

Good News from Good Hope!



*Day after day... they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. ❖ Acts 5:42
Good Hope Presbyterian Church ❖ The Presbyterian Church in America ❖ March 2009*

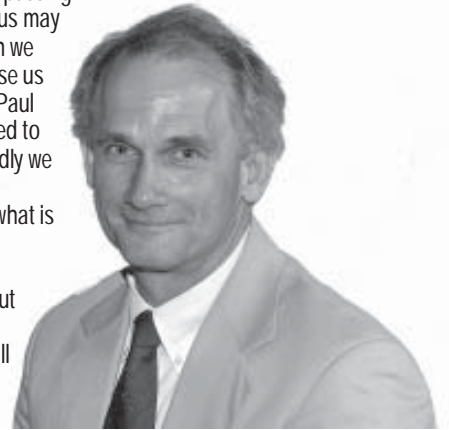
Do You Need A Hand to Pull You Along on the Uphill Climb?

It is difficult to keep working when what you're working on keeps falling apart. It is hard to keep climbing when you keep sliding backwards. It is exhausting when the output of your efforts always seems to be less than the input of your labor. If you're caught in one of these cycles, you may be tempted to ask, "Is it worth it? Should I keep trying or give up?" In addition to this frustration, we may measure ourselves against others. When we are disheartened, we often imagine that others have an edge on us. We think that even though they are human like us and face severe circumstances like us, somehow they are a cut above us, somehow they escape the full load of life, somehow they escape the repetitive futility that we experience.

The apostle Paul was not immune from trouble, resistance, or mental accusations of defeat. On the contrary, the problems he faced sought to pound him into the ground and permanently produce within him a fearful and frail heart. He wrote, "We are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." (II Corinthians 4:8-9) How was Paul able to counterbalance these forces of pressure, persecution, perplexity, and put-downs that sought his demise? Only a counterweight larger than himself could keep his head above water and his heart engaged in the game of life. The forces arrayed against him were too large, and Paul knew it. He did not possess the stamina needed to prevent him from being overwhelmed, unless he looked to Another.

As one entrusted with spreading the gospel, Paul wrote, "We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us... We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our mortal body... It is written: 'I believed; therefore I have spoken.' With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in His presence." (II Corinthians 4:7, 10, 13-14) Although limited in his own power, Paul looked to the One who possessed unlimited power. His confidence in his present battles and future hope were adjusted to fit God's perspective on life. Paul continued, "We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (II Corinthians 4:16-18)

Okay, so you are not an apostle, nor are you Paul. Neither am I. Our lives will never mirror the adversity of his life, but each of us has our own version of life to live. What will we do when our efforts fall apart, and we keep sliding back down the hill, and we are exhausted by our efforts with little to show for them? Will we drown in discouragement, or will we adopt the mindset of Paul—who trusted in a Lord who is bigger than any trouble that life can throw our way, who relied on the inner recharge that the Lord gives, and who saw with eyes that looked beyond the regions of time? ❖



Focus on Our Missionaries: Linda Karner in Chiba, Japan

I finally returned to Japan on October 7, 2008, had one week to recover, and then jumped into a semester of English classes in full swing! My transition was rather rocky this time, however, as I messed up my anti-depressant medication in trying to compensate for the time difference between the United States and Japan, and it took a full five weeks for that medication to kick in again. I almost lost hope of ever feeling good again in the midst of that, but I continued to trust God day by day, for each day, and step by step I got through it. The fog lifted just before Thanksgiving—how appropriate! Thanksgiving isn't a noted holiday in Japan, but we usually celebrate it as a team and often host outreaches at that time.

One of my favorite things that God has done this semester is to bring 5 new students to my English classes! Three kids and two adult men. One of the men is the non-believing husband of our dear church secretary, a man who has hardly ever darkened the door of our Christian center in the 10 years that his wife has been involved, so all of us at Kokubunjidai are excited to see what God will do next in his life—that is, how long will it take now for him to come to faith?!



Linda with her Thursday afternoon class of 5th grade students

The other man is the son of a dear young believer, who came to Jesus within a year of her mother being baptized in the hospital on her deathbed. She is energetic, full of faith, and participating in our church-wide discipleship program. She retired from teaching in order to care for her parents, and now that they have both passed away, she has remodeled her house and will open a day-care center there this April. This one son, however, has some psychological issues that prevent him from participating fully in life. He is a dear in class, though. I enjoy him immensely and, of course, hope and pray that God will take hold of his life too. At this point he does not stay for the optional Bible time, so a big step in his life would be to participate in that. Right now, just the hour of English seems rather stressful and tiring to him. But he is finding acceptance and to the extent that I can be a channel of God's love to him, I think it will help his healing.

Well, I have zeroed in on just two students this month, but I hope it will help you to see that Japanese people are just like people everywhere. The human heart is the same no matter where you go, full of sin with the possibility of nobility, and everyone needs the same Savior. Please pray that God will continue to make me into whatever I need to be to do this blessed work He has called me to do—mainly, I think, a channel of His love and grace. Please pray for His blessing on our Bible times, for an outpouring of the Spirit that will unite the words of Scripture with faith in the hearts of the students. And please pray for a kind of logistical thing—that in these times when the world economy is so uncertain that we believers everywhere would bear in mind that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." Thank you all ever so much for your prayers and support!

God bless you,
Linda Karner

Join us for Sunday School at 9:45am and Worship at 11:00am each Sunday.
Evening Worship is held each Sunday at 6:30pm.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sunday School - 9:45am Worship Service - 11:00am	2 March Deacons: Matt Malanoski Jim Rowan	3 Men's Breakfast Group - 6:00am Rowan Growth Group - 6:30pm	4 Precepts Bible Study 6:00-8:15pm Mclver Growth Group - 7:00pm	5 Macdonald Growth Group - 6:30pm	6	7 High School GG 4:00-6:00pm Daylight Saving Time begins at 2am. Turn your clocks forward!
8 Daylight Saving Time Begins Sunday School - 9:45am Worship Service - 11:00am Communion To Be Served Friends & Family Luncheon Choir Rehearsal - 5:30pm Evening Worship - 6:30pm	9 Session Meeting at the church - 7:30pm	10 Men's Breakfast Group - 6:00am Rowan GG - 6:30pm Deacon Meeting at the church - 6:30pm	11 Precepts Bible Study 6:00-8:15pm Mclver Growth Group - 7:00pm	12 Macdonald Growth Group - 6:30pm	13	14 High School Growth Group at the church 4:00-6:00pm
15 Sunday School - 9:45am Worship Service - 11:00am Middle School at church - 5pm Choir Rehearsal - 5:30pm Evening Worship - 6:30pm College/Career Group at the Higgins' - 8:00-9:30pm	16	17 Men's Breakfast Group - 6:00am Rowan Growth Group - 6:30pm	18 Precepts Bible Study 6:00-8:15pm Mclver Growth Group - 7:00pm	19 Macdonald Growth Group - 6:30pm	20	21 High School Growth Group at the church 4:00-6:00pm
22 Sunday School - 9:45am Worship Service - 11:00am Middle School at church - 5pm Choir Rehearsal - 5:30pm Evening Worship - 6:30pm College/Career Group at the Higgins' - 8:00-9:30pm	23	24 Men's Breakfast Group - 6:00am Rowan Growth Group - 6:30pm	25 Precepts Bible Study 6:00-8:15pm Mclver Growth Group - 7:00pm	26 Macdonald Growth Group - 6:30pm	27 Info for April newsletter due to Kate Haber today!	28 High School Growth Group at the church 4:00-6:00pm
29 Sunday School - 9:45am Worship Service - 11:00am Middle School at church - 5pm Choir Rehearsal - 5:30pm Evening Worship - 6:30pm College/Career Group at the Higgins' - 8:00-9:30pm	30	31 Men's Breakfast Group - 6:00am Rowan Growth Group - 6:30pm	1 Precepts Bible Study 6:00-8:15pm Mclver Growth Group - 7:00pm	2 Macdonald Growth Group - 6:30pm	3	4 High School Growth Group at the church 4:00-6:00pm

Daily Schedule of Bible Readings in March

March 1 - Matthew 13	March 16 - Mark 4-5
March 2 - Matthew 14	March 17 - Mark 6
March 3 - Matthew 15-16	March 18 - Mark 7
March 4 - Matthew 17	March 19 - Mark 8
March 5 - Matthew 18-19	March 20 - Mark 9
March 6 - Matthew 20	March 21 - Mark 10-11
March 7 - Matthew 21	March 22 - Mark 12
March 8 - Matthew 22-23	March 23 - Mark 13
March 9 - Matthew 24	March 24 - Mark 14
March 10 - Matthew 25	March 25 - Mark 15-16
March 11 - Matthew 26	March 26 - Luke 1
March 12 - Matthew 27	March 27 - Luke 2
March 13 - Matthew 28	March 28 - Luke 3
March 14 - Mark 1	March 29 - Luke 4
March 15 - Mark 2-3	March 30 - Luke 5
	March 31 - Luke 6

Time To Spring Forward!

Don't forget to set your clocks forward one hour on Saturday night, March 7th, in observance of **Daylight Saving Time**.

Friends & Family Luncheon Returns

Plan to stay for lunch and fellowship together after morning worship on **Sunday, March 8th**. And bring a friend!

Don't Forget the Deacons' Fund!

With the economy struggling, many people are suffering financial hardships—both within the church and in our wider community. Good Hope has a deacons' fund, which is administered by the deacons and is specifically designated for meeting these needs. The deacons' fund is supported not by the budget but by your giving over and above your usual tithe. The deacons encourage you to consider giving to this fund as you feel led.

Save the Date—2009 Missions Conference

The 2009 Good Hope Missions Conference is scheduled for the weekend of **June 5-7**, with evening events planned for Friday and Saturday nights and a special missions focus on Sunday morning. Mark your calendar now, and stay tuned for more details to come soon! Please contact **Craig Smith** to be involved with this exciting weekend.