

VOLUME XCII
February 2019

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF



Jesus Loves You As You Are

*NOW THAT YOU HAVE PURIFIED YOURSELVES BY OBEYING THE TRUTH SO
THAT YOU HAVE SINCERE LOVE FOR YOUR BROTHERS, LOVE ONE ANOTHER
DEEPLY, FROM THE HEART. 1 PETER 1:22*



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Shepherd's Staff;" and, any other
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A Tale of Two Meetings

[Note from Pastor Keith: This is a republic of a January 24, 2019 article written by Pete Corak (Village Missions National Board Chairman).]

The juxtaposition of the two meetings in Acts 15 hits me like a ton of bricks. The first meeting (15:1-35) involved Paul and Barnabas along with the apostles, the elders, and, it would seem, the whole church at Jerusalem—many of whom didn't really know one another that well. The invitees to the second meeting in Antioch (15:36-41) were just Paul and his faithful ministry partner, Barnabas, “son of encouragement” (Acts 4:36)—two men who had been through thick and thin together and had partnered well to plant churches and encourage new believers.

The agenda for the Jerusalem meeting centered on deep theological questions which would have a foundational impact for the church for centuries to come. At Antioch, the question was simply one of who should go with Paul and Barnabas for the next couple of months as they visited the churches they had established and see how things were going. In Jerusalem there was consensus of opinion, unity among the participants, and a confidence that what seemed good to them was because it seemed good to the Holy Spirit (15:28). But in Antioch, these two brothers couldn't agree as to whether or not another brother should join them on their planned follow up tour.

And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. (Acts 15:39-41 ESV)

What?!?! Sharp disagreement? Literally, “contention contention” or, “irritation irritation”? (We get our English word paroxysm from the original word, meaning “a sudden attack or violent expression of a particular emotion or activity.”) How could this be?


And they separated!?!? Each so entrenched in their position that they find new ministry buddies and head in opposite directions?

And did the church take sides too? Nothing is mentioned of Barnabas being sent off with the blessing of the church at Antioch, but Paul is “commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.”

After the triumph of the theological council at Jerusalem, after the clarity and unity and certainty that the Spirit had led, how does the Antioch planning meeting seemingly go so south? No clarity. No unity. But I'm guessing the same Spirit.

So what are we to make of this? Is it intended to show Paul's clay feet? Or evidence that Son of Encouragement had his limits? Did the Spirit of God not fill them that day? Was this totally an outcome of the flesh?

Or, is it a reminder that God in His sovereign purposes and mysterious ways uses jars of clay to accomplish mighty purposes. That He determines to use works in progress to accomplish the work of the kingdom of heaven. That He multiplies workers for the harvest even through disputes on how best to steward the harvest.

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I don't know. But it seems worth chewing on. Seems kind of profound that the same men who walked away from Jerusalem likeminded concerning the implications of grace were unable, by that same grace, to come to a meeting of the minds on such a simple matter as who should accompany them on their church strengthening road trip.

Maybe it says something of legitimate differences of opinion and perspective. Paul seems to have held the mission up as the greatest priority and didn't want to risk Mark bailing on them again (Acts 13:13). But Barnabas, perhaps being true to his name, wanted to encourage Mark and give him a second chance, placing the man and his restoration above the mission. Maybe it's not that the Spirit was absent in their deliberation, though it would seem to have gotten somewhat heated as some point, but that the Spirit's fingerprints are all over it. Using these men and how they were wired to accomplish what He had purposed. Working all things—even heated, divisive argument things—for good, for these brothers who loved the Lord Jesus and were both called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28). Maybe.



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Words of Delight

The other day I was reminded of a comment one of my professors made. The Christian Studies wing was upstairs in the building known as “New James” (he wasn’t a king... it was just a fancier addition to the James Building). When you went up the stairs, directly ahead was a sitting area and a window. I can’t remember if the bookshelf had always been there, but one day this shelf was full of books for sale...

(Before resuming my story, I’ll come out and say it: yes, this is another article about books. What’s the big deal? This isn’t a review of another book [see: 2018]. It’s just the first full thought that came to my head as I started thinking about this month’s newsletter. Consider it a continuation piece, if you like. Ahem...)

Anyway, this shelf was full of books and my buddy and I started salivating. Books? Check. For a dollar? Check. Being “sold” by our Bible school professors? Check! What could go wrong? Well, as we were browsing the titles, Dr. Morgan passed by. He inquired which ones we’d been considering. I said something like, “I wish I could get them all!” His response was the comment to which I alluded two paragraphs ago. I don’t remember his precise wording, but the thought was that I shouldn’t wish that I could get all of them. This was a completely foreign concept to me. Why wouldn’t you want to acquire as many books as humanly possible? (As a side note, this is still a conundrum to me.) Dr. Morgan then explained that I should only want the books worth reading. I don’t remember which books I walked away with that day, but I am sure that they were worthy of my time.

I’m not sure how many books I own. There are two shelves in the office, three shelves full at home, nooks here and there throughout the house, and probably four or five crates of novels. My book-collecting predilection isn’t the subject of today’s article. Rather, I have been noticing more and more (as both space and time seem in shorter supply), that I’m choosier when it comes to what I acquire. There is a nigh endless list of things I’d like to read (both fiction and non-), so I have to be strategic in my planning.

There’s an interesting bit of Scripture at the end of the book of Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes is an odd book that takes some care so that you’re reading it as God intended. There are differing views, but I see that Solomon (the “Preacher”) wrote on how everything in the world is ultimately meaningless (or “vanity”) if you don’t have your relationship with God right. Nothing can ultimately satisfy and trying to define your life through one of these other avenues is a “chasing after the wind.” To conclude these twelve chapters of “preaching,” Solomon summarizes (Ecclesiastes 12.9-14):

Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care. The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth.


The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd. My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

“Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.” Does this mean that you should completely disregard all (or the most-confusing) recommendations from last year? Does this mean that we shouldn’t read anything but the Bible and even then we should largely restrict ourselves to Old Testament wisdom literature? Well, no, obviously. What, then, does it mean?

In its original context, Solomon is encouraging his readers to stay rooted in the fear of the Lord. They could have read works by the surrounding nations concerning how to live well, but the truth was already in (what we now know as) Scripture. Beware of other sources of knowledge because they will include bones you’ll need to spit out. Don’t wander off after grandiose strands of understanding. You’ll get tired and all you need to know

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about the meaning of life (and the vanity of all idols) is right here!

So what does that mean for us? Let me say up front that I'm referring to what I call "growth" books. I read plenty of books for fun (I'm reading about King Arthur when I'm writing this article). I'm not going to address the "fun" category today (that's a subject for another newsletter). Instead, we're going to be talking about "growth" books – books that we read for our own spiritual/emotional/philosophical betterment. From Ecclesiastes 12, I have a handful of points of application that I think we can draw from this:

1) "Beware of anything beyond these." Many "Christian" books may talk about Jesus or even reference or quote the Bible. Some of these authors may even be pastors of churches. We need to be careful, though: if a book seems to be saying something about Scripture you've never heard before, beware. If an author just talks about God without references to back up his or her points, beware. If an author gives an unnatural reading of a verse, beware. Being ware (or bewaring, if you'd prefer) doesn't mean you need to automatically jettison such books. Rather, we need to know the Bible well enough so that we don't accidentally go beyond what it says.

Another realm of "beyond these" are books that are written by non-Christians. No, I'm not telling you that people who love Jesus only read Christian books. From Ecclesiastes, I think we can see that there will be weariness in going through self-help or secular "growth" books. They may have good things to say, but there's danger in committing to anything (even something good) that has a decidedly non-Christian starting point. Be leery of New York Times bestsellers that promise total life makeovers by next Tuesday. Satan is happy to smuggle in heretical worldviews with positive life changes.

2) "Of making many books there is no end." In 2013, the International Publisher's Association reported that there were 304,912 new titles (or re-editions) published in the United States. What with Kindle and other websites, 2017 saw over 1,000,000 books self-published. I'm assuming that these figures are worldwide, but good night! That's a lot of books.

I'm sure I'm not the first person to have observed that we live in an age of information-glut. With social media, self-publishing, and the ease of acquiring and populating a personal website, it seems like everyone thinks that he or she is worth listening to. Right now, I could go on the internet and post a moving essay about the rights of ptarmigans. If I had the money and the patience for it, I could even write a book about the subject. This doesn't mean it'd be worth reading... because I don't know anything about ptarmigans except that they're white (sometimes... I think) and that they have a great name.

There are bajillions of books out there, many of them claiming to be good for your spiritual growth. I'm sure there are worthwhile portions of most, but you could exhaust yourself quickly on the endless supply. Here's my suggestion: read books that matter – books that have stood the test of time, books that are well-reviewed by people who know what they're talking about, books that have clearly impacted many and are deeply rooted both in an experienced relationship with God and in the text of Scripture. Y'all know I want you to be reading, but there are some books out there (some that may even be on sale at Christianbook.com) that are not worth your time.

If you have questions about your vehicle's engine, please don't come talk to me. That conversation would be very short and awkward as you marvel at how mechanically inept I am. If you have questions about cooking or baking, I can offer you tidbits of advice to the extent of "if you can't machine wash a kitchen tool, what's the point?" If you have questions about which books would be best to read, I'd love to visit with you! I don't have all the answers by a long shot, but it is a genuine joy to me to do some digging to see which books would be most worth your time for your growth in obedience and in the fear of the Lord.

Maybe I'll write about something other than books next month... no guarantees.

By God's grace,
Pastor Caleb



Looking back

Turning the corner of the new year I've been reflecting on what has happened in 2018 and what God has brought me through.

The start of last year was the hardest when my dad passed away and a lot of things shifted in my life because of it. He was always for Jesus and missions and is one of the biggest influences in why I am a missionary working with YWAM.

I still think about him a lot and wonder what he would say about what I'm doing but all his advice he ever gave me had a theme and that was to **move closer to Jesus in everything I do.**


I think that is summed up well by a part of Bob Goff's book *Love Does* where he says how **Jesus is our reference point for life.**

In all things we do we need to refer back to Jesus, he brought me through this difficult season of my life and took me back to nations and people I love.

In following his leading he brought me to his word the Bible and specifically to do a School of Biblical studies through YWAM.

I knew this wouldn't be an easy thing to transition into because it would be different from anything I've ever done but I also knew that whatever God is calling me to is the best decision I can make.

A majority of last year was spent state side with a trip to Cambodia in the middle and concluded by ending my first trimester of the YWAM School of Biblical Studies.

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Transitioning out of an active role in the organization and back to being a student was a little weird at first but has become my favorite thing I have done with YWAM so far.

I love studying the Bible and learning about the history meaning and context of Scripture.

My apprehensiveness to the tedious monotony of studying the Bible was quickly diminished by the truths I was learning through doing the work.

The Bible brings life to the Christian's walk, in a similar way that my dad would challenge me to be closer to Jesus the Bible brings us closer to Jesus.

The challenge before me is six more months of this school as I study through the rest of the Bible.

I'm excited to learn more and more and want to leave you with a question.

What is God challenging you in this year to bring you closer to Jesus?

I'd love to hear about what God wants you to do this year or even just how you are doing so feel free to reply.

As always love in Christ,

Ben Wichael

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ben may be emailed at:

BenjaminWichael@gmail.com

Ben Wichael is a "Youth With A Mission" (YWAM) missionary our PCC family supports.



1) Praise and thanks for God's provision (year end and this month) *toward* our mission ministry trips (Africa and Asia) for this year 2019!

2) Thanks for God's continuing provision for our living and working in Germany (Europe) and PCC's partnership!!

3) For MEN: military men here (single, married, married with kids) are probably underserved in terms of their spiritual, emotional and family development (leadership/shepherding). Even when there is something provided (i.e.: a men's retreat), many are unable to participate due to overwork (long work days and weeks, and week ends). Then, many travel on the weekends (especially longer weekends like MLK-so they make themselves Unavailable for much needed input when there is an opportunity.

Therefore, I am inviting about 12 men to consider a one day or an overnight men's retreat this month. Please pray they will see their personal need and the priority they could (should?) give this opportunity. Ask God to select and bring the men of His choosing.


BTW, Karen is involved with a number of women who will be attending a Women's Retreat Jan. 25-27. Thank you for praying.

4) For broader ministry - there are two special conferences for military chaplains (and in one case, chapel congregations)- one this month here where we live and minister (Kaiserslautern Military Community - 50 to 70,000 Americans!) and one next month (Feb.) in eastern Germany near the Czech border where there is another large US military community (maybe 10-15,000).

Please pray that as we interact with many chaplains and their assistants from all over Europe at this conference in January (22-25) that the Lord will bring specific individuals He would like us to minister with and to as this year plays out (personally, in their lives, and in their ministries with servicemembers and their families).

Karen and I will team up with another full time Navigator couple and some volunteer staff couples (military-NavAssociates we call them) for the conference in Feb about 4 hours east of our location.

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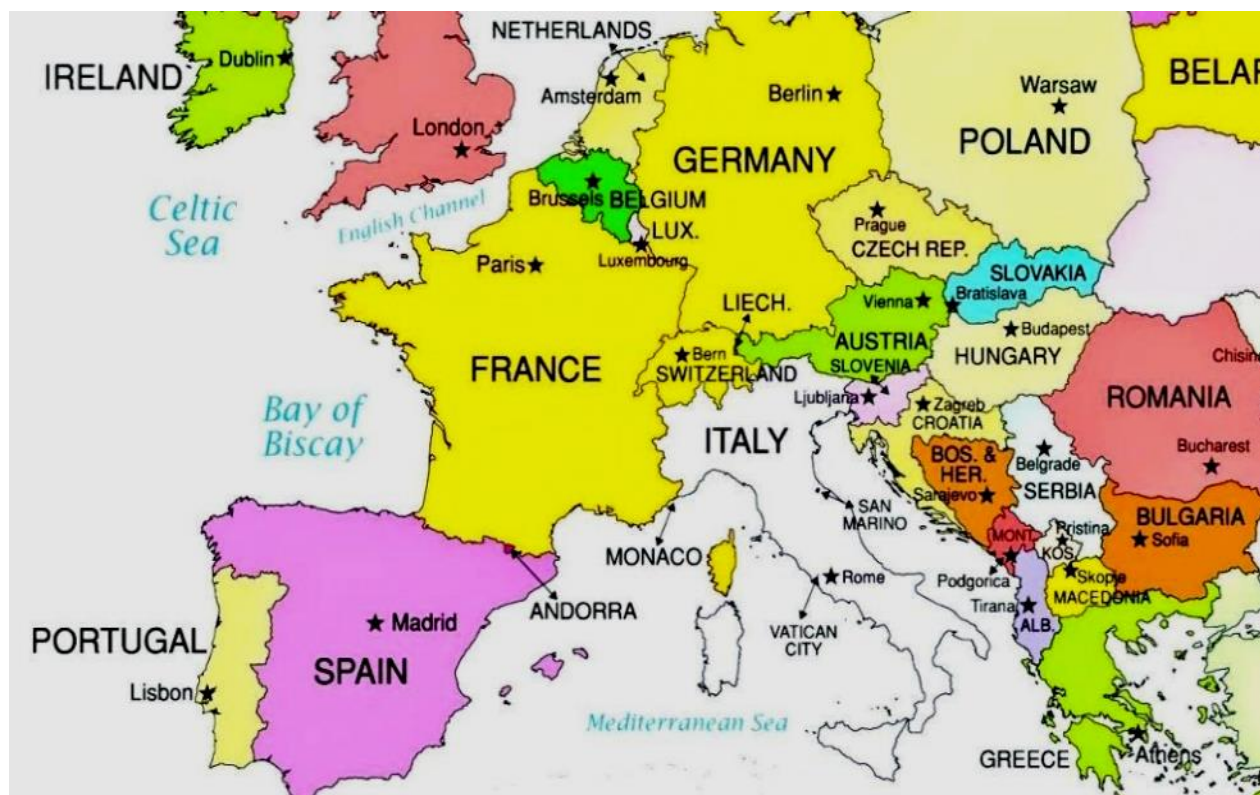
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5) We have airline tickets from Germany to Côte d'Ivoire (French speaking, Ivory Coast) in West Africa from Feb. 28-March 12.

Please pray for adequate preparation and effective ministry in Africa. We will share more on that through our updates in the course of time. We have a mission or ministry trip planned in May for S. Korea (Army) and Japan (Navy and Air Force).

6) Regarding our future? What is God's will and His time line for us in terms of moving from Germany (to where? Including Europe, Africa and somewhere else in Europe)??????????????

Mike & Karen Kotecki
The Navigators
Germany



Mike and Karen Kotecki are Navigator Missionaries our PCC church family supports.



Michael Schneblin <mschneblin@crescentproject.org>

Date: December 6, 2018 at 1:31:35 AM PST

Subject: National & International Happenings

You've wanted to hear from me and it has been a while since many have heard a peep, concerning ministry. In fact, it's been since my last parent passed away. The stress of those years took the stuffings out of me and I still have not fully recovered.

I've still been able to participate in structured events with Crescent Project, but it has been difficult to initiate anything outside of that without my mojo! I went a year with my hormones out of whack and finally arrived at the hormone therapy that was best for this time. It's helped quite a lot, but I'm still having to sort out other issues that still dog me.


Some activities with Crescent Project that I have staffed have been our two yearly events. Sahara Challenge, at the end of the school year, is a 5-day, in-depth, training on Islamic thought from former Muslims and Muslim experts. In late fall, we staged our National Conference, which was our largest, yet (i.e. 375 in Columbus, Ohio). We are an event driven agency and our staff have expanded to 60 from the 30 when I started. As staff, we are tasked with attending each of these events. It's an all-hands-on-deck affair. People are impacted with the training, passion and sincerity of staff, trainers, and leaders.

I've helped organize what we call an Outreach Group, here, in Redlands. There are a handful of us that meet, pray, and reach out to the Bengali, Pakistani, and Arabic community that live among us. One of our members, Linda, invited a Muslim couple to our church's dinner night that allowed tables to interact with non-believers on spiritual topics. This couple engaged with members from our church (which was a delightful experience for both of them). We also put on a Bridges at our church. And instead of me leading every session, I had each member of the Outreach Group take one on.

In January of last year, there was a memorial service for an Anglican pastor that I worked with when I lived in Casablanca, Morocco. I helped him and his wife set up the first Bible Society organization in that country. I was one of the founding board members and we had very interesting experiences along the way. I wasn't able to attend, which made me very sad. They were like second parents to me. Summer rolled around and I felt I needed to test the waters in Morocco. Was I still on their watchlist or had I successfully entered the last time with a new passport and gotten a new dossier?

There were a number of things that I wanted to do in Europe, but my inertia and mental state caused me to put it off. Then the family of the Anglican minister wanted to have a second memorial service for those that couldn't make it. They invited me, personally, and then asked if I would do the message. Well, that overcame the inertia, but giving a message created all kinds of anxiety (because of my fragile mental condition). It was especially daunting after I was told that a bishop couldn't give it and I, a mere knave, was to do the deed! They graciously tweaked it into a meditation and supplied the Scriptures. The bishop was there and it was no less than the former Archbishop George Carey! He approved of how I approached the use of the scripture portions that he had chosen!

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I flew down to Gibraltar and visited with one of our church's missionaries in southern Spain. I took the ferry to Morocco, only to find that my passport had "problems." I quizzed the immigration officer and he gave me the lowdown. I had been deemed persona non grata (expulsion of missionaries and my name was still on the residents' list, even though I had moved out previously). This was done in absentia, of course, in 2013, but he gave me hope. He said the computers would delete me after five years. So, I am looking at plane flights for January 2019 to see if the IT guys have done their job.

I especially want to get in to visit the Village of Hope kids, who are teenagers, now. I need pictures so that I can start raising funds for their future education (whether vocationally or scholastically). I am still officially on the board that oversees the kids. So, I will meet with the chairman, who still pastors in the capital city of Rabat.

As a postscript, I'm seeking how the Lord wants to use me in aiding the burned out areas. I especially want to go to Paradise since the other burn areas have easier access to help and resources. Paradise residents are much more remote and I'd like to spend a few days up there with Samaritan's Purse. The Lord tugged on my heart because this happened during Thanksgiving and Christmas/New Year is coming soon. It's been wet, snowy and cold. Chico is nearby and there is a Costco there. I'll drive my truck and maybe borrow my brother's trailer and help sift through the ash or serve in the canteen.

I'm sorry for the lateness of this and hope that it will catch you up on what I've been doing. Some of the mental issues have caused me to be very disorganized and I've all but given up. I may have a renter that will be moving in and his need has pushed us both to get my house in order! Which reminds me, I recently found my gas bill to be way out of line when it quadrupled during the past 6 months! When the gas company came, they shut my gas down until I found what the problem was. My plumber found three T connections that were only hand tightened with no joint compound! They were all in the proximity of a major wiring junction and under my bedroom! Ha! And I was worrying about my wiring until I recently rewired the house!! : O

Well, I'm dropping this in the mail slot. I have a staff meeting in the morning. My boss is going to speak about what God is doing in Southern California with Muslims and introduce our new COO! I can't wait, but I do need to get some sleep before then! ;)

Mike Schneblin
IE Area Coordinator

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Mike Schneblin is a Crescent Project Missionary our PCC family supports



Raul and Teresa Corona

Cuba Mission Trip

I feel very blessed because I had the opportunity to take a mission trip to Cuba, I went there as speaker guest to a men's conference in a Christian church in Cuba. This blessing was extended to our congregation since they came together to support this trip by donating clothing for me to take to the church out there. Adding to this 3 of the newcomers accepted Jesus as Savior. Glory to God! I am very happy that we as church are able to support this ministry and be a blessing to other churches so that they may continue to grow and spread the message of salvation in their own communities. I am excited to see what God has in store for this ministry and for the great things that He will continue to do in all of the mission projects that we support.




Year of multiplication.

In the last 2018 we saw the increment in new born babies in our congregation. We presented at least eight new born babies. This fact makes us to trust in God that his church has future. Here are some pictures.



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Mexican Fiesta.

As every year we made a call to people of our community to come and celebrate Mexican Independence Day. The occasion has been very fruitful since nonbeliever people accept our invitation and always we remark the festivity with The Message. [This last September we had this celebration in our new church building. Praise the Lord!](#)



Women Club meetings.

By its part, the women club, have had very fruitful meetings too. Every month the women reunited to have a potluck and share meditations about family matters. [We are so glad of our youth leader, Yeraida Garcia, that for first time she shared a message with the ladies. It was very useful message since she talked about parenting. Amen!](#)



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Music Fest!

Organized by the city of Avenal. They invited the churches who wanted to support this first Music Fest in the city park. It was a very good opportunity for our band to ministry through the music in an open air activity.



Float 1st. place Winners!!!

The City of Avenal also organized a Christmas parade. We participate with a float that was the first place winner! Thanks to all our Sunday school teachers that made great effort to organized the children and prepare everything for the performance. [We continue doing team work with the City of Avenal with the community and recreational activities.](#)



Thanks to all our supporters of Pahrump Community Church this can be possible. Don't forget that you are part of this outreach in the city of Avenal, CA.
Preaching the Word and Loving the People!

Raul and Teresa Corona are Village Missionaries in Avenal, CA that our PCC family supports



Peaks and Valleys

By Sharon Ankrum

I was born and raised near the Continental Divide between Idaho and Montana, surrounded by lodge pole pine, yellow pine, fir and spruce trees. Visibility was limited due to the denseness of the forests, so to get a clear view of the world surrounding me, I had to go to a mountain top to see the vastness of the rest of the country. It is hard to imagine a place where there were no mountains. Now I know those that live in the prairie land have "hills", and open views from horizons to horizons, but they are not mountains. I have lived in Wyoming where you can see forever and have lived in the red cliffs of Utah, where once again you had to get up high to see the beauty of no trees unless you went high in the Lasal Mountains.

We have been studying 2nd Corinthians in our ladies Bible study and chapter 11, deals with ups and downs. Paul talks about his tribulations and sufferings, his "thorn in the flesh". This is the same man who wrote about being caught up to heaven. He was at the highest level a person could be possibly be in the presence of God. He had gone from a proud, arrogant, self-righteous man to a humble, blind, dependent, helpless man. Talk about peaks and valleys!

Are we any different? Each of us goes through ups and downs in our Christian walk. There are days when we are so filled with the Spirit that we think we are walking on air. Other days, a thorn goads us; and, we fall apart, sinking into self pity and despair. The denseness of being surrounded by daily troubles and tribulations; and, not seeing anything but problems brings a flood of despair. God says His Grace is sufficient. Are we trusting in His promises or trying to fix things our way? Are we on the mountain top or in the valley? Don't get me wrong here, both places are a blessing. Valleys are our testing places, the Lord uses our weaknesses to show His strength and our dependence upon Him. He is our strength as Ephesians 6:10 tells us. He takes us to the mountaintop to reveal His Grace and Mercy, where we can say "How lovely is your dwelling place". Someday we will be in His presence continuously, but I firmly believe that in the New Earth there will be trees to enjoy, to smell the green freshness and the beauty of all the varieties, and in the New Jerusalem we will be on the PEAK and worship the beauty of the Lord and His Holiness.

So when the thorns goad us and our valley is closing in, remember to go to the top of the mountain and survey the promises we have through His Word. Just as Moses was engulfed by the cloud on the mountain, we will have a clear view through Christ Jesus, who delivered us.

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Epsom Salt Monorail, California By Bob Jacobs

First, I want to state this is not a hike or even a place to visit because the majority of the monorail route is on the restricted China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station outside Ridgecrest, California. However, I think the history of this endeavor is VERY INTRESTING. That being said, I did hike out to the Epsom salt mine itself which is right on the border of the China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station. (The mine, however, is just inside the Death Valley National Park). And, the drive out there was on a bad 40 mile dirt road. I had to park and hike the rest of the way to the mine. The hike was long plus there wasn't much left of the mine to see. Talk about being REMOTE this place was just that REMOTE!

To summarize, there was a short lived monorail in San Bernardino County that was built to ship Epsom salt from the mine to the rail head outside of Trona, California (28 miles away). It started operations in 1924 and closed down in June 1926. A brief history of this short lived venture is given below.

It all started when Thomas Wright, a florist from Los Angeles, wanted to become a prospector. In 1919 he discovered a rich lode of magnesium sulfate commonly known as Epsom salt; and, then proceeded to find investors. Shipping the ore to the refiner became a problem since the mine was in a very remote area in the California desert. Building a narrow gauge railway line was considered to be too expensive; and, shipping the ore by truck was not the answer since there were no actual roads in this area. So, he decided to build a monorail on wooden trestles. This wild idea was so widely publicized that investors were eager to sink money into it — over \$200,000 to be exact.

NOTE: Monorails were becoming very popular in Europe during the early 1900's and utilizing such a transportation system for this isolated mine seemed like an ideal solution.

They founded the American Magnesium Company to construct the monorail track; and, construction began in 1922 for the 28 mile long track. The monorail was completed and inaugurated in 1924. The route crossed Searle's Dry Lake and had to climb two grades—one through Layton Canyon (7% grade); and, one through Wingate Pass (10-12% grade). This route would not allow for a normal railroad due to the roller coaster nature of the topography.

NOTE: To date this was the longest monorail ever built in the United States.

The mine employed 12-15 workers during the two short years of its operation. Epsom Salt could initially be scraped from the surface using gardener's tools, but the high quality minerals were quickly depleted. The return on investment was hampered by the high transportation cost and the high maintenance cost of the monorail. The first locomotive was battery operated, but it was not powerful enough to pull the loaded cars. Therefore, seven conventional Fordson tractors and one Duda tractor were modified to build articulated monorail locomotives. Brakes were only installed on the locomotives, which needless to say caused recurring problems; and, a very scary ride for the operator.

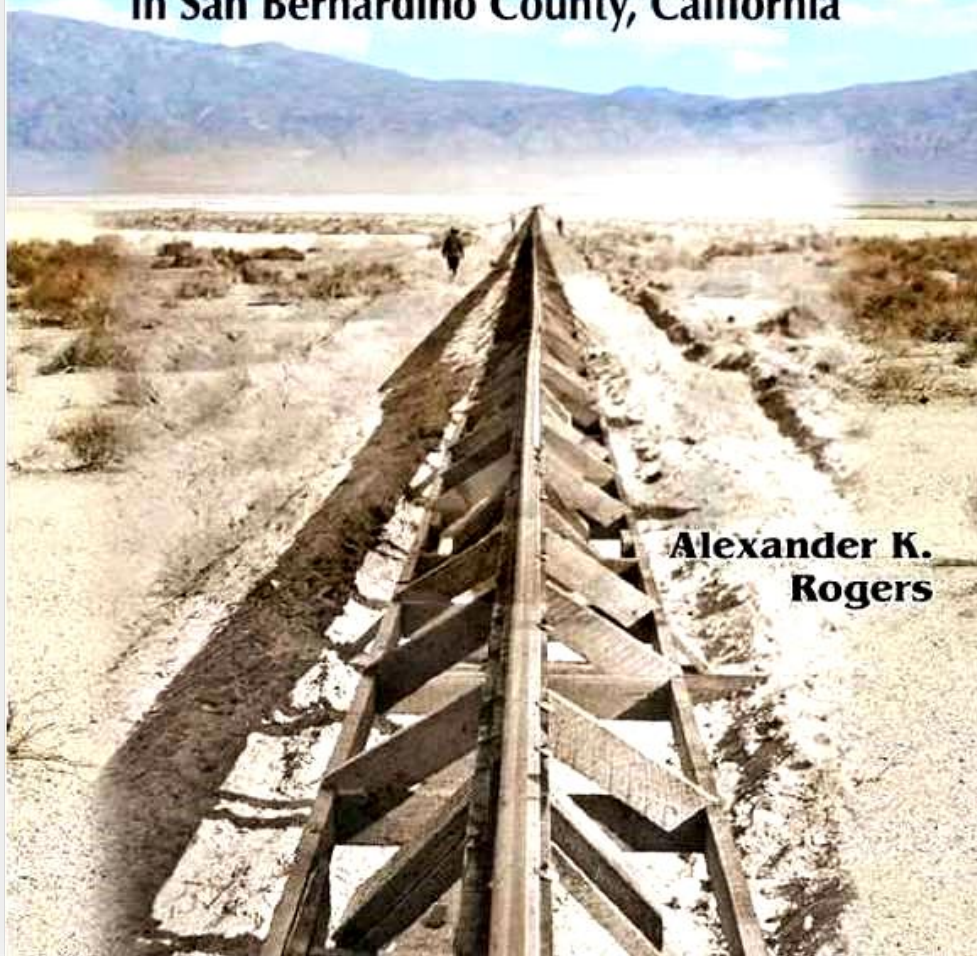
However, they simply did not build the monorail track framing strong enough to handle the heavy loads of the ore and the new engines. I am sure the cost of building stronger framing had everything to do with that decision. The mine was closed in 1926 as no buyers could be found to take over the operations; and, only a small percentage of the initial investments could be recouped during the liquidation of the company. Mr. Wright returned to something at which he knew he could succeed at, - ***selling flowers!*** Sadly the monorail was disassembled for scrap in the late 1930's.

In conclusion if you want to know more on this subject there is a VERY INTERESTING book called "The Epsom Salt Monorail" shown on the next page, which has dozens of great old photos from the 1920's of the monorail and a complete history of this project. It can be purchased from the Maturango Museum, 100 East Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest, CA. 93555, phone number 760-375-6900.



The EPSOM SALTS MONORAIL

The American Magnesium Company Monorail
in San Bernardino County, California



Alexander K.
Rogers

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Who Am I?

I don't know about you – but the hardest thing I have ever tried to do is to really understand who I am and why! And, I am sure I am not the only one who is in search for that answer. I want to answer this question truly and honestly without bias. I know who I **THINK** I am; but I don't know why. And, how can I be sure I am being honest with myself. I don't want others to define who I am because I know they only see the outside. I am the only one who should really know! Who and what we say or do before others is one thing. But that is biased and slanted because we are reacting according to our environment and temperament; not to our inner realities. You know what I mean! Most of us realize that even from our childhood we were taught to display only our “good” side when we were in “public”. And, there were repercussions if we didn't obey. When we were upset in any way in public – we would only show a protruding lower lip or an unrelenting vacant and steady stare (behind our parent's back, **of course** and with our heads down **of course**.)

Isn't it odd that we began life almost immediately - or at least by the age of two - not showing who we really are? For instance, if we fell on the floor and kicked our heels – I am sure we only displayed that temperament no more than twice. But inside we really wanted to continue this behavior. I believe that is described in polite society as putting on a “happy face.” Some of us could maintain that “happy face” only until we were able to find a solitary “alone” place out of the sight of others where we could lay down and kick our heels on the floor.

So, we learned early “not” to display who we really are; or rather not to openly display who we really are or how we really felt. And later, as we grew older, we learned we **must** exhibit polite/restrained behavior and comments before others. For example, if Miss Jackson has on a silly hat, we restrain from telling her that. Instead, we say it to ourselves and display a smile that cannot be interpreted.

To continue, I am really and truly deeply involved in knowing who I am and why. Recently I came across this quote: ***“In order to love who you are, you cannot hate the experiences that shaped you.”*** Isn't that just too defining?!!

I am who I am because my experiences have “shaped me.” Now I am beginning to understand me more than ever because I have had some truly life defining experiences! For instant, my father was extremely humorous; but, too often his humor was misunderstood as not being humorous at all. I, however, enjoyed hearing his “jokes” or retorts. But to me, because I am now an adult with an adult comprehension, what he had was more “wit” than “humor.”

Later in my life, my life became engulfed with a series of disappointments, tragedies and rejections. Perhaps, that is why a part of me is melancholy; yet, I can still maintain that “dry” – “sarcastic” – sense of humor. Somehow, that sarcasm allows me to vent and smile at the same time. My father's wit was one experience that shaped me; and, my series of disappointments and tragedies added to those experiences.

Yet, I meet each challenge with the knowledge that I am still being shaped. And, I will go on being shaped if I know I am being shaped by the “Potter's Hands.” After all, whose hands held me as I underwent each experience.

If “the past is prologue,” then, each yesterday becomes “a new beginning!” And, you have a chance to change something different today that will become a new beginning tomorrow.



*“O LORD, You are our
Father, We are the clay, and
You our potter; and all of us
are the work of Your hand.”
Isaiah 64:8*