

Ruth's Reflections

May 6, 2008

It's been four weeks since I have sat down to write *Reflections*. That's because Pam went to China with her husband, and the second issue in April had to be mailed early. A "lot of water has gone under the bridge" during that time. For you young folks who don't know what that means, it's an old saying that means "a lot has happened."

Here's a quick run-through of the events Pastor Don and I have had on the calendar during that time. We helped celebrate 9 birthdays for folks from age 3 to 94. Two were full-fledged parties: First our little 3-year old great-grandson, Luke; then a big party Sunday, 4/27, with a fully-catered lunch and program for 90-year old Charles Goans of the Drexel church. He's in very good health, except he is blind. One birthday was celebrated with a card shower (Sadie Eller received 35 cards). For two other birthdays, we sent a card and gift, for another we sent a card and a newsy letter, we took a card and gift to 3 others, and that adds up to 9. We also spent a day "walking through the New Testament." On another occasion we prepared food for and attended a "carry-in lunch;" we went to 2 Baby Showers, and met and greeted the Wyatts. The last week in April, I came down with chest congestion and constant coughing. I was too sick to go to the doctor Monday, so I went on Tuesday, had an appointment with my eye-doctor Wednesday, baked a cake for the Men's Weekend Bar-B-Que (Pastor Don delivered) on Friday.

Saturday we went to a Breakfast Bar with the Bible Class at 9:00, and to a lovely outdoor wedding out on Conley Road at 1:00 p.m. (That's 21 activities for the month, plus weekly S. S. and church since the last *Proclaimer*.) Stacey Settlemire (Ramona Crosby's daughter), and Jay Crowe were married in a beautiful setting with a white arched arbor as the focal point. Pastor Terry performed the ceremony and did a nice job. As director of the wedding, Teresa Wilson carried out Stacey's plans. The five female attendants wore turquoise satin gowns and carried yellow daisy bouquets. The five guys wore black tuxes with turquoise satin ties and a yellow daisy boutonniere. Jay wore a stunning white suit, and Stacey wore a long white satin gown with turquoise flowers scattered down the front of the full skirt--very pretty. Jay and Stacey have been coming to church regularly for several months. (They have come before, but it was hard to be regular since Stacey is working full-time and also going to college. She has completed two years of a four year Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education. Jay has worked for two years in landscaping.

Another reason I am having a hard time writing these *Reflections* is because my dining room table is covered with baby clothes. My cleaning helper and I cleaned out a linen closet two weeks ago, and the top shelf had two large boxes of baby clothes, which our children had worn. I decided that now was the time to pass them on to the ones who had worn them. However, after being packed away for an average of 50 years, they needed a little "fluffing up." So I decided to wash them (2 large loads). Pastor Don ironed them for me and I started sorting them for the rightful owners. We had fun remembering those good days, even though some things reminded us of how poor we were. Our daughters are coming over today to choose what they want. I've already packed small boxes for our sons. We'll put whatever is left in our Basement Sale or give them to the Pregnancy Center.

However, the activities don't end there. We have 3 Graduations in the family this summer. The first one is yet this week: Sat., May 10 (the day before Mother's Day). Randy and Kris' son, **Tim Icard**, is graduating from Anderson University in Indiana, having earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree, with a Major in Finance and a Minor in Accounting. We will travel Thursday or Friday, go to his Saturday graduation, have an after-graduation dinner in Indianapolis, and on Sunday go to church at Madison Heights COG in Anderson. We'll visit Pastor Don's brother Roy and his wife Wilma while we are there, and then travel up to Michigan on Monday to see my sister and the rest of my family. Then on Friday start back home.

We will be here for **Sunday, May 19, for Penny Punchbowl**, when we bring in the change we've saved for that Special Missions Offering (or some green, or a check). This is always an enjoyable time as we place our special offering in the punch bowls. We will also celebrate our Spiritual Birthdays by listening to the testimony of "one of our own." We also have baptism on that Sunday, those who are being baptized can choose the pastor they want to baptize them.

On that same weekend, our family has another graduation. **Jacob Woody**, who we all call Jake, is the husband of our granddaughter, Emmy (Tom and Carol's daughter). He will graduate with a Doctor of Jurisprudence Degree in Law from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. We will not be going up for this, since we will be seeing him the next weekend, when, **Tom Walker Smith**, will graduate with an All-A average from Fork Union Military Academy in Virginia. This is just 20 minutes away from Jake and Emmy. In fact, we'll be staying at a motel in Charlottesville. This Tom, our grandson, is the son of our oldest son, Joe, and his wife, Vicky. He has earned the wonderful honor of receiving an appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD. It is an all expense paid 4-year college education combined with military training and regimen. He was nominated by Senator Burr and Representative Price. We are very proud of all three of our graduates, and pray the best for them as they pursue their careers. These 3 will make a total of 40 high school and college graduations in our family, counting ourselves, our children, grandchildren and their spouses. We can hardly believe this when we look back and know that no one in either of our families had ever gone to college, let alone graduate, before each of us did. We are not bragging, we are only acknowledging that God is so good as He leads us along!

I want to include a little note here about the Men's Bar-B-Que at church this past weekend. So far they have cleared \$3600.00—with ticket money still to come in. Many, many people (both men and women) worked very, very hard. Ten youth worked very hard, and were paid \$7.00 per hour to be applied to their International Youth Convention Trip. It's so wonderful to see such nice cooperation!

In the midst of all the good news, there has been sorrow. Four deaths have recently touched members or friends of our church family. The first was **Bradley Fox**, Dewey's 47-year old son who lived and died in San Francisco. His body was shipped back here for a memorial service at Gibbs Chapel on Sunday, April 20.

The second death was that of **Phyllis Peters**, who would have been 69 May 24. Phyllis was the sister of George Powell and Linda Berry. She was on our prayer list for several weeks, but died Thursday, April 17, at the hospital in her daughter's town in Illinois. George and Jean went up soon after they heard the sad news to be of help to their niece. Phyllis' body was flown to Du Quoin (pronounced Du Cain) to be buried next to her husband, Keith, who passed away 2 years earlier. Don and Linda drove up a few days later with another sister, Joan and her husband Bill Buff. The funeral was on Friday, April 25. Both the Powells and the Berrys left soon after the funeral to drive home. George and Jean got in at 1:00 a.m., and Don and Linda, after battling traffic, at 2:00 a.m. Everyone in the family was grateful that Phyllis had given her heart to the Lord, and was ready to meet her Maker.

The third death was that of **Leony Cates' younger brother** who lived in Manila. Her sister, Dory, called me from Hong Kong, where she works, to thank me for sending her back copies of my *Reflections*. She likes to read them, and then she asked if I had heard about the death of Leony's brother. Dory had been in the Philippines for a short vacation with her family. She took public transportation to Manila to visit this brother. He took her to the airport Saturday, and saw her off. She arrived home safely, but the next morning she got a phone call that the brother had died. She kept saying, "I can't believe it, and I can't go back." Death comes very quickly sometimes. Of three boys and three girls in Leony's family, this was the first sibling to die. One brother lives next door to Leony and Albert, and one lives in Canada. The other sister lives quite close to the Cateses, so she and Leony went to Manila together for the funeral.

The fourth and last death was that of **Rick Lewis**, husband of Darlene and father of Brooke, who died about 2:30 p.m. Saturday, May 3. Details later.

AND NOW FOR SOME JOYFUL NEWS! Max and Joyce Quarles are happy grand parents again. Their daughter, Marcie, and her husband, Jason Callicutt (who live in Huntersville), are first-time parents with the birth of little 6# 1 oz., 19 inches long, **Matthew Elam**, born April 8, just 3 days after her "family shower" at the Quarles' home. This baby would have been the great-grandson of Marvin and Wilma Dean. Both Sherry and Sheila had girls, so little Matthew is doubly welcome. Youth Pastors Kevin and April Wyatt also have their new little girl.

MORE NEWS FROM THE PHILIPPINES! Three Sundays ago, our daughter church celebrated Thanksgiving in their morning service with 163 present, and their 8th Church Anniversary Service (147 present) in the afternoon. They served food after both services, making a total of 310 meals. Albert said they had a little Business Meeting afterward, and decided that next year they will have only one service and one meal. He said it was too much work for the women. I think that was a very practical change. They also had a Baptismal Service. It was their Youth Pastor, Arnulfo's, first time to do the baptizing. He and Pastora Julie worked together. She held the hand of the one being baptized as they entered and came out of the baptistry. Arnulfo did the actual baptizing. Seven people were baptized (2 adults, 5 children). It is so wonderful to hear of their spiritual growth in this place.

NEWS FROM THE STEVENSONS IN UGANDA! Tim and Colleen's son Jesse, who was in second grade when we were SAM's in Uganda, graduated from the Heritage International School where I taught. Natasha is completing her second year at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, majoring in Artistic Design. Logan, who was three when we lived with the family, is now completing Junior High School (8th grade). But the Big News is that their oldest child, 21-year old Tiffany, was united in marriage with Morgan Limoges in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, April 17 in a civil ceremony. Since nearly all of her family are in Africa, the Stevensons are planning a formal wedding there on July 15th. This is Tiffany, whom I taught in the 6th grade the 5 months we were there. Tiffany, who climbed too high on the playground, broke her arm and had to wear a cast. She could not fit into the costume to play the lead role of Esther in a play the children wrote and performed for our turn to present a Chapel Program. So what did she do? We rounded up a large hunk of black hair to use for a beard, and a full long-sleeved black choir robe someone had sent over. With a lot of pluck and in her deepest bass voice, she played the role of Haman, the villain.

To God Be the Glory (Soli Deo Gloria)—Ruth

P.S. One last thought. You have a short window of opportunity (until May 18) to purchase a **\$12.95, 144 page book titled, *Basics of Belief***, put out by Warner Press (which scripturally explains and defends the beliefs of the COG) for **only \$4.55 plus shipping and handling**. Find the Order Blank on another sheet in this *Proclaimer*. This only can happen with an order of 12 or more copies at the pre-publication price of \$4.55 plus S & H. Pastor Smith's Sunday School Class is ordering and we can order one (or some) for you. Get your order in with correct cash or check made out to "The Pastor's Class," and hand to Kaye Williams. Call her at 433-4989 for any questions.