

Sunday, April 30, 2017

MY VISION Reaffirmed

Abraham Kuyper said, "One desire has been the ruling passion of my life. One high motive has acted like a spur upon my mind and soul. And sooner than that I should seek escape from the sacred necessity that this is laid upon me, let the breath of life fail me. It is this: That in spite of all worldly opposition, God's holy ordinances shall be established again in the home, in the school and in the State for the good of the people; to carve as it were into the conscience of the nation the ordinances of the Lord, to which the Bible and Creation bear witness, until the nation pays homage again to God." I share Kuyper's vision and desire. However, I would amend it to read, "One desire is the ruling passion of my life. One high motive has acted like a spur upon my mind and soul. God's holy ordinances must be established again in the home, in the school and in the public and civic lives of Believers for the good of the Nation; to carve as it were into the conscience of all Christians the ordinances of the Lord, to which the Bible and Creation bear witness, until the Church thus pays homage again to God in our Nation."

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 16:38

Tuesday, July 29. 2014

NEW: POSTING RESUMES FROM MARYLAND

You may have noticed that I have not posted here for several weeks. That is because my wife and I have been very busy relocating our home from Massachusetts to Maryland. Today, I pick up my digital pen and paper to blog once again. I pray that you will be helped in your life as a Christian by what you read here [and on my website, reformedliving.org] in the days ahead. - Cal

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 15:30

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Both Jesus and Paul proclaimed the kingdom of God. One Biblical meaning of the word "kingdom" is power as in ... Another meaning is dynamic- reign and the third use is static- realm. There has always been the Kingdom of God inasmuch as God has always had and exercised power. He has always ruled in the affairs of humanity and the natural world. And where He has done that, there has been His Realm.

In a special way, the power and reign and realm of God were present in the world in the life and times of Jesus. Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Kingdom of God prevailed and conquered the Powers of Sin, Death and Satan (although these Powers deny and resist this Truth strenuously!) That is the penultimate good news of the Kingdom preached by Jesus and Paul. The Kingdom of God continues today in all 3 senses of the word. When the Risen and ascended Jesus personally and publicly returns at some point in History, the fullness of the Kingdom shall be manifest in the redemption and renewal or transformation of both earth and the heavens.

The Kingdom, power and glory belong to God alone- not to Satan or to Humanity, let alone any Nation, organization or political Leader. None of the latter can build the Kingdom. God alone does that.

However, God uses all these and the forces of Nature, as the agents or instruments of His Kingdom. The most important or primary agent that God uses to demonstrate His power and to expand both His reign and realm is literally the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God grows (the power, reign and realm of God are manifest) primarily through the spread of the Word of God. The Church is not the Kingdom, but it is the keeper of the Keys to the Kingdom (Matt 16:19) And those keys are Preaching the Word and Discipling those who respond to that preaching- those who confess the Faith, are baptized and learn to obey the commands of God. (Matt 28:19f; Acts 2:36-42, 8:12)

Preaching and Discipling! These are the major privilege and responsibility of the Church. I no longer have the authority or opportunity to preach in any church (although I can pray for and support those who do); but through the medium of the internet, I hope to continue to teach and disciple Believers.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 15:28

Friday, March 1. 2013

NEW: INTERACTIVE E-BOOK

I am proud and happy to say that Kudos Press is getting bigger and better. Please visit the site. The newest of 4 Platforms is a very innovative, interactive e-book!! The other 3 include Devotionals I have written, an e-zine of various topical articles and an e-zine for high-end motorcycles and sports cars (lots of photos). There are also audiotapes by well-known Christian Teachers (eg- J.I.Packer)
<http://kudospress.com>

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 18:12

Friday, January 11. 2013

PLEASE VISIT THE ARCHIVES

I began this Blog 7 years ago (2/2005). There are now 256 pages in the Archives with 2560 Posts. Looking back over it, I honestly believe there are many good articles about many important, relevant topics. I encourage you to check them out. Thank you and God bless!

Cal
cfoxinstitute@thinkersloft.com

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 19:05

Thursday, November 8, 2012

WHO I AM

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION -

I am Calvin Fox, ordained as a Baptist Minister of the Gospel, according to the usage of the Baptist General Conference, in 1961. Retired from the Pastorate, I am now a lay-theologian in the Reformed, Covenant and Neo-Calvinist Tradition. (The Principles of Neo-calvinism are outlined below the photo.) We are also now confirmed Anglicans, having come to appreciate Liturgical, Eucharistic Worship. My formal education was at the University of Connecticut and Lincoln Christian Seminary.

Our 45 years of Ministry has included Pastoring full time and part time in a variety of churches, from urban to suburban to rural. We have been blessed in ministry to college students, as well as in Evangelism and church planting in several States. I have also had many years experience working in Social Services both in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Retired, my wife and I live in Springfield Massachusetts.

I share a vision seen by Abraham Kuyper. However, I would amend what he wrote to read, "One desire is the ruling passion of my life. One high motive has acted like a spur upon my mind and soul. God's holy ordinances [Law] must be established again in the home, in the school and in the public and civic lives of Believers for the good of the Nation; to carve as it were into the conscience of all Christians the ordinances [Law] of the Lord, to which the Bible and Creation bear witness, until the Church thus pays homage again to God in our Nation."

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 16:40

Sunday, July 29, 2012

NEW RESOURCES FOR WOULD-BE WRITERS

As regular readers know, some of my Devotional writing, called QT Thots, may be found every week at <http://kudospress.com/serendipity/>

My son, Kevin, also has a new, improved and very attractive website on which he posts material in his special field of writing and editing and publishing. He is a trained Professional and offers a lot of well-organized resources. I hope you will use them- I am.

<http://www.fox4editing.com/>

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 08:20

Monday, November 7, 2011

LIGHTS OUT

The area we live in was without power this past week. Hundreds of thousands had no electricity, including yours truly, for 7 full and stressful days. Hence I was not able to post. - Cal

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 20:25

Saturday, October 15, 2011

READING WORDS ENGRAVED ON WASHINGTON MONUMENTS

Inspiring and wonderful words are engraved in the walls of buildings all around Washington D.C. High-sounding ideals are engraved on the new memorial to Martin Luther King Jr, as well as on the older ones dedicated to Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, Woodrow Wilson, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson as well as on memorials to veterans of our various wars. They include words that every American can wholehearted agree to, words such as Justice, Equality, Brotherhood, Peace, Freedom, Honor. The same Ideals are engraved on the walls of the Library of Congress and the Congressional Building and Supreme Court Building and many others. These are words, Ideals, we all believe in. They speak of Principles that unite us, words for which we stand together as a People. Then why are we so divided as a Nation? Because we do not agree on what these words, these Ideals, these Principles actually mean in practice. More than that, we do not agree on how to achieve and preserve these Ideals, particularly the role of the Federal Government in doing that. Behind these wonderful words and concepts that appear to unite us, are divisions caused by often opposing beliefs and dogmas about how to apply and live by these words as a Nation. This is tragic but true. It is Reality. How did we become the Disunited State of America? First, we the People have departed from the Biblical, Reformation (Calvinist) Faith of the first Colonists, the Puritans, which was dominant in this Land for more than 125 years before the Revolution of 1776. . That original dominant Faith has long been replaced by another dominant one known as Civil Religion or the Religion of the Republic which has Christian trappings and symbols, but is not Christian. Second, we have departed from the original meaning of the words, principles and intent of the Founding Documents of the United States and their Framers. Those founding words have, over the years, been endued with ever new and progressive meanings in keeping with the changing values and mores of American Society. (There are many reasons why this happens.) The result is that all Americans can read the Ideals engraved on all those memorial walls with open and nodding approval, but secretly with different, often conflicting, understanding of them. On special occasions when those words and Ideals are invoked, we appear to be united. In reality, we are far from it. Reading the words on these memorials, as I did last week, I am inspired by the ideals they represent and impressed and thankful that they have been spoken and embraced by so many of our Leaders, but the reality troubles me. What must be done to remedy this situation? The solution seems obvious and I am motivated to work harder to do what I can to achieve it by the grace of God and to His Glory.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 00:14

Friday, October 14, 2011

WHEN WASHINGTON D.C. WAS BURNED TO THE GROUND

Our visits to the Washington D.C- Baltimore area are always filled with fascinating discoveries and experiences, thanks to the interests and hospitality of our daughter and her family who live there. They are a Navy Family, our son-in-law being retired after his 20 year career (but still involved in national security), a grandson who has served and another who is a midshipman now preparing to serve our Country in the Military. Our patriotism is always stirred up during these visits big time! Our daughter knows and enjoys both DC and Baltimore very well and we always visit historical places, National Memorial sites, museums and buildings of importance to functions of our Government. I really wish every American would do all that! We have been several times to Fort McHenry in Baltimore, which recently opened a new visitors' center, and have become familiar with the War of 1812-15 when British armies and ships invaded our Nation from the Great Lakes to Louisiana, burning down our Capital, but being defeated in the 26 hour battle in Baltimore centered around the Fort. Watching the very well-done video of the Battle, ending with the display of our Flag that was still there in dawn's early light and listening to the (now) National Anthem sung by the Naval Academy Chorus really moves the heart and brings tears to the eyes, a lump to the throat and great thanksgiving for the mercies and blessing of God on our Country and a strong appreciation for those who have gone before us to fight for and preserve this Land of the Free!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 11:04

Saturday, September 3, 2011

WARNING: GRANDPARENTS SCAM

My wife answered the phone yesterday. The young man calling said he was (one of our grandsons). My wife told him he didn't sound like (our grand son) He replied he had a cold and then went on to say he was in trouble and needed our help. He had been mugged but in the scuffle the mugger fell down and hit his head. Ambulance and police arrived. The mugger accused (our grandson) of assault. The police believed him and took (our grandson) to the Police station. That is where he was calling from, he said. He asked us not to call his parents and to please send him money to get out of jail. We were totally incredulous, but very confused. What? Who? Where? How? 3000 dollars!? He said his lawyer wanted to talk with us. I got on the phone. The man, a different voice, repeated the story and said he could get the charges dropped if we sent the money. He was very serious, very convincing. I said I did not believe what he was saying. No way! And we would never wire money to a stranger anyway. He went into this whole thing about "If you love your grandson, how can you let him sit here in a jail cell, etc." I said my wife and I would need to talk about this. He said he would call back in a half hour but he did not.

We called our real grandson's parents. No, he was not in jail. He was where he lives, miles away and safe. We later read on Google about how common this "Grandparents Scam" is. We were put through a scare and almost got cheated out of 3000 dollars. Thankfully we did not bite. But I write this for the benefit of others who may never have heard of such a thing. From the stories on Google it happens all over the Country. And how did the scumbag get our names and number? Most likely from Facebook! Beware!!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 19:20

Thursday, July 28. 2011

JOHN STOTT

Tributes to John Stott are being written and posted in many places. on the web. He went home to the Lord yesterday at age 90. I simply want to add my thanksgiving for his Ministry that began as a Priest in the Church of England in 1945. We never met (I did hear his wonderful exposition of Scripture at Urbana in the early 70's) but he influenced my Christian life and thought greatly through his books and what I learned from his personal example as a world Christian leader of the highest caliber.

In particular, he (and his contemporaries such J.I. Packer, Leon Morris and C.S. Lewis,) convinced me that I could be an Evangelical and an Anglican at the same time. He faithfully glorified the Lord and His influence for Christ lives on in me and multitudes of others. Thanks be to God!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 16:35

Saturday, July 2, 2011

WELCOME BACK

As regular readers know, I have been off-line for the last three weeks on vacation. Last week, my wife and I with our family enjoyed a wonderful time at a marvelous Christian Conference Center in Maryland. We highly recommend Sandy Cove. Everything about it is first class.
<http://www.sandycove.org/>

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 18:20

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

THE HACKING AND REBUILDING OF KUDOS PRESS WEBSITE

Over the Christmas Weekend, hackers destroyed the website of Kudos Press. But it has been rebuilt and is better now than it was before the attack. The excellent mystery novel written for youth by our son, Kevin, can be found there. It is called "Christmas Crimes" and is set in Newport Vermont (It is not a Christmas Story)

The practical, helpful book introducing the basics of world or cross-cultural missions today, called "Engaging the Adventure", is also available at Kudos Press website. It was written by our other son, Loren, formerly a Missionary in Asia and now a Pastor in Florida. It is especially good for small group study -outlines, charts, discussion questions.

<http://kudospress.com/serendipity/>

Go to the Bookstore (on the navigation bar at the top) for more information. Thanks!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 14:16

EVANGELIZING MUSLIMS AND OTHERS

Having posted the 2 articles below this one, I want to clarify where I'm coming from on the subject of Muslims. I do not personally have a special burden or vocation to reach Muslims for Christ (or Hindus or Jews or Atheists, etc). I know others who believe they do. Although many have strong feelings against Islam, I do not personally have a special vocation to combat that Religion (or any other as such). What I do have is a life-long a burden to reach sinners with the Gospel whoever they are, wherever they live (I have never had a burden for a particular town or group of people as such, although others have- only for individuals, young or old, who live in the town or group.) My life-long burden has been for evangelism wherever and with whomever I have had the opportunity to do it. It is the love of Christ in me for them that constrains me and my love for Him and a desire to see Him magnified around the Globe, by peoples of every nation and tongue.

I do have a vocation to combat spiritual powers of Darkness and to tear down any and all Ideologies, Philosophies and "-isms" that are opposed to the Truth of God and that help prevent sinners from seeing the Light that is Christ. I do not believe sinners can be led to faith by reason or argumentation as such. The object of "tearing down strongholds" is to creat doubt and confusion in the minds of unbelievers about their worldview and their assumptions about life and what they hold to be true. This is not an end in itself. This is pre-evangelism, which is essential to evangelism. It is plowing the fields to prepare them to receive the seed of the Gospel and to produce the fruits of that Gospel in daily living. I understand why many are offended and threatened by such intentions, but this is nothing new at all. I fully agree that the Gospel is dangerous and will turn the world upside down and change the way people think and live. None of that should deter us. These spiritual Powers of Darkness operate in many places and ways. They seek to control and utilize all the systems of the world to promote Evil. That includes the Church, Marriage, Family, the Economy and Government. The dark Powers work in conjunction with fallen human nature, appealing to it to faciliate sin in human lives. These Powers can be found everywhere among all types and kinds of people around the world and go by many names. But the conflict is not with the names as such, or with people as such. We do not hate unbelieving people. Others will accuse us, from their perspective, of being bigoted, oppressive and phobic toward human beings. This criticism will be hard to avoid, but it must never be actually true. The main weapon of the spiritual Powers of Darkness is intellectual Deception; deceiving the unsaved (and some Christians, too) into believing false hood about both spiritual matters and morality. The best offense is confronting these Powers and Falsehoods with Truth and Prayer. This spiritual warfare, to be effective, must be done intentionally and strategically. It requires an educated and skilled army of Christian soldiers. Having been engaged in the conflict most of my life, I find my special burden now is to equip and encourage others, especially youth, to take the field of battle. I do this today primarily through writing and teaching (rather than Preaching), using the internet and my prayers. I hope we are co-laborers in this work. There are many practical, relevant posts on this Blog and on my Website for you to use.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 13:17

Monday, January 3, 2011

THANK YOU FOR VISITING- I hope you will come again and often!

Happy New Year! We were away over the Holidays and thus no new posts last week. I want to thank all who visited this Blog and my website, Reformed Living, last year. In total, there were almost 10,000 visits in November and again in December. (There were far more "hits") This is encouraging to me and motivates me to do more with both these sites. I also send out Devotionals by email 3 times every week to those who would like to receive them. (You may request them at cfoxinstitute@verizon.net)

May the Lord bless each of us and direct us all by His Spirit and Word to know and do His will in all things. -Cal

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 08:04

Friday, October 15, 2010

BACK TO THE BASICS AGAIN!

I wrote on my website that I have given up my unhealthy obsession about unhealthy churches.

<http://www.reformedliving.org/>

Keeping up with daily news can also be very unhealthy, too. The daily diet of corruption, fraud, theft, deception, greed and violence is sickening. We must advocate for social justice as the Bible defines that, but the real, urgent need is still for changed human hearts. And only preaching the Gospel will lead to that. Then, the minds of those who's hearts have been regenerated must be disciplined rigorously to obey the Word of the Lord in all areas of their lives no matter what!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 11:43

Monday, July 19. 2010

ANGER MANAGEMENT II (REVISED)

II. We become stuck in a cycle of anger when-one of more of the causes of anger are present.we confront the causes and try to force a changewe meet resistance in others to the proposed changes we become more frustrated and the anger escalatesIII. Ways to try to handle angerA. Unhealthy- suppression,open public aggression, passive aggression- 1. suppression This has been my life long public (not private) practice, believing "Christians do not get angry" and not wanting to be like my father who often became very angry. (I have always tried to be a "good boy") My effort to suppress anger may be manifest in the seizures I have had for the last 15 years. Doctors have told me I have "Conversion Disorder". The Theory is unresolved internal anger is converted unconsciously into clonic-tonic body movements. I must resolve my anger in a healthy way. 2. open public aggression [before I began this study, I had begun to express verbal anger and that (plus the "seizure thing) scared me and led to doing this study. 3. passive aggression- This is expressing anger in underhanded, covert ways, undermining or hurting others without blowing up or assaulting them directly. These 3 methods do not work and are counter productive; B. Healthy- assertion or letting go- 1. Assertive AngerThis anger is not expressed with aggression against others. Aggression is replaced by assertion, i.e.- with constructive communication and with consideration of the needs of others and of one's relationship with them. The object is to improve those relationships and keep the door open to improvement. Of course this assumes that I want to improve those relationships. I am learning to sort out the issues. I must be sure the issues that are upsetting are truly important and essential (most are not) and not trivial (many are). I am learning to not threaten others with my voice (words and tone) or with gestures and actions. All this is an ongoing challenge and not easy.2. Dropping Anger (letting it go)I must recognize when change is not going to happen and when I can not change anything and when I not in control of the situation and thus to walk away or drop it. I must accept differences; forgive if necessary, but move on. Learning to do this has been very helpful. It is good advice.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 13:55

Thursday, June 24, 2010

ANGER MANAGEMENT I (REVISED)

A recent visit to Washington DC scared me. Well, not the visit itself, but the anger it aroused in me. I surprised myself and those with me by my over the top, negative reaction to all the security restrictions. That is what alarmed me. Where was this reaction coming from? I have since been working my way through a manual on anger management. I had used the book years ago as a resource for pastoral counseling. It is "The Anger Workbook" written by Les Carter and Frank Minirth, published in 1993. It has been helpful and I think it might be helpful to others. Therefore, I am putting some of my notes on this Blog. This is from my personal journal. I am trying to work through some very personal issues. Writing it out is helpful and I recommend journaling to you if you do not already do it. My experience may be very different than yours, but I am guessing it will be relevant to yours and hopefully you will find my notes helpful. Carter & Minirth explain Anger as the emotion of self-preservation. It can be defined as effort to preserve self-worth, essential needs and basic convictions when we feel or perceive these are threatened or violated. -p.8

Using this definition, I have come to these conclusions-

BASIC REASONS FOR MY ANGER

I am angry when 1. ... I am demeaned or dis-respected as a human being, a person. It is not enough to know that God and some people value me as a person. I know that and I am glad, but when people trash my yard, break into my house, drive in ways that endanger my life or car or yell at me and order me around or ask me to do stupid and demeaning acts or treat me as though I were a child or stupid, I still become angry. ... I feel demeaned and disrespected, if my knowledge and skills and experience as a Christian and Pastor are put down, ignored, devalued or disrespected, especially by other Christians and Pastors. Sometimes I have felt, and still do, feel, this happens. I am angry when 2. ... my personal needs are ignored or denied. Some of my greatest needs (besides the essentials for health and life) are - to be loved, valued and respected by significant others, sharing time with them - freedom to set my daily schedule pace, quiet, privacy, time for study and writing - organization, order and punctuality. - knowledge (the exercise of my mind) - meaningful corporate worship, good sermons and teaching - meaningful Christian fellowship and support - ministry (I need to be teaching and sharing with others) It is not enough that some of these needs are usually met. The bottom three needs have rarely been met for several years now and that has been disappointing and frustrating. I am angry when 3 ... my convictions and values are ignored, violated or trashed by others. It has helped to prioritize these principles and accept imperfection in myself and in others and to be realistic; not to sweat the little or secondary things, not to let the lesser sins of others get me down, not to be rigid. I am working on these things. Nevertheless, I still have strong and high standards about many matters that are not shared by many around me.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:33

ANGER MANAGEMENT III (REVISED)

NEXT: Why Anger persists: digging deeper into the 3 factors that cause Anger: Disrespect, Unmet needs, Contradicted convictions Of all the unmet psychological needs, foremost is the unmet need for love, starting in childhood, then family, peers and in marriage. We depend on people loving us. That dependency can become unhealthy. We crave acceptance and approval and that takes over our lives and our happiness becomes dependent upon others. How others treat us can determine our emotional health. We must recognize unhealthy dependency on others and reject it. It leads to disappointment, frustration and anger. We must accept that others can not meet all our needs. C&M say we must learn to look to the Lord for the love we need. He must be the "other" who meets this need. And we must learn to turn to Him when we find ourselves feeling unloved. This requires knowing Him and having a strong devotional life and learning to obey Him. This is important but I think it is insufficient. Anger persists when we are feeling completely controlled by others at least at the time or by circumstances, making demands on us against our will, depriving us of freedom and choice and personal responsibility. People seek to control us because our performance is considered more important to them than our feelings or our relationships. Others want us to do what they expect of us. Period. Another reason for being controlled by others is to enforce conformity to their expectations and differences are not valued. Great differences are rejected. They (and thus we) are threatening to "the program". Discussion, alternatives, objections are rejected by whoever is in control. Obedience is required. We must not respond to being controlled by seeking to counter control. This leads to power play and that is counter productive. Instead, we must claim inner personal freedom. Believe in your self worth. It will be your free choice whether to conform or not. If you determine the situation will not change, decide if conformity is worth your while or not, being willing to be responsible for the consequences either way.

We can choose to walk away or to be cooperative within agreeable boundaries. All of this sounds too simplistic and unrealistic in many situations, but in general I have found it to be good advice and I'm working on it. Many people are angry because of their own poor choices. The causes of their anger are often self-inflicted and this usually begins with a poor understanding of what one's true needs are. Angry people are often people who live only in the moment, seeking to satisfy immediate needs immediately in whatever means possible or available at the moment. There is no planning, no sense of consequences, discipline or exercise of responsibility to others. People characteristically angry are often people who live only for themselves, often compromising their values and morals for immediate gratification. Angry people are often overworked, concerned mostly with material things, overloaded with problems and very stressed out. They usually do not take care of themselves properly and so have poor health and are always tired. This stress, frustration, unhappiness results in very low self-esteem, hopelessness, resentment and abiding anger. Again, C&M recommend turning to the Lord and making Him the center of one's life. This is the deepest and most important "need" that everyone has. The ultimate, but not single, solution for anger is turning one's life over to God. I have found that such turning is often a process, not done overnight. The book goes on to explore the relationship between Anger and Pride, Fear, Loneliness and Inferiority feelings. Having a good counselor is necessary to probe these areas and probing is the work. It is work and can be difficult.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:31

ANGER MANAGEMENT IV (NEW)

The Carter Minirth Workbook probes deeper into the problem of Anger management by examining the connection between Anger and Pride. Pride is defined as the "emotion of self-absorption", of being preoccupied with ourselves (p.117) Such pre-occupation sets us up for anger. Pride is not the same, they say, as arrogance and conceit, but it is having our mind focused on yourself, our rights and preferences. The anger comes when we feel others are not catering to these concerns. The fundamental solution is to become preoccupied with God and focusing on serving Him. We can not be God-centered and self-centered at the same time. We can not dwell in the presence of the Lord and still believe we are the center of the Universe and every one must serve us. However, many of us do not realize, we don't see, how much pride we have. Some of those who love the Lord are also some of the most self-absorbed people I know. They do not realize it. We are very good at compartmentalizing our lives (and deceiving ourselves). The practical solution to the problem of Pride is to intentionally cultivate Humility, the lack of self-preoccupation. Becoming humble means accepting limits upon ourselves, agreeing we are not the center of the universe and others are not obligated to, and will not always, cater to our needs. This humility can not be artificial or forced. It is not about repressing our emotions. "Putting on" humility must not be used as another way of getting what we want out of others. Ironically, false humility can lead to real pride. If being humble is seen as an obligation, a duty then we can be proud of ourselves and be puffed up because we are obeying the rule. True humility comes as we choose to recognize and honestly appreciate the needs of others and become sensitive to them and seek to meet their needs instead of our own. Sounds like loving our neighbors! Becoming less angry requires recognizing that there are limits to what we can have or do or be. When we decide to accept and respect others and their differences and rights, our pride consequently will diminish and so will our anger. When we choose to do this, we shall feel less inconvenienced and imposed upon. With humility, we shall not be so easily offended and therefore become less angry. We accept that the world really does not revolve around us ("Don't they know who I am?") and it doesn't need to and it won't. Accepting that reality, we won't become angry when that happens. Our "commitment to humility needs to be repeated daily". (p.132) So does our commitment to loving the Lord and the people around us. All of that makes sense and I work on it daily. The next topic is Fear and it is more challenging to me. I recognize this as a real problem for me and there is a connection with the anger I struggle with.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:30

ANGER MANAGEMENT V (NEW)

Fear and Anger. The key (as usual) is with the definition of "fear". It is not about having phobias or anxiety attacks. It is not the same as being unassertive, intimidated, cowardly or extreme shyness. According to the Workbook, "Fear" is inner insecurity that inhibits us from living with confidence. It implies being hesitant, apprehensive and full of doubt. (p.135) And the most reliable sign of fear is defensiveness. The latter includes any tactic intended to shield ourselves from perceived threats (p.137). The connection of fear and Anger is simple when we remember Anger is the emotion of self-preservation. It can be defined as effort to preserve self-worth, essential needs and basic convictions when we feel or perceive these are threatened or violated. There are 3 types of tactics used to defend ourselves when dealing with something that makes us fearful: Denial is refusal to acknowledge personal problems bothering us. This is self-deception. Evasiveness, on the other hand, is when a person knows there are personal issues, but deliberately deceives others about them. This is avoiding the issues because problems are expected if they are confronted. There is personal insecurity and a lack of trust in others. (They will not understand or they will reject me or hurt me.) I certainly have been guilty of Evasiveness. Probably all of us have. I think sometimes it is necessary at the moment.

Evasiveness becomes a serious issue if it gets out of hand and becomes very frequent and interferes with our relationships and we live a double life filled with dishonesty and deception. Reversal is to go on the verbal offense (believing the best defense is offense) Feeling threatened, we try to turn the tables and go after the person we fear will attack us. Doing this keeps people away from us (or from the "real" us that we are covering up), expecting the worse from them. (I realize I have often used humor or sarcasm to do this when certain people approach or when a sensitive topic comes up. It is defensive move because it wards off their inquiry or changes the subject or it makes them want to step away and leave me alone. I have consciously worked to stop doing this, but it still happens. I am often defensive, and when I am I become touchy and irritable (angry). We practice Denial, Evasiveness or Reversal because we are insecure, apprehensive and full of doubt, especially about other people, in relation to certain issues in our lives that we do not want to deal with or do not know how to deal with or do not want others to try to deal with. They are tactics to avoid the responsibility of meeting problems head on. The Workbook says the problem is (again) that we are allowing people to have too much power over us. We need to become self-confident and not fearful of what others will say to us or about us or to us. The opposite of fearful defense is open authenticity where we live without pretense and what we do and say is faithful to who we are and what we believe or want. In other words, no games. Be true to ourselves. This means we are open about our weaknesses and struggles as well. We do not need to cover up or be afraid of being discovered or disapproved by others. We will have nothing to hide and there will be no need for barriers or Denial, Evasiveness or Reversal in our relationship with others. We will not need to rationalize, make excuses or pretend to be someone else. We must especially need to deal with the fear of rejection. We want so much to have the approval of significant others. We are giving them huge power over us, trying to meet their expectations. We are not trusting our selves to be a competent, responsible person- we depend on others telling us we are and fear they won't. Trust your own judgment and the validity of the decisions you are making. Do not believe you need others to validate who you are. Here I fall back on the need to maintain a relationship with certain people and fear that if I were really up front about some things, I would lose their friendship, perhaps confusing or hurting them. Actually, that has often happened. This problem for me comes from having often felt or actually been rejected, ridiculed or criticized many, many times over the years- not by my parents, but by my peers (starting in grade schools) and co-workers (in secular employment) and by Leaders of churches where I have ministered. It is very difficult, even now, to trust people. One major reason I left the Pastorate and do not want to get involved with another church, even as a Layperson, is fear that there will be more conflict and rejection. At my age and stage, I do not want any more of that. I have found that being an authentic person and being a Pastor at the same time is very difficult for me. I did church related activities and programs I did not want to do as a Pastor and was prevented from doing many other things I did want to do as a Pastor over 45 years of Ministry. All this fed my anger. (I must add that I also had many positive experiences in the Pastorate.) Good relationships require trust, acceptance and allowing others to be who they really are. I have been disappointed in others for not being who I thought they should be or for not doing what I thought they should do. I have been learning to let go of such disappointment and move on. In this case, "letting go" means backing off, cutting others some slack, allowing people to be themselves. Treating them as I would have them treat me. All of this takes God's grace, a filling of the Holy Spirit and relearning ways to be and live with others. It also means, hopefully, others will show me forgiveness and patience and be supportive of my effort at change. I take comfort from knowing God is not finished with me yet.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:04

Tuesday, June 1, 2010

THE UNIVERSITY AND MISSIONS

Last week, one of our daughters, Melinda, graduated from college. First she followed her husband through his 20 year career in the Navy and mothered 3 children who are now adults. It actually was a 25 year journey to the large arena in Baltimore, MD where 1200 students received their Bachelors degrees. Melinda was at the top of her class, graduating Summa Cum Laude in History. She is now certified to teach Social Studies in High School. She has what it takes to be a great one. She did her internship this past year at a large inner city school in downtown Baltimore and loved the teaching and her students there and hopes to find a position in a similar school in the Fall. What was striking about her graduating class at the University of Maryland Baltimore County was how diverse it was. The Valedictorian was Ethiopian and will go on to become a neurologist, He described a study group on campus in which he participated. Out of 10 students only one was American. There were students from around the world in the Class. There seemed to be a very large number from East Asia, India and Africa, as well as Hispanics and European and African Americans. A very international student body. The President of UMBC is an African American. We once lived in Northern Vermont, which is rural and has almost an entirely White population. I thought how far, far away that was, in so many ways. We do not need to go to the far corners of the world to reach the Nations with the Gospel. They are coming here to the United States and the best and brightest can be found in Universities almost everywhere. Pray for the work of groups like Inter Varsity, Navigators and Campus Crusade in those Schools, as well as for the individual Christian students who study there.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 02:57

Friday, May 14. 2010

OVER 1845 ENTRIES AND HOLDING

Dear faithful Readers,

There are over 1845 entries on this Blog, posted over more than 5 years. I hope you will browse and enjoy some of them.

God bless

Cal

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:32

Friday, February 26, 2010

SOCIAL SECURITY JUSTICE

This story reminded me of the time a few months ago when we received notice from the SSA that 6 years ago they had miscalculated my SS payments. My wife and I sat for an hour and half in their waiting room with maybe 80 other nervous people until being called into a cubicle and interrogated by the stereotypical bureaucrat, who was all business and oh so serious. She reviewed all our financial records. Amazing what they have in their computers. The SSA wanted their money returned, but finally settled on deducting \$20 a month from my check henceforth. I had not done anything wrong (it was their mistake) but for a while I thought I was going to be Bernie Madoff's cell mate.
[article/2010/02/18/](#)

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 14:35

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

THE IMPORTANCE OF BOOKS

I have always been surrounded by books. At one time my library had some 5000 volumes. (almost all of them non-fiction). Today's Serious Times Blog expresses well how I feel about books and a personal library. <http://www.serioustimes.com/blog.asp?id=117>

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 16:59

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES and a LESSON ABOUT EDUCATION

Today I came across the photograph of a childhood friend posted with his academic achievements on the website of The Teaching Company, purveyor of scholarly audio books. He is now a retired Professor of Political Science, having spent most of his his career teaching at Barnard College/Columbia University in NYC. He and I were best buddies in 7-9th grade. We attended a very plain 4 room country school in what was then a rural part of New Jersey. We and our friends walked the 2 miles to school each way, all year long. We often played in the woods and swam in a local swimming hole and enjoyed pick-up baseball games. His folks raised a few chickens and goats (The favorite had only one horn and was named "Patchy"). They did not practice any Religion, while my family was active in the local Congregational Church in the village, where I preached my first sermon at age 12. He became a student of Gandhi and I of Jesus. I haven't seen him since those days, but am thankful for some great memories.

My point is that those early, humble, Norman Rockwell beginnings did not prevent either of us from going on through college and graduate school into professional careers. Where there is a desire and will, along with supportive parents, academic achievement is possible, no matter from which side of the tracks, advantaged or disadvantaged, a child may come.

<http://www.teach12.com/storex/professor.aspx?id=2>

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 16:28

Tuesday, January 12. 2010

A BLESSING

Here is a Hymn for my Devotions this morning. It is by Augustus Montague Toplady, (1740-1778)
It is filled with good Calvinist Theology and wonderful comfort to me. A debtor to mercy alone, of covenant-mercy I sing;
nor fear, with thy righteousness on [the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to Believers], my person and offering to
bring. [Believers can approach a holy God without fear when clothed in that righteousness]
The terrors of law and of God with me can have nothing to do [those terrors do not prevent my approach, because-];my
Savior's obedience and blood hide all my transgressions from view.The work which his goodness began [in me], the arm
of his strength will complete;his promise is Yes and Amen and never was forfeited yet.
Things future, nor things that are now, nor all things below and above,can make him his purpose forego or sever my
soul from his love.My name from the palms of his hands eternity will not erase; impressed on his heart it remains in
marks of indelible grace.
Yes, I to the end shall endure as sure as the earnest is given;more happy, but not more secure, [are] the glorified spirits
in heaven.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 13:59

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

WE HAVE NOT YET BEGUN TO FIGHT!

In the basement of the Chapel on the Naval Academy at Annapolis MD is the sarcophagus of John Paul Jones, Father of the American Navy. During a battle at sea, his ship was seriously damaged and the Captain of the enemy ship asked if the American wanted to surrender. Jones famous reply was, "I have not yet begun to fight!" The battle resumed and the Americans won it.

I am frequently told to really retire and give up the Battle against the anti-Christ forces both in the Church and in the World. I have heard from the real Commander-in-Chief and, at the risk of sounding rather overly dramatic, I, too, like John Paul Jones, want to say, I have not yet begun to fight! And by the grace of God I will.

YOU MAY LISTEN TO A SERMON I PREACHED A FEW WEEKS AGO ABOUT SPIRITUAL WARFARE HERE

<http://www.accch.org/>

click on Sermons and you will see my name and the title Armor of God Part 2

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:14

Monday, December 7, 2009

FOR CHURCH AND COUNTRY

We have been away, visiting children and grandchildren in Maryland and Florida. Our son in Florida is a conservative, evangelical Priest in the Episcopal Church. Yes, there are such Clergy, including Bishops, in that Denomination. It was refreshing to be with his Parish Family for two Services and a Thanksgiving Dinner. God is doing a good work among them. As a orthodox, conservative Episcopalian, I am increasingly distressed with the Leadership of the Church on the National Level. Most of that Leadership seems to be apostate. There is no doubt that on the national level, they have abandoned the Church's Biblical Faith. But to see a faithful Remnant still at work within the Denomination is very heartening. Visiting our daughter and son-in-law in Maryland always, among othe good things, renews our patriotism. They are a Navy family and it was very inspiring to visit the new Museum of Naval History on the Naval Academy campus. Coming from the very liberal state of Massachusetts, where traditional patriotism is very hard to find, we needed that renewed fervor. Am I proud and thankful to be an American? You betcha! Do I believe in American exceptionalism? Absolutely! The contemporary Church is rife with heresy and error, but I still am committed to its Heritage, History and Biblical founding Principles. I want to be faithful to those things. Our Country is currently rife with disastrous administrative policies and corrupting greed and wrong-headed ideology, but I am still committed to America's Heritage, History and Biblical founding Principles. Those are what are exceptional!The challenge is to make both Church and Country live up to what it was and can yet be, for the glory of God!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:04

Monday, November 16, 2009

HAPPY THANKSGIVING AND TIME OFF

I have been busy for a number of weeks now with supply preaching for churches in the area. Each sermon takes me a good 20 hours to craft, along with my other studies and writing, so I have not had time enough to post much on this Blog (as you have seen).

I will be taking time off for the next few weeks and hopefully will be back at it soon with new vision and energy. I need both.

May the Lord make us all aware of the many blessings we have for which to be thankful!

Cal

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 08:23

Friday, October 9, 2009

THANKING GOD FOR THE HEALTH CARE WE HAVE

My wife went to our Podiatrist this morning. We like him and are pleased with his manner and methods. I walked around the Hospital grounds where he has his office and prayed for all who work there and for those receiving health care there. No question there are many things about health care that need improvement, but I want to say my wife and I are very grateful for the professional care we (and members of our family) have received through the years. We personally have been well served and thank God for it. We have been blessed by Him through it. Our excellent Primary Care doctor is serving God in His healing work. He is a Christian who is intentionally serving the Lord with his knowledge and skills, but I believe all Physicians (and those who help them) are doing the same even if they do not know the Lord.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 11:36

Friday, October 2, 2009

WEBSITE ANNIVERSARY

My <http://www.reformedliving.org/> Website launched one year ago today. With the help of son-in-law, Norm Gosselin, I began posting last October, Essays I write about Church, Theology and Biblical Norms applied to daily living. (The site began 2 years earlier at CalvinFox.com). We consider this work a Ministry for Christ the King (FTK) It reflects our conviction that Jesus Christ and His Word should be preeminent in all things. The Essays reflect a Reformed and Neocalvinist Perspective and worldview.

I have had very little feedback and have been disappointed with how few Evangelicals I know seem interested in what I write, BUT I am encouraged to report that visits to the website have been increasing. There was an average of 64 daily visits last month which was a total of 1682 for September. (There were 16,562 hits) This Blog (Dutch Treat) receives about twice as many visits and hits!

My brief devotional study (called QT Thots) that I email to about 80 friends twice a week is a blessing to many according to the responses that I receive about them. If you would like me to send my QT Thots to you, it let me know.

All in all, I am encouraged and thankful for the opportunity the internet gives me to continue to Minister to others with God's Word. May the Lord bless you, dear reader.

FTK
Cal Fox

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 13:19

Wednesday, August 12, 2009

LIVING IN A CITY FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

The most recent statistics indicate that 67 percent of the citizens of our City (Springfield, MA) are Minorities (most Hispanic and Black). Approximately 33% of the 150,000 citizens are White. Almost all the elected Officials are White. Coming up in November are the City elections under a new Ward System that many proponents believe will make the Leadership far more representative of the total population. That is their major concern. It might come out that way (depends on who runs and who votes) but I think it will also make the City far more divided into special interests and bi-partisan politics between Ward "Bosses" and competing Neighborhood demands. The City has more than its share of poverty and crime, noise and congested streets. It also has many fine neighborhoods that are very nice to live in. There are many good schools and excellent medical facilities, as well as cultural and entertainment venues and events. And it is in a very convenient location for travel. We have lived here for about 25 years altogether. Sometimes I have thought of moving to some predominately conservative and White, small town here in Western Massachusetts which would offer a more peaceful, bucolic kind of life. It is tempting. But I can't do it. Springfield is the future of America. It is far more what the majority world looks like and as a Christian I believe I should be in the mix and have a witness and ministry in a City. We can't bury our heads in white sand and pretend the world is what it once was or run away from it. There are other larger and far more dynamic and interesting Cities than this one, such as Boston or Baltimore or Washington D.C. Those are more appealing than Springfield. Even Hartford, CT is. We were surprised when we recently visited Hartford, (we used to live there, too) which is about 25 miles south from here, to see ourselves surrounded, at Lunch in the business District, by young professional East Asians (from India and Pakistan). Talk about Mission opportunities at our door step! And students- this area in and around Springfield has many of the top colleges in America and tens of thousands of bright young people live here- more opportunities for Ministry in front of us. We moved to Vermont 11 years ago and we have been back now 5 years this month. We are glad to be here- in a City for Christ's sake.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 17:01

Tuesday, July 21. 2009

WHY AM I AN EPISCOPALIAN?

There is truth in the saying, "Biography explains Theology". I have told much of the story that follows before, but this retelling is a new attempt to help explain to myself and others where I am at today, Summer 2009, and especially why I am a member of a Church whose Leaders blatantly hold views I consider to be very heretical and unbiblical, now more than ever. I am concerned that I might be discrediting my Testimony among my long time conservative and orthodox friends and confusing them and my former parishioners. This is my Apologia. I was ordained to be a Baptist Pastor and I enjoyed my ministry among the Baptists and still have good friends and memories from those days. But I became interested in the quest for the ideal New Testament Church, and succumbed to the goal of seeking to find one and worship as the first century Christians did. It is a tempting goal, that many have found irresistible through the years- almost like the music of the Sirens that tempted Odysseus on his mythic travels. I learned the futility (and danger) of the search after having gone to a Seminary that was a leader in the Movement to restore the early church and having ministering among them for a few years. We still have friends and good memories from those years, too. Christians in that Movement (once known as Campbellites) are not Reformed Calvinists (although the Campbells, father and son, were ordained Presbyterian Pastors from Scotland. The members of the Restoration Movement prefer to be known simply as non-denominational "Christians"). I did not make an issue of that, but simply preached a core evangelical Gospel. They practiced a mix of Elder rule and congregationalism. In doctrine, they were Arminian, but my concern was primarily with Ecclesiology. We observed the Lord's Supper every week in our corporate worship, as Believers did in the NT Church, and connected it and Baptism with Salvation more directly than Baptists do. That emphasis has stayed with me over the years and, in retrospect, prepared me to eventually join the Anglican/Episcopal Church with its emphasis on Eucharistic Worship and Sacraments. (This development would boggle the mind of my old friends in the Restoration Movement and absolutely confound my Seminary professors). Our local church at that time was in a college town. I came to realize that local churches of any kind are not reaching the minds and hearts of college students. In fact, churches of any kind were not doing much of anything to engage Culture for Christ or the people who would become change makers in it. Churches were, in effect, ineffectual as agents of the Kingdom. Increasingly, that was the work I was drawn into. We began an effort to minister to students at DePauw University with a bookstore we started with that purpose. Within a couple of years, the Lord very clearly led us to move from Indiana to have a Ministry of evangelism, apologetics and counseling with college students in Amherst, MA. I reaffirmed my Reformed Calvinist Faith and Worldview and my wife and I had an effective 1:1 ministry among students and some faculty of the famous 5 Colleges in the Amherst-Northampton area through the two bookstores we owned and managed there. That remains a "mountain top time" in our lives and we still have good friends from that period which is now some 35 years ago. I missed preaching and my wife took on the management of our stores and I went back into the Pastorate, this time in a local old mainline Congregational Church which had had a serious split. A member who was a friend recommended me. The appeal of this move was another old idea- instead of planting a new church, we would work to change an established one from within. I again preached a core evangelical message and many came to faith (and most of them moved on to a local evangelical church) Eventually the longtime liberal members had enough of me. I resigned, very much discouraged and broken. I decided I would never attempt to change a liberal church from within again. We were befriended by two Episcopal Priests (one was to become a Bishop) in the days after I resigned and for a while we worshiped in the local Episcopal Church. God used the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, those friendships and liturgical Worship to heal and renew me. This is a major reason why I am Episcopalian today. Our evangelical friends seemed to have deserted us completely, although the Elders of our former church in Indiana called to ask if I would consider returning there. I declined and we moved back to Amherst and began a short-lived "Community" with students in a house we rented just off campus. I studied and wrote and taught classes. The owner eventually sold the house and we had to move. While there we held Sunday morning Worship Services using various Anglican/Episcopal resources. (The Episcopal Church or TEC is one of 38 National Churches or Provinces which have an historical and spiritual connection with the Church of England and its Archbishop of Canterbury, hence they are "Anglican". They share a common Heritage including the liturgical way they Worship, which is governed by a Book of Common Prayer. Until 1979, they all shared the same Doctrinal Standards. Together they form an association called the Anglican Communion and it is the third largest body of Christians in the world.) The best place we could find to live next was in an old tough neighborhood of Springfield, MA. I had begun working for the State Department of Retardation while in Amherst and we became very active in an Episcopal parish a few blocks from our new home. We visited evangelical churches but found a home in none of them. We settled in as Anglican/Episcopalians. I had renewed my Reformed Calvinist Faith. We knew the Episcopal Church had the reputation for being a dying liberal mainline denomination, but that 1928 Prayer Book and the History and Heritage of Anglicanism which it shared was rooted in the Reformed Calvinist Faith. Some of the writers most influential in my studies have been Reformed Anglicans such as J.I. Packer and Leon Morris. I was accepted by some of the area Priests as a colleague, and began preaching and teaching and having workshops in several parishes;

but when I applied to enter the track toward Priesthood, I was flat out rejected by the Commission on Ministry under the influence of the Chairperson who had distain for evangelicals). My wife and I continued to be active as laypeople and actually had a good ministry among Episcopalians, but when an opportunity came to be the Pastor of a rural community church whose former Pastor, I was told, was an evangelical, I went for it. Again, a friend who was a member recommended me. Again I preached the core evangelical Gospel and many came to faith. Again, the long time members became unhappy and literally fired me (the Chairman of the Board called to inform me of that the day after my father passed away). That was 10 years after I had resigned from the Congregational church. We continued with a home Bible study and within a few months tried to begin a new church in the same town at the request of the folks in the Study. We lasted there about a year, leaving again over a personality (?) conflict with the key family. They hired someone else. I became the supply Preacher for an Evangelical Free Church in CT. That went well for a few months, but I was unable to find a permanent or full-time Pastorate anywhere. It was on my heart to preach. I heard of another EFC in Vermont that was looking for a Pastor. A friend who was a member there recommended me and we were accepted and moved there for what was a 5 year Pastorate. I set aside my Anglicanism and Calvinism because EFC churches are neither. I preached the same core Gospel as I always had before and people came to faith and there was growth and a new building; but again, long time members became unhappy with me and a stalemate ended with my resignation. That was 6 years ago. I interviewed at other EFC churches but that process reaffirmed that I was not to be a Pastor in a typical evangelical church again. We returned to Springfield and to a local Episcopal Church in a nearby town which we knew was evangelical, even though the Diocese and national Church are not. I do not and never have bought into the Liberalism of TEC and I strongly disagree with the national Church, the Denomination, on many important subjects. But there have always been many Clergy (including one of our sons) and lay members who know and faithful serve Christ and His Word within the national Church in Dicoeses and Parishes around the Nation. They are simply not in power and the unorthodox have captured the Leadership of the Church, now in 2009, more than ever and I realize many of the current memebrship are not evangelical Chrsitians. The situation is very dire. Is it hopeless? Probably, although as long as there is "local option", freedom for local clergy to faithfully follow Christ and preach His Word there is reason to remain for the immediate future. Will that freedom disappear under the pressure of the current authorities to make everyone conform to their views? Most probably, over time, but I am 71. Many of the orthodox Clergy have been leaving the Church, now that alternative Anglican Churches have begun to emerge on the American scene. There are none in this area. The current Priest-Pastor in the parish where we have worshiped over the years is evangelical, but most of the evangelical members have left. Should we join the exodus? Shoud we stay and support him? The appeal, as always, has been the Eucharistic and Liturgical Worship and we can not find that and an evangelical Pastor anywhere else in this area. I absolutely do not want to return to contemporary or emergent evangelical church worship. I definitely prefer the formal, orderly and theologically sound Anglican/Episcopal worship. As to the Reformed Faith, my knowledge of it has deepened and become more clear and strong over the years, I appreciate it, and see the the need for its promotion, more than ever. I certainly do not want to fosake the Reformed Calvinist Faith again for the "core evangelical Gospel". Actually, the latter is morphing into something that is nothing like the Gospel I preached over the years. It is becoming the Gospel of love, relationships and social action. If the Episcopal Church has its heresies, so do the evangelical churches. They are on a very slippery slope into serious error and away from the Truth once and for all delivered to the Saints. So where does this leave us? As a sheaf of wheat among tares, as a light in darkness, as a voice in a wilderness? Well that is a bit I over dramatic, but something like that. At least I can minister in some ways within our local Parish for the time being, but I do not know for how long. I have no hope or expectations of changing the Episcopal Church as such. I will not try. The Rubicon has been crossed. The Radical Liberals have come and have conquered and are committed to complete conquest. It is a tragedy. To me it is a lost cause. However, Anglicanism and the world-wide Anglican Communion is growing and doing very well without TEC and shall continue to do so. I look forward to seeing some Anglican Parishes established in this area some day. Meanwhile, the old need to reach college age young people and students with Truth is more urgent than ever. What to do? Promote the Reformed Faith (and its worldview, known as Neocalvinism) and continue enjoying Eucharistic, liturgical worship. And Preach and teach as opportunities come, but remain "retired" from Pastoral Ministry. By the grace of God and hopefully- to His Glory!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 17:55

Thursday, July 16, 2009

VIEWS ON AGING by George Carlin (?)

Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions. 'How old are you?' 'I'm four and a half!' You're never thirty-six and a half. You're four and a half, going on five! That's the key!! You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead. "How old are you?" 'I'm gonna be 16!' You could be 13, but hey, you're gonna be 16! And then the greatest day of your life . . . you BECOME 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony. YOU BECOME 21. YESSSS!!! But then you turn 30. Oooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk! He TURNED; we had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're just a sour-dumpling. What's wrong? What's changed? You BECOME 21, you TURN 30, then you're PUSHING 40. Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you REACH 50 and your dreams are gone. But wait!!! You MAKE IT to 60. You didn't think you would! So you BECOME 21, TURN 30, PUSH 40, REACH 50 and MAKE IT to 60. You've built up so much speed that you HIT 70! After that it's a day-by-day thing; you HIT Wednesday! You get into your 80s and every day is a complete cycle; you HIT lunch; you TURN 4:30 ; you REACH bedtime and it doesn't end there. Into the 90s, you start going backwards; 'I was JUST 92.' Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. 'I'm 100 and a half!'

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 19:05

Monday, April 13. 2009

LOOKING FOR THE RISEN CHRIST IN THE DAILY NEWS

As I read the News and "watch the culture" every day, I intend to focus on 6 areas that I believe indicate the work of the Lord in our world. These are areas where we can see signs of His Kingdom, both Rule and Realm, in the daily news.

Advance of the Gospel, seen in Conversions and healthy growth of the Church.

Pro-Life, i.e.- the promotion and preservation of the dignity and value (the health and well-being) of every human being

Pro-Environment, i.e.- responsible stewardship and development of natural resources

Pro-Biblical Marriage and Family Life

Economic Development, i.e.- the preservation and extension of private-property and industry (equitable production and distribution of goods and wealth)

Civil Government committed to Political Freedom and Justice under Law for all

I intend to concentrate on these areas for posting on this Blog in the months ahead.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 11:02

THE APOSTLES SLEPT WHILE JESUS WEPT

I read an article recently about the survival of independent bookstores. It listed many ways that owners and managers are using to stay in business. Promotions, stocking books that are "hot" and the public want, keeping very current, following trends, personal service and attention to customer needs, readings and signings by authors, child care and cafes are all popular. Reading this article made it clear again that I was never interested in running a bookstore as such like the folks interviewed for the article are, even though we had 3 of them and did just that (using many of these ways to succeed) for a number of years. I was interested only in a Christian ministry to students through offering and promoting the study of certain kinds of books I believed would help them come to Christ and grow their Christian lives. My wife and I were not committed to doing whatever it takes to keep a business as such alive and thriving for our livelihood or as a career plan. Reflection also made it clear that this has been true in our church planting and pastoral work. People have various vocations, but I have never been called to simply start a new church for its own sake or to restart or revive a struggling or moribund church for its own sake. We did church planting and pastoral work for many years, but always as a means to help people come to Christ and grow in their Christian lives, the same purpose as the bookstores. If a store or the local church was not effective in outreach or it became evident the people involved were not serious about evangelism and growth, I was not interested in continuing on with them. Life is too short. Jesus is either going to come for me or I am going to Him. There is work to be done. I want to be faithful to His calling on my life and occupy the time well. I do not want Him to find me sleeping. That is why I now devote almost full time to this Blog, my website and writing my email devotionals and corresponding and praying with people on Christian matters.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:53

Thursday, April 9, 2009

HAPPY EASTER!

Last Sunday after Church, we visited long time friends at the Nursing Home where she now lives. Her husband was feeding her, in one of the dining areas. She didn't seem to know we were there. It was sad. We went to lunch on Monday after a medical appointment. The Hostess seated us in one wing of the building with the "older clientele", she said. Across the hall in the other wing where the bar was, there was the much younger crowd. Our side ate quietly. An older lady played old favorites on a small electronic organ (it was probably old, too) The younger section was very noisy and popular music was playing loudly. That made for a very distracting, confusing atmosphere ("What did you say, Dear. I can't hear you.") The Hostess just shrugged her shoulders when I complained. It reminded me of most every contemporary church we have visited. One of the main reasons we attend an Episcopal Church is for a reverential, quite Service with traditional music. Being alumni, we enjoyed watching the UConn women win the national basketball title Tuesday night. We were at the home of friends our age. We talked about a few personal matters. Wednesday morning, I had an appointment with an orthopedic surgeon about the increasing pain where wrist and arm meet and he recommended reconstructive wrist surgery. I haven't done anything about surgery on my knee. At noon, we went to an Ecumenical Lenten Worship Service and lunch at the local Methodist Church. It was a typical crowd of "Golden Agers". The same group we see at early bird specials and at the concerts presented by the various armed services bands when they come to town. Last night we enjoyed the last Lenten Supper and a quiet healing Service at our church. Nice time of quiet singing and praying. It actually was the conclusion of our Lenten book discussion group. It has been cold and rainy for some time now, but soon we will be working in the yard. Bought some "feed and weed" today. Last week, I had the snow tires replaced by all-season ones on our old car. Spring is about to arrive. (We are excited about going to the graduations of two of our grandchildren in a few weeks)I think you have caught the general tenor of our lives these days. But though our bodies may be getting older, our spirits are renewed day by day. We enjoy a simple, peaceful life; but there are times when I really miss being a Pastor and "on fire" for the Lord. I would love to be in a Pulpit this Sunday. Easter is the greatest time to really preach the Gospel and confidently, enthusiastically proclaim the Good News of Christ' triumph over Death. At least I can still sing boldly (unless all the perfume gets to me!) HAPPY EASTER! I pray the joy of Jesus' victory will fill your heart!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 19:31

Monday, February 2, 2009

NEW DAY DAWNING

OK. I must change my focus. There is almost nothing in the national news that does not disturb me. I have decided that writing about Mr Obama, the Democrats and the Congress is counterproductive and useless. They are not listening to me or to millions of others who did not vote for them (to hear them talk, we are not among to "The American People" who, they claim, mandated the "change" they are ramrodding through). Maybe the current mess in our Country may turn out to be a very good things as multitudes of people must now reevaluate their values and way of living. Just maybe this will bring opportunity for God and His Word to break through into many hearts and minds that have been closed. Maybe as people suffer and pay a steep price for their greed, self-indulgence and irresponsibility they might repent and turn to the Lord. Maybe. I am also turned off by the RNC trying now to reinvent itself for "next time". I have got caught up in all of this and my Blood pressure shows it! I again conclude Evangelicals who support Mr Obama's agenda are wrong. And I conclude that Evangelicals who adopt the principles of secular Conservatism are also wrong (what are they anyway these days?) Atlas shrugging Libertarians are also very wrong- certainly, not Biblical. So I am re-focusing on my original purpose. See my post below. Thanks and Good Night. Better yet, thanks and Good Morning! It is a new day dawning

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 11:59

Monday, January 19, 2009

IN A DAZE OVER THE DAYS IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES

I am really feeling out of it tonight, rather disconnected. Almost everyone around us is caught up with excitement over the Inauguration of Mr Obama. Two personal friends left this morning for DC. Excited School kids are being interviewed, all kinds of folks are thrilled about the Event. The newscasts and reporters in all the media are totally immersed in this "historic Moment for America". They can't stop talking about it! You know what I mean. It is the same where you are, too. I am just waiting till it is over and for life to move on. A Liberal Democrat is becoming our next President. I am a conservative Republican. What is there for me to cheer about? I'm not arguing; I am just confessing my confusion and consternation- my personal feelings tonight. On another front, I spent most of the afternoon catching up on what is happening in the Emergent/Emerging Church movement. It is growing everywhere. There are many really attractive websites and some very bright and knowledgeable writers publishing their books and blogs. But they do not write or speak in my language. What they say does not resonate with me. I do not recognize the Faith and the Church I have been a part of all my life in what they are talking about. They have left me in their dust. I'm as disconnected from them as I am from the Inauguration and the people who are in DC tonight. Its not about age, it is about a state of mind and mine tonight is in a daze, stumbling, but seeking a footing and a place to stand tomorrow.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 18:36

Saturday, January 10, 2009

NEW SERIES: A PASTORATE DERAILED

Today, I began a new series on my website, Reformedliving.org. Entitled A Pastorate Derailed- painful lessons learned! The first article is about Church Politics. I think it could be very helpful to Pastors and churches everywhere. I offer it with the hope and prayer it will prevent others from becoming derailed as I was.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 13:24

LAST FIRST THINGS

The Christian magazine I read and enjoy the most is usually First Things. It is intellectual and challenging while being very conservative and orthodox. It was started by Richard John Neuhaus who passed away this week. He has been a strong voice, speaking Truth to Power in Public Places for more than 35 years, starting out as a liberal Lutheran Pastor in the 60's and becoming a conservative Roman Catholic Priest in later years. His section of the Monthly is called The Public Square, a survey of Religion, Culture and Public Life. It served as his Blog with personal observations and reviews about many things. I appreciated and admired him. May he rest in peace and may many rise up to continue his work. On a personal note, Fr Neuhaus was 72 and died of cancer. He had another bout with cancer 15 years ago. Another reminder to me to redeem my time. The last page of the current issue (which came to the house the day after he died) concludes with the thoughts he had during what turned out to be his last days. He was ready to pass on as well as to continue. He had much he hoped yet to do. He thanked those who were praying for Him and said he simply wanted God's will to be done. That, he wrote, was not resignation to dying. God's will for our lives is good and always the best for us. That is what he wanted. Asked how he would spend his time if he knew it was about over, he replied, "Pray and Plant trees". A good motto. Think about it.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 08:40

Wednesday, January 7, 2009

WHAT TYPE FACE DO YOU WEAR?

Last night I was fascinated by a documentary on the history of modern fonts- type faces that you find on your computer. There are dozens, but the focus of this special was on the invention of Helvetica some 50 years ago. You know what the Helvetica font is- you see it everywhere. It is by far the most common type face in use every where today (although it is not available on this site. This Verdana is very similar.) Many disdain critiquing culture. That is a very serious mistake. Just this simple history alone was unintentionally loaded with Theological and Philosophical meaning. And every trend in developing new ways of doing church can be seen in the trend to develop new fonts. Fascinating. For example, young graphic designers were recorded expressing their boredom with Helvetica type- it is so conventional. It is predictable and controlled and is found every where. Thus it lacks excitement and originality, personality and individuality. Helvetica is so establishment, so "modern" and conventional. It no longer says anything worth listening to. Time to try something new, something for today that will communicate to the youth of today. This was said about type faces, but does it sound familiar about something else? The fonts of yesteryear are no longer relevant for today! I realized that I am "helvetica". I do not use new, cutting edge graphic art or fonts when I type. I believe helvetica communicates most messages best. Although I am sometimes tempted to use dingbats and wingdings. I realize that probably most of us chose our churches and worship styles more out of personality than out of principle. I like my life controlled, organized, orderly and planned. I enjoy quiet and lyrical, harmonious visual and aural beauty. It makes sense that I enjoy Worship that is very Liturgical in a sacred space. It also makes sense that someone who has a different personality may not enjoy the same things I do. I accept that I am "helvetica" and many others are not.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 16:02

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

I rarely read other Reformed websites any more. There are some very good Reformed scholars writing and worth reading. But when I have tried reading blogs by Reformed writers, I am sorry to say I am turned off by what I perceive as condescension, sarcasm and ridicule directed toward those with whom they disagree. And when I try reading blogs by neocalvinists, I usually find specialized jargon that is often impenetrable. When I read Episcopal blogs I usually find diatribes, rants of one party against those of another- sometimes down right nasty and hateful. That is objectionable to say the least. I pray as I get back into writing here in this new year that God will deliver me from such presumptuous sins and guard my heart and mind so as I might be edifying to my readers and free from personal attacks on those with whom I disagree. Pray for me.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 15:45

Tuesday, November 25, 2008

GIVING THANKS

God so loved, He gave and we have received His grace and mercy and untold blessings in abundance. The news media are full of gloom and doom these days. I guess folks do not know the generous goodness of our God as we do. Oh, that they will. We are secure in Him. He will keep His Covenant promises to keep and preserve, provide and protect us, His People. We truly have much to be thankful for as family and friends, as Christians and as Americans! May the coming Advent be filled with an exciting awe as we prepare for the Coming of the Lord. Who knows, maybe this year it will be the real thing and not just a dress rehearsal. Safe, Secure and Satisfied in JesusCal

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 13:54

Wednesday, October 15, 2008

PLEA FOR KNEE PREVAILS

Three months ago, an orthopedic surgeon told me I needed a total knee replacement because of arterial necrosis plus pain from arthritis and a torn meniscus. Two other orthopedic surgeons said maybe and to wait three months. Today, looking at new film, the orthopedic surgeon found nothing to operate on and dismissed me from his care. My knee still doesn't feel or work properly, but it is much improved and I am glad for today's report. Thank you, Jesus.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 16:46

Wednesday, July 16, 2008

IN THE WORKS...

I have not posted much recently because I have been busy writing sermons to be preached at a local Presbyterian church this month while the pastor and his family are away on vacation. I have also been busy working with my webmaster (my son-in-law, Norm) to develop a new website that will serve as an entry into my QT Thots, Re/formation Institute, Dutch Treat Blog and my old freeweb static site now called EcclesiastiCAL- all my essays and comments available in one place! No one asked for it, but it seems like a good idea if I can learn at least a few technical fundamentals And I have been dealing with a swollen, painful leg for almost four months now, which is making me cranky as well as tired. Yes, we are making the rounds of doctors and tests to find relief. Thanks for your patience with me- and for your prayers.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 19:38

Saturday, April 19, 2008

OH YOU'RE RETIRED! WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR TIME?

I recorded a program on a local Christian radio station this week about the importance of personal evangelism. Most of my life, I have given priority to it; but no longer. The most obvious reason is that I literally do not see or spend much time with many people these days. Being engaged and involved with people, particularly unsaved people, is the first requisite for personal evangelism. Second reason is that people who come to Christ must be taught to live as Christians and my understanding of what that living involves has changed. New and older Believers need to think and act Biblically in all areas of daily life. I see very few Christians doing this. I want to spend my "retirement" years working to change this situation. Such work requires much time for study and writing, most of which is done privately, as well time as for teaching.

A third reason is new understanding of some basic concepts. The Gospel itself is wider than I once thought and begins with Creation rather than the Fall and ends with a New Creation, not simply Eternal Life or Glory. Christian living involves living daily in harmony with creational ordinances and the Torah- God's Norms for life; not simply church services, personal devotions, small groups and occasional outreach programs or ministry-to-others activities. I am finding it very difficult (if not impossible) to implement what I am writing about here in both the traditional and contemporary churches I know. Fourth, Christians unknowingly are dualistic and enmeshed in (dominated by) non-Christian and often anti-Biblical ideologies and isms. This prevents them from "walking the Talk". These ideologies and isms need to be "destroyed" before Christians can see clearly the path the Lord wants them to walk. I will continue, of course, to be burdened for the Lost and seek to lead them to saving faith as I have opportunity, but instead of giving priority to making more new Believers, as I have done all my life, I now am more concerned to help folks who are already Believers break free from their intellectual bondage to the ideologies and isms of our times and then re-form their minds and lives according to Biblical Principles. To this end I intend to start a Re/formation Institute- a learning community. This should have a greater, long range impact on the growth of the Kingdom. The enemy strongholds that must be brought down begin with Atheism and move on through Naturalism, Scientism, Technism and Materialism. Evangelicals are caught up in all of these Isms and they control their thinking about "how life works" and they live accordingly, rather than Biblically. The five major areas of life effected are Being Human, Marriage and Family, Environment, Economic Development, Government and Law (Justice) I see the local Church, no longer as the work I do, but as the primary means of the grace necessary for me to live as a Christian and to carry on this re/formational work.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:10

Monday, March 31, 2008

REMEMBERING "BURN OUT" AND HELP RECEIVED

Two clergy who were very influential in my life at the same time, but independently, passed away last week. Some 32 years ago, I went through serious "burnout" as a Pastor. I had a difficult struggle which led to my resignation.

Outwardly, and by several indicators, my ministry was going well. I enjoyed fellowship with other Evangelical Pastors here in Springfield. We would bemoan the condition of the world and rejoice with stories of conversions, baptisms and church growth. I was happy to add my own. When I tried to share my struggles, however, something changed. We were committed to being overcomers and were not comfortable with stories of discouragement and depression [although I have learned, they abound]. I remember clearly my Choir Director berating me for having lost my joy. Didn't I know Pastor's were to always be an example of joyful Christian living?, she said. After resigning, my evangelical colleagues dropped out of sight. I seemed to have become some kind of pariah. My support group didn't support. But there was one Pastor who ministered to me- a local Episcopal Priest. He didn't do a lot for me and we seldom saw each other, but what he did was encouraging, mostly during and after Services. The last time we saw him and his wife was the day my wife and I spent with them at their summer cottage in the country. (I was also befriended by another Episcopal Priest, during that period. Together, these men unintentionally influenced me, by their friendship, toward becoming an Episcopalian- that, combined with a second hand 1928 Book of Common Prayer I began to use in my devotions at that time). The other Clergy person that passed away last week was very different. I decided to go for counseling during this same period of time and he was then in private practice as a Therapist. He sat there and encouraged me to "let it all out". I realized in those sessions that I had serious issues with my father and anger toward him was a major factor in my relationship with some folks at the church. Working through all that eventually led to some real healing and improved relations with my father. All this was good, but in the third session, my Counselor told me I needed to set aside my Religion, Faith, Bible- all of that, he counseled, had to be put on hold until I was able to work through my problems. That struck me as terrible advice and I stopped seeing him. His advice had an unintended outcome. It taught me a very important lesson- we don't let our problems come between us and God. We get even closer to God and then, with His help, deal with the problems. Well, both of these men have now passed on. I am grateful to the Lord for what they meant in my life. I am glad to have known them during a very difficult time in more than 3 decades ago. Requiescat in pace

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:31

Friday, March 28, 2008

NOW OVER 10,000 VISITS! Thank you for droppin bye

One year ago today, I wrote the following Post. it is still true. I struggle with the purpose of this Blog: what should I write, how and for whom? I read a lot of newspaper and magazine articles and columnists covering the gamut of daily news. There are many who Blog well on such matters. I will still do so occasionally; but most of all, I am interested in searching for answers to my many questions related to God, Christian living and life itself. I write to organize and express what I am learning. These become my personal "Position Papers". In truth, I also want to teach what I have learned and draw others into studying and applying it to their own lives. So I put my Position Papers on the internet with that objective and hope. I welcome responses, suggestions and questions to clarify what I write. (I do not want to digress into other areas). I would be glad to go deeper into the subject presented in each post with anyone interested in learning more about it. Thank you for reading. May God bless you!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 11:31

Friday, December 14, 2007

PROMOTED TO GLORY

It is beautiful here today- sun shining, air is sweet and fresh, around 40 degrees and there is about 12 inches of fresh snow on everything. Happily, we are at home. We hand shoveled the driveway, but have not had to drive anywhere. Tomorrow we plan on helping out an art show downtown, sponsored by Nehemiah House, to display and sell art work done by the homeless and poor of the City. Tomorrow night and into Sunday and Monday another major storm is predicted. Friends from Florida are arriving today and tomorrow for the Funeral of an old, dear friend who "died" yesterday. His wife said it was just like him to do that during a snow storm so he wouldn't have to shovel. How's that for a sense of humor?

Actually, Ed was a very industrious man. After retiring from his career in the Air Force as a Major, he finished college and earned a Masters and a Doctorate in Education from Boston University and became a High School Principal. We have known him, his wife and family since his military days when he was in his early forties. He and his wife have been stalwart, fundamental Baptists who have loved and very actively served the Lord most of their lives. They were wonderful friends from the days of our first full-time Pastorate in Lowell, MA. That was the best church experience we have had in 45 years of Ministry and a lot of that was due to their prayers and support. We have had fellowship on and off for all these years. Ed was always open to a good debate, but I don't think I ever changed his mind about anything (when I dared try). He certainly helped sharpen mine. Millie and I have many fond memories of him and his wife. He has now been promoted to Glory and I'm sure he will receive a warm commendation from his true Commander in Chief.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 12:35

Friday, November 9, 2007

AARGH!

I haven't written much this week as most of the subjects in the news I have been reading about or discussing with others have been most discouraging or disturbing. I have also been spending more time on my serious studies, this week finding roots of some aspects of today's post modern culture in Plato (2500 years ago!), continuing my exploration of Ontology and Epistemology. Speaking of Plato, I realize his ideal "Republic" was ruled from the top down by an elite group of Philosopher-Kings and that twisted versions of this model has led in modern times to Totalitarian States. However, there is something to be said (and our Colonial Founders did say it emphatically) that for our Republic (the U.S.A.) to work well, citizens must be both educated and moral (and that, derived from the Christian Faith). What I hear and read everywhere in these pre-national elections days seem to indicate these virtues are in short supply in both our citizenry at large and among our elected Leaders. There is fear-mongering, pandering to self-interest and blatant ignorance lathered generously over the landscape. This particularly applied to local Elections held in this State (of Confusion) this week past and in votes of our Legislature and to proposals by our Governor. Just the use of basic Aristotelian Logic would help. But false premises and invalid conclusions cluttered the media and public discourse everywhere. All of which brought forth a primal aargh from me. Bring on the Philosopher-Kings or at least educated and moral citizens.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 16:07

Thursday, October 25, 2007

ENJOYING FAMILY AND THE BALTIMORE-DC AREA

We returned from Maryland last night. We had a good visit with our family there and that included visiting Baltimore's Inner Harbor- always fun, and times wandering on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay- also a pleasure. It is a great area- sometimes we visit Annapolis or go down to DC. We also spent time on the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) campus where our daughter, Melinda, is a student. She is one of 13,000 at this school that bills itself as an honors university, known for research in various Sciences. I was really impressed by the great number of East Indian and Asian students. What a mission field for local churches and groups like IVCF. I know that is not PC to say in this age of Pluralism and, in fact, all the students on the campus need Christ, not only the international ones. And then, all the students who are Christians need to be challenged to think Biblically about the material they are studying. I would make a good guess that most of them are not.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 16:23

Saturday, October 6, 2007

WE LIKE IT HERE

We like living in Western Massachusetts. Though the foliage has not yet peaked and it is far too warm, we went for a long drive yesterday (to Otis) and stopped at Lake Congemond on the way back and went on a short drive today to buy some cider and cider donuts (at a farm in Monson). Just about everywhere you look, all can see is beautiful. This is mostly rural, very hilly farm and resort country with many quaint New England villages and college towns. These leisurely drives were very pleasant. We try to take them often- usually an hour or so in every direction from the house and back. Together. Very nice. Meanwhile, new Federal and State monies keep coming in to improve or beautify Springfield, a city of maybe 153,000 with all the ammenities. Yes, we like it here.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 15:46

Wednesday, October 3, 2007

MUDDLEHEADED, AGAIN

It happened again. I went to a meeting last night in which open discussion ("sharing") from the floor was encouraged. It was a mess, mostly due to an old, too common problem- failure to define words being used: justice, racism, politics, unity, reconciliation, segregation; even Biblical words were not defined: Gospel, Church, Christian, Evangelical, Forgiveness. This led to the usual muddleheaded thinking common to such open discussions ("bull-sessions"). We ended up with misunderstanding, banalities and much over simplified discourse that produced more heat than light. I did not want to get drawn in and was not going to participate. Regretfully I did. Again, I resolve not to do so again! I do not intend to return next week for Session 2- this format does not make for a good forum. A well thought out position paper (complete with definitions) should be presented and then comments and discussion confined to that paper, guided by a good moderator to keep discussion on target, would be better. Another major and serious problem with many Christian discussions is a the absence of comprehensive Biblical world-view. There must be one and it should be stated clearly and accepted up-front. A world view would provide parameters for the discussion: this is where we are coming from. These are the given presuppositions. This is the common ground which will guide our discussion. These are the agreed upon Principles by which we will approach and measure whatever the assigned topic is. Otherwise, we waste a lot of time and get no where.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:40

Thursday, September 6, 2007

THREE YEARS NOW

We have now lived in Springfield a full three years. We lived here for 19 years before moving to Vermont to pastor a church there. That we lived in Vermont for six years before returning here seems more and more unreal. We miss some of the places there that we used to enjoy. We definitely miss fellowship with the friends we had to leave behind. One major reason we came back here- we could have gone anywhere- was to be near our ailing mothers. In fact, they both passed away about a year after we returned. We also wanted to be closer to our children and their families. They do not live around here, but the highways and airport are closer for easier travel than from northern Vermont. We also expected that we could have a ministry here with friends who work in the inner city or with churches and Christians we once had worked with. That ministry has not happened for several reasons. Simply put, folks and situations here changed while we were gone and those here now "know not Joseph". That has been disappointing, but God has His reasons. I am thankful for the time I now have to study and write and hope that good will come from that eventually. We realize keenly that we are very much out of the swirl of things. Maybe we should be glad. We are well. We enjoy time with the friends we still have here, as well as Greater Springfield (including its medical facilities) and Western Mass (including the college towns). We like our little Cape (house) and so we remain for now. God may yet call us elsewhere or open doors for ministry here of which we now know not.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 15:52

Saturday, June 2, 2007

THOUGHTS ON MY BIRTHDAY

Today is my birthday. The Lord has given me the gift of 69 years. That means today, I am entering into my 7th Decade on earth. My father lived here four years longer, my mother, 20 years longer than that- only the Lord knows what is ahead. My times are in His good hands. I earnestly pray they will be filled with the meaning that comes from being in the center of His will. I live to serve Him. I preached my first sermon at 12 and was a pastor at 20. I believed, back then, that I would always be a Preacher, and probably a Pastor, all of my days. I have had a number of "secular" jobs along the way, but no other ambition or desire for my life. I was never interested in making money, believing God would always provide as I served Him. I am thankful for what we have been able to do and for the many people we have shared life and ministry with. Now I neither preach nor pastor and wonder what God has in mind for me and my wife in the years ahead. I'm not complaining or fearful at all- just wondering and waiting on His direction and provision. I want to go out "with my boots on". Meanwhile, I have learned my personal identity is not tied up with being a Preacher or Pastor. That has taken a while (I miss those roles). I am also finding that my age and experience give me a vantage point from which to survey the church and evangelicalism, as well as a perch from which to culture watch. I want to understand better the world in which we live, as well as to understand far better, God and His purposes in this world and beyond. I hope to find a way to share more of what I see and learn.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 14:41

Thursday, May 24, 2007

SALTY, SANE AND SANQUINE

I would like to get into the routine of one post each day about some item in the news- just one. The problem is choosing just one. I have been reading our local paper, almost cover to cover, daily. The Washington Post emails me the latest news which I scan for items of interest. Then I read, on line, selections from the Boston Globe, the Christian Science Monitor and Wall Street Journal. Of course, we see various TV news broadcasts daily- 5 area stations (3 in Springfield and 2 in Connecticut, plus Boston and New England (Comcast). And there are several weekly TV panels that debate the issues. In addition, I peruse a variety of (mostly) conservative news magazines and read a variety of columnists and blogs covering the news. All of this is taking a lot of time. I consider it an obligation, as a citizen, to stay informed. I also consider it an obligation, as a citizen, to be well informed and not run off at the mouth or shoot from the hip when I discuss any subject. The result? Distrust, dismay, discouragement and depression [just to use words that begin with d.] I have become disturbed and am often dumbfounded. Mostly, I have become distracted from the Lord and my greater commitment to Him and His Word. We can not, we dare not stick our heads in the sand and become know-nothings. We certainly do not want to be pious pollyannas and reclude ourselves to become happy clappy Christians living in some conclave or commune (whether in a city or out in the country). God forbid. The salt is meant of get out of the shaker. But we must not lose our saltiness (which comes from Christ). So that is what I will be doing most now- working on becoming more salty and sane, while trying to remain sanguine!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 17:13

Wednesday, May 23, 2007

LOVING THE LORD WITH THE MIND

I have been reading about God and Time. This is relevant to understanding the essential nature of God, especially His incommunicable attributes such as aseity (is He effected by contingencies or need anything beside Himself to be what He is?), impassibility (can He feel pain or any emotions at all?) , immutability (does he ever change?). Is God in Time or above Time? Does God have experience and personal knowledge of tensed facts (the past and the future) or does He exist in a timeless Eternity (everything is Now for Him)? These questions address whether God is a "Person" and whether He is involved in our daily lives and answers our prayers. Etc

This project requires the study of Scripture, exacting linguistic studies of Greek and Hebrew terminology related to Time, Systematic and Historical Theology, Philosophical Theology, Philosophy of Time (A-Theory and B-Theory) and Science, especially Theoretical Physics- Theories of Relativity and the Space-Time Continuum and Quantum Mechanics. It also requires a mastery of logic and sophisticated, terse rational argumentation. I do not want to give the wrong impression here. I am an autodidact and my knowledge of some of these subjects is quite superficial. All of this is far removed from typical sermon preparation or the usual, small group "Bible studies". I call myself "The Re/formation Institute" for a reason. Sadly, I know of no one locally that shares my interests, but maybe someday...I must also agree that all of this also seems, to most people, increasingly far from what Christianity, and being a Christian, is all about. Systematic Theology (let alone Theology proper: the study of God- Theos) is not in favor among Christians these days. During the Middle Ages, Theology was known as the Queen of Sciences. In the 19th Century, mathematics became Queen. (There have been other contenders since.) Before the Middle Ages, Philosophy reigned. A Liberal Arts education, until recent times, required courses in both Theology and Philosophy. By my undergraduate days, a Course in Ethics had replaced them (but optional in the 50's). Ironically, there is currently a new demand for Ethics courses (especially in Business schools) but not any for Theology or Philosophy. My college Minor (second Major) was in Philosophy and it was in its death throes due to the dominance of Logical Positivism, which has since, itself, died as a Philosophy (the latter had degenerated into a study of the rules of language.) The Big Questions were long gone as a subject for Philosophy, but not for me. I still am committed to rogation (from the Latin for asking or questioning) and loving the Lord with my mind. How about you?

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 15:49

Thursday, May 17, 2007

TO BLOG OR NOT TO BLOG?

I'm back. It has been almost a month since I worked on this Blog. Last week my wife was sick and spent four days in a local hospital with pneumonia, which she still has. I have been busy with a number of projects. One is a Paper on God and Time and I've been reading a lot of American History. But relative to this Blog, I needed to reconsider whether the time I put into it is worth while.

I have come to accept the fact that I am an analog man in a digital world. This is not simply a matter of age or aptitude. It is also a matter of choice. I do not like or approve much of what I see in both the secular and the Christian (and Church) world around me. Studying and analyzing these matters is almost a full time occupation for me, not a hobby, and I take it all very seriously. Reading and writing articles about current events and contemporary culture can be very disturbing, disheartening and depressing. After more than 50 years of preaching, I am convinced more than ever, the world (and the Church) needs to come to God. I have learned more about Him over the years and have more to preach and teach about Him and His Word now, than I did when I began; and the need is more urgent than ever. Our prime responsibility in the community is to represent God and to present Him to those around us, rich and poor, the up and outs and the down and outs. We are to call non-believers of every kind to faith in the God revealed in Scripture and found in Christ and to turn from all other gods in that process and then to live in His service alone. Believers are to be disciplined: taught Bible Doctrine [The Reformed Faith] and trained to obey the Lord and organize their daily lives according to His Word. They are to be baptized into a Community of like minded Believers, where they will worship God, as He has instructed, and be nurtured by His Word and the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Trying to teach others how to do any of this is what I am here for. Lord willing and enabling I will continue the Blog.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 18:16

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Sour Grapes, Sweet Lemons or Mixed Fruit Salad?

Last night we attended the Service to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of a friend's ordination. I had to leave early due to the heavy fragrances in the nave. My old problem with allergies continues. So I sat in the car till it was over, pondering my own ordination 46 years ago and my ecclesiastical adventures since. They have been both enjoyable and very painful. I actually served as a Pastor somewhere for only some 21 years total (8 congregations, plus one before ordination). Of course, I have preached for many others, too, during the years. I was ordained by Baptist churches, but have served in several denominations. I thought I was finished with the pastorate and was confirmed in the Episcopal Church 25 years ago. I was active as an Episcopal layman for 15 years. I got back in the Protestant saddle 3 times, for some 7 more years. The last 2½ years (I finally did retire) we have not had a permanent church home and we are now recently back to worshipping in a Parish where we once were very active (that's where last night's Service was). Our reluctance to becoming active Episcopalians again is due to the sad and sorry state of this national Church, which seems heading toward a major breakup. We value and appreciate Liturgical Worship with Holy Communion each week. It is a real blessing and means of grace in our lives- no matter what else is going on. Beyond that, I highly value belonging to the Catholic, Reformed and Evangelical Church which has a history and heritage back to the first century. When I was confirmed, in my mind, I was actually entering into the Anglican Communion of churches which share this Tradition around the globe. Most "Anglicans" are neither English nor Episcopalian. The latter is only the official national member of the Communion in the United States. That may soon come to an end, as it has collectively left its Heritage [there is still a faithful remnant trying to keep the ship afloat], while most of the "branches" around the world remain orthodox and conservative. There will be a continuing presence of the historic Anglican Communion in America and I want to be a part of it, even though it does not recognize or value my Protestant ordination 46 years ago or my Protestant pastoral ministry of 21 years. I am content that God does. It has been my honor and privilege to serve God that way. Now it is time to serve Him in other ways, yet to be made clear to me.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 16:49

Wednesday, March 28, 2007

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BLOG

#I struggle with the purpose of this Blog: what should I write, how and for whom? I read a lot of newspaper and magazine articles and columnists covering the gamut of daily news. There are many who Blog well on such matters. I will still do so occasionally; but most of all, I am interested in searching for answers to my many questions related to God, Christian living and life itself. I write to organize and express what I am learning. These become my personal "Position Papers". I have put a new one on this Blog today. In truth, I also want to teach what I have learned and draw others into studying and applying it to their own lives. So I put my Position Papers on the internet with that objective and hope. I welcome responses, suggestions and questions to clarify what I write. (I do not want to digress into other areas). I would be glad to go deeper into the subject presented in each post with anyone interested in learning more about it. Thank you for reading. May God bless you!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 13:58

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

The Bomb

For those who think I am a much too serious, sit at home and study all the time person- check this out. My webmaster and I are taking our ministry out on the road-http://thinkersloft.com/uploads/53_Modified2.jpg

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:24

Wednesday, February 14, 2007

VALENTINES DAY

Interceding this morning for many couples we have known through the years, that their love and faith in the Lord and in each other may continue to grow. Especially, praying for all the couples I remember whom Millie and I have counseled, before or after, their wedding. Enjoyed recalling many of those weddings. The wife of the first couple I "married" passed away a few months ago of cancer. The second couple, one of my cousins and her husband, are still going strong. The key is commitment to make marriage work- in sickness [sometimes lots of it] as well as in health, in worse times as well as in better, sometimes richer and often poorer. I remembered, too, today, those who now live without their partner. All of this means there have been tears, as well as joy. Always, the lesson is to appreciate and value what we have, while we are able, and to be thankful that we have loved and been loved and are loved.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 06:13

Saturday, February 10, 2007

SECOND ANNIVERSARY

Today marks the second anniversary of this Blog- my online journal of topics of interest to me. Today, I will have posted a total of at least 2000 entries, on a wide variety of topics. You can see the general categories in the column of the right. You can search specific topics using the Search box, also on the right. The History box automatically links to the posts for one year ago, on any particular date. I am thankful that there has been over 7700 visits to this Blog during these 2 years on-line. I pray, and earnestly hope, that I am contributing something to help Christians think through the topics discussed here. These notes are from my personal ruminations and study. They are far from perfect or complete, but I hope they give solid food to chew on. I also hope you will make time to read the more in-depth Articles on my static website. See the Link at the top of the column on the right. Thank you and bless you!! I would be glad to hear from you- either comment here or by email-- cfoxinstitute@verizon.net

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:46

Thursday, January 18, 2007

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY FOR ME FROM ROCKY BALBOA

My wife and I have really been under the weather with sinus infections, acute bronchitis and conjunctivitis (all at once). It will be 3 weeks this weekend. Thus, I have not been able to function well and have done nothing on this Blog for awhile (as you know) Hopefully, we are now on the mend and will be back- including new articles on my static website. I appreciate your prayers and patience. This quote for the day is from an interview of Sly Stallone by CT movie critic. I like it! What do you want audiences to take away from Rocky Balboa? Stallone: That life is full of peaks and valleys, and when you reach a certain age you have to make some strong decisions on how to live the last of your life. You may feel as though your worth has come and gone, that you don't contribute that much to society any more. But that's not true. This is about fighting for respect, the ability to go on and be a constructive and useful citizen to yourself and to the people you love. It's a story about symbols and metaphor, and how older people wonder, "Has the best of life come and gone?" I believe it hasn't. I just want to show that the heart is the last thing to age in somebody. You still have that fire inside, and it needs to be released. But often society goes, "No, you had your moments, so just move on and watch the parade go by." I'm not ready to watch the parade go by. And what Rocky has lost in skill, he's made up in will." <http://www.christianitytoday.com/movies/interviews/sylvesterstallone.html>

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:43

Monday, January 8, 2007

"WHY WE LEFT THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH"

The following are excerpts from an article of that title by The Rev. John Yates and Os Guinness, January 8, 2007... we believe it is time to set the record straight as to why our church and so many others around the country have severed ties with the Episcopal Church. The core issue for us is theological: Some leaders expressly deny the central articles of the faith -- Episcopal leaders openly denying what their faith once believed Episcopal revisionism negates the authority of faith. The "sola scriptura" ("by the scriptures alone") doctrine of the Reformation church has been abandoned for the "sola cultura" (by the culture alone) way of the modern church.... the Episcopal Church today is either its own authority or finds its authority in the shifting winds of intellectual and social fashion -- which is to say it has no authority. Episcopal revisionism severs the continuity of faith. Cutting itself off from the universal There is so little that is distinctively Christian left in the theology of some Episcopal leaders, Episcopal revisionism obliterates the very identity of faith. the great truths of the Bible and the creeds are abandoned These are the infidelities that drive us to separate. We remain Anglicans but leave the Episcopal Church because the Episcopal Church first left the historic faith. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/07/AR2007010700982_pf.html

In 1976, having gone through great personal crisis as a Pastor, I turned to the 1928 Book of Common Prayer of the, then, Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. God used the contents of that Book to comfort and sustain me as a Christian. In 1982, I knelt before a Bishop of that Church (then called The Episcopal Church U.S.A) and became a confirmed member of it. That was a major spiritual moment in my Christian life. I found the Liturgy and, especially, the Communion Service (the Eucharist) to be a real means of grace to me. Learning more, I came to greatly value the History and tradition of the Church and was glad to be a part of a Church extending back, through the Church of England and the Reformation, through the Roman Catholic Church, back to the Orthodox and Catholic Church of the first Centuries to the Church of the earliest Christians. That historical continuity is important to me, as I believe Christ did indeed institute His Church (established it as a formal organization with a Ministry (Clergy), Sacraments and Discipline, as well as a Mission as His Body on earth) with the promise that it would never be destroyed. That Church still exists and has a glorious future. It's nice to be a member of it, especially appreciating and identifying with its historic, Protestant and Reformed "wing" associated with such men as C.S. Lewis, John Stott and J.I. Packer. I sought ordination in the Church, but was denied as unqualified. Having been ordained by Baptist churches in 1961 to The Gospel Ministry, I continued, after Confirmation, to preach and be an interim Pastor for several Protestant congregations. Unable to be an Episcopal Priest, I was glad to simply Minister in any way I could, respecting whatever Church that gave me the opportunity. When I accepted a call to be a full-time pastor, in my last church, I knew it was neither Episcopal nor Reformed. It was a very middle of the road mix of contemporary evangelical and conservative, traditional Baptist type Church with some Plymouth Brethren influence. I tried to work within what it was and did not try to make it Episcopal or Reformed. I was simply glad to have the opportunity to preach and teach the basic Gospel and Bible material ("Mere Christianity") every week and to be an old fashioned, real Pastor ("Shepherd"); visiting and caring for "my flock", seeking to build it up, in the traditional Baptist type way in which I had been ordained. (Half a loaf is better than none.) There were blessing in doing this, I was there 5 years and that was 3½ years ago. I am glad to be free now to pursue my long time theological interests. That includes again being a Reformed Anglican. That leads me back to the original topic. The ECUSA, now called, simply, The Episcopal Church (TEC) has changed for the worse and is in great conflict. Where do I fit in to it today? We decided not to get involved with that conflict when we moved back here and so began attending a small Presbyterian (Reformed) Church. We like the people there, who were very welcoming, as well as the young Pastor, serving his first church. We soon realized that though officially Reformed, this church in practice is a mix of liberal mainline characteristics, a small and conservative congregational culture and contemporary evangelical faith and practice. None of this is what I want. Meanwhile, the Episcopalian parish we used to attend, after a painful split, now has a quiet, older and mature man of God, who is evangelical and they offer the Liturgy and Eucharist, which I value greatly. There, we would be back in the Church, in which we were confirmed, exactly 25 years ago this month. But then there is the statement, quoted at the beginning of this post. These men are solid, mature men of God. Why should I now get involved in the Church, when men like them are leaving it? Most of the evangelical Episcopalians we knew from the local Parish (St David's) left it some time ago and are now active in a variety of other non-Episcopal evangelical churches. One thing: evangelical is not enough! I am again flying my Reformed banner and do not want to lower it now. And evangelical is not Reformed by any stretch (although Reformed can be evangelical) St David's is not really Reformed, but the Episcopal Church, in its history and heritage and Prayer Book is. There is the problem. Many of the major players in the Church (TEC) are definitely not conservative, evangelical or Reformed. In fact, many of them, including the new Presiding Bishop, are heretics. Many of the other leaders (Bishops), in my mind, are simply middle-of-the-road, compromising for the sake of unity (and their jobs) Managers ("Churchmen"). It is significant that no

one in this Diocese seems to admit of any conflict in the wider Church at all, or at least nothing to worry about- it will all blow over. Let's just do our thing locally. But they all still observe the Liturgy and celebrate the Eucharist and function according to the Prayer Book. This means that the two writers quoted above are mistaken. They can not say that the Episcopal Church as such, officially, has left the Faith. It has not. Certain top Leaders definitely have. There are many other Leaders in the Church who uphold the orthodox and Reformed Faith of the Prayer Book and the Church's official Standards. These Standards have not yet been revoked, even while some of the Leaders ignore them or personally do not agree with them. They are 'bad apples' in the barrel. There are still good ones in there, too. To declare the entire barrel to be rotten is not true or fair. If the hand that serves me Communion at the Altar does not belong to an orthodox Priest, the bread is still the Body of Christ, the wine is still the Blood of Christ. Thankfully, the latter is not contingent upon the former, but upon the Scriptural Words pronounced over them and the saving faith within the heart of those receiving them. Besides the theologically and Biblical stalwarts still in the Church, including our son and his Bishop (an old college friend) there is the Trinity Episcopal School of Ministry (TESM). The Board, Staff and Faculty of this Seminary, from which our son and his colleagues graduated, are all committed still to the historic, reformed Anglican Faith and this is the largest Seminary affiliated with TEC. It is also the major training ground for the leaders and clergy of the growing Church of the Global South (especially Africa). As long as it remains and continues its present work, there is good, and reason for hope, in TEC. In addition, there are several solid evangelical missionary organizations, and their workers, affiliated with TEC, active throughout the world. The battle is not lost yet. So, I guess we remain for now and have a go at it, again. We do not know, my wife and I, what this will actually involve in practice. If we lived somewhere else, we might consider Parishes affiliated with other expressions of the world-wide Anglican Communion, such as the Reformed Episcopal Church in Maryland, to which my webmaster and his family belong (one of our daughters and her husband and their children) and another longtime friend in NYC; but, there are none anywhere around here in Western Mass or Connecticut.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 12:54

THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUOTE

"It is a great blessing to have the way to the past barred, to be unable to make peace with the present and to have no where to go but forward."Leander Harding, TESH

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 12:49

Wednesday, December 13, 2006

BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT

The last two full days, I served on a jury in a criminal trial here in town. Between us, my wife and I have been called to Jury Duty 6 times. It is a privilege to serve and always educational (although the process itself can be very boring). It is also, obviously, very important to the people involved. This case could have gone either way; that meant that the decision, "guilty", was impossible because it would not have been made "without reasonable doubt". A Jury serves as "judge of the facts". It was refreshing to hear, over and over, how important facts are, as well as reason and common sense. No question, there were some who wanted to go with "gut feelings", but that is where the requirement for a unanimous vote by all 12 peers of the defendant was essential (although there can be emotional peer pressure on any hold-outs to go along with the majority. just because it is the majority and everyone wants to go home) We had a good Foreman to keep the deliberations honest and fair and focused on the the evidence and the facts, "just the facts" - in other words, on determining the Truth of the case. I personally enjoyed listening to the older, very experienced Defense lawyer use great skill in his very analytical, logical approach in presenting evidence and questioning witnesses. He did it very well. The much younger and inexperienced ADA did not do as well in this process and "lost the case". What he was saying may have been valid, but he did not present it well enough, compared to his opponent (hence, the doubt factor). Comparisons here to Christian Apologetics and Preaching should be obvious.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 12:30

Friday, October 13, 2006

A VERY GOOD DAY

The Lord has given me faith to handle the big things. I confess, I often sweat the small stuff. There are times when I become very anxious and this morning was one of them. The context for today's QT was worry about forthcoming results from my appointment this morning with my PC doctor. Today's Psalm was so appropriate and very helpful. Thank you, Lord. We kept the appointment and every thing was fine. No health problems, just more signs of old age. Fear knocked, again, and again, faith answered. No one was there. That happens often. We celebrated by going for a drive on this absolutely gorgeous Autumn day, enjoying the foliage, shopping at Atkins (a country store), a good lunch at an Italian restaurant in the college town of Amherst, spent time browsing in a book store and drove home through the country side, back to the City. Now back to studying. Great Day! Thank you, Jesus.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 15:36

Thursday, October 12, 2006

LISTENING

Sitting here in my Study, it is quiet. I almost never have music playing. It is distracting to me. There are natural sounds outdoors, mostly birds in the backyard trees. I enjoy listening to the quiet. I think. I must have this space apart. I value it greatly. It leads to meditation and prayer. I am thankful. When I go out for a walk, I look and watch everything around me: all kinds of people, doing all kinds of things. Vehicles of every description. Buildings in every kind of size, shape and condition. Flowers, shrubs and yards. Trash and toys. Colors and textures everywhere- I really enjoy the works of art all around me, not only the birds, leaves, flowers and sky-borne clouds ; but, even on the sides of trucks and buses, as well as billboards and murals on building walls and decorating many of the people I see. There are odors of all kinds, some pleasant, some that make me feel sick. There are potholes and curbs to watch for and the cars and bikes that wizz by. But mostly, there are sounds- all around. Acorns hitting car tops, breeze rustling leaves in the trees, birds warbling, footsteps approaching from behind, airplanes flying overhead, sirens signalling emergency vehicles on rescue missions, dogs snarling, cars and danger approaching, glass breaking. And all the different languages being spoken or yelled, and yes, lots of music being played, and nails being pounded and power saws buzzing. Being able to listen is not only fascinating, but could be (often is) life-saving. I hear God speaking through all these sights and sounds. It all leads to meditation and prayer. I am thankful.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:51

Wednesday, October 11, 2006

THE MOST IMPORTANT CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE TO READ

My favorite Christian magazine is celebrating its 50th Anniversary and its current issue is chock full of interesting articles. I have received every issue, from its beginning in 1956. I kept all of them, until we moved to Vermont and then I threw most of them away, having culled a few especially helpful ones. It is the magazine of record in Evangelical circles. It has been my main source knowledge of developments in those circles. I have "kept up" by reading it, through all these 50 years. Billy Graham started the magazine and there is a fine, touching article about him now, living in retirement and very frail health with his wife, Ruth, who apparently is confined to bed. They have served the Lord well and together. I am mindful of other frail, elderly Christian couples we know, still partners, who have done the same in their own unique way. I am impressed by life times of faithfulness. I know that it is possible only by the grace of God. It is very impressive and greatly encouraging to review all that God has done through the Grahams and this magazine and among Evangelicals around the world during these 5 decades and even more now. A Korean version of the magazine is being started. There is a good overview in this Issue of the many ways the Church of Christ is alive and well around the globe, especially in the Global East and South. Praise God. One article is an interview with John Stott, another faithful servant of the Lord through this same period. He and James Packer and Leon Morris, as well as CS Lewis- all Anglicans- were very influential in my life through their lives and books. They are among authors listed as most influential on Evangelicals everywhere through these 50 years. There are 50 titles listed. I have read and owned and greatly benefited from 40 of them and know of the others, as well. Interesting, an American woman wrote the book mentioned as most influential: Rosalind Rinker and her work introducing Conversational Prayer. Not a work of scholarship, but of devotion. She changed the way most of us pray, even though many Christians today do not seem to know who she was. That probably is also sadly, and regrettably, true about many of the people who are mentioned in this history. Buy or borrow a copy if you can and visit the website <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/>

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 16:46

Tuesday, October 10, 2006

REMEMBERING NEIGHBORS FROM HALL ST.

This afternoon we are going to a Wake for a woman who was a neighbor on our street, when we lived here before going to Vermont. She is my age. She and her children were part of our lives back then. Her son was our son-in-law, Norm's, best friend in his childhood days. I walked by their old house yesterday and prayed for Thelma and her family. They moved away some time ago. I stood in front of the house where Norm grew up- where he was living when he met our daughter, Mindy. I reminisced about most of the people who used to live on that street. We knew almost all of them. I think only 3 of those families are still there. I prayed in front of the house of one of those families- for Norm's Uncle and his wife. His cousins have moved away. I expect we will see a number of the folks from that street today at the Wake. We moved there about 28 years ago. It was a tough city street then, There was a lot of drug dealing and crime there. We had a Bible Club and several of the young teens from the neighborhood came to Christ, especially through the witness of our daughters. We met in our house and then in a nearby church basement. Thelma's son was active in it. May the Lord have mercy on you, Thelma, and on your family.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 12:56

VISITING A CANCER CENTER

The post prior to this one expresses gratitude for the healing ministry of various clinics around this city. This morning we went to a major Cancer Center here. My wife has ongoing checkups and treatment to prevent recurrence of her breast cancer. This Center is an impressive place and today seemed especially busy. Being there can be an emotional experience. Many women, of all ages, coming and going, many without hair on their heads. A few men as well. Many old couples shuffling along, often holding hands. Adult children helping their aged parents. There is another section for young children and their parents. It can be very sad and disturbing. It is also encouraging. There is a positive energy and atmosphere about the place. Staff seem to be very caring, as well as professional. They have all the latest technology and are abreast of the latest developments (no pun intended). It is a place for healing. Jesus is doing his work there and we are thankful for it.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 12:42

Sunday, October 8, 2006

TRUE WORSHIP or JUST DOING CHURCH ?

I visited a church this morning that promotes itself as Calvinistic, using the Regulative principle, with an emphasis on expository preaching of the Word. I went hopeful that the Worship I mentioned in my last post would happen. From their website, I knew there would be a traditional choir and traditional Hymns and no seeker friendly "entertainment". The "Worship" was a traditional, fundamental Baptist Service out of the 50s and 60's. There was no Praise Team or overhead projection. They used all the time worn jargon of those "olden" days and the emphasis was on the Cross and the need of saving souls. There were a lot of empty seats and the Budget figures in the Bulletin indicted a serious deficit. The pianist and organist played well, but ran through all the old hymns with great speed. The Elder who prayed used all the time worn phrases that I know so well from the past. The Announcements were silly, with teasing insider comments- mostly about the coming Supper and Clean Up Day next weekend. The middle aged Pastor, with a PhD after his name, spent the first 10 minutes making small talk and explaining why he did not have a fresh sermon this week- he said he was going to use one last preached 17 years ago- but it was fun then, and he hoped it would do today. It was going to be about fighting temptation to sin. That is when I left. By the way, the pulpit was framed by the American and State flags. Some might consider that idolatrous. Needless to say, my hope was dashed and the thirst I wrote about here, last night, was not quenched in the least. Disappointment and distraction again. I'm sure the good folks who assembled for that Hour sincerely believed that they worshipped. That is not what I would call it.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 12:50

Saturday, October 7, 2006

A THIRSTY SOUL

Psalm 63:1-9 Tomorrow is Church again. Strange, my whole life, the rhythm of my every week, revolved around Sunday Services for years. Now it does not. 1 O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; my soul is athirst for you. 2 My flesh faints for you, ... 3 I [would] gaze upon you ..., that I might behold your power and your glory. 4 Your loving-kindness is better than life itself and so my lips shall praise you. 8 ...you have been my helper ... 5 I will bless you as long as I live and lift up my hands in your name. 6 My soul shall be satisfied, ... and my mouth shall praise you with joyful lips, 7 When I remember you ... and meditate on you ... 9 My soul clings to you; [and, at the same time] your right hand shall hold me fast. I have always felt this way about God. This and Church kind of intertwined. But, Church has become a great distraction from this intercourse with God. The Church I want is the one that helps me experience God, i.e.-helps slake my soul's thirst for Him; Its Worship will enable me to behold God in His power and glory. It will give me the opportunity to praise His Name in song. It will enable me to meditate upon Him. The sermon shall say: "Behold your God". I will be led to cleave to Him more than ever and to have a renewed sense that His Hand is holding me fast. And I shall leave the Service with my soul satisfied. Where is this Church?

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 21:16

Friday, September 29, 2006

SPARED AGAIN

It was pouring rain this morning when we went out for a medical appointment. Minutes after we passed a curve on I91 going North, a semi behind us skidded and jack knifed into the south bound lane. Another semi, going south, swerved to avoid a crash and, instead, also jack knifed. That driver was killed and his tanker trailer spilled out on the highway. Serious gridlock for about 3 hours. Today, in the Church calendar, Michael and the Angels are remembered. We are thankful to have missed out on all that. Once again, spared for further service.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 18:18

Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Carpe Diem

Yesterday, we traveled to the northwest corner of Connecticut to share with the family and friends the "calling hours" for a woman we have known for many years. She and her husband were the second couple I "married" as a young Pastor. That was 44 years ago. There were photos of the wedding on display. They also suffered with breast cancer and prostate cancer. In recent years, we shared that in common. As with us, they both were treated and declared cancer free after 5 years. It came back to them both. Needless to say, this has been unsettling to us. At the Funeral Home, we met not only members of their family, but old college friends. We had been in college together. As well as being from my wife's home town and high school, she had been her dorm mate. Strange time for catching up. Most touching was the sight of her parents, in their late 90's, sitting in their wheelchairs, viewing their daughter for the last time. Once again, we were reminded to appreciate God's grace and our loved ones, while we have time and are able.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:59

Saturday, September 23, 2006

Psalm 63.1-9 MY PRAYER THIS MORNING

O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; my soul is athirst for you. 2 My flesh also faints for you, as in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.3 So would I gaze upon you in your holy place, that I might behold your power and your glory.4 Your loving-kindness is better than life itself and so my lips shall praise you. 5 I will bless you as long as I live and lift up my hands in your name.6 My soul shall be satisfied, as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise you with joyful lips, 7 When I remember you upon my bed and meditate on you in the watches of the night.8 For you have been my helper and under the shadow of your wings will I rejoice. 9 My soul clings to you; your right hand shall hold me fast.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:57

Monday, September 18, 2006

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

We are down to only one car now. Our second car is off the road. It won't pass State Inspection and can't be fixed. We have enjoyed our very reliable Ford Escort for 11 years and will miss it. We do not have the money to replace it, either- all part of learning to live on a limited retirement income. The car looks almost new. It was never in an accident and has no dents or erosion. The paint is not faded- we kept it up. Problem is underneath. It stands as another example that things are not always as they appear or that you can not judge a book by its cover or that beauty can be only skin deep. Like the strong looking trees that reveal rot within, when they come down, so our Escort is corroded by rust within, particularly the hand break cables under the car. We have had other areas fixed, but that moment has come when further repairs would not be worth while. Enuf is enuf. There is a spiritual lesson to be learned here.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 13:53

Sunday, September 3, 2006

ENJOYING CORPORATE WORSHIP

This Morning, for a change, I actually enjoyed corporate Worship at a local Episcopal parish. The nave was quiet when we entered, so kneeling for preparatory prayer was helpful and I was able to focus on the Lord, away from the usual distractions. It actually helped that there were very few people present. The organ prelude was appropriate. The man behind me has a good singing voice, so I enjoyed singing the Hymns and Responses with him. The Reader read the Scripture well. The preaching was ok and not upsetting. (Prayer Book Liturgy is always meaningful. The Service makes sense- it has a beginning and goes some where, with a satisfying conclusion.)Most of all, the Presence of the Lord in and during the Eucharist was real. I find the physical act of going to the Altar rail, and kneeling there, meaningful. In this church building there is a wonderful stained glass window in the wall, up above the Communion Table. I look upon the figure portrayed there and remind God to remember the Sacrifice of Christ on my behalf. Yes, as I have written elsewhere [in my posts about Eucharistic Worship], the Supper is not to remind us of the Cross. It is to remind God. "Lord God, as a sinner, I remind You that Jesus died for my sins and that I claim that Sacrifice for the forgiveness of my sins. Remember, Lord God, I enter your presence under the covering of the Blood of the Lamb, slain for me. I kneel before your Holiness, confessing my unworthiness, but asking You to remember what your Son has done and allow me to enter into your Presence now and in Eternity. Thank you, Heavenly Father. By your mercy, I now commune with You and feed on You in my heart by faith with thanksgiving". [I have gone through the Wardrobe into the land of Aslan- see the post prior to this one. In true worship, we ascend, in our hearts, into the heavenlies, where the Lamb is, alive and on the Throne, with the Father]All this takes some unrushed time and definite concentration. I was able to enjoy both this morning. That is a very rare and good thing!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 12:15

Saturday, August 19, 2006

UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS, AGAIN

Over and over, we have learned that a major problem in people's relationships- marriage, church, business partnerships, college room mates- is unrealistic expectations or, at least, unwarranted assumptions. Last night illustrates: Every year, a nearby town has a greatly hyped "Peach Festival" Over 20,000 people attend. We have never gone. It was advertised to begin yesterday at 3:30. We decided to check it out and expected to enjoy a large helping of peach cobbler or peach shortcake for Supper. We paid the parking fee and walked in. Many of the booths were not yet set up. No mind, they were mostly vendors offering Polish and Italian specialties. There were kiddie carnival rides and a stage on which a very loud rock band was doing their thing. Where are the peaches? We found one booth selling baskets of them and another booth selling ice cream sundaes with peach sauce topping. Turns out the Festival really functions as an annual pre-back to school event for residents of the town- one last big town party as it were (kinda like Labor Day) and the emphasis is on seeing old friends and fun for children. Oh, there was also a field with antique cars in it. Today is a local town parade, too. Fine. All of that is fine. It is assumed everyone knows all this. Not visitors from out of town! It is not at all what we understood from the promotions. Peaches are promoted in the advertising. Our expectations were reasonable, but unrealistic. Again! Turns out, we can have peach topping on the pancakes served tomorrow (Sunday) morning for the Big Breakfast. Well, the forecast is rain for tomorrow morning. For us, the Festival itself was a rainout. We will not be back. We'll stick with our plan to be in Church tomorrow morning. I hope what they will serve there will be what they advertise!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:06

Friday, August 18. 2006

GOD AND JESUS? HUH?

A reader questioned something I said in my post yesterday ("Different Wells") . I was describing the content of my usual morning devotional reading. I said "...the content of the reading. It is thoroughly God-centered. It is not centered on the Man, Jesus. The content I am infused with daily (which I described in the post below) is what shapes my understanding of Worship and daily Christian living."I have often noted here that the spirituality of many younger evangelicals I know or read is almost entirely focused on, and shaped by, Jesus- Jesus the man, the Carpenter- upon his life, his relationships with others, particularly with the poor and marginalized. This, in turn, defines what they understand the Gospel to be (love and service to others, especially the poor).There was a time in my life when that focus appealed to me, too. There was another period when I focused on the Holy Spirit and charismatic experience and teaching. For the last 25 years or more, my spirituality is more and more Trinitarian- the focus is on GOD, the triune God. This is nurtured by the daily readings (my well) which are mostly about God and include a lot of Old Testament (especially the Psalms). They include the Gospels, Acts and Letters as well, of course. But that is the point: our spirituality (Worship and daily living) must rest on the entire revelation of God and therefore on God in His entirety. It is against that much larger background or context (Theo-ology) that I interpret the Man Jesus and the story of his earthly life. By taking the opposite approach, many who start with the Man, miss God (Father, Son and Spirit)

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:04

Thursday, August 17, 2006

DIFFERENT WELLS

In the post below [prior to] this one, I mentioned the daily devotional reading that shapes my spirituality. More than the discipline of the reading itself, I mean the content of the reading. It is thoroughly God-centered. It is not centered on the Man, Jesus. The content I am infused with daily (which I described in the post below) is what shapes my understanding of Worship and daily Christian living. Thinking of this, I realize that this explains why I so often am disappointed and frustrated with contemporary Worship (including Sermons) and the life style of so many contemporary evangelicals. We are drinking from different wells.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:29

LIVING BY FAITH

Almost every morning, I read 3 or 4 Psalms and a passage from the Old Testament, as well as one from the New. This is the mainstay of my spiritual life. It is what shapes my spirituality. Sometimes I am bored by it, often confused by it; because, these readings almost always are about God as Creator and King. They insist that He alone is God and this is His world. He is in charge and holds all peoples and nations accountable to Himself. He is absolutely Sovereign- the Almighty. His will is to be done. His Law is to be obeyed. He rewards the righteous and thwarts the unrighteous. Hearing this over and over, the daily repetition of it, can be the boring part and the confusing part is that it does not correspond with my knowledge and experience of the world. I watch the TV news and read several newspapers everyday also- I do not knowingly see God's Hand in most (any?) of the current events I learn about. On the contrary, God is not even mentioned as a minor player, let alone as the Major Player on either the local or the world stage. The Scriptures I meditate on are the "Word of God". They are true. I accept them by faith. I seek to organize my entire life around them, in spite of the empirical evidence contradicting them. I am staking my present and eternal life on their veracity- on the world view derived from them rather than on the view of the world I get from the world itself.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:02

Thursday, July 20, 2006

THOUGHTS FROM LUNCH TIME TODAY

While having lunch my wife and I had our usual conversation about the changes we see constantly happening around us in the world. Today, we discussed the lead article in a newsletter from Gordon Seminary. It summarized another article appearing in the International Review of Missions. The statistical population center of global Christianity has been tracked over its history [the number of all professed Believers is the same NSWE from this geographical point] The trajectory begins in Jerusalem and is now almost in the middle of the African Continent. There are important ramifications: The dominant Theology will no longer be from the European West (i.e.- the Theology of the Reformation, about which some of us are so serious. It will be replaced (or greatly modified) by a global and ecumenical Theology written primarily by men and women of Asia and Africa. This Theology will be written in the languages and idioms of the Global South and East and grounded in the cultures and historical experience of peoples living there, not in Europe, Great Britain or North America. It will also be greatly influenced by interaction with Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists. World Christianity will not be my Grandfather's Christianity- nor mine either. REMEMBERING A WONDERFUL WOMAN AND A GREAT SUMMER Last week, we each read the inspiring biography of Ray Buker, who went to Burma, as a young man with his new wife, and ministered along side his twin (medical doctor) brother and his wife, as traditional, old fashioned, career missionaries in (what was called) Burma. Their careers started in 1924 and they served until the 70's, Ray having by then become a "Missionary Statesman". This was the kind of story that challenged us when we were in college, to serve the Lord with our lives. We read another such biography (It was about Isobel Kuhn, missionary to China) when we were in Jamaica 41 years ago this Summer. We had gone there to officiate at the wedding of a dear friend. I also preached at several churches. It was hot and our host and his wife treated us to a few days at an Inn, high up in a much cool mountain. That is when we read the book. This comes to mind because our host's wife went home to be with the Lord this week. Holly and Henry were most gracious to us. We have not seen them since (although we have talked on the phone). The memory of their kindness to us (and the joyous wedding), those years ago, are a fresh and warm blessing to our hearts today. Our host was the brother of the groom, Holly being his sister-in-law. May the Lord bless Aston and his beautiful family with His comfort and peace.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 13:13

Tuesday, June 6, 2006

My Vision

Repeatedly, I come back to reasserting the Glory of God, the Sovereignty of Christ, the Kingdom as my top personal priorities. Many Evangelicals could agree with that, but what do they mean by it? - These priorities for most translate into Worship, Evangelism and Missions (personal salvation and/or holistic ministry) or Church health and growth. Bottom Line: By seeking the Glory of God, the Sovereignty of Christ, I mean Christians seeking to obey God's will in all matters, which means obeying His Creational Norms, Principles and Law, as revealed in the entire Scripture, starting in Genesis and, ultimately, as interpreted by the Apostles [including what they passed on as the teaching of Jesus], particularly Paul. By seeking the Kingdom of God, I mean particularly seeking His objective Realm, which is "human society organized and running according to God's creational intentions and norms". What would such a Society look like? It would include- All education grounded in Christ and His Word The Sciences and Technology serving God The Fine Arts and Pop Culture pleasing to Him Marriages and Families functioning by God-given principles Nature and Environment managed and used as God intended Businesses (all economic endeavor) organized around Biblical principles Such an effort is commitment to obeying the Stewardship Mandate given to all human beings at Creation. But, this is not a Plan for the world to follow. It won't. It can't. The Kingdom is God's, we can not turn the unbelieving world into the Kingdom. We are not seeking to make America, or any other Nation, Christian. I am concerned about how Christians, as the Covenant people of God, live in this world. To the degree they seek the Kingdom and obey God's Word-Law in their daily lives, God will expand His Kingdom on earth. Our faithfulness in attempting this seemingly impossible task, fraught with frustration, will, in itself, be our greatest witness to the Sovereignty of Christ. Of course, seeking the Kingdom includes feeding the hungry and caring for the welfare of children and operating medical clinics, but it is far, far more inclusive and wider than such ministries. Such good work can, and is, being done by many (including innumerable non-Christians). What I have in mind is far more fundamental and radical and goes more directly to bringing God glory. In fact, such ministries can be diversions or substitutes for what I have in mind. (The same is true about the pursuit of the American Dream and the so-called "good life".) I fear this is what is happening in the lives of many [most?] young Christians. My wife and I did not come from privileged or affluent families. We both started in poverty. We grew up working and earning our way, all the way. We went to public schools. I have devoted more than 45 years to serving people in need, as an inner city and small, rural church Pastor, as a State social worker with inner city youth in trouble and as a direct care worker with the severely handicapped. As a family, we have lived for many years in poor urban neighborhoods. Most of the public schools our children attended were in the city. It is this very life experience that confirms to me the necessity for what I have been saying. I understand the tyranny of the urgent. We must not give in to it. Most young Christians coming out of college think they have a fine education (especially the ones coming from elite private schools). They probably have, by the world's standards. They have not by God's standards. Have they studied and mastered what God has revealed are His Norms and Principles for Economics, Public Health, Government and Political Science. Technology and the various Physical Sciences, Sociology, Psychology and all the Humanities, the Fine Arts- all the academic fields? Of course, they have not! Have they studied and mastered all the basics of Bible, Theology and Church History? Of course, they have not. Yet all of this is required to live faithfully for God in this world. I would like to see young Christians drop out of all activism and devote themselves entirely to at least one year of serious study, such as I have outlined here. Then they will be more ready and far better equipped to live life the Kingdom way, for the rest of their life.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 20:13

Wednesday, May 31, 2006

Pulling weeds and doing other good things

We do more yard work here than we ever did in Vermont. Our place is a lot smaller, but there are far more shrubs, flowers and trees, as well as the lawn, that need never ending care, at least in this Season of the year. It may be more than we can handle. We like it here, though, and our neighborhood is far more quiet than where we lived in Derby Line. Nice. I relish peace and quiet. We just came in from working outside on this hot day, so I am now cooling off before a fan, before I commence writing more. Walking and yard work are good for meditation on the Word, praying and thinking through things. So I guess I will get to it- the writing, that is. I pray you are having a blessed day.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 11:30

Friday, May 26. 2006

Two milestones: 5000 hits and a domain name. Praise the Lord

Greetings, faithful readers. This Blog has had over 5000 visits now, in 15 months. I am truly thankful for your interest and God's blessing on this Ministry. I am also delighted to see interest increase in the studies I am posting on my website and to hear from folks who are blessed through my QT Thots on Monday and Friday. My son-in-law, Norm, has made it possible for me to now have my own domain name. You may see all my work now by visiting the following URL. Thank you, Norm. You have been a great help. <http://www.calvinfox.com>

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 16:56

Remembering those who are gone

When we visited the cemetery this week (see post below) and walked around looking at gravestones, almost all were strnagers to me. They were but names engraved in stone. But they all have stories. Someone must remember who they were, what they did. How sad if no one remembers who we are, after we are gone, as though we never were. At my grandmother's grave, her name evoked many good memories of a wonderful woman. Nearby is the grave of Gram's brother, Oliver. I vaguely remember a few things about him from my childhood. But that is it. All the others, besides my folks, are nobodies to me. I trust they are somebody to families and friends. We must remember our loved ones, after they have passed on (while they are with us is nice, too) . This is the weekend when multitudes of us do just that, especially those loved ones and friends who served our Country. Most wonderful and comforting is the knowledge that God knows and remembers each one whose remains are buried. He never forgets. The word "cemetery" means sleeping place. I do not believe any one is actually sleeping under the blanket of green turf. Every one of them is more alive than ever, living elsewhere in one Place or the Other.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 12:23

Wednesday, May 24, 2006

Thoughts in a Graveyard

My wife and brother and I visited the cemetery yesterday, where the remains of my parents are buried. We were checking to see if the engraving, that we had done on the stone, was correct, before paying for the work. It was and we paid. That was the last detail, one year later. There was a poignancy about it and a closure. We do not expect to visit the place very often. They are not there. We will remember and honor them in our hearts. We have yet to buy a plot for ourselves, not knowing where we will be living in years to come, but we did go to the Office at the Cemetery to inquire details. There are some nice spots available and the remains of a number of relatives, besides my parents, are there. We walked around and looked for their stones in the oldest sections. These are my ancestors from England and Ireland- my father's side. My mother's family is Italian and Swedish. Their remains "rest" in New Jersey. I am an English-Irish-Italian-Swedish-American. The Swedish side has never been a part of my personal culture (although I was baptized and ordained in a Swedish Baptist Church) I have fun with the Italian side. I guess my temperment and cultural proclivities are mostly English. The strongest influence on my culture is Christ. I intentionally seek to be Christian before anything else. How about you?

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 12:12

Sunday, May 21, 2006

Music to the Glory of God

Friday after lunch, we left to visit our daughter, Melissa, and her family. One of our grand daughters, an accomplished violinist, was in the last concert of the year at her high school. It took us 4 hours of crawling, bumper to bumper driving to go the 75 miles to get there. We were traveling the Mass Pike. It was closed, near Boston, due to the turn over of a tanker truck. We were tired and somewhat frazzled when we got there. No worry. The wonderful concert of classical music by 5 orchestras was excellent, grabbed our attention and picked up our spirits immediately. What made it extra inspiring and encouraging was the fact that the very talented and disciplined musicians were elementary, middle and senior high students- children and teenagers intense, committed and passionate about learning and playing classical string orchestral music. The 2 hour performance concluded with Peter I. Tchaikovsky's Serenade in C Major. There are some one hundred youth in the school's string music program- amazing! It can be done. It is being done, at Whitinsville Christian School, to the Glory of God.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 15:49

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

Remembering Lowell

Watching the news coverage of the current flooding of the Merrimac River, and the cities built on it, in northeastern Massachusetts brings back good memories of my first full-time church. We served the Lord at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lowell, on the river, for four years, more than 40 years ago. Our daughters were born in that City and we have gone back occasionally to visit friends. Most of them have gone on to the Lord now. We have very fond memories of those days. Being the Pastor there was a very positive experience, for which I am grateful. The City itself, as well as the population, has undergone great changes. But, that church, those Saints of yesteryear, remain as they were, in my heart and memory.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 08:39

Monday, May 8, 2006

Back to the Beginning

In the story from Acts mentioned in today's QT Thots, two additional observations come to mind-The man who was miraculously healed was poor. He did not ask for healing. He asked for money (3:3) The Apostles got his attention and Peter said forcefully to him, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the Name of Jesus...walk!" I have been an inner city Pastor. I have been an inner city social worker. I have brought needy people home and washed and clothed them, giving them food and a place to sleep. I have worked with street people. Coming back to Springfield, I have felt the pressure to do more of all that. I want to support friends who are doing that; but now, in my older age, I am back to the beginning. What I must say to the physically needy is the same as Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the Name of Jesus...walk!" What I have is the Gospel, the Word of Truth. People everywhere need to hear Truth and walk according to it. I am glad there are many people and agencies providing direct care to needy folks. But their need is far deeper than food and shelter. After many, many years in direct care ministry I am more convinced than ever that much more serious needs exist and must be met. Peter and John wanted the street person in the story to know the Risen Christ. It is significant that after his healing, the man is brought into the church. His ongoing, daily needs are met there (see chap 4-5). That is the Biblical Model: Evangelism and immediate assimilation of new Believers into the local body of Christ. Leadership in the local church is shared accordingly: Ministry of the Word and Ministry [same Greek word] of the Table (chap 6)

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:06

Tuesday, April 18. 2006

Cardiac Therapy

I just came back from cardiac therapy- my walk around the neighborhood. I really enjoy doing that. Among other things, it really facilitates praying. I interceed for the people and places and happenings I walk by in the hour's trek. I used to do this for many of the 19 years that we lived in this same neighborhood, before we went to Vermont. Since many of the people I pass speak another language and are Hispanic, Asian, African or African American, this routine keeps my mission vision keen. And since many of these same folks seem to be underprivileged and struggling, this walk keeps my heart and mind burdened for social justice and community activism. I recommend the practice. It is good for health, in more ways than one.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 13:34

Thursday, April 13, 2006

The First anniversary of My Mother's Passing Away

My wife and brother and I went to the Cemetery today, about one hour south of here. One year ago this morning, my mother went to Heaven. It was just yesterday. Sometimes I wonder in my mind how she is doing. What's it like Mom? Is it what you expected? Have you seen Jesus? Dad? your parents and brothers and sisters? Aunt Peggy? Are you happy? Singing in the choir? We went to the grave stone place to order the engraving of the date of her passing a year ago. It had to be done, just to tie up the detail for historical purposes, I guess. I really have no interest in the grave site. On her marker and on my father's, it says "Together with the Lord". That is where they are. They are not at the Cemetery. It is a pretty place, though. It is proper to pay respect to their physical remains. But we have an Easter Faith. O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through Christ Jesus our Lord. Alleluia. He is risen. As He said. We shall be, too.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 18:08

Wednesday, April 5, 2006

Remembering my favorite Gospel Singer

It will be one year next week that my mother passed away. When elderly people do that, many try to make us feel better, I guess, by reminding us that they were elderly- like well, what did you expect? Be glad they had a long, good life and that you had them in yours so many years, whereas other lives are cut short and their loved ones did not. Well, exactly. But, having someone you love in your life for a long time means that there is a long emptiness left when they have left. They have been there for you for many, many years. There is a lot to miss. One of the special things I miss about my mother is the times we used to sing together. All her life she used her beautiful singing voice to serve the Lord. As she got older, the quality of that voice diminished and she no longer sang in public. When I visited her, we sang and prayed together. For years. I miss that. She knew many old hymns by heart. Here is a favorite from my Oremus QT this morning-

I will sing the wondrous story of the Christ who died for me; how he left his home in glory for the cross of Calvary: Refrain: Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story of the Christ who died for me, sing it with his saints in glory, gathered by the crystal sea. I was lost, but Jesus found me, found the sheep that went astray, threw his loving arms around me, back into the narrow way. Refrain: Faint was I, and fears possessed me, bruised was I from many a fall; hope was gone, and shame distressed me, but his love has pardoned all: Refrain: Days of darkness still come o'er me, sorrow's path I often tread, but his presence still is with me; by his guiding hand I'm led. Refrain: He will keep me till the river rolls its waters at my feet; then He'll bear me safely over, where the loved ones I shall meet. Refrain: That includes my mother.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 08:46

Thursday, March 23, 2006

Obituaries: Life Stories

When our children lived at home, one of the enjoyable activities we did was "grave rubbing". ie- putting paper over grave stone markings and rubbing them with crayons to transfer the engraving onto the paper. Many cemeteries allow this, if done with due care and respect. It was fun. many of the engravings were a fun read. Some were a serious read, may with stern warning to those still living. Some told sad stories of still birth or sickness or tragedy. There is a lot of history captured on old grave stones. A very interesting day was spent with my mother-in-law, when my wife and I visited several cemeteries with her and she used the various stones, of family members we had never met, to rehearse for us a lot of her family history. Fascinating. A new book is entitled "The Dead Beat: Lost Souls, Lucky Stiffs and the Perverse Pleasures of Obituaries" by Marilyn Johnson.

Ms Johnson has done serious research into the use and content of newspaper obituaries. Many I read seem to be "boiler-plate", standard and generic. Ms Johnson has studied hundreds and found that many tell fascinating tales of times, places, events and, of course, the deceased. We read the obituaries every day. Most are rather barebone; we often say, "There has got to be a story behind that" It is strange that we do not know someone even existed, until we read their obituary. When we do, we often are made to want to know more about this person- their story. At many Funerals, we say we have gathered, not to mourn the death of... , but to celebrate the life of... . However, rarely do we hear much biography, other than, perhaps, a few vignettes. And those are not only very short but also very personal and pleasant. Except for the famous among us, most folks never have their life story told. That can be a real shame. It is almost though they never lived at all. Everyone assumes that their individual recollections are enough. Some do not want to recollect at all- or very selectively. At least soem folks, probably most, deserve more than that. Maybe the closest thing to telling the biography is the displaying of photographs. These do help, but they are often few and are a very incomplete record. Usually they are unmarked and thus do not mean anything to most people walking by, anyway. Short of long engravings on grave stones or detailed obituaries and a few unmarked snapshots and a brief Eulogy, I think we need to find away to tell the life story of our loved ones who pass away- to honor them and share who they were and what they did. I had hoped to do that for my mother after her internment. We went to the room reserved for us at a nearby restaurant. The seating arrangement worked against it and we did not spend the time I had hoped we would, sharing stories about my mother. I regret that. There were good stories to tell. They will never be told now.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 20:03

Friday, March 17, 2006

Happy Birthdays

You, Reader, may be celebrating St Patrick's Day [wearing Orange, I assume]. We are celebrating one of our granddaughters, who turns 16 today! And next Saturday, we will celebrate my younger brother's 65th Birthday and his retirement. Our times are in the Lord's Hand. Each day is to be received with thanksgiving. However many days the Lord may give each of you, Caitlin and Wes, may they be filled with the joy, peace and fulfillment that come from Him. We thank the Lord for you. We are very glad you are in our lives.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:51

Thursday, March 9, 2006

Where is Home?

People from New Orleans talk about how they love that city- it is their home. They do not want to live anywhere else. Living there means everything to them. Appeals are made to the rest of us to help them do that. Personally, I care nothing about New Orleans (and especially the French Quarter) and think it is foolish to rebuild it on the same flood-prone swamp land. But then, I am not attached to any City (except the one above (Heb 11:2- the new Jerusalem) Some of this is for Biblical, spiritual reasons. Some of it is due to my personal history. We now live here in Springfield for practical reasons. I do not love this place. We could move tomorrow and I would not miss it. This lack of commitment to a place has worked against me with some people in churches where I have ministered. In fact, there is often a real division in churches between people born and brought up in a place and those, like ourselves, who come from somewhere else. I have lived in 24 homes in 22 Cities or Towns in 8 States over my life time so far. I have no roots in any place. I feel for no place like people native to New Orleans say they feel about their place. This lack of attachment effects how I live, my values and interests- my perspective on life and what is important. Conversely, it does the same for folks who do have deep roots in a geographic place. Often, this reality is not reckoned with in ministry. The closest some of us come to having roots in a place, is having roots in our language (which includes accents, figures of speech, ways of talking or not talking, etc) Favorite foods and customs also are carried with us as we move around the country. Actually, the place where we are truly rooted, that we take with us, for better or worse, is the home within us. The language, foods and customs that are deepest are from childhood. If we have a "place" where we are rooted, no matter where we live, it is there. In fact, some of us move geographically to get away from that place. That doesn't work- we take it with us everywhere we go. When the Apostle Paul said he had learned to be content in whatever state he lived (Phil 4:11), he did not mean Vermont or Massachusetts; but, it would be nice to learn to be content, or come to terms, with the Home we have in our hearts, whatever our street address might be. When we "put on an addition", or remodel, the one that needs the most work through the years, is that one.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:49

Wednesday, March 8, 2006

Finding the next tree

As mentioned below, my current Institute Course, based on Genesis, finished this week. I need to reconsider what I am doing, with whom, where and when. Meanwhile, I shall start putting some of my study notes on my long neglected website. When I have that back up and running again, I shall announce it here and by e-mail. Yesterday, we went to one of the local noble barns filled with a bountiful harvest of books. There are two of them here, each about 10 miles away. Spending time in one is, for me, like going to church: a special space filled with means of inspiration and encouragement to the life of my mind. A much more crude metaphor is also apropos: "as the dog said. 'So many trees, so little time.' " I'm trying to decide, this morning, which tree to target

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:41

Sunday, February 19, 2006

After Church come the Comics

I read the "Sunday Comics", but to call them that is a misnomer. The strips I follow are really true to life stories or stories that have true to life themes or observations. Limited to the ones that our local paper carries, I recommend Charlie Brown, For Better or Worse, Dilbert, Funky Winkerbean, Crankshaft, Adam, Doonesbury, Family Circus, Shoe, Zits, Tiger, Rose is a Rose, Hi & Lois, and Drabble. For Better or Worse, Funky Winkerbean, Crankshaft and Doonesbury are the ones that carry an on-going story line. All of these 'toons can be very insightful into the "human condition" and worth reading.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 14:47

Saturday, February 11. 2006

What Gold is in your Wallet?

Philippians 3:7-21 Many days, I get very weary of this world. I enjoy time with my wife and family- but, the world? it makes me very, very weary. Every day, the news is a constant reminder of sins and sickness everywhere. The TV, movies and magazines are a constant suffocating surfeit of consumerism and materialism and lives of ungodly amusement, angst or ennui. There is tragedy and violence and injustice around the globe. All my life I have wanted to do something about all of that- make a difference. I have fervently believed that God, Christ, the Gospel and Church should be doing something about all of that and make a difference. I have worked hard at it. As I get older, I have this real sense that time is running out to do it. We all hear stories, during these Olympic Games, of young people who have dedicated and spent their lives to date, ten years or more, for one thing: to win Olympic gold. It is their magnificent obsession. The gold I am in training for is still ahead. The starter's pistol went off for my race 50 years ago. I'm still in the race, begun when I was 17...because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ...this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.... whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss ... and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, I am still stubbornly committed to making a difference for Christ in this world, but that is less and less what I live for. Increasingly, as my time goes by I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. My advice to others? Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; Paul does not use the word "discipleship". Instead, he teaches the "imitation of Christ" and by that, he does not mean following the simple servant life style of the Nazarene Carpenter. Rather, imitating Christ means imitating Paul-Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. What is the opposite of this? Being an enemy of Christ. Beware- For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction... The major characteristic of the enemies of Christ is that their minds are set on earthly things. But -our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation so that it may be conformed to the body of his glory and that is the Gold Medal Paul and I are running hard to win. How about you?

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 14:43

A Pink Panther in another Color?

If It Ain't Broke ... Movie Review by Mark Moring, Online Managing Editor/Music & Film ChristianityTodayMovies.com "I've got nothing against Steve Martin. Like many others, I fell in love with the wild and crazy guy with his appearances on Saturday Night Live in the 1970s. I don't know why a man in an all-white suit playing a banjo with an arrow through his head was all that funny, but it was. Still is. And I like some of Steve Martin's movies, especially The Jerk, Father of the Bride, Roxanne, and Planes, Trains & Automobiles. Fun stuff. But now I'm afraid he's crossed the line: He's starring in The Pink Panther, opening nationwide this week. I'm sorry, but that role is taken—signed, sealed and delivered—by the inimitable Peter Sellers. The very thought of someone else playing the role is galling ... Martin should've politely passed on the gig. "No thanks," would've been the right answer, "but that role belongs to Peter Sellers. I'm not touching it." Some roles are simply not meant to be played by anyone else. "This is how many of us feel about changes in traditional Worship Services. Some things to us are "signed, sealed and delivered"—On the other hand, the younger generation, that never saw Peter Sellers in the original Pink Panther movies, has no problem with a new actor in the role and the spin he puts on it. By the way, what was Saturday Night Live in the 1970s?

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:50

Friday, February 10, 2006

First Anniversary

This Blog has reached a milestone. I have been posting to it for one year today. There have been more than 3700 visits. There are innumerable Blogs on the internet. Many are forums for discussion. This Blog is not primarily about that. Comments are possible, but primarily, I interpret "Blog" to be a web log- a "log" in the sense of a journal of my thoughts about a variety of things. It could be a lot longer or more frequent. Usually, I write to simply clarify and summarize my own thoughts about something, for my own benefit; but, with the idea that maybe someone else might find them interesting and even helpful. If not, that is ok; but, I am pleased, to judge from the number of hits (about 75-80 most weeks) that some do. I appreciate my son-in-law, Norm, who has helped with technical details and without whom this Blog would not be here. I pray for this Blog- that it might be a blessing to others and not simply a form of self-expression for me personally. If you have been helped or encouraged by anything you have read here this past year, I am thankful. Let the new year begin...

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:02

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Rant & Roll

I have been working on material related to the Course I am offering here on Monday nights- Biblical Principles for Economics. This, in turn, has me studying the subject of Epistemology (Philosophy of Knowledge); particularly, the presuppositional epistemology of Cornelius Van Til. I despair developments that I see on the local church scene. I am tired of trying to relate and be relevant to the culture around me and trying to meet the perceived needs of this or that special interest group. At this point, at least, I just want to study, seek Truth and learn to think the thoughts of God after Him. I have often heard, "It's all about Jesus". Actually, it seems it is really all about Iraq, Political Corruption, Homosexuality or Racism or Poverty or New Music or "Seeker Services" or Community. For diversion, there are Sports, so-called reality TV and Award shows. On and on...

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 14:40

Friday, January 27, 2006

40 Years Ago

Yesterday, our older daughter turned 40. Amazing how a year from now can seem like a long time. Forty years ago was just yesterday. I was Pastoring an inner city church in Lowell, MA. God had blessed and we were in the process of relocating to a nearby suburb. That Summer, it was my great privilege to conduct the wedding of a dear friend and his fiancée in Jamaica WI. That was a wonderful 2 week experience, during which I also preached in several churches. It was very hot and my wife was carrying our yet to be born daughter. Our hosts were more than very gracious and we met wonderful people all over the island. Our two sons were staying with my in-laws. Come January 26, we drove to the hospital. Delivery was not supposed to be imminent. I went to the weekly women's Bible study at a church member's home. A friend we had met in Jamaica was flying in that day to visit us, coming from Ireland. Melissa arrived early, I arrived late at the hospital. Our boys stayed with the hostess of the Bible study and our friend had to wait hours at Logan Airport. My wife, ever the good trooper, was fine and so was our daughter. I am thankful.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:24

Wednesday, January 25, 2006

Remembering Alan: Faithful Servant

Next week, February 2, will be the second anniversary of the Homegoing of a faithful servant of God. His wife and children seem to be moving on and doing well. Alan is still very much a part of who they are and what they are about and always will be. Child of career missionaries, growing up in what was the Congo until coming to the States for college, Alan had a sure call and passion for evangelism and church planting. He was also sure that this ministry was to take place in a small town in Vermont. Doing such work there can be, was, and still is, very daunting. He was determined. Sometimes, I thought, just plain stubborn. It was very slow going. He had an excellent college and seminary education. He was very gifted, in many ways. The church plant turned out to be very frustrating and did not yield the intended results. Alan and his wife did not quit or leave the area. They both found non-church related jobs and were busy raising 3 very active children (and a nephew, for a while). Alan became a good medical insurance claims examiner for the State. His wife, also educated and gifted, became a fast food restaurant manager.

They continued to pray for everyone in the town, using the phone book. They had neighborhood "socials" and found creative ways to share the Gospel in town. He and his wife were still convinced God had called them to that town. They were not giving up. His family is still there. Still praying. Still hoping. Alan was very active in our denomination, being supportive of other Pastors, such as myself. He did occasional pulpit supply and was just finishing a part-time interim position in another small town church, when he was killed in an auto accident. The God who called Alan to Vermont had called him to Heaven. The effects of his witness continue and the impact of his life on his family and friends, such as myself, goes on. He once sent me a card, It is pinned on the bulletin board behind where I am sitting. On the front is a cartoon of a boxer in a ring. The caption reads: **FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH - 1Tim 6:12** Thanks, Alan, for the encouragement you still are to me. You were faithful.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 08:39

Tuesday, January 24. 2006

Artists and Angelfish glorifying God

We greatly enjoyed a documentary last night entitled "Rivers and Tides" about environmental sculptor Andy Goldsworthy. His creativity and patience is amazing. One thing I enjoy about artists of all kinds is their effort to be in the moment, and visual artists, particularly, in their effort to see the world around them- shades and tones, shapes and forms, textures and lines, movement and energy. How much richer would we all be if we made more of such an effort. These artists learn to see and enjoy things that have always been there, but that the rest of us miss out on. There is a spiritual lesson here. Sunday afternoon, on the program "Nature" we were mesmerized by what was captured on film in a documentary about the Monterey CA Aquarium. I especially was taken with the "Jellies". See for yourself on their website. From migrating birds in the sky to animals swimming beneath the ocean, we delight in the creating glory of God. God made all these animals and materials and said "They are good". Just by being their good selves, being as God intended, these creatures and natural resources bring their Maker glory. The same can apply to human beings. I have appreciated Special Grace for years. It is wonderful to be learning to see the Hand of God everywhere and appreciate His Common Grace.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 19:01

Sunday, January 22, 2006

Birds and Humans together Perform Great Feat

For an absolutely awesome documentary, I recommend Winged Migration. The cinematography is gorgeous and the epic flights of these large, beautiful migratory birds is a wonder to behold. I found it a paean to the Creator, a worshipful experience. The music is very appropriate (very few words are used through out the film.) It is interesting that the dark moments come when the birds fly over cities in contrast to pristine wilderness. And one has to sympathize with them when, having flown for maybe a thousand miles, the flight of some is abruptly ended when they are shot down by "sportsmen". For a mind-boggling story, watch the extra material on the DVD about what 500 people over 4 years had to do to make the film. The human feat is more awesome than the avian one. It also brings God glory.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 13:17

Saturday, January 21, 2006

Marriage is Good

My wife had a root canal done yesterday. I went with her to the periodontist. We have been going to dentists and doctors together for many years. While waiting, I was ruminating again about our long life together and all that we have shared "side by side". Every morning, in my prayers I remember a number of other couples who have also been together many years- some more than 60. In this day of people in and out of "relationships", I simply want here to put in a good word for marriage: a committed for life, till death do us part, covenant between a husband and wife who persevere through sickness and health, riches and poverty, sorrow and joy. It takes a lot of work and patience, much grace and forgiveness and always a lot of prayer (together and for each other). When two thus become one, it is very precious and beautiful and all eminently worthwhile. As time goes by, it is ever better. I am very thankful.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:41

Sunday, January 15, 2006

Changing Jobs

My first real job, when I turned 16, was threading pipe in the back of a hardware store. For three Summers, I was a camp counselor. I put myself through college working outdoor construction (and small jobs here and there on campus) After college, I worked in the Connecticut State Labor Department, processing unemployment checks. I worked in a steel mill and later was a Case Worker for the State Child Welfare Department. I spent time as a kiln operator, Insurance Underwriter, AFDC case worker and substitute teacher in the public schools. My wife and I owned and managed 3 Christian Bookstores (in college towns) and I finally spent 19 years working with with developmentally delayed (handicapped adults) in a variety of positions with the State Department of Retardation, including 6 years as a printer.

Through all of this time (starting in college) I also was a Youth Pastor, became married and started a family with my wife. We have four children. I went to Seminary, pastored 4 churches full-time, 4 other churches part time and did a lot of work as an Evangelist (using chalk art) and as a supply Preacher. More than 45 years in ordained Ministry. Lots of stories here. Lots of joy and lots of pain. Not too many easy times, lots of hard times. One thing has remained constant through all these changes: God's love for me and my commitment to serve Him (since I became a Disciple at 17). My circumstances and jobs have changed a lot through the years, my Work never has.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 14:04

Saturday, January 14, 2006

Stevie: a film to see

We have started to enjoy DVDs from Netflix. Last night we experienced a powerful, heart-wrenching documentary about Stevie- one of the most sad and lost souls you'll ever meet. But the film abounds in grace, if you look for it. Read Jeffery Overstreet's full review (even if you do not see the DVD) In itself, the review will touch your heart.
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/135/43.0.html#stevie>

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 18:47

Sunday, January 8, 2006

Putting the Kings in Their Places

Well, today was it- the day to take down and put away the Christmas decorations. We did it while paying a DVD documentary about Big Band Swing music and jitterbugging, called "The Joint is Jumpin' " (Our first from Netflix) Christmas, of course, came to an end on Friday, Epiphany (and the birthday of one of our sons-in-law). I always enjoyed preaching about the Visit of the Three Kings (which is what the Hispanic community celebrates). I see in Epiphany the revelation of the King of kings to the 3 kings as a prophetic event foretelling the day yet to come when all the Nations of the world will see Christ and fall down before Him. Epiphany makes a great Missions Sunday and, coming as it does at the beginning of a new year, it sets the direction for all that should come in the next 12 months. The plaster kings are now in a box down in the basement. The King of kings is alive and well, on the Throne up in the attic, I mean, in Heaven, where He belongs. I'm sure that joint is jumpin'.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 18:32

Wednesday, December 28, 2005

Missing Special People

We had a stack of mail waiting at the PO today, including many Christmas cards. Many of them were from people we care about, who live in Vermont. Before the Holiday, we received cards from others, as well. A few people there did not seem to realize how many meaningful, good relationships we had- how many people we loved and in whose lives we were deeply involved, as well as many who loved and cared for us. Leaving the church and Vermont, we had to leave these people and we miss them. We still care for them, have photos of their children on our fridge and pray for them regularly. We are still very sad over the turn of events that led us to leave there; but, it has really warmed our hearts to get all these cards, many with touching notes. It is nice to know some miss us and appreciate the time we had together.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 18:59

Death of a Dentist

Before we left for our Christmas Holiday, I spent time with our Dentist and was to see him again when we got back. He passed away on Christmas Day. A thin, trim man who dressed very well, he was quiet and very gentle and personable. He was 63 and father of 6 children. Suddenly, he is gone. Another reminder to "seize the day" and make the most of the time and opportunities we have.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 15:00

Back for the New Year

We are back from a most enjoyable visit with our family in Maryland. This morning we are catching up- me with email and my wife with a week's worth of laundry. (Hey, doing email is hard work and somebody has got to do it.) We celebrated the birthday of Jesus primarily by attending two Services of Worship at this Church. We were blessed in doing so. There is something very special and sacred about Worship filled with beauty, reverence and awe and that moment of receiving Holy Communion, bowed in prayer before the Holy Table.
<http://www.christthekingrec.com/>This Sunday, I look forward to beginning the new year in the pulpit of the Presbyterian Church we attend, while the Pastor is away.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 11:40

Monday, December 19, 2005

God Provides

It was the week before Thanksgiving. My wife had her 6 week check up by the doctor after the birth of our fourth child. Within a few days, I was driving a small UHaul truck with our young boys on the seat next to me. My wife and our two very young daughters were following in the Ford sedan. We had said goodbye to our parents and were on our way from Connecticut to Illinois. The route took us through upstate New York toward Buffalo through a blinding snow storm. We found shelter overnight in a motel and continued south to the middle of Illinois- a tiny town of about 200 people in very rural farm country. Our new home was a ramshackle, rundown farmhouse. We moved in with the many mice who also called the place home. The farm family had long before moved out and away, although they still worked the farm itself. A professor from the Seminary I was to attend had made arrangements with the farmer for us to live there. We had brought a little money saved up to live on for a while, but no income. We were there on faith that the Lord would provide. Soon I was traveling as an Evangelist throughout the area. My specialty was doing Revivals and Rallies using "Chalk Art". For that first Thanksgiving, the Professor had us over for Dinner. Come Christmas, nothing was planned. The house was far out in the middle of corn fields, about two miles from the tiny town and the village church [and about 15 miles to the campus] We had no money for any gifts at all. Just lots of mice running around the house, in the walls, in the tub and over us during the night. We put out a lot of de-con. We discovered chili and Millie made great gingerbread men. They helped to keep the kitchen warm. To travel 60 miles in Winter weather to preach somewhere and come back home to a loving, faithful wife and 4 precious little children huddled in the kitchen and the fragrance of that chili or those cookies was very special. On that first Christmas, folks from that little church in the tiny town, strangers, came to the door with wrapped presents for the children. My heart is still touched as I write about it now. By the next year, I was helping to plant a church in Indiana and drove back and forth to Seminary in Illinois during the week. We moved from the Illinois house, which was abandoned to the cows that had looked in the windows while we were there, into another abandoned farm house surrounded by fields of soy beans. In Illinois we had a crank up phone. In Indiana, we had water drawn from a well in the back yard. When the new church grew, we were able to move into town and live in a nice house rented from one of the Elders of the new church. By then, our boys had started school and our girls were in day care. Millie was going to graduate school as well as teaching. When we left Indiana, about four years later, to return to New England, it was again by faith. We had no income, just the assurance that God would once again provide. He did, but that is another story. That church in Indiana now is in its third building and has over 600 in attendance.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 16:25

Tuesday, November 29, 2005

What Should I Do?

I have been struggling again today with focusing on what I am trying to do these days and explaining that to friends who express interest. This Sunday is sign-up-for-a-ministry day at the church we attend (Stewardship Sunday). We frequently are asked about joining the Choir or teaching Sunday School. My wife also is asked to join the Women's Group. I occasionally have felt a desire to return to the pastorate or to start a new church. Some of our friends here are very much into urban ministry, meaning working with and for the "poor" in the inner city. They always need extra hands. We are almost done with the Course in Genesis that I have been leading on Monday nights. Besides my wife and I, there have been 5 faithful adults who have stuck with it and now we need to decide whether to go on with the next Course. The first one is pre-requisite for the second, so no new people can be added, even if they could be found. (The two courses are actually the two halves of one course)The pastorate and becoming involved in a local church are no longer options for me. I am not called to inner city work. Been there and done all of that most of my adult life. The Course and my envisioned Institute remain serious options. Psalm 146 explains-

Alleluia! Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. This is what I will do. Seeing God glorified is my passion. After all these years in ministry, this is more primary and pressing to me than church work or soup kitchens. Put not your trust in rulers, nor in any child of earth, for there is no help in them. When they breathe their last, they return to earth, and in that day their thoughts perish. My faith and hope for seeing the Kingdom of God come does not rest in rulers of any kind, nor in government or church politics and programs. Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help! whose hope is in the Lord their God; Who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; who keeps his promise for ever; Who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; The Lord loves the righteous; the Lord cares for the stranger; he sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked. God will bring in His Kingdom. Ours is to focus on Him- to shout from the housetop: Behold your God! When rulers and all people, rich and poor, do that- Justice will flow like a river and churches will be the churches He has always intended them to be. The Lord shall reign for ever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Alleluia!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 18:50

Monday, November 14, 2005

Revisiting the Past

Yesterday, I conducted two Services at a mainline Congregational (UCC) church in Bloomfield, CT. I accepted the opportunity because I had a message unique to them. From the pulpit, I could see, through the window, the Masonic Hall where I had preached more than 40 years ago, helping to plant what is now a large evangelical Baptist Church in that town. [A woman on the staff of that Baptist Church came to Christ at the invitation I gave at the end of sermon I preached at an Episcopal Church in another town years ago] My sermon yesterday was about how both my father and I discovered, separately and many years apart, that there is a difference between being committed to Christ and being committed to Christian ministry. Using John 15:5, "without me you can do nothing", I urged the necessity of having a vital, personal connection with the Vine. We each learned that lesson in the context of doing ministry in liberal, mainline churches in West Hartford, the town next to Bloomfield. Its a long story, but I thought it would be appropriate and special to to the congregation yesterday. There was a very warm response from many of those present at each of the Services- maybe 80-90 people. They were mostly older folks, whom I suspect do not share the agenda of the younger staff. Some said I was should not be retired and hoped I would return. That was gratifying and I thank the Lord. The old, beautiful, colonial building reminded me of other similar churches were I have served or preached. Enough said.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:08

Sunday, November 6, 2005

Morning Prayer Today

It is 9:30 and I have just finished my daily Quiet Time. I have a head cold today and did not go to Church this morning with my wife, as usual. Instead, I turned to an old favorite resource: the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer. <http://www.missionstclare.com/english/index.html> If you go there, I recommend clicking on Morning Prayer whole text. It is the easiest to use. I did that and really was blessed in using the prayers and Scripture readings this morning. If I had my druthers, I would go back to being an Episcopalian. I really appreciate and enjoy the BCP and the Liturgy and I miss the Eucharist each week. To me it really has been a means of grace. Interestingly, the Old Testament text today is from Ezra. He was weeping before God over Israel- they had not been faithful to the Word of God, particularly (in this passage) in the matter of marriage to unbelievers. These men loved their "foreign" wives and children; but, for the welfare of the Nation they agreed they had done wrong and agreed to "send them away". When the world-wide Anglican Communion agrees, for the good of the "Nation", to send the ECUSA away, out of its Communion and gets on being the Church God has called it to be, I will be glad to return. [or, alternatively: if the ECUSA agrees to officially withdraw from the Anglican Communion and go its independent way] I do not want to simply be a part of some new Denomination that scavages the Church for parts and assembles its own "car" to drive in.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:37

Saturday, October 29, 2005

Left Behind

We have finished sorting through, and disposing of, my mother-in-laws things. Always strange how things are left behind. Her recliner is now sitting in one corner of our living room, opposite the recliner I use, which was left behind by my father. We watched a fascinating TV documentary last week, covering some 20 years, about the "Last Cowboy". He is a man about my age whose entire life was devoted to farming, particularly to raising cows. His family long ago lost interest and moved to town, including his wife. He won't leave. Sad story. He will pass away and not only his farm, but his way of life, will be left behind. When we have passed on, what from our lives, do we hope will be left behind? I do not mean farms and recliners. Those, too, will eventually be gone. What will live on because we have been here?

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 15:00

Saturday, October 22, 2005

Making Adjustments

We are in a period of adjustment. One of the main reasons we had for moving to Springfield, was to be more central to family. None live here, but we are a lot closer than Northern Vermont. Now our mothers have passed away. For the first time in many, many years we do not have to worry about or care for them. This is a big change. Our children and grandchildren are all very busy with their own lives. That is good. They are doing well. Another reason for moving here was that we have many friends still here from when we lived here before. We thought that would make for connections and opportunities for ministry in this area. Well, they all have moved on over the 6 years we were away and, while warmly welcoming us back, are also very busy with their own lives. The church scene has changed. Most local Pastors, now here, do not know me and, naturally, have their own agendas. The City itself has changed. We have changed. Old friends assume we are the same and assume we will join them in their various churches and ministries and pick up where we left off, now 7 years ago. Truth is, we have changed a lot through our experiences of recent years, including becoming older and slower. All of this calls for adjustment. We are not about to move again any time soon. We both miss one-on-one ministry, especially Millie. My main outlet has been writing for my Blog most every day, but that is very limited. One local ministry that we have been very interested in, is evolving and going in a different direction. I had high hopes for starting a school of sorts- my Re/formation Institute- another major reason for moving here. I have put a lot of time and work into creating lectures for the "Foundation Course" in Genesis. I now do not think it is going to happen. For one thing, typical Christians are not into the kind of study I do and/or they are already into other activities that requires their time and I am not connecting with college students or young adults (or young Pastors) , who seem to live in a very different world than I do. Actually, most people do, even other Christians. Looking at the CBD catalogs that come, I find almost nothing that interests me in the listings of authors and artists popular among today's Christians or in the programs or workshops offered by the Conferences here, such as their annual Vision NE "Congress". I am not complaining by any means- just taking inventory. I have much for which I am thankful. That includes time and opportunity to study and write. Something might happen tomorrow to change that [again], but that is what I plan to do. I am going to turn my 60 page Syllabus into a book. That requires focus. Currently, I am prone to read books and magazines about many, many things, often in response to the interests of others and current events in the world. That must be curtailed. Oh well, just thought, on this rainy afternoon, that I would put current thoughts down on "paper". I often write to find out what I am thinking. May the Lord bless you in yours.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 14:53

Friday, October 7, 2005

Christianity without Church?

As those of you who read this Blog know, I have a real struggle with the institutional church. The current issue of International Bulletin, the best academic missions journal, this month features articles on the topic of a churchless Christianity. This is done in light of the fact that today there are 37,000 church denominations in the world and 300 ecumenical organizations. There are supposedly 2 billion Christians. Much of the explosion in growth is happening outside of traditional churches. One major reason is the association of "Church" with the West and people in the non-West want their own indigenous expression of their Faith. The other Missionary journal I receive came this week as well. The Evangelical Missions Quarterly, has an article "Doing Theology: an international Risk" and another entitled, "Missionary Teaching in a Postmodern Context". How do we do theology and teach it, in such a multi-ethnic, cross-cultural world? The short answer is "differently". The paradigms and models I am so familiar with are up for serious reevaluation and revision, if we are to do theology in partnership with Christians from another world and culture. Teaching must be "contextualized": I can not drive through a Barrio in Honduras and throw the Four Spiritual Laws booklets written in English out the window at the people. The same applies to how I do theology and teach it here in Springfield, if I am to reach people for Christ, if they are people who do not share my language, culture, education and values. Oh, the answer to the title question? No (but that will have to be another post)

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 14:22

Monday, October 3, 2005

Getting our priorities in order

Psalm 57

Exalt yourself above the heavens, O God, and your glory over all the earth. Through the years, my focus has changed. Early on, I saw people as souls needing to be saved from Hell. I was a zealous "soul winner" and did a lot of personal evangelism. For a long time, I saw people hurting and in need: emotionally, mentally, physically, socially and my heart went out to them and the focus of my ministry was on serving them in practical ways. I have also, on and off through the years, put a lot of time and energy into planting and growing local churches. Today, in my Autumn years, I see that these earlier concerns were mis-directed. They focused on people. Oh, God, too, of course. But, the primary focus was people. Now my focus is on God. My heart is firmly fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will confess you among the peoples, O Lord; I will sing praise to you among the nations. I have learned and am convinced that when people focus on God, then their salvation and well-being will follow.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 08:38

Saturday, October 1, 2005

Happy Birthday

Today, we celebrate the birthday of our youngest child. She is 38 Today, is a belated birthday party for our youngest granddaughter. She is 13 Today, my wife and I are going to spend a diifficult day with her mother. She is 88 She is in the process of passing away, with only a very short time to go. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord. I remember being struck by this lesson years ago, when my paternal Grandmother, whom I loved and enjoyed greatly, passed away and a few weeks later our first child was born. Our times are in the Lord's hand- oh, to appreciate the life [and loved ones] we have and to live it well, while we can-----and to be prepared to go into Eternity. The God with whom we have to do is eternal. He has no beginning or end; He is Life and that life, which He offers us, is eternal. It is not the same as timeless existence. Far, far more- it is the very life which is His, with all of its peace, perfection and meaning. Actually, believers in Christ have that life now, partially, in our temporal existence. But, one day, whatever our physical age may be at the time, we enter into the fullest experience of God's eternal life, which has no end. Now, that will be a day of birth!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:00

Friday, September 23, 2005

Deciding to Die

We have been very involved with my wife's mother the last few weeks. She is 88 and lives in a nice nursing home. In the last 6 weeks she has had pneumonia and been in the hospital. She has had a lot of fluid in one lung and has needed aspiration twice and needs it again. She is also very anemic and needs a blood transfusion. And she also had surgery this past year and lives with pain. On her own, she decided this week to let go and has refused any further treatment. She talked with her doctor and knows that means she has probably less than a month to live. She professes no Christian faith and believes that death is death- there is nothing beyond. I write this simply to share the news with those of you who know us personally. Please pray we will have grace in the midst of it all. I also write this to share a real life experience, with the admontion: be prepared.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 19:27

Tuesday, July 19, 2005

Change

Last Saturday, we visited the campus of our alma mater, the University of Connecticut. We graduated from there 45 years ago. It is not the same. Here and there, a building remains from our day, but, by and large, the campus is very different. All the broad expanses of lawn have long been filled in with buildings and parking lots. Places where we spent time- from the Library, Student Union, Field House, dorms and coffee houses- are gone or renovated into something else. I know what is taught there is very different too, as intellectual fashions change along with hairstyles and clothes. The college we enjoyed lives on mostly in our memories. It was depressing. The new campus is modern, booming and exciting. And it is reality. There is no going back, nor would we want it to.

Yesterday, I read an article in a missionary magazine in which the writer was reviewing the way the world of missions has changed since he began his career in it some 30 years ago. The changes have been as major as the ones we saw at UConn. He was happy about it. The point of his article was that the missionaries and their agencies that have adopted the new methods are far more able to effectively communicate the Gospel in today's world than those who are resisting making changes. The latter are on their way to obsolescence. They have become irrelevant- answering questions that no one is asking anymore or using language that no one speaks (or listens to). He is concerned about those missionaries that fear the new world and the new ways, or simply do not want to deal with them, but prefer rather to retreat into isolation just because they are comfortable there. Change is painful and adaption can cost a lot. What we saw at UConn and reading this article have given me a lot to think about.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 11:16

Saturday, July 9, 2005

As Fido said, "So many trees, so little time"

I have stacks of books around me here in my Library Study. One has books about trends in current philosophy and theology, especially related to Post Modernism. Another stack has books analyzing contemporary society, especially about "Power". Another stack has the books I am reading about Racism and multiculturalism. And then there is the material I have been using to put together the 60 page syllabus of lecture notes for the course I plan to offer in the Fall: From Chaos to Civilization for Christ (studies in Genesis) And of course, there are the magazines and newspapers and all kinds of websites to check out regularly. I do not laugh while I work, like the ball players in the last post, but I do enjoy studying and writing and teaching. I hope you are enjoying your work, too.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 19:09

Thursday, June 30, 2005

I often write in order to learn what I think

This piece was written for that purpose-We enjoyed listening, recently, to a very impassioned, informed and well-done presentation by Randy White, an IVCF national staffer responsible for developing programs around the country that "plunge" college students into inner city ministry . He and his family also live in the inner city, in a section of Fresno CA, where they themselves maintain one such program. He had many human interest stories to share that really touched the hearts of the 25+ people present here in Springfield. He made no bones about it- working in the inner city (what we used to call the slums) is work that Jesus both modeled and calls all of us to do. I have done it- a lot of it through the years. Not now. Why?

If you respond to the stories, out of compassion- or guilt as a person who is middle-upper middle class (usually white) or both- you will get involved with some such ministry today. In fact, Randy's plea was for people to literally move into the inner city (slums). We must feel the pain of folks who live there and stand in solidarity with them. We can not have an effective ministry if we just "mail it in", ie- our money or an occasion helping hand for a few hours in some project. We must build up and earn the trust of inner city people by living among them, as Jesus did (this is what the incarnation was all about, Randy said- see The Message, John 1:14- Jesus "moved into the neighborhood") P.S.-I have serious misgivings about the way Randy interpreted and used Scripture in his talkMy heart still responds to such appeals. Indeed, we lived in a run down section of this city for 19 years. We have come back to live in it again, after the last 6 years in beautiful, rural Vermont. Our children went to Middle and High School here. They have been long gone, living their own lives elsewhere, but we have come back to spend our retirement years here. But not working in a shelter or food pantry. I'm glad there are those who are- meeting immediate, practical needs that demand attention now. Those needs are present in front of us daily, as we walk, drive or shop in the neighborhood. The greatest need in the long run, as I see it now, is to work on the structures and institutions that create those immediate needs in the first place. My heart goes out to people in trouble- it really does. I have a genuine burden for them. I don't "feel" that way about the multitudes who live "normal" middle class lives in the area. And, to be honest, I am repulsed by the affluent who live an exclusive, elite self-indulgent life style. Some of those who work in the inner city are concerned with the social-political-economic systems that are in place. They want to use those systems to change the inner city and improve the lives of the poor who live there. Perhaps I have just gotten cynical in my old age, but I think most of the social-political-economic systems today are not only ineffective for real change, they themselves cause and perpetuate the problems in the inner city. We need a radical approach- one that works to change the ideas and ideologies which drive those social-political-economic systems. That is what I am now trying to do. Change the way people think = change the way people live. Social-political-economic systems that are Biblically based will make a radical difference in our city. The idea is to flesh out this concept and "sell it" to fellow Christians. I am occasionally tempted to give it up because it is lonely and because there are those stories, those people with immediate needs to be met. It would be easy to just shove the books and go down to the Shelter and hand out food. Am I sticking with my plan to study, write and teach only because I don't have a church anymore? Not really. Much of the writing I am doing is based on notes and research done over many years. This is no new hobby I have just now taken up to occupy myself. These concerns have stood the test of time. I have been concerned about these things most of my life; but the pastorate, for me, was always all consuming and I rarely found any interest in these subjects (or this work) among church members. At best, the pastorate was the time to meet immediate needs (the tyranny of the urgent). Now, at last, I am free to pursue this work full-time, hopefully to make a difference for the future.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 11:41

Saturday, June 18, 2005

It's Sunday again- where to go to church?

Many weeks we are on the road, over the weekend, and attend different churches. I do not say "worship"- attending a church service and worshipping are two very different things, although the former is usually substituted for the latter. I have often gone to church and have not worshipped, sometimes that has included times when I was the Pastor of the church.

Many, many years ago I came to the conviction that Worship includes communion with the Lord and that communion is best done during Communion, ie during the Lord's Supper. This is surely the example of the early New Testament church (eg-Acts 2:38, 20:7)

One of the major attractions to me of the Episcopal Church is that it offers Communion at every Service. Of course, most Protestant churches do not include Communion in their weekly Service (even though the Reformers advocated it). The focus is on the sermon. I agree that Communion should not be celebrated [that word means observed or performed] apart from a sermon. The Eucharist is the Word made visible. [the word "Eucharist", an ancient name for the Lord's Supper, means thanksgiving, referring to the prayer offered over the Bread & Cup. See I Cor 10:16, 11:24] But, Scripturally (and spiritually) the Word, in the weekly Worship Service, should not be offered apart from the Eucharist. Most of us go along with the custom of our denomination or local church, as I have done, with Communion once a month. As a Pastor in such a church, I was willing to be flexible in this matter; but now, I am not a Pastor and do not need, in this or in other matters, to follow that custom. So, where to go to church tomorrow? Where can I find a Service where I can worship the Lord, enjoying the means of grace which are the Word preached and Word made visible? That means I need to find a church where the Pastor preaches a theologically solid, expository Bible message and Communion is offered in a formal, reverent manner. (Such a church should be in this local area, if we are to be regular in our participation. Finding such a church is a problem for many of you in your area as well.)

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 08:54

Oremus and a Missionary to Zimbabwe

I do my morning devotions, sitting here before the PC monitor, using the Oremus website. It is from England and is a rather liberal Anglican site. I do not endorse or recommend everything you might find there. What I use is the daily morning devotional because it has a lot of Scripture, all printed out in front of me, to meditate upon, presented in an orderly fashion through the year [called the Lectionary] It also includes a Hymn and a variety of prayers to use. Very helpful to me. In the prayers each day, there is a petition for Christians in some part of the world, eg- today is for the church in Newfoundland, Canada. If some of the Anglican material bothers you, just set it aside, as you do the bones when you are enjoying a fish dinner, and keep on eating. On most days, using the Anglican Church Calendar, there are stories of men and women through the years who have served the Lord in a variety of ways. I learn a lot from them. Today is the moving story of an African convert to Christ, Bernard Mizeki, who served Christ for 10 years in Zimbabwe, before being martyred on this day in 1896

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 08:48

Tuesday, June 14. 2005

Military Children also serve our Country

We are back from our trip to Maryland. We helped our oldest granddaughter celebrate her graduation from High School. Unfortunately, she was suffering from a sinus infection (?) or very bad cold all week end, so was only able to make it to the Ceremony itself and missed other special activities, which was a major "bummer". We are very proud of Vicki and thank God for her. She did very well in her academics, played on the basketball team, edited the school paper, helped at a local food pantry and worked long hours at Friendly's. She plans on attending Eastern University, near Philadelphia, in the Fall. Vicki has spent her 18 years as apart of a military family. We Americans sometimes appreciate the sacrifices made by the men and women who serve in uniform, we rarely appreciate the sacrifices made by the families of those who serve. Living on military pay and usually in base housing, they move often. Their children frequently must change schools --and friends. They can not not put down roots. When they live off base, as in these last two years for Vicki and her brothers, they must learn how to integrate and fit into schools where almost all of the other children have been attending all their lives and are therefore tight with each other. Coaches and teachers favor the locals kids they have know well for years over the new kids who then must prove themselves all over again, against the odds. Even in churches and youth groups, it is the same story. All of this makes Vicki's accomplishments even more impressive. This weekend, I came to a deeper appreciation of Vicki, her brothers and all those other children of military families who serve our country and often sacrifice in doing it.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 10:38

Wednesday, June 8, 2005

A Missionary's Message and Millie

It was the Valentine's Day progressive supper of Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship at the University of Connecticut main campus in Storrs, February 1958. The speaker was a Missionary from Columbia, Pastor Strube. He and his family worked among a tribe of Indians for several years without any measurable success. Then one of his children died and he conducted the Funeral with the tribes people present. They were so struck by his testimony and example of peace and hope in the midst of the tragedy, because of Jesus, that the first of many came to saving faith. Sometimes, that is what effective ministry requires. What brought Pastor Strube to my mind was today's Psalm (in Oremus). He used it as his text for the message he gave to us students. Psalm 101:3 says, "I will set no worthless thing before my eyes" From that, Pastor Strube exhorted us to never watch any worthless TV shows or movies. Not what David had in mind, but still good advice, although I have not always followed it. This meeting was the first time I met someone special- another student, who later became my wife.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 18:55

Thursday, June 2, 2005

Beginning my 68th year

I came to saving faith in Jesus at 17. We have lived my life together for 50 years now. Actually, in many ways I was born a Christian. I have always known God and have sought to love and serve Him. I have always gone to a Christian church and Sunday School, prayed and read my Bible and tried to live my life like He would want. Of course, I have often sinned and made mistakes and have had poor judgement. Realizing that is what led me, as a "Christian" teenager, to open up my heart to Jesus in a new way- I realized then, that I was trying instead of trusting. I was a Christian without Christ in my heart. He spoke to me through John 15:4-5 I was trying to have the fruit apart from the Vine. I sometimes have a problem with people who have a story of "living in sin" and getting saved. Almost always the "sin" is sexual or some kind of addiction. Churches feature these "testimonies" of people who have been born again after wasting their lives in some gross fashion- Town tramp gets saved. Town drunk gets saved. Teen gang member gets saved. Drug pusher gets saved. Bank robber...rapist...murderer... You get the picture. Churches make celebrities out of these people. I'm glad they have been saved. At the same time, those of us who have lived ordinary lives and believe in Jesus are often made to feel second rate. It is almost like only people who live in gross immorality can really get saved. I honestly think most folks have a story much more like mine. This is especially true of the children of Christians, who, like me, raised in Christian homes and churches, have been praying to Jesus since they were old enough to talk. I also think a lot of folks who grew up like me do not get saved for this same reason. Exactly because they have grown up singing hymns and going to VBS and youth groups and have heard testimonies about living terrible sinful lives, they conclude, by comparison, they don't need to get saved- they are not lost in sin, so they don't need to get found. As a result a lot of fine, good church people are going to Hell. Good kids need Jesus just as much as bad kids do. Happy successful people with good marriages need Jesus just as much as abused people, living in a bad marriage, do. Everyone needs Jesus to be the person God wants them to be. Period. Life without Christ is not life as God intended. That's why such a life needs saving. Anyway, I am glad that God saved me [I'm using old fashioned, now unfashionable, language on purpose] 50 years ago. More, than that, I marvel and I'm very thankful that He has kept me all these years, which have included a lot of struggle and grief. To God be the glory, great things He has done. I look forward to seeing Him face to face- oh, what Glory that will be. And it is getting closer all the time.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 08:03

Tuesday, May 31. 2005

Memorial Motivation

We were moved to tears as we watched the annual Memorial Day Program from the Nation's Capital Sunday night. The speeches, stories, film clips and martial music all touched our hearts, as we remembered those who have died for our Country through the years. These same sights and sounds stirred my soul and strengthened my resolve to do more to combat the evil powers in the world which exact such a terrible toll. My anger and disgust that there are such powers still wrecking havoc in the world, even as I type these words, and which makes me recoil at such horrible images of suffering soldiers, spurs me on to do something that will make a difference. I believe that "something" is teaching and promoting the material in my Institute Courses. The typical church and common evangelical beliefs and practices just do not, and will not, make the difference that is needed. We must go far deeper and attack root causes- such as idolatry. (Romans 1 makes it plain- that is the basic reason for the sins and social evils in the world around us and within us. Please study (not just read) the material I am putting on my website www.npgpro.com/cal. Thanks

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 16:18

Friday, May 27, 2005

Remembering the Forgotten at Belchertown State School

It is certainly right and important that we remember those who have died in the service of their country. It is also right that people in this area are now remembering, for altogether different reasons, the 200 people whose bodies are buried on what were the grounds of the former State School in Belchertown, MA. Apparently, their remains were dumped in unmarked graves for many years- forgotten - a final act of ignominy. Now there is a groomed cemetery with grave markers for each of these persons. I worked at B.S.S and with its residents for many years. Talk about a dumping ground for unwanted human beings...! At the beginning, it was a farm and most of the residents were from the eastern part of the state. Many were simply unwanted children who had "nothing wrong with them". Increasingly, the residents were children with various and multiple "disabilities". There was even a nursery for the youngest. They grew older and the place became like a warehouse for discarded adults. There were investigative articles and documentaries (one made for TV in particular) that brought to light the atrocious living conditions, on what looked like a college campus, in bucolic Belchertown. The School was phased out. I worked on grounds during its last two years and helped transition the residents into community placements. Then I worked with many of those residents for the next 17 years in the community. Many of them suffered from life-long "institutionalization", as well as from their original "handicaps". Each had a story. All of them were, and are, human beings. It is good to memorialize those who died in our country's wars. We must also remember those 10's of thousands of this country's citizens with disabilities discarded in dismal detainment centers like Belchertown State School. For 19 years they were my daily companions and co-workers. Thank God we are more enlightened these days and better, more appropriate, care is provided today. I also thank the Lord for the untold number of staff at BSS who diligently, selflessly and professionally served these men and women through the years. Many still do. There have also been a group of parents, caught in a very difficult situation, who have faithfully advocated through the years for the welfare of their children placed at BSS.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 11:18