

THE MOUNTAIN ANTHEMS NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2005

Sipesville Brethren Church Sipesville, PA

SUNDAY, AUG. 7

We left at 8:15 a.m., the sky hazy and overcast. Judith Yoder traveled with us today. We were happy Aaron and Irene could be along again.

When we arrived, the greeter at the door said the church had been waiting 15 months for us to come.

There was no way to get through this old church to the downstairs bathrooms except through the Sunday School rooms which had classes already in session. We slipped through.

Mostly older folks attended this service. I counted two young people and four children besides Brock and Brooke. It always concerns me when there are so few young people. Who will be left to come through these doors in 10 or 20 years from now?

Among other songs, we did "Living Water," "Blood Washed Band," and "Deeper Than the Sin Stains."

*"I sing the goodness of the Lord
that filled the earth with food,*

*Who formed the creatures with his word
and then pronounced them good . . ."*

Does that mean flies too? All through the service a number of chorus members were visited by these unwelcome creatures. *What if my mouth is open too wide when one is buzzing about?*

Menno directed the first half of the service and Mike, the second.

After the service a man told Menno, "I never heard you before but I got goose bumps. Instruments would spoil your ministry."

Lunch! How delicious. We enjoyed hot roast beef sandwiches, green beans, cole slaw, and cake. For awhile, we got to lounge around the church. A man was to meet us down the road at 3 p.m. to lead us to the next church.

The man, Keith Solomon, proved to be an interesting character. After we parked at the church, he came onto the bus and started visiting. He said 2 weeks ago he was performing his 468th wedding when he fainted. Fortunately he was near the end of the ceremony. EMTs and nurses from the audience sprang into action to save him. It took about 7 minutes to revive. From the gurney he looked up and pronounced the couple husband and wife. What a memorable wedding! And in the wedding party were 34 people.

Dan View Church of God Smithton, PA

EVENING

Requested tonight was "Sheltered in the Arms of God" and "I Found the Lily in My Valley," by Loretta. The congregation really enjoyed helping with "Clap your Hands."

Mike invited Menno to come forward in the last 15 minutes to do whatever he wished. He led "King Jesus" and "Ready to Go." Also "Where No One Stands Alone." He finished with his new solo, "Stand by Me."

Brock and Brooke had already changed into their night clothes and were running around outside when Joyce heard Brock holler.

"Ouch! Ouch!"

She quickly went to investigate, afraid the noise could be heard inside the church. A yellow jacket was hanging onto Brock's ear lobe! She flicked it off. A quick check revealed bee stings on both crying children. A little salve applied soon helped alleviate the pain.

**WHENEVER MENNO AND KEITH
SOLOMAN'S PATHS WOULD CROSS,
KEITH WOULD INVITE THE MT.
ANTHEMS DOWN TO HIS CHURCH. AND
MENNO WOULD WRITE IT ON HIS HAND.
BUT UNFORTUNATELY, BECAUSE
MENNO WASHED ONCE A WEEK, THE
MESSAGE WAS ERASED. THAT IS WHY
WE HADN'T BEEN BACK TO THIS
CHURCH IN 17 YEARS!**

Faith Mennonite Church South Boston, VA

SATURDAY, AUG. 20

We left at 10:10 a.m. with a number of empty seats. Missing were Aaron and Irene, Terry and Linda, Larry and Amanda. Lyndon had to fly the DNR across the lake to count the boats. It couldn't be done before our leaving time. Aimee and Rose planned to drive down.

The sunny sky was dotted with clouds. A pleasant day to travel. This was our last overnight trip for the year. We all brought packed lunches.

At 12:30, on I. 81, a traffic jam halted the bus. A tractor-trailer, traveling from the opposite direction, had crossed the median, flew across the interstate,

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and lay in pieces among trees and brush some distance from the road. Thank God we were not in it's path when this accident happened.

At the church, we opened the bus door to stifling heat. It had to be close to 100 degrees. Ah! but the church had A/C. I believe everyone enjoyed that as much as the delicious Mexican Haystacks we were served for supper. Grantsville native, Gertrude Slabach, helped serve us.

Community folks and Mennonites from other communities attended the service. Mike directed the whole evening. Menno did, "*Where No One Stands Alone*," and "*Stand By Me*," in the second half. He told us he sensed the chorus had very anointed singing. The congregation responded well. Afterward, a number of people expressed how they were so blessed.

Close to the front sat a 20-year-old boy who loves music. His mother told me they didn't know he was blind when they adopted him. Today he is a very successful businessman making and selling huge pallets to logging companies who use them to create roads in forests instead of putting down gravel.

John Peterson sat in a wheelchair. All through the service he was really responsive. Often he'd say "Amen!" His face glowed.

Before the service, he had told Dave Slabach that "if that bus doesn't show up tonight, you and I are going to have to sing." After we arrived he said, "Dave, we won't get to sing tonight."

Calvary Baptist Church Lovington, VA

SUNDAY, AUG. 21

Arrived at 10:10 a.m., a 2 hour drive from South Boston. The church was a huge complex of red brick buildings with white trim. The greeter gave us hugs as we entered.

The expansive foyer allowed for relaxation on comfortable sofas and easy chairs. The large six-sided white auditorium had a red-carpeted sloping floor. Overhead, from open beams, hung flared, golden chandeliers.

More than a few people welcomed us, saying how much they looked forward to the service. Requested today were "*Take Time to be Holy*," "*I Bowed on my Knees and Cried Holy*," and "*Hallelujah Square*." We used the churches' sound system. Because we didn't have monitors, the guys couldn't hear what the girls were doing on that last

number, and so the parts were "ooing" the backup at different tempos. It was a bit hairy.

The program aired on local TV.

What a spread we enjoyed for lunch! The tables nearly groaned with the assortment. Meats, casseroles, breads, salads, desserts and drink. It was by far more than we deserved.

The leader said they definitely want us back in two years. Sooner if possible.

The recording committee had a meeting en route to Dale City to decide the arrangement of songs on the "Living Water" recording.

Sovereign Grace Baptist Church Dale City, VA

EVENING

Sovereign Grace Baptist Church has long been a lover of the Mountain Anthems. The entire church sings our songs, plays our recordings, and cheers us on in the work of the Lord. Pastor Gifford has little respect for the popular music of today. He is very careful about the groups they have come in to the church, choosing only groups who sing God-honoring music and lyrics.

When Pastor Gifford introduced us, he kept referring to Menno as "Simon." After some time he corrected himself. He said you really can't go too far wrong if you can remember Yoder, Miller, Shrock, Stoltzfus, and Beachy.

Menno told the church that since Sam Yoder, our recording engineer, was in the audience, we would be doing all the songs we planned to record on September 10.

In the second half, Loretta did the requested, "*I Found the Lily in my Valley*."

Near the end, Pastor Gifford came to the mic. "There's a special fellow in the audience," he said, "who is requesting '*Hallelujah Square*.' Could you please sing that?"

He had just said this when a boy, appearing to be about 6 years old, came bounding up the aisle, up on stage, and stood right with us. It was apparent little Matthew had Down's Syndrome. Brother Gifford spoke kindly to him and invited him to come sit with Pastor on the front bench while we sang.

Later, Matthew's dad told me he is actually 11 years old. He is such a joy to the family. He said when they sing "*Hallelujah Square*" at home they sing ". . . and there'll not be Down's Syndrome in *Hallelujah Square*."

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Pastor Gifford invited Simon Schrock to the mic with Menno, Mike Yoder, and their own music director. Among other things, they prayed for Mike on recording day since he will be in charge.

Simon was asked to do the dismissal prayer. But of course, he couldn't do just that. Simon said that on July 4th when they go to Washington D.C. to watch the fireworks, it always ends with the grand finale. The most spectacular show of colors. "I think we should have that same thing tonight. Could you

through the bus and went to sit with . . . *Lorraine!*

Well! Another couple!

The Mountain Anthems Family congratulates Rodney and Lorraine. We wish you God's blessing. May He guide and keep you in this special relationship.

-- by Lena Eicher

sing "*King Jesus*"?. Someone else asked for "*Triumphantly the Church Will Rise*". We did both requests. Then Simon led us in a responsive dismissal prayer.

On the Way Home

The love bug seems to be catching. It must be something in the water. This time it was Rodney who went to the bus mic to make an announcement.

"As of tonight," he said, "I will be vacating my seat." He said it was available if someone wanted it we just weren't to fight over it.

"*Where is he going?*" we wondered out loud. "*Is he leaving the chorus?*"

Rodney didn't seem to hear. He just strode back