



The Mt. Anthems Newsletter

June 2007

Blue Ball Mennonite Church

Blue Ball, PA

Sat. June 9, 2007

We are never quite prepared for tragedy when it strikes. And when it strikes and takes a life we are compelled to pause. To think. To consider. Life is so *fleeting*; death so *final*. Are our lives invested in that which will outlast time? Are we invested in eternal values?

This Saturday morning we celebrated the life of Elmer Beachy, and his graduation to his eternal home. For many years Elmer sang with the Mt. Anthems and was a member of the board approximately 41 years. Six grandsons carried his body to its final resting place on the hill.

After lunch, a somber group of Mt. Anthems boarded the bus for Lancaster. Ed Petersheim spoke a few words and led us in prayer.

On I. 81, speeding past Chambersburg, I looked back over the bus. It was so unusual to see so many chorus members sleeping on such a sunny day. But I supposed the events of the past days had taken their toll.

After the rest stop, someone introduced the game of *Rage* to a circle of friends beside me. We arrived at the church at 4:55 PM.

Mike began the service by telling the church, mostly a conservative Mennonite audience, about the Wednesday morning accident and read a note from Menno explaining that Elmer was Grace's brother, and because of this death in the family they didn't come along this week-end.

Feeling dry, Mike said he didn't know exactly which songs to begin with until he heard the chorus singing, during our meditation time, ". . . *fill my cup Lord, I lift it up, Lord, come and quench this thirsting of my soul . . .*" So we started with

"Amazing Grace."

We are always reminded with "*Purify Me*" that in this life, we struggle with Satan who wars against us and we need cleansing, both from our sins and from the dirt we pick up from rubbing shoulders with the world. "*Living God, consuming fire, burn the sin, from my life, Make your will my desire, take my life in your hands . . .*"

We enjoyed another attentive audience. One couple, sitting back a few benches, by their smiling expressions, showed they were just soaking it in.

"I'm the lamb that the Shepherd left the flock for . . ." Marty sang his testimony of comfort, the chorus then echoing these thoughts with "*Under His Wings.*"

Other solos were Marty's "*God on the Mountain,*" and "*You Can Have a Song,*" by Loretta.

We ended the service in tears. Songs about heaven reminded us again of Elmer's passing: "*What a Meeting,*" and "*We'll Be There.*" Mike did "*Ready to Go,*" which is an all-time favorite.

Rawlinsville Mennonite Church

Lancaster, PA

Sun. June 10, 2007

We met at Blue Ball to load, under overcast skies, and were on the road by 7 AM. We had an hour's journey to the next church. By the time we arrived at Rawlinsville at 8:15, it was spitting rain.

This church is built of bricks and surrounded by old trees. We had the entire service from 9 to 11 AM which is traditional church time for the Lancaster area.

A few young folks were from the Lancaster High School Choir which presented a program at our church several weeks ago.

Songs we did this morning were Mike's solo, "*I*



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Know a Man Who Can, "Have Thine Own Way," and "Christ Arose."

Gloria enthralled the children with her version of the Blind Bartimaeus story using a little squeeze light bulb to add emphasis that each of the children is unique and special to God. (The light bulb, with a little face on it, Gloria said is to be squeezed when you are frustrated although she doesn't squeeze him very often:-) We ended children's meeting with "Put a Smile on Your Face." The children were offered a little gift back at the recordings table after the service.

The quartet did their new arrangement of "When the Saints Go Marching In." What a joy to be in that number when all trouble and sorrow are past and we have the privilege of spending eternity with God.

We had a long enough ride from Rawlinsville to Midway that chorus members were able to get their coveted naps. The bus was pretty quiet when we arrived there at 1 PM.

Midway Reception Center

Lititz, PA

Afternoon

This afternoon we sang about the forgiveness of sins. "Though Your Sins Be as Scarlet," "I Forgive You," and "Deeper Than the Sin Stains." Can you imagine life for people who are trying to make it without God? Can you imagine the burdens they carry around unnecessarily? Thank God for the forgiveness of our sins!

Marty sang his testimony, "I Claim the Blood."

Mike shifted gears reminding the group of what he had said two years ago. He has always been fairly talented in sports, music, etc, no problem. But he did have one thing he struggled with. Girls. Three girls he had asked out turned him down. Several months

after he shared this at Midway, he asked Lynnette and she accepted. (He asked her to raise her hand.) Now they will be celebrating their first anniversary in a few weeks.

Mike reminded the group that not everyone's story has a happy ending. He asked Aaron to come and share his testimony about God's faithfulness when he lost his wife to cancer.

Aaron gave the short version. He said he learned to accept Irene as a gift. To have her but not to cling to her. He reminded couples that their partners are gifts also. We sang, "Remind me, Dear Lord."

"The things that I love and hold dear to my heart are just borrowed, they're not mine at all. Jesus only let me use them to brighten my life, so remind me, remind me dear Lord."

We also did "He Lovingly Guards Every Footstep."

In the second half, Mike did another new thing. He invited two sopranos, two altos, two tenor, and two bass from the audience to come up and join us on stage. When hardly anyone responded, he ended up inviting 10 of each part. That stirred the audience. We soon had a mass chorus. Then Mike led us in "Christ Arose," and "Jesus, Hold My Hand." (Did someone say they saw the ceiling raise?) That was gorgeous!

Mike thanked everyone for coming up to help sing, especially the "old ladies." (You should have seen the horrified looks on their faces :)

We finished this concert with Loretta's solo, "Wish You Were Here."

Hahnstown United Zion Church

Hahnstown, PA

Evening

This night the church was jammed. People filled the benches in the main auditorium, were sitting in



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the side room and up along both sides of the platform. They stood in the anteroom and nursery doorways, one side of the center aisle was full, the preacher and another man shared the piano bench. People were lined up standing along the outside walls, were seated in the entrance door and lined up outside.

As we filed in, I had that same feeling of *who am I? Who are we that these people have come to hear us sing?* We feel so small. We look into faces filled with expectations. We have *nothing* of ourselves to give them. But we bring them JESUS. Jesus' light and his love. His presence. His peace. Yes! We have so much to share and we do it with joy!

We started with "*The Lord is my Light and my salvation, whom shall I fear . . .*" and moved on into "*Breathe on Me Breath of God,*" and "*I Sing the Mighty Power of God*" that made the Mount-ains rise . . ." Then Marty did his solo, "*How Big is God.*"

We encouraged the listeners "*Don't Give Up,*" following it with the comfort that "*Tears are a Language God Understands.*" Mike sang:

*"Hold my hand , all the way, every hour;
every day,*

From here to the great unknown.

*Take my hand, let me stand where no one
stands alone."*

After break, the quartet did their special, "*Midnight Cry.*"

For the third time this weekend, Loretta did, "*I Found the Lily in My Valley.*"

We ended the service reminding the audience that very soon we will be "*Caught Up Together*" to meet our Savior, then "*What a Meeting (!)*"

All through the service, a lady up front sat taking notes.

Kenton said a man came to the recording stand

and in conversation mentioned that he has been to three of our concerts this weekend. He always tries to make at least two when we are in the area. Each concert is fresh to him because each one is different and unplanned.

A second man said two of the songs we sang had been sung at his graduation. One of the members of his class had died just a month before the graduation ceremony. He really enjoyed the evening, the memories it brought, and the reminder of future life in heaven. He had had to stand all evening but he said it was well worth it.

Goshen Mennonite Church

Laytonsville, MD

Sun. June 24, 2007

We rolled out of the parking lot at an early 6:50 AM.

Talk this morning centered around the Amish auction held yesterday at the Bennie C. Yoder residence. It was an all day event and involved about 20 members from the Mt. View Church who served people at the lunch stand.

Other talk concerned the two Beitzel barns that burned yesterday afternoon.

We arrived at the church at 9:30. It's always difficult to get the bus in through the entrance gate to park, but Marty got us in without a scratch.

Lee Mumaw came onto the bus and gave us a warm welcome.

This old, Tutor style, brick church has a fascinating history. Though the slaves had been freed after the Civil War ended in 1865, the ending of the war did not end segregation. Built in 1870, this church, under its cedar shakes shingles, did not allow the black man to sit with the white man even in church.



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There's a brown door in the side of the building, now blocked with plaster, where the black folks entered to take the steep steps up to the low balcony. Only three of the top steps today are original.

Part of the a huge, circular, flower-shaped window at the center of the building lights the plain benches where these folks worshiped.

The church sanctuary looks like an old fashioned parlor. Neatly arranged are the dark, curved benches, the many-slatted brown shutters folded back from the tall windows, and decorative chandeliers. Overhead, the balcony sags a bit in the center. But no wonder if you notice the thick, heavy posts that make up the railing.

On past visits to this church we didn't have the luxury of restrooms. Instead we had close brushes with nature in the little gray outhouses.

Now they have built on an addition to the back of the church with kitchen facilities, and restrooms. From outside the charming design appears almost as old as the church itself with its brick-red siding and wide brown trim.

We enjoyed a good service directed by Mike. He said we are an impatient people. "Mom, where are my shoes?" we ask, as children. As if Mom wore our shoes. We did "*Show a Little Bit of Love and Kindness.*"

It's interesting, at times I'd like to request a song but don't get around to it, then Mike already has it picked. As happened with "*He's the One.*" A great song.

Mike asked Brock and Brooke what will happen this week on Tuesday. They said it's their 8th birthday. Mike told the church on that day Menno also has a birthday and he will turn 81. He asked the children to do a song. They chose, "*I am Redeemed.*"

"*Wonderful Story of Love*" was again sung by the men and sounded really good.

Several ladies, about two thirds of the way back, just beamed throughout the service.

The acoustics were great this morning. Fannie Beachy, Menno's sister, and our guest for the day said we blended so well too. She really enjoyed the service.

Mike had Marty do "*God on the Mountain*" and Loretta did the requested "*I Found the Lily in My Valley.*"

Ending the service, Lee Mumaw had us quote Jude 24-25. "*Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling*"

The day was beyond gorgeous. Clean blue skies, warm sunshine, and no humidity. About half the group ate our Haystacks, pie and ice cream outside on the lawn at shaded picnic tables brought to church especially for our benefit.

We had just traveled down the road about 2 miles when Mike asked if someone had put the attache' on the bus. No one had. There was a quick scramble to find the phone number of Lee Mumaw while Marty looked for a place to pull off the narrow, two lane highway.

Since we had such a hard time getting our mammoth bus in and out of the church grounds, common sense said it would be better for someone to meet us with the attache' than for us to turn around and go back for it.

Marty found a place to park once we got to the four-lane. Mike hopped off and met Lee, got the attache,' and we were on our way.

Grantsville Park

Grantsville, MD

Evening

Arrived around 4:50 at the park. We had an awful time wiggling the bus through the entrance. We moved back and forth, back and forth, a fence post



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too close to our right, a vehicle too close left forward, and one parked along the curb immediately behind the bus. Finally Marty managed to get us through.

The drizzly weather was an almost exact repeat of our last year's visit to the park. Jerry Rodgers hadn't changed either.

Menno led the first four songs, three of them being solos. He did "*Stand By Me*." We did "*Why Me, Lord?*"

Mike led "*I Sing the Mighty Power of God*." Our audience sat under pavilions, under umbrellas on lawn chairs or stood around listening. In spite of the distractions, many reported being blessed.

It was nice getting home as early as 7 PM on a Sunday evening with time to relax or catch up with necessary things.

God bless you all till next time. Please continue to keep us in your prayers.

-Lena Eicher