

FEBRUARY 2010

Have you ever noticed the warnings which are displayed on the back of many sixteen wheelers? If you've driven closely behind a semi-tractor trailer (and who hasn't?) you may have seen the diagram that explains that the driver of the vehicle in front of you has blind spots. If you are too close, the truck driver does not know you are there. The warning often states this: "If you can't see my mirrors, I can't see you."

I wish I knew what all my blind spots are. I've discovered a number of them over the years of my adult life but it seems there are always new ones to be discovered. Sometimes I get "blind-sided" by a comment a question or a concern or an event that, if I had not been blind to it, I could have prepared for it. There are accidents in my relationships with people I care about that could have been avoided. Or miscommunications that could have been nipped in the bud. Or opportunities for the gospel that would not have been missed.

Mirrors are a huge help when driving a truck or car. The same thing is true when trying to navigate through interpersonal communications. I try harder and harder to look "in the mirror" as it were. I figure the more I understand about myself and the people around me, the safer I will make my way through the relationships I have with them. But mirrors can only do so much. Even appropriately reflecting on my own motivations, my habits and my blind spots, I cannot always avoid bumping into somebody else's space or backing over somebody's toes. I can easily create confusion or hurt feelings. Even as helpful as mirrors are, they cannot give an adequate representation of the where really things are. ("Warning: Things in this mirror may be closer than they appear.")

Better than mirrors are spotters. I am amazed when I watch a truck driver back his rig into a tight-fitting loading dock using only his mirrors. Whenever I'm trying to maneuver a car back and forth in a limited space, I want somebody to spot me. This person stands outside the car and watches my bumper and the obstacles I am trying to avoid and gives me

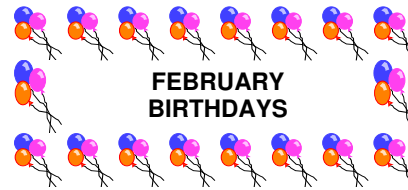
verbal feedback on what to do: "Pull forward a bit. Now turn hard to the right. Now back up a foot or so. Stop!" Or when I am cruising down the highway and it's time to move from the left lane to the right lane, I appreciate it when I have a passenger on board who can look over her shoulder at the traffic behind us and say, "All clear."

All of this is to say that everybody I know has blind spots. Some of us know what our blind spots are and many of us still have more blind spots to discover. What about you? Learning from past accidents we can become wiser and try harder to be self-aware. We can use rearview mirrors to avoid future mishaps if we take seriously the lessons learned to reflect on our own personalities. We need to know our own strengths and weaknesses. We need to know the boundaries and rules of the road. We need to be constantly scanning for people moving into and out of our range of operations.

But best of all we need one another. We need accountability partners. We need spotters. Such people who are honest and have our best interests at heart are a rarity. That's why I appreciate it when someone can firmly and lovingly confront me if they see me about the make a misstep. Even so I need to heed their input or proceed at my own risk. Or, as is more often the case, some people can tell me when I've mistakenly stepped out of bounds, or inadvertently done some damage. This kind of truthfulness is at times hard to deal with and many of us avoid these kinds of involvements. Too often people will stand back and watch a friend drive over a cliff rather than figure out how to intervene in a helpful manner. But I'm guessing that the person in the spotting position might not be so reluctant if the driver spoke up and asked for feedback before he put his truck in gear and released the brake.

All of the above are my personal reflections on an important but often avoided passage in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. I hope they help us all grow in the kind of unity and maturity Christ wants for His Church.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. *Ephesians 4:15-16(NIV)*




- 1 Janet Sharp
- 6 Joe Slusarczyk
- 8 Joyce Billock
- 9 Marty Daugherty
- 10 Larry Lynn, Butch Shood II
- 11 Patricia Wilson, Nancy Schrader
- 14 Pamela Slusarczyk, Shannon Cunningham
- 15 Jim Alexander
- 17 Helen Swinehart
- 20 Wilford Eckert, Evelyn Stohler
- 23 Beth Ann Nims
- 24 Gloria Hahn, Katie Arthurs
- 25 Lola Parshall, Cecelia Pritchard
- 28 John Schulz



- 3 Dave & Cindy Cunnigham
- 8 Jesse & Nancy Daum
- 14 John & Jenny Palmer
- 18 Fred & Marty Daugherty
- 28 Dave & Diane Thomas

FROM THE BOOK-SHELF



Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper

Bill Bright, Edwin Cole, Dr. James Dobson, Tony Evans, Bill McCartney, Luis Palau, Randy Phillips, and Gary Smalley.

This book was written for men. It gives seven promises of a Promise Keeper. It shows how they can make a changing life with their God, Family and church.

REMINDER for Childcare during 10:30 service

<p><u>2 years-preK</u> February 7-Stephanie Nichols February 14-Kris Naman February 21-Loralee Weaver February 28-Cheri Watson</p>	<p><u>K-3rd grade</u> February 7-Michelle Sadlak February 14- ??????-need someone February 21-??????-need someone February 28-Jodi Shood</p>
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"A Look into our Mission Ministries"

A letter from Stasi and Micah Henry.

Happy New Year!

We are still doing well here in Slovakia, We did a lot of visiting with our Slovak friends here over the Christmas weekend and still had time to enjoy the tree Micah cut down and each other's company. We had a nice restful holiday but we missed being at home with our American friends and family. An interesting side note: stores in Slovakia are required by law to close on Christmas Eve by noon. NOTHING is open on the 24th in the afternoon. Or the 25th, or the 26th.... we discovered that the hard way, I think we visited every store in 3 towns on Christmas Eve :).

We hope that each of you had a blessed holiday season and will have a wonderful year ahead! It is hard to believe that we are in a new decade, 2010 here we come. One of the resolutions Micah and I made was to be more intentional about Prayer. We would like to lift you up when we pray. Please send us an e-mail and let us know any specific requests you and your family have.

We have a few events coming up here at the Ranch. The 15 -17th of January will be a seminar for Bass Guitarists in Christian bands and on worship teams. The seminar will cover practical things and biblical basis for worship and service. This is part of a series of Seminars that Youth for Christ Slovakia is holding. We have already held seminars for drummers and worship leaders and seminars are being planned for singers, pianists and guitarists as well.

On the 22nd-24th of January there will be a conference for Friends of Israel here at the Ranch. There will be times of preaching and prayer.

There is a meeting scheduled later this month for all YFC Staff here in Slovakia. This will be a time of sharing what each ministry center has been doing in the past year and plans for 2010. Because there are YFC ministry teams working in 5 locations as well as ministries happening in cooperation with churches and other Christian organizations around Slovakia, this is a time when we can all get together and really feel unified and seek God's direction for YFC Slovakia.

We also wanted to thank those of you who prayed for Simon and Angie's baby. They were back in Switzerland for Christmas and had another Sonogram. The cyst in the baby's brain is no longer there! Praise the Lord.

Thank you for your prayers and support,
Micah & Stasi

An Apology

Visual media can be very helpful in communicating a feeling or in creating a "hook" to catch an audience's attention. I underestimated the impact of the media I produced for Christmas Eve to use as an introduction to my message on the Peace of Christ. It was too powerful and too startling. I was insensitive to the fact that there would be many small children in the worship service on this most holy of nights; not to mention being insensitive to any veterans who have fought in combat or to families who may have loved ones currently serving in harms way in Iraq or Afghanistan. I sincerely regret my decision to use this media tool and apologize for any negative emotions or impact that it stirred. My intent was not to frighten or offend, but to point to the beauty of Christ's Peace by contrasting it to the ugly conflicts which plague our world. Christ overcomes violence and divisions between people by entering into this conflicted world as an innocent, vulnerable baby and by handing himself over to be grotesquely crucified on the cross in order to reconcile us all to His Father and to destroy the hostility between factions of humanity. My message that evening was undermined by my own zeal for communicating it. To the body of Christ here at ACC and to all who attended what was otherwise a beautiful Christmas Eve service, please accept my humble apology.

In Christ,



Rev. David B. Roberts



Helping the Helpless



In previewing the video portion of the lesson for our adult Bible Fellowship this past week, and a statement really jumped out at me. It was said that **“You judge a church by where the poor and weak are.”** That phrase has been turning over in my mind ever since. And I have been asking myself, Where are the poor and weak in our church...in our community...in our world? And what is our responsibility for them? As a result, I have been much more keenly aware of the needs and the needy all around.

With the devastating earthquake in Haiti, the whole world has been awakened to the helplessness of some of the poorest of the poor in the whole world. It has been very encouraging to see the outpouring of support by so many to raise money and send relief to the people of Haiti. It has also been heartbreaking to see the scope of the suffering and the challenging struggle it has been to get help to those in need. And it was incredibly disturbing to hear on CNN of some unscrupulous individuals actually preying on the helpless, orphaned children, snatching them up & selling them into slavery.

While we need to reach out and help the people trying to recover from the awful earthquake in Haiti, I am also feeling the Lord stir within me to care about the helpless nearer to home. Where are the poor and the weak in terms of *our* church? Do we allow them to be like the weak in the animal world, falling behind the herd, easy prey for taking down, or will we surround them and protect them, tending to their needs?

We read in God's Word that *“Religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”* (James 1:27)

Widows and orphans are those who don't have others to look out for them. There are “widows and orphans,” so to speak all around us—people who are broken, hurting, needing help, and don't know where to turn. There are people suffering quietly in our church. There are people struggling to get by around our community. There are neighbors, friends, and members of our extended church family who are going through some very hard times. Am I content to know that they out there beyond our church to fend for themselves, or am I moved to go out and bring them into our care? I know that I have some phone calls to make. I have some people that I need to visit. There are people that God wants to care for through me. Some I know. Some I have yet to meet. How about you? May God give us all His heart to care for the helpless.

Your Director of Ministries,

Brad Bloomster

ACC PRESCHOOL CHILDCARE NEWS...

As reported in last month's newsletter article the students, parents and staff participated in the preschool's annual “Gift of Love Project”. This year, the organization we collected for was The Pajama Program. This charity provides new pajamas and books to children in need. I am very pleased to report to you that our center collected 110 pairs of pajamas and 94 books. Thank you to all who participated!

During the month of January, children 4 and 5 years of age were screened for possible vision problems. The screenings are done by volunteers through the Goodwill Industries of Youngstown. Eighty-five students were screened and parents of 18 students received referrals to have their child's eyes further examined. Goodwill Industries also works with the Lion's Club who has grant money to help those with financial restraints.

A “Challenging Behaviors” class will be held in Fellowship Hall each Thursday from 6:15 p.m. till 8:15 p.m. The class, for teachers will begin Thursday, February 18th and continue each Thursday through March 25th. The class is sponsored by the D& E Counseling Center and is paid for by a grant.

May God continue to bless the Preschool Child Care Ministry.

Love and God's Blessings,
Cindy E. Ellashek