



Saints Alive

July 2009

Herr und Frau Meier

By Jim Burdick

Please study the scriptures noted by the numbering.^[1]

Have you ever wondered why I seem to be so consistently stubborn about 'getting along' with each other?^[2] Have you ever wondered why I am convinced that how people treat each other is probably the primary indication of our Christianity?^[3]

I want to tell you a story of almost 40 years ago. It is not a long story. But these events affected me tremendously. Let me share this with you. Some of the story is personally somewhat embarrassing, but we need to hear this.

In 1971, I was stationed in Heilbronn, Germany. Heilbronn sits at about 550 feet above sea level, similar to San Antonio. But, it is much further North, sitting at about the same Latitude as Vancouver, BC. The folks in Heilbronn are a very hospitable group and I enjoyed learning about a different culture very much.^[4]

Two other soldiers and I rented apartments from a rooming house downtown. The landlords were 'Herr und Frau Meier,' who rented rooms above their store and apartment. In our language, they were Mr. And Mrs. Meier.

Frau Meier had some unusual habits. When we would arrive back at the rooms in the evening, like many young men might do, we would shower and lounge around a bit before putting some supper together. One fellow, in particular, liked to read every day. Frau Meier would come in (without knocking) and go from room to room, regardless of what occupants were or weren't wearing, and if the windows were open, she would close them; if the windows were closed, she opened them. After she left, and when she could not hear, we would call her 'Fenster Frau', meaning Window Woman or Mrs. Window. When we tried to talk to Herr Meier and ask that she knock and receive permission to enter, he responded that "She doesn't mean any harm."

Once, the toilet broke and for weeks after it was fixed, she wandered around muttering "Toilet ist geld. Toilet ist geld" which means that the toilet costs money. Over and over and over.

To be honest, her behavior began to wear on us. We came to understand that Frau Meier was what we would call 'troubled.' Eventually, we moved. I do not think I was ever disrespectful, but I admit that I felt the need to get away from this most awkward and challenging situation.

But, let's talk for a minute. Frau Meier was, indeed, troubled. And it took some special effort to keep her problem from overwhelming you. But she truly was not a danger, she was just troubled. As I reached my 40s, 50s, and now 60, I have come to view this story differently.^[5]

I have not told you everything. I need to tell you why this experience now assures me that how you and I treat each other, and others, is so critical to the reality of our Christianity.^[6] If we care to prove that we are Christians, then everyone, anyone should

feel like being in our presence is the safest place on the face of the Earth.

I am convinced that Frau Meier came by her mental challenge through no fault of her own. Both Herr und Frau Meier had numbers tattooed on their arms. These were not tattoos they chose. These tattoos were the enduring evidence that the Meiers were victims of the vilest of man's treatment of others. The Meiers survived something I doubt I could endure.

Now, consider the horrific actions that drove Frau Meier to a state of mind we don't understand. Then, consider Jesus turning to the thief beside him and promising Paradise. Think of Jesus' final plea - "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."^[8]

None of us have taken actions as far wrong as the actions of the Nazi's. But, neither are any of us as loving as Jesus. We are in-between. But in every action, we need to move our actions toward the direction of the Christ.

Every day, every place we go, there are people with some kind of 'tattoo' on their history. Not their arms, certainly, but marks on their soul just as dark and undeserved. How I treat that next person, and the one after that, moves the momentum of society in one of those directions. We can not tolerate hatred, polarization, prejudice, judgment, racism, sexism, ageism, you-name-it-ism.^[9] We must actively promote the healing love of Christ. Always remember that any behavior that allows for the marking of people's souls fails to endorse the kind words Jesus uttered on the cross.

Scriptures:

[1] Psalm 119:105

[2] John 15:14

[3] John 15:12

[4] Doctrine and Covenants 163:3a&b

[5] Corinthians 13:12

[6] Matthew 5:47

[7] Luke 23:43

[8] Luke 23:34

[9] Doctrine and Covenants 163:3

July Greeters

7/5/09—Reta Tucker

7/12/09—Carol White

7/19/09—Pat Campbell

7/26/09—Patty Walker

News from the Pews

Tom Walker missed the finals by just one spot at the National History Day competition in Washington, DC. Out of 91 kids competing in his category, Tom came in anywhere between the 15th and 22nd place. We don't know for sure his final placement but it is somewhere in that range.

Welcome to **Patrick and Nancy Ford**, Ginny Ford's parents, who have moved from Waco to Victoria and are now attending our congregation.

Wayne and Lisa Talcott have enjoyed having Marcella, their daughter-in-law, and Lafe, their grandson, visiting from Japan. They've been here while Matt has been traveling on Air Force business. Matt's travels will actually bring him to San Antonio, and the five Talcotts will be able to sneak a weekend at the beach in Corpus Christi while he's here. (And the new baby is going to be a little girl!)

Here's an update from Carol White:

I have been busy with Transpersonal Energy Healing classes offered by Lionheart Institute that I started taking last September. They are held one weekend a month at Incarnate Word University. June had a double whammy, with two weekend classes. Linda Holder, a recent graduate, recommended this training to me and Holly Hampton of Corpus Christi has also been a Lionheart student and was in one of my early classes. I've been doing some traveling seeing the Texas roads from Amarillo to Corpus Christi.

In June, I enjoyed a week long visit with my daughter-in-law, Brandy White's, family in Amarillo. We had lots of fun looking up in a Texas travel book all the historical markers along the way and as you know there are a lot of those in Texas.

We also got to see the summer musical production of "Texas" held in the Palo Duro Canyon. This is its 44th season and the crowds just keep on coming for this great show. Every show they give a gift to the person who has come the longest distance and in 44 years it has never been a US citizen. The night we were there, it was a man from Manchester, England. There are the special effects of thunder and lightening as part of the show, but it was not necessary for our show, as God added this touch with the best display of lightening I have ever seen. There was also some light rain, but as they say in show business "The show must go on" and that it did, a little lightening, thunder, and rain didn't stop them, but hey they are Texans, right??? As a matter of fact, there was rain and very cool

mornings (60's), every day I was there; the Amarillo folks said that was quite uncommon. I sure wish I could have brought the rain and cooler weather home with me.

I have been traveling to Corpus Christi routinely to visit my Aunt Dean Vorhes to offer help with doctor visits and hospital stays, as well as just plain visits. However, my 97 year old aunt is still vibrant with a keen interest in what's happening in the world and says that she is going for 100....I do believe that she will make it. I will be visiting Reunion #1 to hear and see David and Carolyn Brock, then attending the Reunion #2 the first week in July. Then I expect to be back in the pew in July. See ya soon---Carol Deane

Presiding & Speaking Help!

Andy Shelton leads a conference call each Sunday night at 5 p.m. for the preachers and presiders for the following Sunday. To participate in the call, dial 1-800-727-7537. Then, when asked for the conference ID, enter 817-685-8202#. If you have trouble getting into the call, you can call Andy on his cell phone at 817-798-1505 for assistance. The purpose of the call is to talk about the bold-faced scripture for the following Sunday and share sermon and worship planning ideas.

Open Discussion Needed:

--an editorial commentary

Over the next several months Community of Christ members will be considering changes in rules on baptism. And we are all called to engage in prayer, reflection and discernment of God's will regarding requirements for church membership.

So as the process moves forward, let us all learn to listen respectfully and lovingly to others before trying to reach conclusions. As president Stephen Veasey said in his April "defining moment" report to members, building a healthy faith community and common consent includes opportunities for people to feel understood, regardless of the outcomes.

-----Lafe Williams

July Birthdays

7----Patty Workmon

16—Bartise Bowden

21—Jay Higginson

26---Ruth Callier

28---Ben Osterhaus



Saints Alive!

**Monthly publication of
Community of Christ
Shenandoah Congregation
11910 Vance Jackson
San Antonio, TX 78230**

Editors--Lisa Talcott

lisa_talcott@hotmail.com

Lafe Williams

lafewill@gmail.com

**ADDRESS CORRECTION
REQUESTED**