



THE *Good News* LETTER

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

[**Editor's note:** Bert Nogler continues his study of the Beatitudes, as begun in previous issues of *The Good News Letter*.]

This righteousness describes the inner condition of a follower of Jesus Christ in contrast to the characteristics of the Pharisees who were proud, thinking they had already attained righteousness. For there is no righteousness outside of the righteousness of Jesus Christ being imputed to our account and confirmed by the faithfulness of God. Psalm 24:5: "He shall receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

The whole man must be renewed in righteousness so as to become a new man and to bear the image of God. I do believe that God is looking for a new man to be fit for His Kingdom rather than an old, patched-up version. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, old things shall have passed away; behold all things have become new (2 Cor 5:17).

The happiness of heaven will certainly fill the soul; their righteousness shall be complete. For they shall be filled.

—Bert Nogler

The Mission Study Explained

The Mission Study is coming, the Mission Study is coming!

The Fort Square mission study will be coming in the next few weeks. What is a mission study, you ask, and why isn't the Missions Committee handling this process? The Mission Study is not a review of our missionaries, but rather an examination of the mission of the Fort Square Presbyterian Church.

The Mission Study is required prior to the formation of a search committee for the new permanent pastor. The information gathered during this study and the report that the committee produces is the core of the information provided to prospective candidates for the position of pastor.

The study will provide a review of the current programs of the church as well as help set a road-map for both improvement in these programs and development of new programs to enhance the ministry of Fort Square.

To accomplish this task, the Session has established a Mission Study committee to manage the process. The members of the committee are Donna Donovan,

Peggy MacLeod, Randy Nielsen, Debbie Simpson, Michele Wilbur, Danielle Baker, and myself. The committee has already begun the planning for the process, having held numerous meetings to chart the course and plan future meetings.

You, the congregation, have an important role in the Mission Study and your input will be used to develop the report. A series of congregational meetings (most likely five) will be held to examine programs, develop dreams of new programs, and to look at who we are as a congregation. A survey will also be taken to gather information on a range of topics. The effectiveness of the study and the accuracy of the

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Leader: Jeine Kamberidis
Youth Minister: Jon Wilson
Sexton: Bob Perch
Sunday Schedule
8:30 am Contemporary service
9:30 am Sunday school
11 am Traditional service

*But you,
keep your head
in all situations,
endure hardship,
do the work
of an evangelist,
discharge all the duties
of your ministry.*

2 Timothy 4:5

*Fort Square Mission Study
continued from page 1*

report will be entirely dependent on your participation in the process. To put it bluntly, we need your input, we need your involvement, we need your help!

The committee will keep you up to date on the progress of the Mission Study. We will in-

form you of the dates and plans for both the congregational meetings as well as the survey. Please be in prayer for our church, the work of this committee, and your participation in the Mission Study in the days and weeks to come.

—Walter Baker



Dear Fort Square Family,

We would like to say thank you to all for your care and concern for Christina at the end of the summer when she had her tonsils and adenoids removed. We greatly appreciated all of your cards, thoughts, and prayers. and we are grateful for complete healing. God is good!

*Love, Christina
and Gert Sweeney*

My Progress and Your Prayers

It has been more than a year since my fall. I'm down to two days a week at physical therapy, but expect that to end very soon. Regaining muscle strength is still going to take a while, but, with God's help and that of my wife Carol as well as your continued prayers, I look forward to a full recovery soon.

Bob Knowlton



Clothing Room Update

Do you know anyone in need of a good winter coat or jacket? Please have them come by our clothing room and get one soon. We had some winter coats, hats, and gloves left from last year, but a recent donation from the Weymouth Girl Scouts brought us ten large bags of great winter wear. Spread the word!

—Bob Knowlton

God's Patchwork Quilt

In February, Pat and I flew to Louisiana to attend the funeral of Pat's sister, Margaret, who passed away suddenly on February 8. We knew that Margaret was an ardent quilter, a member of Busy Bees Quilt Guild in Baton Rouge, and was known for her original designs and unique scenes. In fact, we viewed the quilt that she made of her hometown, New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, depicting Westminster College, the Presbyterian Church, the covered bridge and even the town park and swimming pool. We were made aware of her amazing talent as we gathered up all of the partially completed quilts and the huge number of quilting squares that she had already made with future quilts in mind.

As I thought about this article on missions, the thought came to me about God's "patchwork quilt." I looked at the list of missions that we, as a congregation, support all over the world, and I thought to myself, "If we made a quilt with patches for each country, what would it look like?"

It would be a patchwork of countries with people, ethnic groups, and landscapes from mountains to deserts, from forests to cities. What a magnificent quilt it would be.

But where do we put the first square? Right in the middle. And who do we put in the square? We, the members of Fort Square, and an image of God. And what would we put

in the surrounding squares? Eight designs depicting the national missions, such as ESL here at Fort Square, His Kids reaching out here on the South Shore, and Teen Challenge in Brockton, and then moving on to Vision New England. Next would be a fantastic display of bright colors in the 11 countries of the world where we send our support, both financially and with our prayers.

MISSIONS REPORT

Close to home we have the Haitian Mountain Ministry which was founded by one of our own members, Reverend Danny Allen. Just this month, Danny and his wife Christy went one step further and adopted two teenage boys from Haiti, bringing them to live with their family in the Allen home in Ashburnham.

Just south of Mexico, we find another of our own Fort Square members, Paige Harding Miño, her husband Mario and their daughter Jenni Rose as members of Living Water International, ministering to the people—especially the children—of Guatemala. What do we stitch on that square? Maybe the four volcanoes that surround Antigua where they live. They have also just recently expanded

the scope of the ministry to reach out to Albania and Cairo, Egypt.

Then, we begin to sew on the patches for the Faith Orphan Fund in Zambia, one for Arsenia Banaga and her schools in the Philippines, the Browns in Bolivia, the Yarians in Togo, reaching out with the Moyers in France, the Taxila Christian Hospital in Pakistan—we could go on and on all over the world completing this wonderful "patchwork quilt" that God has allowed us to stitch!

But the quilt is not yet complete. There are more squares that should be added. Only God knows who and what they would represent, but He calls us to provide the warmth of this quilt that represents the love of Jesus Christ to the unreached people of this world. Stitch on!

—Len Harding

*Sing to the Lord
a new song; sing to
the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord,
praise His name;
proclaim His salvation
day after day.
Declare His glory
among the nations,
His marvelous deeds
among all peoples.*

Psalm 96:1-4

Simple Gifts

“The power of a simple gift.” This is the tag line for Samaritan’s Purse “Operation Christmas Child” ministry, one that has sent out 61 million shoebox-filled holiday gifts to needy children across the world since its inception in 1993. Sixty-one million plus 26! With the help of your donations, our MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) group prepared almost double the numbers of gifts we projected. Save your shoeboxes for our use next year. I can’t empty any more pairs of my shoes from their boxes without creating some serious “closet chaos!” We are particularly thankful to Debby Richie who spearheaded this ministry for us two years ago and continues to be very much involved. (And, trust me, gift-wrapping shoebox lids requires much involvement.)

We are also thankful to Martha Spear, who not only donated precious office space to OCC donations, but also has helped our new Leadership

Team transition since she stepped down. Cathy Maxfield and I will now co-direct the MOPS program. Cathy and I met at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary’s 2000 trip to Israel, Egypt, and Jordan. (Ask her about the “great price”—ahem—she got in on an olive wood nativity set she purchased for her mother in Jerusalem.) Cathy has a decade of ministry experience with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. Most recently, she was Park Street Church’s Director of Graduate Student Ministries. She has four lovely girls, Jeanette, Helen, Martha, and Baby Lilyana. Please pray for her and her husband, Eric, that parenting four bundles of “sugar and spice” will continue to be for them “sweetness and light,” albeit with a little chaos mixed in. Kimberly Symolon continues to serve on our Team, but will



leave in May as her husband Bill, a Major in the Army, is being transferred to Colorado. June

Newman serves as a MOPS Mentor, and Ana Varela remains our kid-loving supporter and helper. Lastly, and, most wonderful, two ladies have just joined our Team: Casey Vincent and our very own Catherine Milsom. Praise God!

MOPS endeavors to provide the “simple gifts” of support, resources, care and love to Moms in our community. We will only be “powerful” in doing this, however, with the help of the Holy Spirit. Please pray that our Leadership Team would grow in its passion for Jesus: the truest and best gift any child, any Mom—anyone—can receive.

—Your “other” MOPS Co-Director,
Cindy Comiso for the MOPS team

The Paradox

Spiritual truths often contradict what we accept as reality. Christ demonstrated lordship by washing his disciples’ feet. In the world today, to be the owner or the boss is to rule and control by directives. Look at the following list. Note carefully the contrast between what the world says and what the kingdom says.

—from *The Man God Uses*
by Henry and Tom Blackaby

What the World Says:

- Pride is important.
- Hitch your wagon to a star.
- Success
- Competition
- Maintain your rights.
- Excellence
- Save your life.
- Affirm self.
- Accomplishments
- Live to die.
- Rule and be served.
- Walk by sight.

What the Kingdom Says:

- Humility is essential.
- Jesus is Lord.
- Obedience
- Service
- Give all your rights to God.
- Christlikeness
- Lose your life for my sake.
- Deny self.
- Character
- Die to live.
- Serve in order to rule.
- Walk by faith.

When All Else Fails, Check God's Word

Before you begin, read 1 Thessalonians, chapter five. This is to help the healing that we all need.

I heard a great sermon recently by Dr. Neil Jackson and it seemed that he was talking about our church. He preached on the fifth chapter of 1 Thessalonians, in particular, verses 12–28. Dr. Jackson talked about good spiritual pastors and leaders. Some pastors are going astray, some fooling with church money, some acting like dictators—none being spiritual leaders.

From 1 Thessalonians 5:12
“Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you.”

Dr. Jackson went on to talk about respecting the leaders of our church and not bringing them down with idle and harsh gossip.

From 5:13: “Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work.”

From 5:15: “Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for

wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and everyone else.”

From 5:17–23: “Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.”

I do hope that we start right now to forgive one another and to bring our loving church family back together again.

—*In Christ, Brother Bob Knowlton*

THANK YOU, “MS. JANE”!

I would like to say thank you to Mrs. Jane Bradbury for her dedicated hard work with the children attending the 8:30 am service.

Due to a schedule change, Christina and I have been attending the 8:30 am service; Christina (age 4) goes to Junior Church during this hour. As this was a new experience for her, I accompanied her to several sessions. I am amazed! “Ms. Jane” is prepared, positive, energetic, calm, and able to share a Bible lesson with our young ones that is engaging and fun—but, most important, one that will be remembered. When we leave church Christina talks, explains, or sings for me some of the things she has learned from attending Junior Church with “Ms. Jane”.

I thank God that He has given “Ms. Jane” this gift of working with our young children and that Christina and others can learn about Jesus during this time.

Thank you, “Ms. Jane”!

—*Gert and Christina Sweeney*

*Praise be to the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of compassion and
the God of all comfort,
who comforts us in all our troubles,
so that we can comfort
those in any trouble
with the comfort
we ourselves have received from God.*

2 Corinthians 1:3–4

Greetings Friends:

Thank you so much for all the birthday cards for my 90th birthday. I received 100 from everywhere—even Japan! That was so nice.

We had a party and all the neighbors and friends came. I was presented with a large Story of My Life album, which delighted everybody. The album even included my gradu-

ation picture from Woodward School for Girls on the first page as well as my parents and the house at 192 School Street way back in the 1930s.

Thank you again for sending the cards and putting a notice in the bulletin. It’s been a long time since my name appeared there!

—*Ingrid Ross*

f² youth

by Jon Wilson

Things I thought while shoveling snow:

- ⊗ Wow, it is cold out!
- ⊗ **God answers prayer.** At this time, last year we had 3 or 4 students attending Oasis every Friday night. We prayed that the Lord would bring us more students. Now, we consistently have more than 20 each week. We have since stopped praying for more kids (just kidding).
- ⊗ **God's Spirit is actively moving among us.** Literally. Every time I clear one part of the driveway or sidewalk, a huge wind blows a pile twice as big into the spot I just shoveled! Also, every other Wednesday night a half dozen high school teens who are so hungry for God's word willingly rearrange their schedules to attend a Bible Study. We have honest and deep conversations that are not possible in a regular youth group setting. Pray that this continues and that more teens feel the call to join us.
- ⊗ **God is BIG.** We had a total of 25 teens, accompanied by 8 leaders, attend our Winter Retreat at Camp Berea. There was a BIG tubing hill, a BIG noise of praise coming from the worship band, some BIG men went down when we pelted them with dodgeballs, and BIG commitments were made by many of the teens. It was the BIGgest group of teens

Fort Square has taken on a retreat in as long as anyone I have talked to can remember, and God came through in a BIG way by keeping us safe, providing traveling mercies, and opening His BIG hands to welcome us all to a closer, deeper relationship with Him.

- ⊗ **God likes fun.** At least, I hope so, because we have a lot of fun events coming up this spring. Our annual Oasis Luau/Beach Party is March 20th, we have a LazerTag Challenge on April 4th, and our annual 30-Hour Famine with Odyssey is April 24–25th.
- ⊗ **God is welcoming.** Most of our youth who regularly attend our weekly meetings are not from the church family. As they are becoming more comfortable in the youth group and developing a relationship with Jesus, they are warming to the idea of persuading their parents to drive them to church on Sunday mornings. Be praying that their parents will do so. Oh, and although they might make a little more noise than we are used to during worship, they really just want to be accepted by the adults and would love it if you talked to them after church.
- ⊗ Can't. Feel. My. Toes.
- ⊗ **Jesus loves explosions.** That is, He seems to be embracing TNT because He is blessing that group in crazy ways. The third Sunday of every month (from 2 pm–4 pm) is so much fun for me because we have awesome volunteers (and desperately need more!) and a

cool assortment of third to fifth graders that come from all over the area. It's up to you to invite every student in that grade range that you know because they won't want to miss a month once they start to come.

- ⊗ **God calls us to serve Him.** Our Community Service Committee (that's right, we have developed ministry-related committees in the youth group) has some great ideas for spring, and you are going to want to be a part of them from the start. Ask Danielle Baker how you can help. These kids have a heart for serving others, won't you join them?
- ⊗ **God Rocks!** The restoration process has not been completed yet in the Gulf Coast, and our teens have heard the call to return and continue the work they have been doing the past two summers. Planning is already underway—pray for how you can support our team, including donations to Rock for Restoration II.
- ⊗ Why is there so much yellow snow around here when I don't even own a dog?
- ⊗ **Easter is about Christ.** I can't wait to color eggs, wear pastel-colored ties, and stuff my face with chocolate, but, really, I know I wouldn't have any of the pleasures of the season if Jesus hadn't come to this earth to die for my sins. I am so grateful. May we never forget that He is risen. He is risen indeed.

God's Plans

Life is easy when you're up
on the mountain
And you've got peace of mind
like you've never known.
But then things change and
you're down in the valley.
Don't lose faith for
you're never alone.

For the God on the mountain
is still God in the valley.
When things go wrong,
He'll make it right.
And the God of the good times
is still God in the bad times.
The God of the day
is still God in the night.

You talk of faith when you're up
on the mountain.
Oh, but the talk comes easy
when life's at its best.
But it's down in the valley
of trials and temptation
That's when faith is really
put to the test.

For the God on the mountain
is still God in the valley.
When things go wrong,
He'll make it right.
And the God of the good times
is still God in the bad times.
The God of the day
is still God in the night.

For the God on the mountain
is still God in the valley.
When things go wrong,
He'll make it right.
And the God of the good times
is still God in the bad times.
The God of the day
is still God in the night.

I believe in the sun,
even when it is not shining,
In love, even when I am alone,
In God, even when He is silent.

—from *Kimberly A. Jones*
(daughter of *Joyce and*
Bob MacDonald)

One of my favorite scripture verses is Jeremiah 29:11. This verse has been a weekly encouragement to the Single Parent Support Group at Fort Square since 1987. I have this scripture on a plaque as I exit my home. I also have two different bookmarks with this scripture, and I often send it to others as an encouragement.

Recently as I was reading the Presbyterian Elders in Prayer newsletter I was pleased to see the article begin with Jeremiah 29:11. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." The writer of this article, Rev. Melany Hamilton, goes on to say that she found her heart being filled and her mind being challenged by the context of those words.

They were part of a long letter Jeremiah had written and sent from Jerusalem to "the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon" (Jeremiah 29:1). These beautiful, hope-filled words from God were written to people living in a difficult place, a place where they did not want to live. The words were written to people who were not going to see their difficult situation resolved quickly. Seventy years, God told them plainly, seventy years in exile. I can't imagine they were happy to receive that letter.

Considering how our own generation craves a "quick fix" for everything, we would not have enjoyed receiving Jeremiah's letter.

But we have received that letter. It is in our Bible, the Word of God. Many of us feel like exiles within our own denomination these days. We look around and don't recognize the place. Many friends have heard God calling them to leave. But many others have heard God call them to stay, to stay in a place that often looks, sounds, and feels like Babylon or some other foreign place. Jesus's prayer in John 17 reminds us that we are "in the world but not of the world." We are to shine His light on the world, season the world around us with the salt of His truth and grace. But our hearts must belong to Him, not to the world. Rev. Hamilton asks "could it be that we are being called to be 'in the denomination but not of the denomination?'" Could this be the time when we are called by God to pray for and bless the denomination by our faithfulness to Christ, and multiplying in number, and planting and reaping good fruit even in a difficult place?

The one thing I truly know is that God knows the plans He has for us, plans to prosper us and not to harm us, plans to give us a hope and a future.

I hope you are as encouraged by this article as I am.

—Peggy MacLeod

CHRIST IS RISEN
HE IS RISEN, INDEED!

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