

BOH Sponsors College Students to Israel

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Registrations are coming in for the January 2010 special trip designed for college age students. Co-hosts Mr. Jim Kampa and Dr. Tom Wiltzius report that nearly one third of the enrolment of 30 has already been reached and they anticipate that the trip to the Holy Land will fill quickly.

The trip has been designed as a combined learning and spiritual experience. Travelers will have pre-reading to do and reports to develop and file with their sponsors. During the trip, they will be exposed to diversity valued by leaders of today. Specifically, focus will be placed on historical, social, economic, religious, and cultural aspects of life in Israel. The complete itinerary is posted on the Beacon of Hope web site: www.bohlightofchrist.org

Experienced travelers to Israel, Diane Ernst and Lynne Keller have joined Kampa and Wiltzius as chaperones. Joining them are Bill

Kessenich and Sam Wiltzius. Both are experienced travelers but have not been to Israel themselves. The chaperones will be assisting with coordinating the various aspects of the leadership trip including journaling, photography, communications, curriculum, music and pre-trip research.

Registration forms and stipend applications are also available on the Beacon of Hope web site. While student travelers cannot be guaranteed a stipend at this time, efforts to raise sponsorships for stipends have also been initiated.

Kampa and Wiltzius have a goal of raising \$45,000 for student stipends and additional \$15,000 for general travel expenses. As of November 1st, \$11,500 in tax-deductible pledges have already been received. Any reader is welcome to sponsor a student or contribute to the general fund.

**Keep the Faith
Change the Church**
VOTF

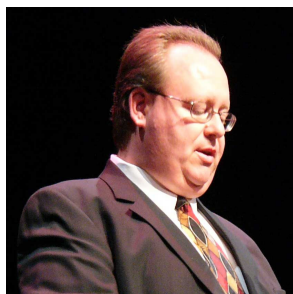
**NOTHING is
Impossible with
GOD**

Hortonville/Dale Food Pantry Reminder



Your help is needed at the Hortonville Food Pantry/Clothes Closet located in Dale behind the BP station. It is open for business to the public from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesdays. Times anyone can stop in to volunteer and work are from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., with a break between 2 p.m. & 5 p.m.. Call (920-832-1495) Jim Garon for more information or just show up!

From the President



Earlier this year the Board of Directors put together an online survey, asking the members of Beacon of Hope – Light of Christ their thoughts about a variety of issues. These questions were similar to those asked at our annual meeting in

May. Thank you very much to those of you who participated! Your answers and especially your comments have been a great source of knowledge for the board as we move forward.

The survey has been concluded and various board members have been reviewing the results and going over the comments provided. Our final meeting of the year in December will be devoted solely to looking at how the board envisions Beacon of Hope

– Light of Christ moving forward based on the responses many of you provided.

In our next newsletter, we will share with you our discussions and any decisions we make at this meeting. In the meantime, if you have any comments regarding Beacon of Hope – Light of Christ, please send us an e-mail to let us know what you're thinking! It's always good to hear from our members.

As we begin the Advent season and a new Church year, and we move toward Christmas and our celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, I'd like to wish all of you a Very Blessed Christmas and the happiest of New Years in 2009. We hope to see more of you next year!

By Greg Stock

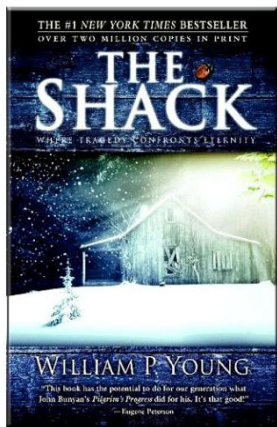
The Shack, by Wm. Paul Young – A Book Review by Bill Kessenich

Your image of God will be comfortably blown to bits by this amazing book that has surprises at every turn and grabs your heart, your head, and your spirit as well! My wife handed me the book that she had read for her book club and told me I had to read it so we could discuss it. Since she says this about most books she reads my first skeptical thought was "Yeah, sure!" But I took her up on her offer and am certainly glad I did!

The Shack is not a run of the mill religious novel, but rather a very well written story that grabs you from the first page and doesn't let you go till the last. The foreword sets up the story in the voice of Willie who is Mackenzie Allen Phillips, the main character's friend. Willie claims that it is Mack's story as told to him as best Mack could remember of a weekend he spent with God. After giving a little more background on Mack and his family, Willie claims the story is true as Mack has told him but because of many different reasons there may be errors in fact or remembrance. The things he and Mack struggled to put on paper were not easy to talk about.

I said that your image of God will be "comfortably" blown to bits by this story. By that I mean that

anyone who knows God deeply and personally will recognize the Trinity in this story as fundamentally true and real. But the images offered will shape a different image of the Real God than one has previously allowed. The book jacket offers a stunning endorsement that "This book has the potential to do for our generation what John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* did for his. It's that good!"



I don't want to say anymore or give away any of the surprising turns in this amazing book, but I recommend that you go out and get a copy today and read its 248 pages as an Advent preparation for Christmas. You will not be disappointed and your relationship with God will be forever deepened in a way that will make you feel like you knew its truth all along.

I believe that the book is biblically and theologically accurate without being preachy or controversial. It presents the reality of God in a common sense way that reflects the collective voice of the common Christian's experience of God; but it is not couched in any particular Christian theological tradition that can be parsed and analyzed for correctness. It is a great visit with the "I AM WHO AM." Read it and give it to all those you love for Christmas!

Cardman History to Hope

Although the crowd was under 100, listeners to Francine Cardman's talk on Hope in the history of the church, were certainly impressed with her vast knowledge of the early church and its interpretation for today's leadership and baptized. Her early warnings to take a specific historical event out of context, or without deference to the customs of the times, reminded us all of how important it is to listen to the Spirit today as we study the past.

Women played a significant role in the early church. They were often the spiritual leaders especially amongst terrible times. She cited their leadership in prisons, their leadership in developing spiritual communities, and the many women who died martyrs because their leadership was a threat to the Roman Empire.

Dr. Cardman and the Theology department from Weston have moved to Boston College this fall and as she shared her experiences, she confirmed what Fr. Charlie Curran shared with

us last spring. There are many baptized Christians who want to learn about the mission of Jesus Christ, the History of our great Church, and teach the Word. However, those students entering traditional seminary are in the minority. Most theological students today are married; often more experienced in real life, and committed Christians who will lead us in a very new way. Hope is great, if we continue to support one another in unconditional love, believe, and listen to the Spirit of today.

Using the Kimberly Room at the PAC allowed for a wonderful give and take with the question answer part of the evening. We need to follow that example in the future. We all learn so much from one another.

If you couldn't be present but would like a CD copy of Cardman's talk, you can buy it for \$5 by writing to: BOH, P.O. Box 2425, Appleton, WI. 54913.

WHEN YOU THOUGHT I WASN'T LOOKING

When you thought I wasn't looking I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator, and I immediately wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking I saw you feed a stray cat, and I learned that it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking I saw you make my favorite cake for me, and I learned that the little things can be the special things in life.

When you thought I wasn't looking I heard you say a prayer, and I knew that there is a God I could always talk to, and I learned to trust in Him.

When you thought I wasn't looking I saw you make a meal and take it to a friend who was sick, and I learned that we all have to help take care of each other.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you give of your time and money to help people who had nothing, and I learned that those who have something should give to those who don't.

When you thought I wasn't looking I saw you take care of our house and everyone in it, and I learned we have to take care of what we are given.

When you thought I wasn't looking I saw how you handled your responsibilities, even when you didn't feel good, and I learned that I would have to be responsible when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn't looking I saw tears come from your eyes, and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's all right to cry.

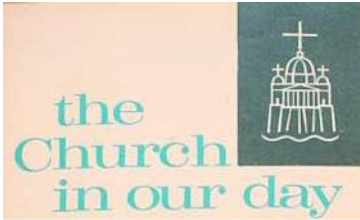
When you thought I wasn't looking I saw that you cared, and I wanted to be everything that I could be.

When you thought I wasn't looking I learned most of life's lessons that I need to know to be a good and productive person when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn't looking I looked at you and wanted to say: 'Thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn't looking.'

Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly. Leave the rest to God.

The Church In Our Day



The Second Vatican Council reminded us: “The present-day conditions of the world add greater urgency to this work of the Church so that all

men, joined more closely today by various social, technical, and cultural ties, may also attain fuller unity in Christ” (*Lumen Gentium*, 1).

The work of Christ and His Church is a work for unity, unity among mankind, unity between mankind and God. It was the Church that first told us that because of our baptism in Christ “there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female” (*Gal* 3:28). This is the Church’s true mission. If she falters in this, she must recover again her pilgrim path in repentance and renewal. Continually the Church is reminded by the baptism she celebrates, by the Gospel she proclaims, by the Bread she breaks, that her mission is unity, her purpose is harmony, her service is reconciliation. She forever gives thanks to God because she knows that there was a day when we “had no Christ”, when we “were immersed in this world, without hope and without God” (*Eph* 2:12). Now all this has changed! For “in His own person He killed hostility,” so that now we “are no longer aliens but citizens like all the saints and part of God’s household” (*Eph* 2:16-19).

Now we know that peace binds us together into “one Body, one Spirit, one and the same hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God Who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all” (*Eph* 4:3-6). Now we know that Jesus is man’s Good Shepherd, that He gave His life for His sheep, and that He prayed for one flock under one pastor (*Jn* 10:14-17). Now we know that “Jesus was to die” so that He might “gather together in

unity the scattered children of God” (*Jn* 11:50-52). Now we understand, we who live out the post-Easter history of the community of Jesus, what He meant on the night before He died when He asked that “all may be one, Father, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe” (*Jn* 17:21). Now we know this and we give thanks to the Father Who did not forget His children, to the Son made our brother Who died and came to life for us, and to the Spirit Who prompts us to reach out for God and for one another. One day the glory of Christ will burst in radiance upon the Church and call it home, perfecting its unity. One day, “when Christ appears...the glory of God will light up the heavenly city and...the whole Church of the saints in the supreme blessedness of charity will adore God” (*Lumen Gentium*, 51).

What, then, shall we say of the Church? It is a mystery so deep that every word which gives us awareness of her sacredness gives us also experience of our ignorance. We see the Church-to-be in the dawn of history, in the alliance God forged with man on Sinai, in the new commitment made during the Lord’s Last Supper. God’s plan was always “to raise men to a sharing of divine life. When man had fallen in Adam, God the Father did not leave man to himself, but constantly offered helps to salvation in view of Christ...He planned to assemble in the holy Church all those who would believe in Christ. From the very beginning of the world, the foreshadowing of the Church took place” (*Lumen Gentium*, 2). If the human phenomenon cannot be separated from the Incarnation of Christ, Christ cannot be considered in His fullness without the Church.

(Excerpts from the document The Church in Our Day published by the Catholic Bishops of the United States, January 21, 1968, appear on a regular basis.)

Beacon is the official newsletter of Beacon of Hope-Light of Christ and is intended to inform its members by sharing news, ideas, and opinions within the progressive Catholic Church. Beacon of Hope is an intentional community and a tax exempt, not-for-profit 501(c)3. All contributions are tax deductible. Our guiding principles are to inform, support, challenge, and grow. Our goals are transparency and inclusion within the Church. Communications staff include: Joe Uchytel, Greg Stock, Tom Wiltzius, Dave Arent, Anne Thielen, Tom Whittenberger, and guest contributors.

Ribbon of Life – An emerging social value set in the U.S.

A philosophical and political concept has begun to get significant traction with Christians across western cultures. While the phrase “ribbon of life” bears no known origin, and holds no boundaries to its application, the political notion of examining social, legislative, and candidate platforms and records is finding commonality across Christian thinking.

In the broadest meaning, the term “ribbon of life” has been applied to geographies, rivers and oceans, and to life itself, including movements to educate about forms of cancer, the environment, and inter-species relations.

For Christians as a collective, three primary life issues have emerged at the forefront of political agendas, while poverty has long remained at the forefront of their social agenda. The apparent links are becoming more obvious and the result has become fertile ground for a concept would be a unification theory of sorts...a social value set.

Within western culture, the three primary life issues that have dominated Christian focus for over four decades are birth control, abortion and euthanasia. These issues have, it seems, correctly brought attention to beginning and end-of-life concerns. These issues have begged for informed thought, received much spirited debate, have been essential criteria for Christians participating in social/political processes.

As can be expected, the focus on these three life issues has resulted in the gathering of new information and data. This aggregate knowledge has been sufficient enough to generate an understanding of which and how social issues impact these life issues. Simply, Christians are clearly seeing and understanding cause and effect more clearly.

The identified social issues of poverty and childhood nutrition, early education, equal employment opportunity, environmental degradation, personal social adjustment, war, and healthcare across the life span have correlations to both beginning and end-of-life issues.

Consequently, as informed Christians participate in the political processes of western

culture, their concerns related to legislation and candidates or office holders are expanding from single issues to a pattern of informed insight. This pattern has also taken on a name...“Ribbon of Life”.

In the U.S., Christians are beginning to ask for more than outcome, single-issue positions or actions from legislators and candidates. As an example, on the life issue of abortion, Christians would historically have asked for reversal of *Roe v. Wade* through the legislative process. Today, informed Christians know that simply reversing a law will not end abortion. To have an impact on abortion, legal or illegal, the causative factors of ignorance, poverty, and social stigma must be aggressively addressed.

Informed Christians also understand that a failure to address all aspects of ribbon of life issues is a failure to address any single life issue. Again using abortion as an example, failing to address poverty is failing to address abortion. Failing to address childhood nutrition is failing to address abortion. And, failing to address education and equal employment is failing to address abortion.

So Christians are led to establish and commit to a concept that links beginning to end, a “Ribbon of Life” that requires attention to all of its elements in order to create value for any one of the elements.

Life is to be cherished all along its continuum. It therefore must be accepted that if any part of the continuum is diminished, life itself is diminished and that if we wish to address any aspect of the continuum that is diminished, we must address all aspects of the continuum.

In a very real sense then, the “Ribbon of Life” becomes both a tool to audit life commitments and a tool to evaluate legislative or political progress.

Also in a very real sense, Christians are only complete as Christians if they are fully committed to Christ’s teachings. The continuum found within “Ribbon of Life” is a full reflection of such teaching.

By Dr. Thomas J. Wiltzius, PhD