

extensions

building up the church one investor at a time

summer 2008



A Word From Les



Having Enough

God has a lot to say to us about being wise with what He blesses us with. Ecclesiastes 7:12 tells us that wisdom is a protection to those who **heed** it. Yet for many of us who read God's word, we still don't understand it. Our culture reinforces this by pumping us with a lot of information without giving us the time to process what it is we are hearing.

When you look at the typical Christian family, the difference between reading and understanding becomes obvious. We are not the salt that we have been called to be. The difference between empty religion and honest faith is obvious to everyone but us. What is apparent is that living like the world so it can understand us better is not working. We are called; no actually it is a lot stronger than that, we are **commanded** to live a life that has answers. An honest faith is lived out without the need for words. What that means is that we need to live differently.

To a culture of instant gratification, it means deferring things even when we could buy it. To a world without self control, it means being willing to pay a price while serving others. To a civilization that is impressed with more, it means having less. To a society in debt, it means saving some – just because God has blessed us with more than enough.

It is this “enough concept” that is tripping many up. We are called to be a **peculiar** people. We are supposed to be a little off, a little unusual. The world is supposed to wonder about us, and those that stop and think, then “get it”. We are not called to save the world; we are called, like Jesus was, to be a light to those who are seeking, those asking the questions. We **need** to be a little off the mark because the mark is where the crowd is headed. Those taking a different path are sure to be noticed, and in turn, used to influence a culture that is panicking.

So what does this really translate into in our lives? Well, it means living life a lot different than we are.

It means turning down a promotion that would lead to a better salary so you can have the weekends to be with your family. It means driving a 5 year old car when you could pay cash for a Mercedes. It means not being stressed when your neighbor gets that Mercedes instead of you. It means going to a cheap movie so you can give a little more. It means raising your kids so that self esteem is not a concept that is tied to what you earn. *It means living life like you are on the bottom even if you are on the top.* And with our money, it means giving first- before you know when you have enough. You see, “enough” is the horizon. No matter how much you have; enough is always just a little further.

Make a decision right now- “I have enough”.



KITCHEN CORNER

“Melty Melty” (My Invention)

- 1 can of Homel Chili
(preferably HOT with beans)
- 1 block of Neufchatel cheese
(Cream Cheese will also do)

Your favorite tortilla chips
(I prefer Tostitos rounds)

For those baseball watching fans:

Place one block of Neufchatel cheese into a microwave-safe container, cover with wax paper and cook for 1:15 in the microwave. Take out the hot cheese, uncover, and mix with one can of chili. Recover with wax paper and cook for an additional minute. Uncover and Enjoy!

By: Conner Simms (NAB Operations Dept.)

If you have a special recipe that you would be willing to share with others, please e-mail us at newsletter@ceif.org.

Living H₂O

“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

- Philippians 3: 13-14

Church
Extension
Investors
Fund



Spotlight on Middle Island Baptist Church Middle Island, NY



“God changed all for His glory. We may never be a ‘big church’, but it’s not about numbers. It’s about discipleship and evangelism and reaching into people’s lives.”
– Pastor Lenny & Kathleen Van Essendelft

Three years ago this Body of Christ in Middle Island, NY was hit hard when their Pastor and some of the church parted ways due to a differing of opinions. This left a small, but unified group of believers with their heads spinning and hearts whirling in confusion over what had just happened. But God was not confused; He was at work bringing exactly what was needed to break up the unplowed ground at Middle Island Baptist for righteousness to be sown and fruit for the Kingdom reaped.

“Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”
–**Philippians 3:13.**

This verse is an invitation to a fresh experience of living with our eyes upon Jesus and not upon our situations. It is an invitation to the harvest, for God to make barren places teeming with life. It’s an invitation to behold God’s glory! And that is exactly what Middle Island Baptist Church has beheld.

Even though this small congregation of believers was left unshepherded and confused, with an overwhelmingly huge debt of a mortgage and no money to pay it, and without a way to afford a pastor, they strained toward what was ahead and got on their knees. They confessed the sins that had been occurring in their church body and leadership and, with heartfelt repentance, sought the face of God. They gathered together, grieving their dreams but also studying the Bible to learn about how to hear God and how to be where God wanted them. Their unhindered surrender to the Word and will of God, choice to leave behind the past that had shackled them and instead claim God’s promises for the future, and desire for nothing but to know God more deeply drew this congregation to the foot of the cross. Out of this process of “sowing the broken land”, the fruit of unfailing love was borne.

“Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.” –**Hosea 10:12**

Those of Middle Island Baptist did not “dwell on the past”, but looked for the way in the desert that God promises in His Word (Isaiah 43:18)... and streams came to their “wasteland”. God advanced His kingdom! And He chose to use the most indirect (and influential) way- teenagers.

Lenny and Kathleen moved their family of four children into a new home not far from their old one. This made quite a change for their children who were now stepping out of Christian schools and into public ones. Since they did not know any Christians, they



thought, “Why not make some!” Kathleen explains: *“My husband Lenny and I and two other couples began to talk and pray about a way that we could begin to share the Lord together with our unsaved friends. We each chose two*

couples to pray for and began to reach out to them and socialize together and invite them to our Sunday evening study. We started to see some incredible results and were so encouraged. Our son Lenny (who was 14 at the time) saw what we were doing and asked if we could do the same kind of thing with his teenage friends. The Edge Bible Study was born and over time we have seen some 40 kids get saved through that ministry.



These kids come from mostly unchurched and/or unsaved homes and their burden has now grown to pray for their parents and siblings as well as their unsaved friends. We are now looking to socialize and develop friendships with these people to introduce them to Jesus Christ.

One way that we are doing that is through our Church ministry. We try to creatively offer ministries for the kids to do such as skits and drama presentations, music and other functions to which they invite their parents. Each time that we have done that, parents have come and slowly, one by one, they are getting saved. God is so cool!!!!”

In the midst of all this sowing and reaping God allowed them to see He had even **further** ground to cultivate for even **more** fruit to be reaped, though. A group of Satanists desecrated the outside of the church building. So much damage was done that it attracted the attention of national news teams. God used the publicity to touch a group known as “Bikers for Christ” to get involved and help out. A gathering of about 50 people from the community came to this church to help with scrubbing, cleaning, and painting, and even helped cover part of the cleaning costs! The close relationships that were built out of this act of love and time spent together made Middle Island Baptist Church known as a “biker-friendly church”. A group of bikers started meeting at the church for prayer meetings and Bible studies. One member of this group, a man named Ski, has felt a call to ministry. He is now practicing preaching in the church and is studying to launch another church out of it!

Every seed sown and fruit borne was out of God’s ability to “forget the former things” and do something new. He is always able to turn our rags into robes, our sins into testimonies, our hearts of stone to hearts of flesh. He has others to bring into His kingdom through the work He does in believers’ lives. Forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead. Submit to His breaking up the unplowed land of your heart. Release yourself to Him because His unfailing love is waiting to be lavished upon you. As Lenny and Kathleen summarize, *“This is so much about who God is. We can’t believe that He would use us in even a little way for His glory in other people’s lives. We are truly humbled and feel so honored that He would be working in so many people’s lives and that we could be such a small part of His plan for them. Praise the Lord!!”*

With the investments of people like you in the ministry of CEIF, this testimony and many others are possible. Thank you for partnering with us to be a vital link in the Body of Christ in such a unique and awesome way. Glory to God!! --Colleen Stegmann

CEIF 35th Anniversary Cruise

On June 8-15, 2008 CEIF celebrated its 35th anniversary by organizing an Alaska Cruise. We had 84 fellow brothers and sisters in Christ come together to celebrate not only God's blessings upon the ministry, but also to marvel in God's majestic creations.

There were so many wonderful blessings on the trip, it's hard to know where to begin. We experienced wondrous beauty, we were inspired by times of devotions, enjoyed fantastic cuisine (probably too much), furthered special friendships, developed new found friendships and much, much more.

This Alaska cruise was an especially amazing time for Nora (that would be my wife) and I. This was the first cruise we have



ever been on and it was the first time we took a vacation without our three boys. To say it felt strange would be an understatement. Fortunately, my mother was kind enough to watch the boys; and it turned out to be a special time for them to get to know their grandparents better. What a

blessing that was.

We were so blessed to have five mornings where five wonderful men of God, sacrificially gave of their time to lead us in morning devotions. Because of the late nights, we first thought morning devotions might be a little too early and thus few would attend. Wow, were we wrong! Every morning we had probably 40-50 fellow believers come together to study the character traits of God. This was definitely one of the highlights of the cruise.

And what would any cruise be without unbelievable food? I still salivate whenever I think about it. Although, as good as it was for

the taste buds, it was probably just as bad for our waistline....not that we ate too much. Also, our evening meals were a special time to really sit down and get to know our fellow Christian friends. Two of the nights were formal dinners and, of course, everyone looked unbelievable. The women were absolutely beautiful and the men looked quite dapper.

We stopped at ports in Ketchikan, Juneau and Sitka. Some took advantage of those "once in a lifetime" excursions, while many took advantage of the time to go ashore, relax, enjoy God's beauty all around them....and of course....shop for souvenirs for their loved ones.

We had three group gatherings where we prayed, worshiped our Almighty God, sang some hymns, played some games, and listened to what God had put on Les Collins' heart. A few of the games we played were "Name that Hymn" (we had a few ringers in this one), "The Marriage Game" (here we got to know a few of our conference leaders and their spouses) and "Best Story". We also had contests for "Best Souvenir" (including a belly button brush) and "Best Picture" (won by Irwin Kujat, Regional Minister in Saskatchewan). These times together were full of love, joy, laughter and reflection.



Remembering back to our trip, it is amazing how God's creation can silence all doubts of a Creator and soften the hardest heart to experience peace and joy. Truly He is above all and so worthy of praise. --Bob Glim

Colleen's Corner



Summer: A Season of Change

Perhaps one of the hardest things to deal with as humans is change. It is the one thing we can always count on happening in life, but usually the one thing not invited into our lives-and especially not with arms open wide to receive it. But, change life must; and we must also.

I have lately found myself in the midst of the "aftermath" of change, so to say. The place where it feels like the storm has lifted and I peek open my eyes and check my body over to see that, Praise the Lord, I am still in one piece. But, around me- on the ground-lies the pieces of wood, screws and cement that had been used to build my dreams and plans. These seem to lie awaiting purpose, no longer sure of their place in my life anymore. These plans and dreams that once seemed to make me, "me"...are not any longer.

I am not who I was...and I am still not who I will be, but I am changed. Growth, maturity...to do so requires change. Having one hand on my previous perceptions of self and life and another on these changed, new perceptions is not something that will enable me to grow. These shattered pieces around me were the foundations of something past, something that needed to be changed for the glory of God to shine through my life. The new things to come and the new beings we are to become, daily and in heaven, are what Paul encourages us to press on to take hold of:

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ

Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

—Philippians 3:12-14

That is what I have chosen to do; leaving the old to embrace the change that brings the new, forgetting what is behind me to grab a hold of what is in front of me. This is the blessing God wants to give to me-to us all.

I want to encourage you: whatever God calls you to forget, whatever is behind you, leave it there to press on toward the goal. Nothing we forsake on Earth for the glory of God will go unblessed by God. For every sacrifice we offer, God has a blessing He wants to give us. But we have to offer it to receive it, we have to ask and believe for it, and-we have to allow Him to change us. To change our plans, our perspectives... into His.

Nugget for your Noodle

You cannot always control what goes on outside. But you can always control what goes on inside.

-Wayne Dyer

CEIF in Prince George

Just before embarking on the cruise to Alaska, Les and I had the privilege to provide a seminar on personal financing to our wonderful friends in Prince George, BC. The good people at College Heights Baptist were our gracious hosts for the 2 day event.

Les and I found it to be a great time to not only get to know a few of our brothers and sisters in Christ, but also a great opportunity to share with them about finances from a Biblical point of view. We challenged each person and couple to look at how God calls us to handle what He has entrusted to us versus what society is teaching us, and how to overcome the challenges that befall us all. Our aim was to give them the necessary skills and knowledge that will enable them to create financial credibility by managing their own money, both practically and spiritually. --Bob Glim

More Alaska Cruise Pictures

If you would like to see more pictures from the CEIF 35th Anniversary Cruise, we invite you to visit us at:

www.ceif.org



Rate Review

US Term Certificates*		
	Under \$5000	\$5000 and up
Five Year	4.25%	4.75%

Canada Term Bonds*		
	Under \$3000	\$3000 and up
Five Year	4.25%	4.75%

*Rates good through July 31, 2008 and subject to change without notice.

This is not an offer to sell investments or a solicitation to buy. The offer is made only in states/provinces where authorized and solely by the CEIF Offering Circular/Information Statement.

Pro-claim Him!: Pr-ayers & Pr-aises!

There's a new addition to our website and newsletter for our Churches and Investors!!! It is an online prayer board called "Pr-ayers and Pr-aises"! Now you have an added opportunity to join in the ministry of CEIF! You can lift up the prayers listed as well as post your own prayer requests, being comforted in knowing that your brothers and sisters in the Lord will be lifting them up. What an awesome opportunity to be the Body of Christ to one another! Please, also keep us posted with praise reports. We want to share in praising God with you, too!

Just visit our website at www.ceif.org and click on the link. If you don't have access to the web, but have a prayer/praise to share, please feel free to call, write, or fax us and we'll be happy to post them for you! We at CEIF are so excited for this addition and will be joining you by lifting up the prayers during our weekly staff meetings.

A few praise reports will be highlighted in this section, also, in the hopes of encouraging you and testifying to the awesome power and love of our God. Nothing is impossible for Him, so let's lift Him (and prayers) up! **Pro-claim Him!!!**

