



The Mt. Anthems Newsletter

May 2008

May 11, 2008

Blue Mountain Brethren Church

We left at 6:30 a.m. from the Mt. Anthems building and stopped at the Locker at 6:45 a.m. We were heading for the church where Bill Holtry used to be pastor. When we got off the bus the smell of honeysuckle was filling the air. What a wonderful greeting!

There were a lot of young people in the audience this morning. It was a nice change from some of our audiences. We dedicated two songs to May Holtry: "Where No One Stands Alone" and "Precious Lord." There were requests for "I'm Not Ashamed" and "Great and Awesome God." Marty did "I Claim the Blood."

After the service they fed us a delicious meal in their gym. We had a long drive this afternoon, so we had to leave by 1:15 p.m. If we'd have had time, we would have sung one song over in their tiny little original church building just for old-time's sake. ☺

Our afternoon drive was a wonderful time to take a nap! The rain ticking on the roof and windows lulled me right to sleep. I did feel sorry for the driver. Rainy weather can make for nasty driving.

We'll stop at the Locker to allow the Oakland people to get their vehicles. This will save them some driving time after the service this evening.

Cherry Glade Mennonite Church

We arrived early enough that the boys were able to set up sound prior to our evening meal. We are only about 45 minutes away from our home church this evening, however we've very seldom, if ever, sung in this church. I guess it's too close to home. ☺

Requests this evening were for "Hallelujah Square" and "I'm too Near Home." Marty sang "God on the Mountain" and the men did their song, "Wonderful Story of Love."

At the recording stand, we've been getting frequent requests for recordings of "I'm Not Ashamed," "Great and Awesome God," and "What a Meeting in the Air." I guess we'll have to start considering a new recording!

Each year we choose an official Mt. Anthems photographer. This year Brent was the favored one. He got approximately 200 photos developed, so the ride home was spent looking at all the pictures. It's always interesting to see the photographer's perspective, and Brent's is certainly unique. That's a good thing! I can tell you from

several years of experience that it's hard work trying to get new and different photos of the same old thing. There's only so many ways to photograph the church building or sign. ☺ Brent is doing a great job! Of course there're always those times when someone else will borrow the camera to see what they can do or rather what the camera can do. At the end of the year someone will have the privilege (or responsibility depending on your point of view) of preserving these memories in a scrapbook for future generations to enjoy.

May 24, 2008

Crystal View Mennonite Church

This weekend is our long trip to Ontario, Canada. Since it's a holiday weekend, we'll travel home on Monday. We were on the road shortly after 6:00 a.m. with Arlin doing the driving. After some initial chatting, the bus quieted down and most people took naps.

We had two rest stops before we reached the border. At the second stop, Marty had to take time to refuel the bus. This gave us time to eat lunch. By 12:15 p.m. we were at the border. Mike went in to take care of paperwork and ID's. They did background checks on everyone. Activities while waiting included reading *Amelia Bedelia* books, Rook games, journal writing, and story time with Jungle Doctor's *Hippo Happenings*. We were only at the border about 45 minutes. Not bad all things considered.

Marty missed our first rest stop in Canada due to traffic. He apologized "to anyone who was under a lot of pressure." A burst of laughter ensued. We were making good time, so we had a leisurely rest stop. We floated make-shift box boats (christened the *Nina* and the *Plymouth*) in a puddle and blew dandelion seeds into the air. Some of the girls ran circles around the bus to get rid of their excess energy.

We arrived at the church around 3:40 p.m. Behind the church there was a lake which had a nice trail encircling it. We were tired of sitting and were glad to take this opportunity for a brisk walk. (Some of us don't walk quite as briskly as others!)

While she was getting ready for the evening, Alisa's covering, temporarily resting on the back of a commode, slid off the tank and into the toilet bowl. All we heard was a horrified yelp followed by a burst of laughter. Thankfully the water was clean, and a thorough rinsing returned it to a respectable condition.

The church was filled to capacity for the service with some folks sitting on chairs along the outer aisles. Menno directed the first half and had the audience help with the first three songs: "God is so Good," "When We All get to Heaven," and "Jesus, Hold My Hand." He ended the half with his testimony, "Come on Home." We had several song requests for the second half: "Hallelujah Square," "I'm Not Ashamed," and "Til the Storm Passes By."

A lady approached me this evening and enthusiastically told me how much she enjoyed the service. She introduced me to her husband and told me the following story. She had been a widow for 28 years and was living by herself. Her landlord was going to evict her (to use the property for other purposes) and she was worried about what to do. About that same time she met a gentleman who was widowed for 24 years. God led them to get married in 2002 and they've been married for 6 years. Her comment was, "Not only did God provide a husband, He provided for my housing need through him as well. God is good and always faithful, even when I wasn't." I couldn't help but be reminded that God is faithful and, knowing our needs, provides for them in unique, practical and even miraculous ways. God is truly good and faithful. Through her story I was blessed and reminded that God likes to do things differently than humans do.

By Sierra McDonald

May 26, 2008

First Baptist Church

We left Floradale at 9:30 a.m. and headed for Listowel. We've sung in this church several times in the past, and the people seemed to enjoy having us back again.

We opened the service with "Gentle, Holy Spirit" and "O Lord, Our Lord" which we haven't done for awhile. We only had four bass, but they did an excellent job. Marty did "I'm the Lamb." Menno directed three songs to end the service: "Gone," "Triumphantly the Church Will Rise," and "Ready to Go." We did everything in one standing this morning.

The sun is shining brightly today, a pleasant change from the rainy weather we've been having at home. It was so nice that some of the chorus members ate their bag lunches outside. They got a bit wind-blown but enjoyed themselves anyway.

The bus got very quiet this afternoon. Almost everyone was taking afternoon naps. Some of us slept so good that Lynnette had to wake us up in time to get ready for

the next program. Oh, the joys of being the director's wife!

Wingham Baptist Church

This afternoon and evening we're in Kingwood, Ontario. The pastor of this afternoon's church told Mike that they are a conservative Baptist church and sing the "old hymns." Mike chose songs with a solid gospel message for this occasion. We led off with "Come, Gracious Spirit, Heavenly Dove," an invitation for God's Spirit to be in our service. We treated them to our newest song, "Great and Awesome God," as well as Mike's solo, "Tho Your Sins be As Scarlet." Our four bass rocked the house with "O Thou Blessed Rock of Ages," while the four altos did their part on "I'm Too Near Home." (Any bass or alto out there feeling the call?) The congregation helped us with the song "He Arose." We noticed one young lady in particular who just beamed every time they were allowed to help us sing. She had Down's syndrome, but that didn't dim her smile at all! Menno directed several songs at the end, including his solo "Until Then."

(De) Bugged!

It is most difficult to sing with a smile when you have a bug running around in disconcerting places on your person! Geneva knows this from experience. In the last half of the Sunday afternoon program, she sensed that something was amiss. Or rather, something was extra! She sang bravely for two songs, and then whispered to Michelle that there was a bug crawling around under her dress. After she left the stage, she was to find that a small, black bug had taken up residence! She promptly evicted him and reports no ill side effects - only a tickly, itchy feeling for a few minutes afterward.

By Bugged in Ontario

I met the sweetest couple at the recording stand this afternoon. Born in Holland, she moved to Canada at age 17, eventually married and then later was widowed. Eleven years ago she married a gentleman she met during a visit to Holland. They were in Ontario for a visit, and she was glad they hadn't yet returned to Holland. (They were leaving Wednesday.) She wanted to buy our *Sing unto the Lord* project because she remembered singing some of those songs with a choir when she first moved to Canada. She was hesitating because her husband

wouldn't be able to read the book. He encouraged her to get it anyway, so she did! Wasn't he sweet?

John and Elisabeth Drudge were at our service this afternoon. She wrote the song "Deeper than the Sin Stains."

During intermission the pastor shared this thought prior to lifting the offering, "The Church is built on three books: the Good Book, the Hymn book, and the check-book."

Faith Mennonite Church

Something that Dwight shared in devotions tonight is worth sharing with you. This was taken from the book *Total Forgiveness* by R. T. Kendall. While discussing mutual acquaintances with someone else, consider these things:

is it	Necessary
will it	Encourage someone
is it	Edifying
will it	Dignify anyone.

If it doesn't meet those criteria maybe we should reconsider and not say anything at all.

I don't know exactly how many people were at this evening's service but we sang to a very full house. The pews seat 350 people and the overflow area seats another 150. They set up about 150 extra chairs in the foyer in addition to that. Those numbers are approximations. Some people were sitting in an area where they weren't able to see us at all.

Mike did most of the directing tonight and opened with "Stand Still (and see His glory...)." Other songs included "Father's House," "You are my All in All," "Come Bless the Lord," "He's the One," and "I'm Not Ashamed." We actually sang that last one twice because Menno requested an encore. Solos were "God on the Mountain" by Marty and "The Cross in the Middle" by Menno.

We had prayed for God's Spirit to fill us, and I felt He really poured His Spirit out on us. The Chorus was blessed even if nobody else was.

After the service, we were served a wonderful meal of soups (4 or 5 different kinds), dinner rolls, several kinds of cheese, and several kinds of cookies. That soup really hit the spot for me. Soup is one of my comfort foods and I was sort of chilly.☺

Now that we've finished eating, it's time to gather our luggage and go with our hosts. Small talk covers such items as Menno's age, our ages and occupations, how long we've been members of the chorus, the weather, the host's families, and occasionally mutual acquaintances. We are so blessed to have people willing to open

their homes to us! God bless you ALL!

After visiting with your hosts for awhile, you head off to bed. The next big discussion is about who gets bathroom privileges when. While getting ready for bed, it is necessary to discuss the events of the day: good, bad, funny, or sad. Once everyone's in bed and the lights are out, you'd think it would be time to go to sleep, right? There are still confidences and giggles to share. (At least that's what happens when I stay with someone. Don't ask me what happens where the fellows stay.) Finally, everything is quiet, and we all fall asleep.

In the morning you sleep as long as possible and then rush through getting ready. Your hostess has prepared a good breakfast. You gulp it down while visiting with them some more and then rush off to brush your teeth and do your last minute packing. Then it's time to drive to the meeting place and get on the bus to head for our next destination.

I sometimes find myself wondering, "Was the blessing they (the host families) received from our program, worth all the effort of opening up their homes to us, giving up their beds, feeding us, and providing transportation?" I hope so but I would guess we often get more than we give!

May 26, 2008

We had planned to leave at 8:00 a.m. and, wonder of wonders, left only seven minutes behind schedule. We stopped along the way to exchange currency and then headed for the border. One of the customs officers came onto the bus and checked everyone's ID. There were no problems and we went on through.

The day started out rather overcast, but gradually it cleared up and by lunchtime we were seeing some sunshine. We picked a lunch stop that provided several fast food options. Next to the McDonalds was a greenhouse, and several of the ladies bought flowers. Geneva went all out and bought a large rosebush. She stashed it in the bathroom. Let's hope no one needs to enter in a hurry!

Rook and Rage were the games of choice during the afternoon's travel. The Rage players got especially vocal.☺ The third game of Rook also got a bit raucous because it was a close game. The girls ended up losing but they put up a good fight.

We arrived back at the building around 6:30 p.m. Everyone was glad to get off the bus! The "cattle" nearly stampeded out of "the holding pen." You've had just a glimpse of what a long weekend is like for us. Hope you enjoyed it.