreign city, you're given directions to find an object inside a cabinet in a house on the other side of town. Those directions contain
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unfamiliar names (are they street names, businesses, parks?). To complicate matters, you don't speak the language and some of the directions are wrong. Today was especially sprinkled with silent prayers. But let's go back to 2nd Chronicles.

I had been reading about how this king of Judah sought the Lord and that one didn't. How the one who did was rewarded and the one who didn't was punished. I was confounded by how King Asa sought the Lord, was delivered from a vast army, but later when faced by another attacking army relied on making a treaty with another kingdom instead of relying on God. I read how the pattern repeated with King Jehoshaphat and I asked myself (as we often seem to do when faced with other folks' shortcomings), "Why can't they see how if they just rely on God at the most basic level, He will be faithful?" That particular morning, I bookmarked the end of 2nd Chronicles 20 and got ready for work.

A few days into trying to figure out this particular program bug, I was especially frustrated and had finally reached the point of giving up when I prayed, "Lord, I have no ability to do this. I've been asking you to help me figure this out, but that's not happening. Would you please just show me the answer?" After more than 30 years in the computer field, it had never occurred to me that God knows how to program a computer. Of course, He knows everything, but it had never before even crossed my mind. It did today, though, as I said, "Amen," looked up at my screen and saw the answer as clear as day. It took less than 5 minutes and the problem was fixed. Just as amazing to me was how God had just spoken to me through 2nd Chronicles 20:15b, "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's."

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Whatever the battle, God expects us to do our part. However, He doesn't expect us to do His part. And, here's the clinker: He is the One who decides which is our part and which is His. I pray I will remember that next time and rely on the Lord again instead of relying on "making my own treaties."

--Brian Nowitzki

e-Pastor

Wilmore Free Methodist Church

From the Superintendent:
Calendar/Upcoming Events

- November __: MEG South meeting -
Scottsville(?)
- December 11-14: Daryl at Superintendents'
Retreat
- February __: Strategy Day
- February 7: FM History and Polity class
begins
- March 20: District Leaders – Wilmore,
2:00 – 5:00 p.m.
- March 20: BOA – Wilmore,
6:00 – 10:00 p.m.
- March 21: MEG/MAC – Wilmore,
8:00 a.m. - noon
- May 29-30: New South Annual Conference,
Oakdale Christian Academy
- June 15-20: NSC Teen Camp
- June 11-14: NSC Family Camp
- June 22-26: NSC Kids' Camp
- September 23-25 New Room Conference,
Nashville, TN

Vacation Reflections

In October, thanks in part to the generosity of our son, Evan, Timothy and I were privileged to take a once-in-a-lifetime cruise from Amsterdam to Rome via Belgium, France, England, Portugal, Gibraltar, and Spain. There were many wonderful things to see and experience, but perhaps the most memorable was a four-hour Land Rover excursion along the Jurassic Coast of southern England. We shared the experience with two other couples and our host/driver. While driving through absolutely beautiful, but barely known backways of the countryside, our host regaled us with stories and details of the world he and his father and his grandfather have called home for a lifetime. It reminds me of my own father who never lost a treasured intimacy with the valley in Pennsylvania where he grew up. It was literally part of who he was. I think most of us know little of such a reality, and this is a loss. We would do well to link our hearts and minds with the physical beauty around us that God has given.

At one point on our journey we went off-road through a farmer's field on a well-rutted finger track road, through several gates to finally arrive on the top of a grassy hill overlooking a splendid sight. Slightly below us and on an adjacent hill was a castle in ruins and then a tiny town right out of the 1800's far below. Aren't they lovely?





Later on we stopped high on a lookout point overlooking the sea. Our host offered us tea and

coffee, Queen Victoria sponge cake and “tea loaf,” which was similar to a Christmas bread. The wind was really cold and blowing hard, but the view was unforgettable. The picture at the bottom of the screen is the kind contribution of one of our traveling comrades.

My heart wells up with awe and gratitude for the beauty that surrounds me. God is so good.

For the beauty of the earth,
for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies.
For the wonder of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light,
Christ, our Lord, to you we raise
this, our hymn of grateful praise.



--Joyce Thomas