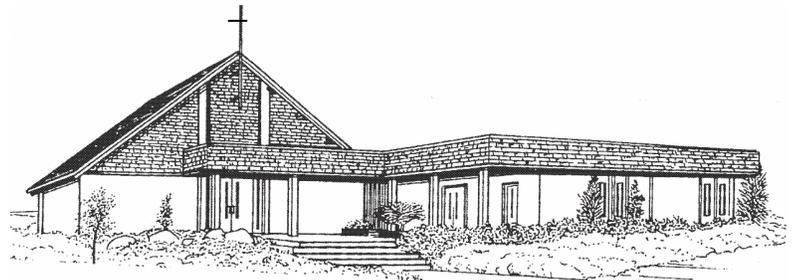
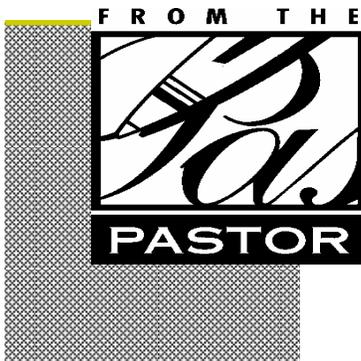




The Reporter



“Come to Calvary”

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When I am in my office and need a little break, I take a moment to look at some photographs on the wall. These are pleasant reminders of some of the experiences I had in Colorado, Montana and Canada. As I allow my mind to wander I recall some of the mountain climbs I undertook. A few were fairly straight-forward. Others were more challenging. Each step of the way I wondered, “What’s the view going to be like?”

This thought kept me climbing even though there were obstacles. Not using technical climbing equipment, I had to go where I could use hand and foot “jams,” or rely on straddling and scrambling. Consequently, when I arrived at a vertical wall, it meant choosing another route. Another challenge was the “scree slopes.” These were slide areas covered with small pieces of rock crushed by the weight of winter snows. They formed a marble like surface which made footing uncertain at best. The results were often, “one step forward and two steps back.”

In spite of the obstacles, and just the physical challenge of making it to the top of a 14,000 foot summit, I persevered. At the end of the climb was the prize. The panorama was breath taking. In every direction there was something that captured my attention. After drinking in the view, I began the descent. It was with mixed feelings. I was disappointed because I had to leave such beauty behind. Still, through memories and pictures, I could always refresh the memory and repeat the climb.

Today, I wonder if I could still overcome the challenges and get to the top of another mountain. Some day, time and determination may offer the opportunity to climb another “fourteener.” In the meantime I need to concentrate on another mountain. One that needs to be ascended on a daily basis. It is not found in the Sierra Nevada, nor the Rockies or even the Appalachians. Its summit does not tower into the thinning atmosphere. Nor does it require special gear to get to the top. This mountain is Calvary.

Mount Calvary is a place of infamy. If you have ever seen pictures of it, you know it is imposing. Its features are intimidating because one side of the mountain looks like a skull. It was at this place where many lost their lives at the hands of the Roman crucifixion squad. It was recognized as a horrible place where justice and fate were not kind. Still, this historical record does not give Calvary its notoriety. Nor does its garish and gruesome past beckon people to its summit. What makes Calvary a place of great importance is that here is where Jesus died.

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In the Apostles Creed we confess, "Jesus was crucified." It was a painful death. One which was to be as cruel and unusual as possible. It was on Calvary that Jesus endured this shameful treatment and bitter death. Every year we have the opportunity to make the trip to Calvary. Every year we are privileged to see what Jesus did for each of us. It is a journey, though, that has its challenges and obstacles.

To even begin is difficult. The path before me is treacherous. The world makes me weary. My flesh is weak. Satan is there to make me give up. It is important that I begin. As I start the ascent I am met with twists and turns. There are many decisions and distractions that seek to make me stray from the right path. The higher I climb, the more intense the challenges become. I am confronted by the loose rock of self-righteousness. It causes me to slide backwards when I rely on my own works. Still, I must persist. When the summit comes into view, Satan confronts me with the towering face of his accusations. "You can't go on! Your sins are too great! God can never forgive you!" Even though I am tempted to despair, I push on. As I approach the cross, the sights and sounds cause me to retreat in horror. The blood, the cries of anguish, the twisted and broken body, and the jeers of an angry crowd. Why am I here?

Before I retreat down the hill, faith takes hold of my heart. It stops me and causes me to remember why I am here. It was faith that caused me to start the journey. It was faith that made me persevere in my climb. It was faith that opened my eyes to take in the view. It was faith that fills me with awe. There I see a panorama that displays God's love for me in all its beauty. There I see a Savior, my Savior, whose sacrifice and death were for me. Faith transforms that horrifying sight of Jesus' death on the cross. No longer is it a sight that shocks or repels. Nor longer is it a sight that disturbs or darkens my thoughts. It is glorious sight that fills me with hope and consolation. I have a Savior who endured all this for me. I have a Savior who proclaims his love by laying down his life for me.

After drinking in the beauty of this precious sight, I depart from the top of the mountain. My life is changed. I am cleansed from my sin. I am purified from my guilt. I am reconciled with God. This is what makes me want to climb that mountain again and again. It pushes me past the indecision of my sin and guilt. It removes Satan's obstacles and distractions. It causes me to look beyond the righteousness worked by my hands. It drives me to the summit to humbly stand before the cross of my Savior.

This time of year is most precious. It gives me the opportunity to return to Calvary and see what my Savior did. As I make this journey over the next six weeks, I can never forget this climb is one I need to make every day. Daily I need the assurance of God's love. Daily I need the forgiveness secured by my Savior. Daily I need the peace and strength he offers. Certainly the psalmist said it the best: "Come, let us go to the mountain of the Lord!"



Come to Calvary's holy mountain, sinners ruined by the fall;
Here a pure and healing fountain flows to you, to me, to all,
In a full perpetual tide, open when our Savior died.

Come in poverty and meanness, come defiled, without, within;
From infection and uncleanness, from the leprosy of sin,
Wash your robes and make them white; you shall walk with God in light.

Come in sorrow and contrition, wounded paralyzed and blind;
Here the guilty, free remission, here the troubled, peace may find.
Health this fountain will restore; He that drinks shall thirst no more.

He that drinks shall live forever; 'Tis a soul renewing flood.
God is faithful; God will never break his covenant of blood,
Signed when our Redeemer died, sealed when he was glorified.

Christmas Carols Appreciated!

By Elvira Rangel

We missed the Christmas service in the Sanctuary Christmas Eve. But Pastor Proeber made it happen for me and Carolyn.

Because he came to my home with Christian friends and sang Christmas carols. I enjoy the singing very much, it was very nice indeed! That at the end I felt sentimental and said to myself: "Hope to be around for many more years to hear Christmas carols!"

And I forgot to say "Thank you all for coming." I told Pastor "Thank you and God bless you all."

I enjoy seeing Carolyn singing carols. She learned them at school and she has a Christmas record that she plays at home. She loves music and art; that keeps her busy at home. She sold some of her artwork, as for me none. Most famous artists don't get famous until they die. Their lives are not easy. But their artwork becomes famous and worth millions of dollars.

Consider our lives as Christians, in a way we're like that, but we get to enjoy a much greater reward in heaven.

Here are some more thoughts to consider:

Why did the psalmist want "wings like a dove?" (Psalm 55:6)

Who was elected successor to Judas by casting lots? (Acts 1:26)

What "burned" when the apostles spoke? (Acts 2:3)

What did Pharaoh's baker dream he carried in a basket on his head? (Genesis 40:17)

Who lost his birthright for stew? (Genesis 25:29-34)

Praise the Lord!

*"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."
Hebrews 10:25 NIV*

FEBRUARY 2008

We rejoice in the many blessings given the members of our family of faith. May the Lord continue to bless them richly.

- 8th —Kathy T.
- 11th —Michael J., Janelle S.
- 14th —Eleanor P.
- 17th —Debbie A.
- 19th —Ray C.
- 27th — Erick C.



On the Lighter Side

Redefinitions - not what you might think!

- AVOIDABLE: What a matador tries to do
- BERNADETTE: The act of torching a mortgage
- BURGLARIZE: What a crook sees with
- EYEDROPPER: A clumsy ophthalmologist
- MISTY: How golfers create divots
- PARADOX: Two physicians
- POLARIZE: What penguins see with
- PRIMATE: Removing your spouse from in front of the TV
- RELIEF: What trees do in the spring
- RUBBERNECK: What you do to relax your wife
- SELFISH: What the owner of a seafood store does
- SUDAFED: Brought litigation against a government official

January 2008 Annual Meeting

by Carl Schueler and Pastor Pastor

On Sunday, January 13th, following the worship service, the Annual meeting was held. The meeting was attended by both women and men of the congregation who expressed an interest in the continuing ministry of Our Redeemer.

The yearly meeting was like others in the past, but there were some noticeable differences. Those in attendance expressed an enthusiasm regarding the work that had been done through the course of 2007. Granted, some work was not completed, but for the most part, as a congregation we continued to enjoy a diverse and growing ministry.

On the Agenda for the meeting was:

- The ministry plan and budget for 2008. It was noted this was the smallest approved increase in the history of the congregation. However, it was not accomplished with the slashing of programs or expenses. Due to a reduction in the Health Care costs for the Pastor and his family, other increases were offset. There will be an overview of the ministry plan distributed later in the month.
- Year end reports were offered by the Chairmen of each of the standing Committees. Again, the Lord was gracious in allowing us to enjoy a blessed and effective ministry through 2007. The Chairmen also offered a picture of “what’s to come” for 2008.
- A progress report was presented by the Board of Elders regarding work on the Constitution and By-Laws of the congregation. The report was received, and the Elders were encouraged to continue with the approved steps to inform the congregation of the alterations and clarifications. An informational / discussion meeting is planned for later in February.
- Thanks were offered to the out-going members of the Council. We are grateful for their years of service. The two members were: Alan T. and Dave V.
- New Council members and their positions were announced based on the elections in October:

Board of Elders:

- Chairman: Ray C.
- Head Elder: Greg G.
- Vice Chairman: Frank F.

Board of Trustees:

- Chairman: Tom P.
- Financial Secretary: Jim E.
- Treasurer: Justin S.

Board of Education:

- Chairman: John F.
- Youth Education: Art B.
- Secretary: Carl S.

- There was one suggestion from those in attendance. A number of years ago the congregation developed a “prayer chain.” Although beneficial, it was not maintained. The Elders and the Pastor will work to revive the program not only to aid the congregation in “praying for one another,” but also to improve “quick / urgent” communication throughout the membership of the congregation.

Other Notes:

Among the more interesting aspects of the meeting was the financial assessment provided by Al T., the Treasurer. Al presented the entire 2007 budget comparing actual expenses and income. It was clear that the Council has been particularly efficient with expenses being \$6,000 under budget. The concern, however, was that the gifts offered to the Lord to undertake this ministry were under what was needed. Although it did not prohibit us from carrying out the work we planned to do, it did cause our General Fund reserves to drop somewhat lower.

The ministry plan and budget for 2008 reflects an increase of \$1,800 over 2007. (\$147,759 and \$149,589). While this is a well below inflation, the budget for 2008 includes a plan for encouraging increased offerings (\$153,963). The additional gifts would be used to replace the General Fund reserves. It would also allow our congregation to set aside funds for an emergency maintenance account.

As you prayerfully consider the use of your God-given gifts, remember how richly he has blessed you. Consider his love and every gift bestowed on you through his Son. Then, ask yourself if you are responding to his gift of salvation with the gifts he has given you - both financial and otherwise.

Remember, he chose us, his elect (“You did not choose me, but I chose you...” John 15:16) to bear witness to the richness of his love in Christ Jesus.

In God We Trust—Or Do We?

By Art Battson

The power just went out, the heater shut down, and all the lights in the house flickered helplessly before they finally faded to black. And so here I sit like a pioneer braving the wintry storms, with only the light of a laptop to see me through the darkness, and the warmth of its battery to help me brave the cold. Such is the rough life in 21st Century Santa Barbara. But I digress (and whine a lot).

As some of you may know, life can be a bit rougher. Personally, I have been the subject of some persecution at the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB), where I have worked for many years in the Learning Resources Department. My new boss, a Darwinian fundamentalist, and I do not always see eye to eye. He seems to view the secular university as a private school for atheists, while I view it as a pluralistic institution supported primarily by taxes paid for by Christians.

As a public school, (if I may borrow some politically correct terms) it ought to “tolerate” a “diversity” of ideas including the idea that “in the beginning God created everything” including every single atom that comprises the UCSB campus. Did I mention that the motto of the University is “Let There Be Light”?

Jesus told us in his Sermon on the Mount, “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16).

Once in a while I let a photon or two slip out. Several years ago, our Associate Vice Chancellor threw a “Holiday Party” for us. His Diversity Committee even arranged some entertainment for the holiday season: “a powerful demon king who expresses through dance his infatuation with a young princess.” Now I ask you, what could be more appropriate? A holocaust denier at a Hanukkah party?

I thought it might be more appropriate to give a Christmas card with a DVD on the origin of the Universe (remember where “Let There Be Light” came from originally) to everyone as they left the party. This would certainly be a good way to make the “Holiday Party” more

“diverse.” Would there be any harm in suggesting to the guests that they might think about the reason for the season? Think about it.

Why does the university give everyone two paid holidays for Christmas? Why is the university closed every Saturday and Sunday? Would it have anything to do with the Creation (Saturday’s day of rest) and the Resurrection (on Easter Sunday)? Should we thank God or should we complain to the ACLU that weekends violate the separation of Church and State? Your choice.

An English professor chose to complain. She walked into the TV Studios (uninvited I might add) where the party was being held and picked up one of the cards and DVDs. She was so offended by the fact that the universe had a moment of Creation and that someone at UCSB had the nerve to say so, that she went to my boss the following week and complained that I should not use my position of authority to impose my beliefs on others.

While I have never used my authority to impose my beliefs on others or discriminate against them in any way based upon their own beliefs, I really have to wonder if she has. In any case, my boss used his own authority to reprimand me for shedding a few photons of light where darkness usually prevails.

Another time I forwarded an email to one of the unbelievers in the department (a friend of mine who often brings up the subject of religion and happens to teach history at Ventura College). The email contained the preambles to all of the State Constitutions. Each one of them contains a reference to God. For example, California’s State Constitution contains these words: “We the people of the State of California, grateful to almighty God for our freedom . . .”

Could our Constitution be unconstitutional? What about the other 49 States who “invoke the favor and guidance of Almighty God,” or “rely upon protection and guidance of Almighty God,” or have “profound reverence for the Supreme Ruler of the Universe”? What could be more constitutional than using our constitutional right to the free exercise of religion? It beats me. In any case, after my boss wrote several threatening and intimidating letters to my file and stripped me of all my managerial responsibilities, I found my head on the proverbial chopping block.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

This is where another of Jesus’ teachings come to mind: “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in Heaven.” (Matthew 5:44-45) Trust me, this part hasn’t come naturally.

But it doesn’t stop there. As I look at the ax about to fall on my head, there is a temptation to worry. Fortunately, I had battled worry years ago when Kathy and I held three jobs and had just enough income to qualify for a home mortgage. Within a month of moving into the house, Kathy became pregnant and I lost one of my jobs. Soon to be down to a single paycheck, I started to worry. I remember being so depressed at times that I nearly gave up hope for a resolution to what seemed to be an insurmountable problem. If only I had turned to the Sermon on the Mount and trusted Jesus’ promise (Matthew 6:25-34):

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?”

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

As it turns out the Lord did provide. The next morning I woke up and found myself covered with feathers . . . I mean lilies. Even my cereal bowl was full of birdseed. OK, I’m not all that good with metaphors. Let’s just say that before anyone even thought of foreclosing on the house, the Lord provided. Positions opened up at UCSB – in the same department no less – that provided enough manna (another metaphor) for us to fill our 4 bedroom quiver with children. “Trust in the Lord” is our take-home message today.

Last week while I was seriously pondering an early retirement from UCSB, the Lord provided again. This time it was a teaching position with SBCC for a couple of classes they needed taught at the Multimedia Arts and Design Academy at Santa Barbara High School.

Now if my boss agrees to hire me back at 40% time, I’ll be able to make ends meet and, most importantly, spend a lot more time proclaiming the gospel at UCSB. This time, I’m going to trust that the Lord will provide for all of our needs. But I would appreciate your prayers.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Reporter’s Wanted!</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Book review? Personal Story of Faith? Event Reports (Potluck, gathering, party, field trip?)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Half-page to Three pages Reviewed for scriptural consistency and readability Due by the 25th of month to appear in next issue</p> <p>Hard-copy to Carl S., or email to Carl (cfs_home@cox.net) & Pastor Proeber (Pastor@orlc.net)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A simple and rewarding way to serve!</i></p>	<p>Thanks to Art Battson and Elvira Rangel for articles in this month’s newsletter. <i>The Reporter</i> continues to benefit from a variety of perspectives, and this issue continues that fine trend.</p> <p>We pray that more members will continue to think about possible articles for 2008. If you have an idea, and are unsure whether to act on it, please don’t hesitate to speak to Pastor Proeber or Carl for advice.</p> <p>Articles can be: ORLC news, past and planned events, thought-provoking articles, instructional pieces, WELS history, other religions, or articles relating to personal perspectives on faith in Jesus.</p>
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CORNER ☩

DEVOTIONAL



“Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.”

“Just a Minute!”

It was a chance meeting. Out of nowhere Dan caught a glimpse of an old acquaintance. Quickly he crossed the street and enthusiastically greeted Fred. It had been almost 20 years since they had last seen each other. Right then and there Dan said, “Let’s get some coffee. I’ll buy.”

It wasn’t long after they sat down at the table that Fred’s phone rang. It wasn’t a long call so Dan didn’t mind the interruption. Not long after the first call came a second, then a third, a fourth and even a fifth. In between calls Fred sipped his coffee, but he didn’t seem to pay too much attention to his host.

Dan finally said, “If this isn’t a good time, we could get together next week.” Fred, seemingly untouched by his lack of etiquette replied, “Oh, no. Now is fine. None of the calls were that important anyway.” Fred didn’t realize how hurt Dan was, and that his attempt at humor didn’t help the situation. Dan excused himself, and said, “Take care.” Fred couldn’t figure out what had just happened. While he finished his coffee he kept wondering: “What was Dan’s problem?”

It’s clear, Dan didn’t have a problem. Fred did. Fred accepted Dan’s gracious invitation, but then Fred allowed something else to become more important. Dan eventually grew tired of hearing Fred say, “Just a minute.”

When I consider Dan and Fred’s meeting and compare it to the disciples’ response to Jesus, there is a definite contrast. Fred offered excuses and was distracted by interruptions. James and John “immediately left the boat and their father and followed Jesus.” This response makes me consider, “How do I respond to my Savior’s loving call?”

Through his Word Jesus gives me his invitation, “Follow me!” It is more than a friendly gesture. It is an offer that promises a richly blessed life – now and eternally. So, what is my response?

It is easy to offer Jesus a quick, “Just a minute.” It would certainly indicate my intentions were good. Still, is this the right response? Will Jesus be polite and wait while I repeatedly offer him my excuses? It’s hard to say how long he will offer his invitation, but there is one thing of which I can be certain. In time he will respond as Dan did: “I must go now.” When the Lord departs, he will not return.

I need to remember the response of James and John. Yes, it is hard to comprehend how they left everything – their possessions, their father, even their livelihood. However, when they compared what they had to what Jesus offered them, it didn’t take long to decide what to do. They immediately left everything. It was not a rushed decision. Nor was it one that filled them with regret later. Their joy in what they saw and what they received from their Savior only increased.

I need to receive Jesus’ invitation in the same way. As I see his undeserved love, as I view the rich stream of blessings he offers, and as I grasp the comfort of his presence and peace, there is really only one decision I want to make. I want to follow Jesus, now!