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BETHEL GROVE BIBLE CHURCH

1763 Slaterville Rd, Ithaca, NY, 14850

THE MESSENGER

August 2011

THOUGHTS FROM DAVE

When Joyce and I travel to the beach for our vacation, we throw the bikes on the bike rack, make sure we have plenty of sunscreen, and pack several good books to read. Sitting on beach chairs, while facing the majestic ocean, is inspiring. Doing it with a book in our hands reinvigorates and rejuvenates us. After reading a chapter, I usually get up, hit the surf or take a long walk to digest what I just read. Not a bad way to spend some vacation time.

One of my vacation books was Christopher Wright's *The Mission of God*. It is a 580 page masterpiece that unlocks the Bible's grand narrative and if I am honest, it will take three beach vacations to finish. In the initial chapter, I discovered a wonderful summary of God's overarching vision for this world and our response to it. Wright states that: "fundamentally, our mission (if biblically informed and validated) means our committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's own mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation." This theme swirled around in my heart for a long time and serves as a great reminder for our church to engage in God's purposes for this fallen world.

After reading the first four chapters of Wright's book, I spent a day reading *Radical* by David Platt. Subtitled *Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream*, Platt seeks to challenge Western Christians "to consider with an open heart how we have manipulated the gospel to fit our cultural preferences." Because this theme is so important to understand, the book will serve as a discussion guide for a Fall Adult Education class.

John Stott's book, *The Radical Disciple*, was my last book to read. Because it is Stott's farewell address to the worldwide church, it resonated with me in a visceral way. The chapters highlight some neglected aspects of our calling to follow Jesus. Straightforward and personal, the radical nature of discipleship is seen in the reality that Jesus is Lord and that all life comes under his Lordship.

These books caused me to reflect on my life, my faith and my role as pastor of Bethel Grove. I commend each one to you and ask that you pray about how God's Mission will become a more deliberate and radical part of our individual and corporate lives for God's glory and our good.



Kampala Baptist Church & Bethel Grove Bible Church

As Bethel Grove (BG) moves into the fifth year of our partnership with Kampala Baptist Church (KBC), we look forward to seeing what God will do through this growing relationship. Initially, from August 17-29, Dave Jones will travel to Uganda to participate in biblical training of pastors and leaders of Masaka region churches. This training session is a cooperative effort of both churches and is yielding growth in many ways.

The five day session will run from August 22 - 26. Dave will teach on Leviticus, facilitate questions and discussion sessions on the books of Moses, and explore the larger relationship between Leviticus and Hebrews with the focus on Christ. KBC pastor Andrew Mwenge will coordinate sessions on church administration and practical pastoral ministry, along with reflection and application of the Leviticus studies. Daudi Nkugwa, the KBC liaison for these training sessions, will coordinate small group assignments and organizational matters for the training. A schedule is available in the church foyer for your prayer support.

From October 25-31, BG will host three ladies from KBC. They are scheduled to spend one week with us. Faith Kembabazi, Florence Maganda and Miriam Friday will add much life to our congregation. They will participate in a variety of ways during the week, including speaking at an IWBS October brunch and participating in other international and congregational venues. Begin to prepare for their visit by praying for them and their time with us. We thank God for the blessings of this global partnership.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 28, FALL SCHEDULE BEGINS!

Worship at 9:00am and 10:45am

- Childcare for Infants to Pre-school during both services
- Bus Schedule Resumes
- No Adult Education until September 11th

9:00am only -Childcare up to 5th grade

-Promiseland Volunteer training/planning session

10:45am only -Children's Church (K-3rd Grade)



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In Remembrance of John Stott

July 29, 2011, by Michael J. Gerson

Originally published by the Center for Public Justice as a Capital Commentary. This is a transcript of a radio address broadcast on KDCR radio in Sioux Center, Iowa.

In this period of intense public disagreement—when the consequences of political choices are immediate and high—we have recently had a reminder of a different kind of influence. The news came that John Stott died at age 90, in the company of friends.

Many have recounted fond memories of Stott, who only seemed to leave fond memories behind. I was a college Junior when I spent a summer at the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, one of the institutions Stott founded. It was among the defining experiences of my youth. Stott went out of his way to engage a very shy and awkward young student, having me to his home, inviting me to a memorable lunch that included Malcolm Muggeridge. Stott was my first experience of a great public man who was also kind, thoughtful and humble.

But being kind did not make him pale or mild. During that time in London, I remember a sermon he gave at All Souls, Langham Place—one of the few sermons I've heard that I can still vividly recall. The Anglican Archbishop of Durham had recently been quoted dismissing the physical resurrection of Jesus. Stott responded with a sermon titled, "If Christ Be Not Raised," relentlessly drawing the consequences if the resurrection were a pious myth. This soft-spoken man thundered his assertion of the Gospel's truth. Stott's books such as *Basic Christianity* and *The Cross of Christ* remain some of the best introductions to the Christian faith. They combine direct language with a sophisticated knowledge of theology and scripture.

At the London Institute, I saw another side of Stott's ministry. Each week was a different seminar on an issue of Christian social responsibility: nuclear war, events in Central America, economic justice. I did not agree with everything I heard. But Stott showed me how a Christian could reason from first principles on difficult public issues. He believed that faith should have public consequences, not a particularly easy case to make in Britain, where secularization was already far advanced. Eventually, I picked up Stott's book, *Involvement: Being a Responsible Christian in a Non-Christian Society*, which addressed issues from sexual ethics, to labor rights, to bioethics. Stott also had a special passion for the developing world—a global vision that remains an example for others.

Yet none of this would have had the same power without Stott's personal example. His integrity multiplied his influence.

Just last week, I was visiting in London with one of Stott's closest friends and associates, Chris Wright of the Langham Partnership. We talked of Stott's fervor for bird watching. His service as a chaplain to the Queen. His belief in the power of well-crafted words. Chris told me that Stott was ailing badly—his mind clear, but his body failing and suffering.

Stott's passing is sad news, but also evidence of the grace he trusted so completely. In the end, the tired gain rest. And there is nothing to regret in a full life, lived in God's service. Theologian David Wells describes Stott's career as, "one of the most biblically consistent, thoughtful, remarkable, stain-free, God-blessed and far-reaching ministries of our time." All who felt Stott's influence are grateful—and there are so many.

—Michael J. Gerson is nationally syndicated columnist who appears twice weekly in *The Washington Post* and is the author of *Heroic Conservatism* (2007) and the co-author of *City of Man: Religion and Politics in a New Era* (2010).

A Letter In Honour of John Stott

Earlier this week one of my heroes, John Stott, died.

Coincidentally, my book of the week I'd chosen to read just a few days prior to his death was *John Stott: A portrait by his friends* edited by Christ Wright. Reading through it reminded me of the many ways Stott has inspired my life.

The most direct impact he made on us was the vision he cast through his involvement with the Lausanne Congress and Langham Trust. While churches around the world today have more access than ever to the Bible in their own language, Stott passionately believed people still needed to be given a much deeper understanding of Scripture, "until their very blood is Bibline"—filled and flowing with the very essence of the truths of the Bible. This shared belief inspired us to commit our own lives to the full-time writing and developing of modern hymns.

As a teacher, writer and evangelist, Stott's gifting and influence was stunning. He encouraged Christians to see themselves as part of both the local and global church. He maintained an amazing balance of discipline and creativity; of businesslike entrepreneurialism and individual pastoral care. He dealt courageously with extraordinary complexity while living in humble simplicity.

John Stott: A Portrait by His Friends is a must read for all of us. I encourage you to buy it for yourself and for friends. Reflecting on Stott's rich legacy of faith should greatly challenge us on our own spiritual journeys and make us ask, What will those who know us, work with us, and live with us want to say about us at the end of our lives?

With grace and peace,
Keith Getty

BG Library

A special display of John Stott's books is established in the library at the back of the sanctuary's long side. Investigate the options and take one home to be encouraged towards maturity in biblical understanding. Some of the available books are:

- The Cross of Christ*
- Basic Christianity*
- The Authentic Jesus*
- Volume I Involvement: Being a Responsible Christian in a Non-Christian Society*
- Volume II Involvement: Social and Sexual Relationships in the Modern World.*

Center For Student Missions... BG Youth Trip to Toronto - July 17-23



My time in Toronto was by far the most influential experience I have had at this point in my life. The things we did while there were challenging and yet at the same time rewarding, and they really gave me a chance to see some of the things God does in some difficult situations. The people we met and the places we visited carry a great weight, and I will never forget the things we did on this trip. - *Whit Ives*



"The trip to Toronto to work with CSM was a life changing experience for many of us who went on the trip. We gained new perspectives on who God is, who He loves and how He shows it. We learned to live together as a group and to see others around us in a new way, to love them as God loves us." *Alan Pauling*



This trip was a really great experience for me. God really worked in my life through CSM to show me how he is working in other people's lives. This encouraged my faith and helped me grow closer to God because I saw how people can trust in Jesus and be strong in their faith when they have absolutely nothing else to lean on or have hope in. I am so thankful for this life-changing experience. - *Mattie Hause*



"Toronto for me was a reminder of how big God is and how important every single being on earth is to Him. He calls us to love people with acceptance and without judgment. That made me want to push myself to love the way Jesus does and to convey His message through caring about the people He created. I'm so thankful for the trip and the way it built a desire in me to live my life for Christ. - *Meghan Mapes*



Fall 2011 Local Missions Opportunities

Feed My Starving Children

What: food packing event at Trinity Lutheran Church near East Hill Plaza
Who: open to anyone, child through elderly, who can work a 2 hour shift
When: 4-6 pm, Friday, 9 September, 8-10 pm, Saturday, 10 September other slots are available at <http://www.fmssc.org/page.aspx?pid=409>
Why: this is a community event that witnesses Christ in our county; it provides food to hungry children.



Hands of Christ



What: week long series of opportunities to serve in Tompkins County
Who: events for all ages: families, teens, singles, couples, students reach out and use your skills: sewing, painting, cleaning, lugging, raking.
When: 24 September through 2 October, time commitments vary, 2 to 4 hours is common
Why: extend the love of God in our communities

Prayer Walk Week

What: many hour long walks throughout the week and throughout the county in which participants pray for God to move, 1.5 hour time commitment
Who: join with others in your neighborhood, small group, or work place
When: 23 through 30 October
Why: pray for guidance and wisdom; pray for God to move



Why do we engage in good works?

- 1) Acting the love of God transforms our hearts and increasingly conforms us to the image of our Lord. Philippians 2:1-7
- 2) We are commanded to help others. Colossians 3:12, Romans 5:12
- 3) Selfless kindness is a strong witness to our communities. Matthew 15:31
- 4) Working together builds our church. Hebrews 12:14
- 5) We are directly serving and bringing glory to God. Matthew 25:40

How can you help?

- Volunteer to work, to walk, and to pray.
- Courageously offer to lead a Hands of Christ project or a prayer walk.
- Identify a needy person in your neighborhood that we could help.
- Volunteer alone or as families, small groups, Sunday School classes . .
- Prioritize and set aside time for these three activities.

Children's Ministry News!

It's been an exciting summer for Promiseland! We've welcomed four new families and their 10 children. Some of our volunteers took a much needed break, while others selflessly continued to serve. Thanks to our regular volunteers and many enthusiastic BG teens we were able to provide loving childcare for an average of 28 babies – preschool children each Sunday.

Our Children's Church program flourished as well. Members of the congregation shared their knowledge of The Wonders of God's World with the children, ages K-3rd grade, and teens offered a consistent helping hand. We have run out of wall space with our aquarium, collages, and nature table. The kids have worked hard memorizing bible verses and look forward to one last "verse store" where they can choose prizes for their memorization efforts. Each week they shared their offering money to assist people recovering from the tornado damage in Joplin, Missouri, through Samaritan's Purse. Bible Study Fellowship continued for children in 4th and 5th grades, under the direction of a few faithful volunteers, as they discussed the same topic presented in the sermon.

Now we are starting to gear up for an exciting fall as well! We will start the fall with a volunteer teacher training/planning session on August 28th at 9:00. We are grateful that many of the classes are fully staffed. Since some of our volunteers are taking a break this fall and others have moved away, we are continuing to pray for more loving volunteers to help with the babies through preschoolers during both services. Our fall program starts September 11. On this date we will return to providing childcare for both services, Sunday School at 9:00 and Children's Church and Bible Study Fellowship at 10:45.



Amy Bach Promiseland Coordinator
Carla Smith Promiseland Administrative Assistant

Bulletin Board



100TH BIRTHDAY
SUNDAY, AUGUST 28TH
AFTER CHURCH A CELEBRATION WITH
FRIENDS WHO KNOW MARION DUPLESSIS
ARE INVITED TO OUR HOME. REFRESH-
MENTS, CAKE CUTTING AT 2:00PM
NO GIFTS PLEASE.
R.S.V.P. 564-7211 DIANA JENKINS



**TEN THOUSAND
VILLAGES**

Ithaca is hosting a special Fair Trade Oriental Rug Event, featuring high quality, handknotted Oriental rugs from Pakistan made by fairly paid adults. The rugs, which are made by artisans in their homes, will be for sale at St. Catherine of Siena on August 26, 27, and 28. These rugs are exquisitely designed and crafted by an artisan group in Pakistan known as Bunyaad, meaning “foundation” in Urdu. Bunyaad builds foundations for artisans in Pakistan by paying a fair wage to its more than 850 artisan families. By earning a living wage, artisans can build better homes and living conditions, create educational opportunities for their children, foster greater understanding between religious and ethnic groups, and spread peace through equal opportunity for all. You can call our store, at 256-0616 with any questions.

MAKE A FRIEND - IMPACT THE WORLD!

God has brought the world to us in Ithaca. By befriending an international student, you can greatly change his or her perception of Christianity and America. These students will become people of influence all around the world, so the impact you have in their lives will be multiplied many times over. You have the opportunity to be a friendship partner (host family) to one or more international students or scholars studying at Cornell University. The student does not live with you—the expectation is simply to develop a friendship by doing something with the student about once a month.

If you are interested in participating and have not previously attended a training, you are encouraged to attend the Friendship Partner training at Bethel Grove at 9:00am on September 4th in the Ministry Center Living Room. Please contact David or Beth Larson at dlarson778@roadrunner.com or 200-4080 to register.

NEED FOR MENTORS



Considering the July 24th sermon on “Giving To The Lord”, this is an opportunity for women who would be willing to come alongside ladies recently in the Tompkins county jail that need a Christian mentor when released. If we, as believers in Christ, can be there to listen, pray for, and assist in simple ways, they might not return to their old friends and bad choices. We would ask you to pray about this ministry and see if it is one God might be calling you to.

**For more information contact:
Patricia Pollock@ 387-9845.**

Golf Outing, July 22



from left: Fred Scott Don Railsback, Ray Scott, Dick Knight, Howard Loveless, Bonnie Shelford, Jordan Jacobsen, Jonathan Butcher and Dave Jones

On one of the hottest days of July, nine brave souls spent a morning at Elm Tree Golf Course. Several golfers, who will be remain nameless, scored higher than the temperature reading of 96 degrees. These individuals got their money’s worth by exploring vast areas of the course. Each one is certain that the heat contributed to their high golf score.

The other golfers, who exhibited skill and discipline, stayed cool as they registered in the mid to high eighties on their score card. These golfers included: Fred Scott, Ray Scott, Jonathan Butcher and Jordan Jacobsen.

Another golf outing will be offered in the cooler days of the fall. Keep your eyes open for announcements of the next event.

Events For Your Calendar

August 14 - 20

14th 9:30am Worship Service

August 21-27

21st 9:30am Worship Service
Aaron Hicks speaking
Middle School and High School
Drop-in @ Matties
24th CU Instruction Begins
26th B-Mets Baseball with Fireworks
Middle School and High School

August 28-September 3

28th 9:00am & 10:45am Worship Services
Return to Two Service Schedule
Eric Hause speaking
Bus Schedule Resumes
31st Matt and a Movie
High School
IC Classes begin

September 4-10

4th 9:00am & 10:45am Worship Services
Communion
5th Labor Day, Office Closed
9-10th Feed My Starving Children Event @
Trinity Lutheran Church
10th Elders Retreat

September 11-17

11th 9:00am & 10:45am Worship Services
Adult education Begins
Children's Program Starts
15th Ithaca Women's Bible Study Begins

September 18-24

18th 9:00am & 10:45am Worship Services
Youth Kick Off
24 Hands for Christ week begins
(continues through October 2)

September 25-October 1

Hands for Christ week continues
25th 9:00am & 10:45am Worship Services
Youth Kick Off
27th MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers)

October 2-8

2nd 9:00am & 10:45am Worship Services
Communion
Last Day for Hands Of Christ Event

October 9-15

9th 9:00am Educational Hour
10:45am One Worship Service

Wedding News

John Haler III and Emily Scheffler, July 9
Levi and Scotia Scott, July 16
Matthew Student & Elizabeth Wells, July 30

Babies!

Below is a list of babies born to families who attend Bethel Grove. The infant room sure is busy on Sunday mornings!

 Nathan & Carissa Ball - Hannah, July 19

 Lee and Christy Bostic- Ariella, July 20