



# The Iowa Friend

*Iowa Yearly Meeting: Spreading Like Prairie Grass to Make the Love of Jesus Christ Known in the Heartland and Beyond*

December 2002

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## SPIRITUAL LIFE

### A Milestone to Remember!

When I think of Christmas, at one time I thought of gifts and home made candy. I would be touching the gifts under the tree so carefully wrapped by my mother. Lying on the couch in the evening observing the lighted Christmas tree with its many bulbs and decorations brought forth feelings of glad tidings and great joy. The red-lighted green wreath hanging in the window and the lighted manger scene on top of the curio cabinet gave me warm fuzzies of the day that approached when we would find what was behind the wrapping and bows.

For the Christmas program at Valton Friends I would have memorized my part. It was always very nerve racking to say the least, when it became my turn to say my line in front of a full congregation of smiling, nodding adults. What always seemed to get the most attention were the mess-ups by my peers and myself, who suffered from amnesia once we entered the stage of the big lights. Being the one to memorize and present the Christmas story from Luke 2 seemed to pale with the sound of a full-blown cry from one of the kids who suffered momentary stage fright.

Those days have past and I find that what matters most at this point in life are the relationships that I have. Most of all its about relationships with church and family. The fascinating thing is that these relationships change from year to year. It's one thing to say that it changes with my daughters Chelsea and Rachel who have arrived at the ripe years of 10 and 8 but even more than that, it's my relationship with my wife, Gayle.

The person that I knew 12 years ago is different today... better!!! The person she knew 12 years ago has changed. (She will have to be the one to judge the change!) It's interesting isn't it? The relationships we possess are the gifts that keep on giving.

By this time most of us have heard the overrun statistic that the divorce rate in the church is the same as the divorce rate outside the church. It isn't my intention to dwell on this theme at this time of year, but I would like to draw a parallel between this theme and the Christmas decorations that we adore. The babe in the manger is an affectionate tradition that remains central to most people in society. Recent statistics reveal that 80% of Americans consider themselves Christian whether they know what it means or not. If I had to say what the primary challenge of the Christian faith is today, it is one of relevance. Many don't possess inwardly the spirit of what the Christ of Christmas brings.

Back to my relationship with Gayle... to say that my wedding day was the highlight of my life would be wrong. In fact, what I

loved about the days leading up to the wedding was having all my buddies from way back when, all come around to celebrate the time with me. The ceremony itself was more nerve wracking than anything, having a church full of people, many of whom I didn't really know. When driving in our get away car to the reception, Gayle commented that I was hardly someone that she knew given the past few days! I must say that being part introvert, I was suffering from an overdose of attention...

The babe in the manger can become a relic from the past if we're not forward looking in our faith. Like a wedding album, we can be tempted to bring out the manger scene and parade it around without the relational initiatives that move us forward. The future of my life with Gayle is no different than the future of my relationship with the baby Jesus.

Give pause this Christmas season to consider how the Baby Jesus has become your Friend. *"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."* Jesus to the Father-John 17:3

Consider how you are growing with your faith community. *"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need."* As recorded by Luke-Acts 4:32-35



*Kevin and Gayle celebrate a new beginning with Todd Follette, Grinnell Friends; Tom Cox, Valton Friends and Ric Garrison, Chester Friends, May 4, 1991.*



# Friendly Flashes

*"And the King shall say, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matthew 25:40*

As I write this, the election is over, Thanksgiving has passed and we are beginning our preparations for Christmas.

Too often our focus is on the over abundance of food – or over indulgence (we will diet in January). Christmas lists have been presented and the search for the perfect gift is underway. I would guess that very few of us are going hungry or are in **need** of any more 'stuff'.

Around the world, people are hungry, homeless, cold – longing for just a small part of what we take for granted. Boys and girls at Quakerdale would love the assurance that someone they have never met cared enough to reach out to them. Each county in Iowa usually has a list of families in need of food, warm clothes - the basics of life.

Our children will be celebrating a vacation from school. In Turkana, children are kept from school because they do not have the clothes necessary to be allowed to attend. 576 children need uniforms; 56 in the orphanage, 200 for the 4 nursery schools and 320 for the 3 primary schools. The cost of a uniform is \$16.00 of our money, 12,000 shillings Turkana money. Herman Otioko is excited that Iowa U.S.F.W. women are interested in helping these children receive an education. As you or your group plan your holiday or New Year spending, remember how little we would have to give up in order to make a difference in the lives of someone else. We will never feel the loss, but it could be life changing for one "of the least of these" our brethren.

When we give, we give as to Jesus, but when we refuse, we refuse Jesus also. Puts a new light on our giving, doesn't it?

Aid for Turkana - send checks to:  
Irene Ritchie, 1895 120<sup>th</sup> St,  
Richland, IA 52585 memo: FUM Turkana uniforms.

Done this way – the child receives a uniform and an adult is provided a job.

May the richness of this Holy season touch each of you and may the warmth of our Savior's love flow from us to touch someone else.

Peace & Grace,  
Linda Burnett



# MEETING MOMENTS

**OCTOBER SNAPSHOTS FROM LEGRAND** – M&C began October with a 2-day retreat to consider the all-important position vacancy created when Pastor Phil moved. They subsequently recommended to Monthly Meeting that we hire additional staff to work with 7<sup>th</sup> grade through college age kids. M&C and stewardship are currently fleshing out the details.

Six of our USFW members attended the Ladies' Fall Retreat at Camp Quaker Heights and enjoyed an excellent program with speaker Brenda White and reports of the FUM Triennial session in Nairobi.

The church continues to come alive every Wednesday evening when an average of 75 Pioneer Clubbers and about 20 leaders gather for Bible lessons, activities, singing and games.

About 20 people attended the Crown Financial Seminar money management seminar to learn about God's principles for handling family finances. Those attending reported quite favorably on the presentation.

Our dedicated committee continues to raise funds (\$4,000 target) to meet their goal of minimal cost to each family attending next year's family camp. A soup lunch prior to October's Monthly Meeting added to their total (currently about \$500). Currently, they are selling beautiful 2003 scripture calendars for a mere \$5 each.

Our church was favored with a personal visit from Herman Otioko, a man of God, on October 17. About 11 of our congregation gathered mid-week to hear both of his work and his needs at Turkana Friends Mission.

The kids in Children's Church have been studying (of all things!)...manners! Scripture is rich in examples of good manners. So, they look to God's work for guidance and inspiration as Bible stories are neatly interwoven with different aspects of manners such as: saying kind words, dinner table skills (Amen!), being considerate of others, and natural ways to show God's love.

November has also been a busy month. We have updated our church photo directory, held our annual Harvest Home Missions Sunday, and celebrated God's rich blessings at the annual Thanksgiving Eve Service.



*Phil Does of New Sharon Friends shares with Kelly Kellum and Cindy Norman at a recent pastors' gathering.*



## The Great Expectations of Christmas

One of my greatest disappointments as a child was hearing about something or seeing something in a catalog that sounded wonderful, but if and when I finally received the item, it wasn't anything like I had expected. That experience has caused me to be very skeptical about all advertising. My rule of thumb is that the more anything is advertised, the chance that it will live up to the advertising diminishes.

There is nothing more disappointing than expecting one thing and receiving something very different. Sometimes that happens at Christmas. Children believe what they see on television, and think they must have one of the toys or games they have seen, yet how many times have we seen a child anticipate receiving a special Christmas present, only to have it fall apart or fail to live up to their expectations.

That kind of experience can contribute toward making the Christmas season a downer for some people. It is more tragic when Christmas has come and gone and we have not received a greater understanding of the meaning and purpose of Christmas.

In this weeks Gospel lesson, John the Baptist was in prison. Some time had passed since he had baptized Jesus in the Jordan river. In that time, their fortunes had reversed. John who had been so popular was about to be martyred. After Jesus was baptized by John, people began flocking to him to hear him preach and to be healed by him. John sent a messenger from his prison, to ask Jesus "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?"

There is no way for us to know whether John had begun to have doubts or if he was just seeking confirmation that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. It was important that he should know. Jesus told the messenger, "To and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

Jesus was doing what he came into our world to do. He did not come just to give us a holiday to celebrate in which we feel merry and express good will to everyone we meet.

The first coming of Jesus meant some new things were coming in the world.

John tells us in his Gospel, "God loved the world so much that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." We must understand, Jesus came into the world to make some radical changes in the way people live.

Matthew wrote that when Jesus heard John had been arrested, he began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." Matthew also gave us Jesus' beatitudes, which serve as his mission statement.

Luke tells about Jesus coming to Nazareth where he had grown up. On the Sabbath day, he went to the synagogue as

usual. He stood up and read from the Prophet Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

This Advent season we need to keep the readings from Isaiah in mind along with the epistles. Isaiah spoke of a future time when, "Many people shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths...God shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears in to pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war anymore.

We also had Isaiah's prophesy of natural enemies living together in peace, pointing to a time in which, "They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord. As the waters cover the sea."

Obviously, that time has not yet arrived. But what are we doing to hasten such drastically different conditions in our world. God has shown us what our world can be like; if we will only do our part to help establish God's kingdom on earth, as it is in heaven.

Keith Mardock, Pastor of Hesper Friends Meeting



Keith Mardock, President of Quaker Men shares with Margaret Stoltzfus at a recent William Penn Board Meeting.



Jim Hoeksema and Sam Ritchie faithfully serve as IAYM Representatives on the Wm Penn Board.



# Grace - Cuba

## From Mt. Pleasant to Banés....

- Curt Swarm -

What do other empty nesters do in their spare time besides write columns for newspapers and jog? Well, in the case of Patti and Jerry Phillips of Mt. Pleasant, they go on mission trips. On January 23, 2003, Jerry and Patti will board a flight to Cuba for a two-week mission trip to help rebuild a church that is in danger of collapsing. But the flight they will board for Cuba is not departing from Miami, or anywhere else in the United States. Because of long-severed relations between the United States and Cuba, the Phillips will travel to Toronto, Canada, then fly to Cuba.



It's sort of a roundabout method for reaching a destination. But this is also not unusual for the Phillips. Several years ago, Jerry attended what he thought was a school function at the Mt. Pleasant Christian School on a Saturday night. In reality, it was the first service of Grace Community Friends Church that meets on Saturday nights at the Christian School. Half way through the service Jerry knew he was home.

Last year, Jerry went on a mission trip to Jamaica, and was planning on returning this year. However, upon hearing a talk from Erwin Lopez, a Cuban who lives in Oskaloosa, Patti told her husband, "We're going to Cuba." Jerry knew that it was probably one of those times when he should listen to his wife. Did I also mention that the Phillips will be celebrating twenty-five years of marriage, and the mission trip to Cuba will be their anniversary trip? This will also be the first Super Bowl that Jerry has missed. But such are the sacrifices of lay-mission volunteers.

Following a very successful fund-raising garage sale sponsored by the Friends Church, and a soup supper, the Phillips knew they were on the right course. With no special talents, other than a willingness to work hard and an abiding faith, the Phillips put their trust where it belongs and will venture off into the unknown.

When Castro took over Cuba in the late fifties, the churches fell in to disrepair. If the churches collapse, the government seizes them. The churches can be repaired and reclaimed, but the Cuban government requires that American money be used for building materials.

Examples: Banés Friends Church. Estimated cost \$20,000 to \$35,000. Strengthen walls and rebuild foundations of large, historic church. Timber re-used from original church, built by missionaries in 1902, is weak. One wall is buckling.

Velasco Friends Church. Estimated cost \$5,000. Replace roof over church and parsonage. Moisture, insects and other tropical weather conditions have weakened the roof to the point of collapse.

Delicias Chapel. Estimated cost \$5,000. The roof of this rural church has collapsed. Twenty-six people meet regu-

larly for worship under a nearby tree.

The pastors must travel between cities by bike, small motor-bike, or by standing under a tree, waiting for an open truck to come by.

The conditions as described above are what the Phillips will face on their two-week sojourn to Cuba. Are they Apprehensive? Sure. Do they have faith? Absolutely.

In his soft, friendly voice and ever-present smile, Jerry, who works at Hearth Technologies and will be using vacation time for the trip to Cuba, laughs, "People who knew us five years ago can't believe it. We've changed so much."

Patti, normally calm, jabs her husband in the ribs. "We're not suited for full-time mission work. You can do a lot of good for the poor and yourself in ten days. Our goal is to rebuild Friends churches and relations."

Jerry looks at Patti, "I can't believe I'm saying this, but this mission trip is more for us than it is for them. If you give yourself completely, wonderful things can be done through you—more than you ever thought possible. You invariably come home with more than what you left."

*Curt Swarm attends the Grace Community Friends Church and writes for the Mt. Pleasant News.*



*Left to right; Russ King, Don Davis, Jake King, Charlie Sander, Dave Warner, Bill Roach and Dan Pidgeon come together Tuesday mornings for fellowship and prayer.*



### PRAYER BREAKFAST

*It all began after a group of men went to a Promise Keeper's conference in 1995. We needed to be serious about holding each other accountable in our walk with God. For many years it was just a group of three men. We wondered if it was worth meeting together but we persevered. We often thought that 6 a.m. on Tuesday morning might not be the best time - especially after Monday night football! But God has blessed this effort and now every Tuesday morning a group of men meet to eat, share and pray. The group has grown to as many as 15. The power of this group will only be measured in Eternity.*

*Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves.*

*- Sir James Barrie -*



## Mardi Gras Time!

It's that time of year again. For \$150 plus gas, you can spend a week in the sun during winter.

You could serve the lost with your own unique style of ministry or find a new thing. You could be just like George Fox and the valiant Sixty. You could even dress like them for extra effect.

Come join those from IAYM who are already going and other hands from the body of Christ to love Jesus and serve the lost.



For questions and answers contact Spencer Thury at (641) 424-6094, Riverside Friends Church or email: [smthury@juno.com](mailto:smthury@juno.com).

P.S. We need a bigger van this year. Anyone have a 15 passenger van we could take to New Orleans?



Scott Rains, Ric Garrison and Marvin Hall provide back up for Spencer Thury in preparation for leading Friends in evangelistic outreach.

## FUM Consultation on Evangelism

The theme of the recent FUM Triennial sessions was "Finish The Work", based on the Apostle Paul's challenge to the Corinthians to finish the work they had started as referenced in II Corinthians, Chapter 8. The application was in reference to the work of FUM and Friends in Kenya, as the Triennial celebrated 100 years of work in Africa. While the number of Friends in Africa is about 140,000 there are still many areas that need the Gospel.

As I reflected on this while in Africa, I asked myself what is the work that Wilmington Yearly Meeting has to finish? Maybe a more important question is what is the work we have or are to do? It doesn't seem to be evangelism because we have lost approximately 4000 members in the last 80 or so years. Nor church planting because we have not planted a new church in recent history and on the other side of that we have laid a few down. Is it our peace testimony? Our world is still full of war; our neighborhoods still experience violence and unrest. Perhaps we need to rediscover what our work is.

Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon in Resident Aliens suggest that the church is a community in the world to show that God is redeeming that world to himself. The Church is to "...show the world a manner of life the world can never achieve through social coercion or governmental action. We serve the world by showing it something that is not, namely a place



## CAMP QUAKER HEIGHTS

We recently were able to stay in the new RV Center during Pastor's Retreat at Camp Quaker Heights. Everything worked great and we had a wonderful time. We enjoyed several newly planted trees around the RV Center courtesy of Pine Lake State Park. We were also able to do a first for us, we spent two (wet) hours traveling in a canoe down the Iowa River. It was a beautiful sight with the trees changing colors.

It is hard to believe the campgrounds will soon be winterized and closed down for the winter and we will be getting together with family and friends for the holidays.

If you are like our family, we try to plan our summer get-togethers during the holidays and make plans and dates for the summer. Remember the camp as you think about a place to meet your family and friends. The cabins have both heating and air conditioning units for your comfort. the RV Center is set up to accommodate ten campers with each site having it's own fire ring, so gather round the fire!

Some of the other things that are available for your entertainment at the camp is, a biking trail around the lake with bikes available at the camp. The camp also has canoes and paddle boats to be used on either the Iowa River or Pine Lake.

A basketball court, mini golf course, swimming pool, sand volleyball, and several carpet ball games are on site for your enjoyment. Ric and Linda will also prepare your meals while you enjoy your stay. Give them a call and check on available dates.

Nancy Smith, CQH Board Member



Paul Kessler, Art Cooper and Gary Van Dalen lead Grinnell Friends in Worship.

(continued) where God is forming a family out of strangers." (p83). This church is a people who believe that the "greatest thing in the history of the world"...(is) the life, death and resurrection of Jesus." (p28).

I wonder if we are a part of this kind of radical, different church or just a religious society that claims to be seeking God but wouldn't know Him if he sat down with us. Religion has been defined as man seeking God. Christianity on the other hand has been defined as God seeking man. I personally want to be part of that society, that church that has been found and redeemed by God through Jesus Christ.

Let us find the work God is calling us to and get busy doing it! Marvin Hall, Executive Secretary, Wilmington Yearly Meeting.

## The Iowa Friend (USPS 582-120)

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*Charles Mylander presenter at Salem's annual Mission Conference, shares with members of IAYM on the five points of Faith Promise Giving.*

1. *Save here, give there*
2. *I will give 5% off the top*
3. *Out of no where*
4. *Moonlighting for missions*
5. *Out of our abundance*

*Chuck also recommended that all monthly meetings host a yearly missions conference and adopt specific mission fields.*



*Dave Warner cooking up sausage for the early 6 a.m. breakfast and prayer time at Salem Friends. See page*



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT?

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness....you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture or the pangs of starvation....you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead, a place to sleep....you are richer than 75% of the world.

If you have money in the bank, your wallet, and spare change in a dish somewhere....you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If your parents are still alive and still married....you are very rare, even in the Untied States.

If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful....you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.

If you can hold someone's hand, hug them or even touch them on the shoulder....you are blessed because you can offer God's healing touch.

If you prayed yesterday and today....you are in the minority because you believe God does hear and answer prayers.

- - - Author Unknown

## VITAL SIGNS

**Destry D Nixon**, age 49, died Thursday November 14, 2002 at Jefferson County Hospital. The memorial service was held at Fairfield Friends church with Pastor Dave Elmore officiating. Destry is survived by his wife Theresa, 3 daughters and 2 stepchildren. During the Vietnam War, he served his country as a Navy Seal. The last several years, he was Santa for the children in and around Fairfield.

Periodical Postage Paid at Oskaloosa, Iowa