

FRIENDLY VISITOR

The Newsletter of the Warren Park Presbyterian Church ~ May 2011

Pastor's Page

When this letter reaches you, we will have celebrated the Resurrection of our Lord once more—what a great privilege! Let me say another few words about this event, in addition to my April “Pastor’s Page.” Paul informs us that this historical event has radically changed our world view. In Romans 1:4 the apostle draws a graphic picture for us. Christ, he says, was “designated Son of God. . . by his Resurrection from the dead.” The Greek word translated as “designated” (*horisthentos*) is the word from which we get our English word “horizon.” So the word picture that Paul paints for us is that Christ, by His Resurrection, *has been silhouetted for all time against the horizon of history.* The Resurrection, Paul suggests, has made a thoroughgoing alteration in our perception of life and the world.

Now, when you stand on the sea shore and look at the dashing waves and rolling sea, the thing that gives you perspective is the horizon. If there were no horizon, then you would have the sense of rocking and rolling with the waves as you look out over the sea. The horizon provides a point of reference around which we organize the panorama of our world.

A friend once told me that when he takes a boat to find a place to scuba dive, sometimes the sea becomes choppy and the boat rocky, and the staff will say, “Look at the horizon,” and that would provide a still point in the churning environment. That's what the Resurrection has done for us. It is the still point in our turning world.

The Resurrection has installed a new horizon in the universe. It has silhouetted the risen Christ against the skyline of our world, and that has changed the way we look at the world and the way we live.

Paul considers the critical nature of the Resurrection at length in 1 Cor. 15. There he deals with the “what if” of the Resurrection, “What if Christ had not been raised,” and he draws out the awful consequences of that scenario, as he suggests *three* things.

First, the Resurrection has changed *the way we look at our task as the Church.* The apostle deals with it as a hypothetical case: “If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain” (1 Cor. 15:14). These two terms “preaching” and “faith” pretty much sum up *what we do* and *how we live* as God's people. Thankfully, the preaching of the Cross and the Resurrection is not so much gospel verbiage that has lost its meaning in a postmodern world.

Second, the Resurrection has changed *the way we think about our sins*. Paul puts it this way, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17). Now, let's turn that condition inside out. Christ *has been raised*, so we are *not* still in our sins. That's the point Paul is making. The Resurrection has *horizoned* that fact against the skyline of time. The living Christ, who was dead and is now alive forevermore, is the evidence that the Cross accomplished everything it was intended to do. Through the Resurrection God took His royal seal and stamped "Valid" across the events of Good Friday.

Third, the Resurrection has formed a new horizon of history and changed our perception of the world in *the way we look at death*. Paul puts it like this: If Christ has not been raised, "then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished" (1 Cor. 15:18). Now, let's turn this condition inside out and put it like this: Christ *has been raised* from the dead! Therefore, those who have died have not perished. Rather, as the apostle says in 1 Cor. 15:22, they shall be made alive in Christ. That means the gravestones are not perpetual, the cemeteries are not permanent. Separation from those we love is temporary. It also means the fear that death held over our heads like a bludgeon is gone. Christ has taken it away. The book of Hebrews says Christ's death delivered "all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage" (Heb. 2:15).

John Bunyan makes this point in *Pilgrim's Progress* as he tells Christian's story. As Christian is walking down the road, to his horror, he sees a ferocious lion ahead of him barring his path. He can't go back, and there is no way he can make a detour. The only thing left for him is to go on ahead. As he draws closer, he notices that the lion is chained to a post. Someone has traveled that way before him and tamed this ferocious beast. We know who it was. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ announced that the ferocious lion of death has been chained to the Cross. Its roar has become the purr of a kitten. That's how the Resurrection has changed the way we look at death.

Several times I have stood with Wheaton College students on the top of ancient Mycenae in Greece and looked over the hills to the horizon, and there, as legend has it, one can see the lifeless figure of Agamemnon silhouetted against the sky in perpetual repose. He does not move. He is frozen there in time and space, petrified in death. The most horrid thought Paul could think of was that of the crucified Christ reposing in death for all time against the horizon of history! But in this word picture of Rom. 1:4 the apostle paints the masterpiece of human history, that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ has installed a new horizon across the old skyline of history. Silhouetted against that horizon is the living Christ, *designated* the Son of God by His Resurrection from the dead. Our perspective has been radically changed by this event! Alleluiah!

Because He lives,
Hassell Bullock

God's Love-There's Nothing Like It in The World....

We have had our dog Charis since December and have been working on training her to do the right things. She has become pretty good at submitting to commands such as “Come,” “Sit,” and “No.” In fact, she has been doing so good that occasionally we have been letting her free in the backyard without a leash. During one of these times recently, she saw a couple other dogs on the path across the street. We saw her quickly dart off. We called for her several times and chased after her, but she would not stop. She had one thing in mind: fulfilling her desire to meet the other dogs. She forgot all about obeying her masters who love her and know what's best for her. In her pursuit, she could have been hit by a car as she crossed the street or bit by another dog.

Even though Charis wants to do what is right, sometimes it seems as if she cannot control her urges to simply satisfy herself. It is similar with us. God gives us the freedom to choose to do right or wrong. Our desire to do things that are self-seeking comes natural to us. We hopelessly want to pursue the next thing that makes us feel good—whether that be a relationship, food, drink, or material things. But, the truth is that these things only make us happy for a short period of time. Running across the street to see the other dogs may have made Charis happy for a little while—at least until the other dogs went away. But, by going after her own desires, she missed out on something far greater—that is a more intimate relationship with her owners.

God wants a more intimate relationship with us too. He's longing for us to stop running after our own fruitless desires, to admit our sins, and to accept His grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why? God created us and loves us. He longs for us to know Him more in this life and throughout eternity. Jesus said, “Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty” (John 6:35, Holy Bible, NIV). When He said this, He was not talking about our physical need for food and water, but rather, our spiritual need to have a relationship with God. Until we have that relationship, we will always be looking for some temporary, earthly fulfillment of that love. If you haven't yet decided to accept and believe on Jesus Christ as the Savior of your sins, we invite you to do so soon. And, if you have, think again about the amazing gift you have of being able to have an intimate relationship with God. Confess your sins to Him and experience the wonders of His grace and love anew. There's nothing like it in the world.

With love,
Eric & Hope Prinkey

Missions Report

Life is about being faithful. If we know what we believe—the Word teaches us and the Spirit leads us—and we believe it with our whole heart, then we can move forward in God’s strength to put those beliefs into practice within our sphere of influence. II Tim. 4:2 says to “be prepared in season and out of season” and Proverbs 15:23 speaks of the goodness of a timely word spoken. Since God has poured His Word into our hearts, let’s pray that we will be faithful to share it and to live it out in the world. Praise God for our faithful missionaries.

Paul and Ruth Philippi email came too late for April news. They spoke of the home-going of the senior pastor of the local Spanish church. Because he was a cancer patient the church granted him a leave of absence and he was living with a daughter. The Philippi’s were glad to be of comfort and support to the family and the church members during a customary all night wake and funeral. That accomplished they attended the remainder of an Intermission Conference. Keep their work a matter of prayer.

Ernie and Lois Lee tell of family gatherings throughout the winter season. The Lees own a rental house; it became empty last May and needed repair work. They hired a team to ready it for future use and did some of the work themselves. Now their granddaughter, Breonny, and her three children are living there. The checking of the translation continues and some editing is needed on the Old Testament. How good it is to know how much care is taken to make this a reliable translation of God’s Word. Construction has begun on the parking lot for the refugee church which we prayed for earlier. On April 6th the first concrete was poured. The Lees met at Ralph and Lorraine Haupers’ home on March 12th for a 90th birthday celebration for Dave Blood who worked with them in Vietnam. Dave is still helping to check the new Bible translation. Ernie and Lois asked for prayer for a sharp young refugee girl who was able to take part in a special program at Southern Methodist Univ. to prepare for college. Now they ask that we pray for the personal and spiritual growth of a deserving sister, Nguon, and brother, Don, as well. They are attending a nearby young people’s group. Others too in the SS class show by their answers their desire to learn and grow in faith. Bless the Lees in their work and remember the growing church.

Lorry Lutz thanks those who prayed for the team as they encouraged fellow workers in India, let them know others in the USA care and pray for them. God answered many prayers: no one became ill and flights were on time. The team was able to make all the planned visits mostly to those who train church planters to go into smaller villages that foreigners can’t reach. Though some Hindus are actively anti-Christian—burning churches, beating pastors and even killing believers—the Holy Spirit is working and one mission planted 4000 churches in ten years. Lorry feels this was probably her last time in India and came home determined to pray more earnestly for brothers and sisters there.

Norman and Gwen Bowman praise God for opening the way to share their faith with Muslim neighbors. For three years the friendship grew through dinners, childcare, providing transportation, Spanish language help and sharing Christmas celebrations with them. Some Christian friends, one Pakistani, who both speak fluent Urdu have been counseling the Bowmans as to how to proceed in sharing their faith with this family. On several occasions they have prayed for healing for the father who is blind in his right eye and has recently lost most of the vision in his left eye. A dinner was planned and Norm's friends read from the Urdu Bible of Jesus healing blind people in the New Testament. The family's reaction at first was guarded but the Holy Spirit was working. Norm impressed on them how God loves us intimately and personally like parents love their children. Norm asked to anoint the father with oil and pray; all were in a sort of huddle and the young father reached out to Norman and pulled him close and laid his head on Norman's shoulder. Prayer was for his physical and well as spiritual eyes to open-- one more step in a journey of faith. Pray as Bowmans continue to follow God's leading.

Jim and Carolyn Fasold sensed that the Holy Spirit was doing something special in Valencia during three weekends of a marriage seminar in April. There was a larger crowd than expected but it was more than attendance. Many responded positively and thanked them for the lessons. One couple told of forgiving one another and starting afresh with their marriage. The Fasolds are happy when God uses them to help couples improve their lives together. Spain is a difficult country in which to minister; only 2/10 of 1% of a population of 45 million there are evangelicals and Spaniards tend to be individualistic. Christian workers tend to compete with rather than encourage one another. The Fasolds counsel and encourage graduates in their ministries. A couple who worked for 25 years in a city known for prostitution, addiction, delinquency, and dysfunctional marriages and families, told them of lives that were completely changed after they heard the gospel in his church. The couple shared the sacrifices that were made for these changes to happen. Jim and Carolyn thank us for love and support.

Elias and Julie Madeira ask for prayer for Elias's brother who has been hospitalized with a blood clot in his leg. Also a cousin will need surgery following a motorcycle accident. The mother who was recently released from jail has been attending Bible study and worship. Praise for a pre-teen boy from the favela coming to church. Pray that the children in the Saturday club will understand the message of Christ's death on the cross that was presented and come to believe in Him as Savior. Julie thanks God for healing of an ear infection. She continues to teach 2 days at school; Elias is gardening and teaching 1st – 5th grades gardening classes.

Easter greetings from **John and Sharon Stacknik** in Eau Claire, WI. Pray for a job Sharon in the healthcare field and for God's leading in plans for CHAFI focus.

Misha and Gina Zverev also need our prayers. They are ready to move to OM Canada if they can sell or rent their home in Noonan, GA. Gina plans to use her teaching skills to home school Alisa in the fall.

Donna Tulach
Missions Chairman