



THE

Facing Bench

news and inspiration for the Evangelical Friends Church—Eastern Region
2005 - Vol. 27, No. 2

“The Christmas -Thanksgiving Connection”

It happened just a few days ago in Budapest, Hungary. We celebrated our first-ever yearly meeting of the Evangelical Friends Churches in Eastern Europe. People - all kinds of people - gathered: Hungarians, Romanians, Gypsies and a few Americans.

- > We were united in our love for Christ and by our desire to know Him and to make Him known.
- > We were blessed by fellowship, “unity of heart and mind” and excellent, extended times of worship. (On the final Sunday, for example, we enjoyed two worship services, totaling over 7 hours.)
- > We were challenged by the enormous need: most people in Eastern Europe do not attend any church and even more do not know what it means to have a personal relationship of love and discipleship with Jesus Christ.

It was a time when Christmas and Thanksgiving came together.

Christmas is all about the coming of our Savior - the word becoming flesh, the God of the universe birthed as a baby so that He might connect with us humans on our fleshy, physical, personal terms.

Thanksgiving is all about gratitude, overflowing thankfulness, a wondrous sense of how much God has lavished upon us: his love, his Son, his purpose, his power, his presence, his future, his forgiveness, his friendship.

And when we try -

(after all, try is all we can do, given our finiteness, our inability to fully comprehend the fullness of God’s grace and gifts)

when we try -

to put together this unprecedented news of our Savior coming to us in such unprecedented ways - virgin conceived, stable-room birthed, word becomes flesh, God with us, watch him teach and heal and care, see Him on the cross, meet him on the resurrection side of the empty tomb

when we try -

to get our arms and our hearts around the amazing love and grace of Jesus ...
... we have a chance to express an unstoppable thankfulness and experience wonder and worship – the kind Jesus called, “in spirit and in truth.”

During this season of Thanksgiving and Christmas,

I want you to know how very deeply I value and appreciate your partnership in Christ – here in the States across our nearly 100 EFC-ER churches and related ministries – and around the world as God gives us opportunity to multiply ministry for His glory and the blessing of thousands.

May you know - better yet, may you experience – the blessing of a season filled with thankfulness, heart-felt worship of our Savior and Lord and a rich generosity toward people.

**Sounds just like Jesus, doesn’t it?
Yours and His,**

Take a Look Inside...



Page 2 -
Camping here and around the world.

Page 3 - Grateful Hearts

Page 4 -
The Spotlight is on flamingos and fellowship!



Page 5 - Prayer Guide



Page 6 -
Eastern Europe Yearly Meeting

Pages 6-7
Eastern Region Yearly Meeting 2005 Highlights



Pages 8 - 9
Publishers of Truth Essay Contest Winners

Page 9
Teen Girls Retreats



Page 10
Spotlight continued...
Basketball, Bible Clubs

Page 11
Eastern Region’s Hispanic Churches



Page 12 - Babies & Memoriums

Friends Christian Camping Tradition Continues Around the World

Taking young people out into nature, away from their day to day routine allows them time to hear God's voice in clear, distinct ways not found in their neighborhoods and normal routine of life. Three "missions fields of camping" were open ministering to children this past summer.



Campers in Romania take a quick "dip" in the icy river.



Left: Campers at Camp Gideon bond quickly as lots of memories are made. Lower Left: An ample supply of shaving cream always helps!



Campers with Voicu and Ana Marian in Romania had the most beautiful scenery, hands down.



Right: Archery is a hit anywhere in the world, as campers in Romania will confirm.



A Letter from Voicu and Ana Marian Recalling Camping in Romania

Dear Family and Friends,

After weeks of prayer and preparation, we left for camp with a group of 20 children (6th and 7th graders) from the school in Orlat, Romania.

For the next six days we experienced together a wonderful time of learning, playing, hiking, singing and sharing. It seemed to be just one long day, it passed so fast. They never went to bed before 1 AM, (even then, they went because we insisted that they settle down) and they never ran out of pranks, but despite this, the camp was a tremendous blessing for the kids and us alike, and the last day came too soon.

It was truly amazing to see every child write in their journals, memorize their daily Bible verse, sing Christian songs and always ask for more (they absolutely loved singing, both in English and Romanian). Almost every day we went on long hikes, and they never tired of eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for lunch, which was a first for almost all of them.

As we did last year, we set aside a day to help a local family stock up wood for the winter. We explained to the kids that they were the beneficiaries of this free camp because of the love of many people in the

Camp Gideon in Mechanicstown (OH) is pleased to report another busy, blessed summer season with thirteen camps (including weekend parent/child camps). Summer counselors counted over 481 participants and 38 decisions for Christ. For more pictures from camp, check out their website: www.campgideon.org.



Roma Camp in Hungary:

For the second year, Evangelical Friends in Hungary offered a summer camp in Hencida for the Roma or gypsy children ages 10-12. Over 400 youth attended the camp during July and August with some amazing conversions.

The mission center at Hencida can accommodate 40 campers each week and was filled to capacity. The facilities have beds, showers, a soccer field, and a small swimming pool at the Mission Center. Roma families often live on very little income and could not afford the camping experience without outside help. Each camper is asked to pay \$5.00 and the churches in each district help to fund the balance for one week. EFC-ER also sponsored one week of the camp.

The average week included daily Bible study, pantomime drama, sports ministry times, and worship times with the Baldazar Worship team. Our leaders in Hungary request continued prayer for all who attended camp this summer.



US, and now they had a chance to extend their love to others.

The very last day of camp Mrs. Barb, the school principal surprised us with a visit and was delighted to see the camp where her meritorious students enjoyed their mini vacation. We took the bus back home and during the 4 hour drive I talked with Mrs. Barb about many things.

At one point the children asked the driver to turn off the radio so they can sing their camp songs. I was a bit nervous of what the teacher may think, but couldn't hide the emotion as the singing went on for almost an hour, song after song of praises to the Name of Jesus. We listened to this choir who needed no orchestration or director, and couldn't help but marvel at how much they had learned in just one week. As we were entering their village, the kids sang their all time favorite, "Our God is an Awesome God." The principal turned to me and concluded, "They are learning something good."

Taken from the Marians Monthly e-mail newsletter

Guarding our Hearts with Gratitude

Thanksgiving need not stop with the feast.

Together, determine to 'guard our hearts' with gratitude throughout the Christmas season and into the new year.

Additional entrants' "Expressions of Gratitude" have been scattered throughout this edition of the Facing Bench.

Continue to share some expressions of gratitude with gifts this Christmas.

Congratulations to E-mail Quick Response Winners!

An e-mail message was sent to all pastors requesting something they were thankful for in their church. One criteria for the contest was the basic understanding that all pastors are grateful for their entire church families - and that they would express thanks for all, if space allowed. Answers needed to be quick and specific. Listed below are the winners in order of response:

TOP TEN E-MAIL RESPONSES:

1 - Pastor Rick Sams of Alliance Friends in Alliance, Ohio

"We have the best, most loyal, supportive leaders in Friendsdom at AEFC, for which I'm very thankful and I couldn't do without."

2 - Pastor Bob Carson of Smithfield Friends in Smithfield, Ohio

"I am thankful for all the loving and caring people in this congregation. I am also thankful for Cindy's sewing and embroidery skills! (She made new pulpit drapes and communion table runners, and, embroidered shirts for the pastor!)"

3 - Pastor Dave Householder of Providence Friends in Virginia Beach, Virginia

"I am thankful that the congregation voted to build a 28 x 56 picnic shelter. This will be a great blessing as we have our family day cook-outs each month."

4 - Pastor Dennis Seaver of Eden Immanuel Friends in Eden, North Carolina

"I am thankful for the faithful pianist, Joy Meeks who has played at Immanuel Friends for over 25 years."

5 - Pastor Eric Biddle of Water of Life Friends Church in Columbus, Ohio

"I am grateful for the ongoing partnership with God, the EFC-ER, Gilead Friends Church and the incredible people at Water of Life!"

6 - Pastor Ed Vinson of Shiloh Chapel Friends in Marysville, Ohio

"I am thankful for the awesome servants, both paid and unpaid that I am honored to work with as we seek to extend God's kingdom in our community and world."

7 - Pastor Jim Brantingham of Alum Creek Friends in Marengo, Ohio

"The thing I love most about Alum Creek Friends is the excitement that all the people are showing towards the new spirit of life and excitement in every time we meet together."

8 - Pastor Dan Cale of Hughesville Friends in Hughesville, Pennsylvania

"I'm thankful for a brand new small group that has grown to 10 members and doesn't want to stop meeting for the summer."

9 - Pastor Michael Will of Pelham Friends in Fonthill, Ontario, Canada

"I'm so thankful for a congregation that has maintained an optimistic outlook toward its future in spite of sometimes strained and difficult circumstances that could easily dissuade such an outlook."

10 - Pastor Chris Jackson of Orange Road Friends in Lewis Center, Ohio

"I'm thankful for the half dozen or so new Christians baptized on July 31st."

Thanksgiving: The Standard, Substance, and The Secret

The following text is taken from Pastor Jody Hill's "Note from the Pastor" portion of the Deerfield Friends Newsletter.

The Standard of Thanksgiving

"Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 5:20)

The standard of godly thanksgiving is God centered, for He is the Object of our worship and praise; it is Christ channeled, for He is the One who has saved us. As the church we are His children and we express this thanksgiving in our lives.

The Substance of Thanksgiving

"Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...giving thanks." (Ephesians 5:19-20)

Thanksgiving must not be a hollow exercise, but rather a holy exaltation of truth. Christians express thanksgiving to teach others about the glory of the Father. This is spiritually profitable because it results in teaching and reverence for Him too. The Scripture says, "Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through him to God the Father." (Colossians. 3:16b-17)

The Secret of Thanksgiving

"Be filled with the Spirit." (Ephesians 5:18)

One's capacity to genuinely praise the Father is contingent upon being filled with the Spirit of God. The secret of thanksgiving is found in the reality of being gripped by the Spirit's influence. Spirit-filled believers have a song of joy in their hearts. God is the Composer, directing each recipient with the specific notes of praise to be expressed daily.

Helen Keller was able to say, "For three things I thank God every day of my life: thanks that he has vouchsafed (granted) me knowledge of his works; deep thanks that he has set in my darkness the lamp of faith; deep, deepest thanks that I have another life to look forward to--a life joyous with light and flowers and heavenly song."

Friends, as we open our hearts to the Spirit of God, our lives will show thankfulness and our lips will share our thankfulness. There is no greater argument for genuine faith in Christ than a thankful heart.

In the Spotlight

United Services Enrich Congregations

Since a Sunday evening in December 2000 when New Point's congregation met with Peniel Friends for a Christmas musical, presented by the Neighborhood Choir, the two Evangelical Friends churches in Mathews County, Virginia, have joined together on many Sunday evenings. Finding the fellowship enriching, members know that on every fourth Sunday there will be a joint service either at New Point or Peniel. The church service begins at 6:00 with a time of fellowship and good food afterwards. The churches rotate each month except the last two of the year. In November, Peniel Church joins New Point for their annual Thanksgiving covered dish dinner the Sunday evening before the holiday. Pastor Richard presides with an informal service since local neighbors join the churches. In December one entertains the Sunday evening before Christmas and the other church before New Years. The joint services bring members closer, but far greater is the spiritual enrichment, sharing pastors, music and testimonies.

Submitted by Catherine C. Brooks, reporter for Peniel Friends Church in Onemo, VA

Canadian Friends Church participates in a version of "Home Make-over"

Pelham Evangelical Friends Church undertook its own "Clean Sweep" and "Home-make-over" edition. "We have revitalized the foyer and Christian Education wing of our facility, giving it a much more inviting look and eliminating some of the "clutter" that sometimes inundates our meeting places," explained Pastor Mike Will.

"Many of the regular folks were heavily involved in the undertaking of this large project, while we also gleaned some help from others who have since become even more involved in this work of our church. Since revitalizing the facility, we have utilized it for two significant children's outreaches, as well as for an outreach in the form of a ladies tea, which was a wonderful success."

Even U.S. television shows can inspire work for God's kingdom!

Submitted by Pastor Michael Will of Pelham Friend Church in Pelham, Ontario Canada

Pink Flamingos Raise Lots of Green

Just imagine waking to a flock of plastic, pink flamingo lawn ornaments on your front lawn. As you walk outside into a wave of pink, you notice a warning sign stating that you have been "flocked" and that these plastic flamingos are "dangerous creatures" who can only be removed by professionals, for a small fee...

For the Damascus Friends Youth of Damascus, Ohio raising funds for their summer missions trip to the Dominican Republic, the flamingos were an effective, fun, tool.

Weeks before the "migration" began, warning posters had been scattered throughout the church, bulletin and website which stated, "watch for the flamingos." Next, the teens from the Mission Team produced a video to be shown on a Sunday morning in all three services. The hilarious video explained what to do if you were to be "flocked" including how to pay for the "flock" to "migrate" to another home -- sharing the experience and the cost!

"We had two flocks of 12 flamingos (2 large and 10 small)," explained Beth Grimm, Youth Pastor at Damascus. "When I would receive a call from a flockee, I would call one of our team members who would pick up the flock and take it to the next location. Lots of laughter and discussion on the location of the flocks took place on Sunday mornings. Judy Wheeler kept the website with the current listing of location of both flocks. The flamingos roamed throughout the congregation for six weeks with 55 homes experiencing the flocks...and many more who wished they were...but time ran out and we were getting tired!"

"Flamingo Insurance" was available for \$25 for those who absolutely DID NOT want the flock in their yard (only 2 certificates were sold). At the conclusion of the event, flamingos were displayed in the lobby with a sign "Make a donation, Take a flamingo" for those who had missed out and another \$80 were raised.

The Flamingo Flock donations totalled approximately \$1,300 and with the other donations we raised a total of \$1,430!!! (who would have thought!)

Information provided by Beth Grimm, Youth Pastor for Damascus Friends Church, Damascus, Ohio

Expressions of Gratitude:

"I'm grateful for volunteers and people who take initiative in different ministries." - Doug Burch



*Above: Members of the Dominican Republic Missions Team were kept busy "planting" flamingos throughout the congregation.
Below: A few of the flock.*

Small Churches can Make a Big Difference

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

This has been the "mission" for the Outreach program at Beloit Friends Church in Beloit, Ohio for the past 18 months. What an unbelievable God-blessed 18 months those have been!

First, the church responded in practical ways to the appeal from Samaritan's Purse for tsunami victims around Easter. Members rallied with 30 boxes of practical, tangible love to be sent to the victims. But, they didn't stop with that effort. When searching the website for Samaritan's Purse, Susan Stroup, Outreach Coordinator, noticed a special request.

For only \$2,000, Samaritan's Purse was able to supply an ocean-worthy fishing boat to put three to five families back to work; nets for \$20 each, and provide replacement housing for \$250. So, a fishing boat, house, and five nets would cost around \$2,500. Susan asked herself, "Could we do that in a month's time?" Although requesting money to buy fishing boats to send internationally received some strange looks, the folks at Beloit Friends responded with generosity. They believed and God did it! A check for \$3,150 was sent on time to meet the needs.

To whom much is given, much is expected. It is more blessed to give than to receive. We've all heard the saying, "To whom much is given, much is expected" and God has shown us what to give and we've responded.

We've been letting God have what He's asked for at Beloit. People who give their time, their money, their prayers. God is doing amazing things through this small body of believers. We may never meet the people that have been helped by Samaritan's Purse, but we may on the other side! Praise God for the opportunity to share!

So, think your group is too small to be involved in mission work? Don't know what project to choose? Just choose one and get started! We're not called to do extravagant things, just things God places before us to do!

Taken from the Beloit Friends Church Newsletter notice written by Susan Stroup, Outreach Elder. Submitted to Facing Bench by Pastor Mark Reich.

Since the items mentioned in her article, Beloit Friends also purchased a video projector (portable) for Dave & Cindy Aufrance to take back to Hong Kong, where it will be used in the seminary as well as in pastoral training.



Above: Members of Beloit Friends gathering strawberries as a fund-raiser.

Women's Missionary Fellowship Reading List for 2005-2006

- **Checkpoints Along Life's Journey – My Life in Eight Developing Countries** by Lucy Anderson
- **To Fly Again** by Gracia Burnham
- **Three Days** by Melody Carlson
- **The Waiting Child** - by Cindy Champnella
- **I Grew Up Little** - by Patsy Clairmont
- **Overjoyed** - by P. Clairmont, B. Johnson, M. Meberg, L. Swindoll, S. Walsh, T. Wells
- 7 **Torches of Joy** by John Dekker
- 8 **A Woman After God's Own Heart** by Elizabeth George
- 9 **Why?** by Ann Graham Lotz
- 10 **Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them** by John Ortberg
- 11 **Joel** by Joel Sonneberg with Greg Lewis
- 12 **One Woman Against the Reich** by Helmut W. Zieffle

The 5 Finger Prayer Guide

A "handy," helpful tool for effective, directed prayer.

1. **The Thumb is nearest you.** So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest to remember. To pray for our loved ones is, as C. S. Lewis once said, a "sweet duty."
2. **The pointing finger is next.** Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, and ministers. They need support and wisdom in pointing others in the right direction. Keep them in your prayers.
3. **The middle finger is the tallest.** It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the president, leaders in business and industry, and administrators. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion. They need God's guidance.
4. **The fourth finger is our ring finger.** Surprising to many is the fact that this is our weakest finger; as any piano teacher will testify. It should remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain. They need your prayers day and night. You cannot pray too much for them.
5. **Our littlest finger comes last;** the smallest finger of all which is where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. As the Bible says, "The least shall be the greatest among you." Your pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself.

By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively.

The above prayer suggestions were sent by Johan Lourens to Dave Aufrance for his "Monday Morning Fodder," a regular e-mail newsletter featuring their work in Hong Kong along with jokes and helpful insights. To be included in this free, weekly e-mail subscription, contact Dave Aufrance at his e-mail address: daveaufrance@gmail.com.

Expressions of Gratitude: Grateful for growth in music ministry – Wally White

2005 EFC-ER Yearly Meeting: "Guarding Our Hearts...the wellspring of life"

All were grateful for the productive, refreshing times together...

A Time of Re-connecting

Friends from eleven states and Canada arrived in Canton ready to re-connect with friends. The Missionary Banquet brought together over 500 people to hear Jacelyn Jones report on her ministry to Filipina and Indonesian domestic workers in Hong Kong. Active and retired missionaries representing missions fields in Nepal, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Taiwan, Rwanda, Hungary, China, and Hispanics in the U.S. there recognized. Russell and Esther Zinn were honored at their retirement from more than 40 years of ministry in Taiwan.



Left: Cindy Aufrance, Jacelyn Jones and Kim Knowles.

Right: Wayne Evans, Area Superintendent, welcomes one of our three Haitian Pastors serving in the U.S. with his church members.



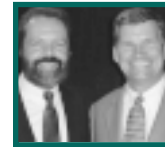
A Time of Refining

Both Sunday and Monday evening services were times to be challenged in our spiritual lives.

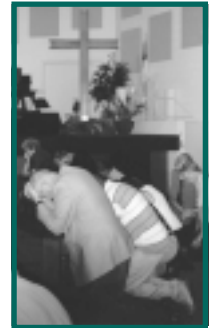
Dr. John Williams, Jr. spoke on the conference theme, "Guarding Our Hearts... The Wellspring of Life," (based on Proverbs 4:23) He presented God as "the ultimate cardiologist." since God looks at our heart with love.

- He said Jesus calls us to guard our hearts
- against callousness with compassion
 - against materialism with the eyes of faith
 - against a slow hardening by giving God what we have.

Monday evening, Ted Haggard, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, and senior pastor of New Life Church in Colorado Spring shared in a "Pastors Think Tank" time prior to presenting the evening message. His purpose among Evangelical Christians is that we grow "life-giving churches" in our communities.



Left: Dr. John Williams with guest speaker, Ted Haggard.



Above: Times spent in close communion with Christ make each service meaningful.

Portions of this summary were taken directly from the 2005 Yearly Meeting Epistle. A complete version and more photos are now available on the website: www.efcer.org

Evangelical Friends Church -Eastern Europe holds first Yearly Meeting Sessions

Five participating countries brought together diverse people groups including Romanians, Hungarians, Romas (gypsies) and some from the Muslim culture of Albania could not attend, but participated by conference call.

More than four languages were shared and interpreted. But, the communication of Christ's love brought clarity and unity to the over 100 participants. EFC-ER leaders joined in times of celebration, dedication, training, and meaningful, joy-filled worship.

Participants from the U.S. included Pastor Jim Ogden, Jess Warren (Pres. of Men in Mission), Denny Peters, videographer Christy Williams, The Renewal Ministries Team with Gary Wright, and Dr. John P. Williams, Jr.



Times of worship gave unity and joy to those gathered in Hungary.

A Look at Friends in Eastern Europe

It began only eight years ago with a prayer-filled visit to Hungary. Today, Friends worship in 5 countries!

- HUNGARY**
- 28 EFC churches
 - 3300 worshippers
 - 17 Friends pastors
- ROMANIA**
- 4 EFC churches
 - 600 worshippers
 - 1 Friends pastor
- ALBANIA**
- 3 EFC churches
 - 380 worshippers
 - 3 Friends pastors
- SERBIA and CROATIA**
- Friends are gathering in cell groups.



A Reminder of the Need for Christ:

The following conversation took place during an interview between one of our leaders and a 22 yr. old secular, newspaper reporter covering the story for the city. This helps to demonstrate the deep need for Christ in Eastern Europe.

"We so appreciate your help in translating. Would you mind if I prayed for you?"

The young lady replied, "What do you mean to pray?"

"Well, I want to pray that God will bless you and your family."

"Do you mean you can actually talk to God? Right now? Right here? How?"

In a culture where prayer and the idea of God are often completely foreign concepts, God is working, moving, revealing Himself, and growing His church.

Expressions of Gratitude: "I'm thankful to the Lord for an Acts 2 local church where I serve as Senior Pastor. It is such a joy to serve people who possess (1) Unity (2) Vision (3) Mission. – Jim Ogden

A Time for Recognizing Life-Ministries

Sunday evening included a special time of recognizing their years of service for Russell and Esther Zinn in Taiwan. The Boston Heights Taiwanese Friends Church sang a beautiful song to honor them on this occasion.



Well done, good and faithful servants.

Left: Dr. John and Denny Peters present an appreciation gift to be used towards the purchase of a car, to Russell and Esther Zinn.

TUESDAY EVENING:

A special moment in this year's recording service included "words of wisdom" from our three retiring pastors: Wayne Ickes, Dr. William Lockwood, and Russell Zinn.

We're happy to report the dedication of our newest recorded pastors occurred before the tornado warning and special "congregational tour" of the secured rooms at Canton First Friends.

All were grateful that the storms passed without any major damage but were disappointed that both the concert with Musical Family, Myrrh and the reception for new recordees had to be cancelled.



Above: Wayne & Barbara Ickes of East Richland Friends in St. Clairsville, Ohio. Below: Drs. William & Eunice Lockwood of Newport News Colony Friends in Newport News, Virginia.

A Time of Recognizing those called to Ministry and Retirees

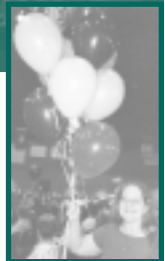
John C. Pierce II and wife, Joni serve at Salem First Friends Church in Salem, Ohio.



Zach Rambaud and wife Kelly serve as Youth Director Jackson Friends Church in Massillon, Ohio.



Randy Thornburg and wife Divonna serve as Music and Worship Pastor at Willoughby Hills Friends Church.



A Time of Recognition with Flowers and Balloons

Tuesday afternoon, pastors who had used their HH Mosher Funds were rewarded with balloons during the Communications Board Report.

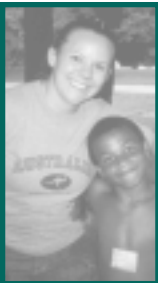
Above Left: Communications Board members, Emily Wight, poised to give balloons to those who have used their H.H. Mosher Funds. Below Left: Steve and Leslie Heilshorn's wedding anniversary with flowers at the Pastors Lunch.



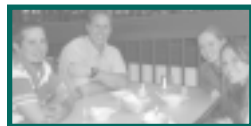
A Time for Life-Leadership Lessons

Left: Julie Pontius with a child from Canton.

Under the direction of Jeremiah Kutz, teens ministered to children in the inner city parks of Canton. Judy Pontius of Shiloh Chapel reports that her teens were so excited about the ministry that they initiated a one day outreach in their area within a month of Yearly Meeting - a great example of applying things learned at Yearly Meeting.

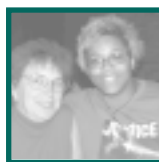
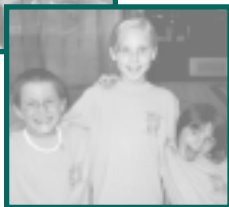


All ages and stages of children are welcome and loved at Yearly Meeting!



Times at the Table

Some of the best conversations happen during the meals served at Malone College and the evening receptions following the weekday services.



A Time to be Preserved

A highlight for the past few years has been a fun video depicting the Yearly Meeting moments created by Christy Williams. Copies of this year's DVD were distributed. Pictured left: Carol and Christy Williams.

Recognizing Award-Winning Friends Youth Writers

Congratulations to EFC-ER winners in national EFI-NA "Publishers of Truth Essay Contest"



JUNIOR DIVISION

First Place:

Devon Spain of
Shiloh Chapel Friends
Marysville, OH

SENIOR DIVISION

First Place:

Alix Bohler of Broadview
Heights Friends Church
Broadview Hts., OH

Second Place:

Dusty Jenkins of Water of Life
Evangelical Friends Church
Columbus, OH

Kids - Start planning now
for next year's theme:
"How My Space Reflects
God's Space."

SENIOR DIVISION: FIRST PLACE

Just As I Am

Many people have trouble accepting or being accepted by others. Some people I know aren't accepted by the world because of their faith in God. But other people, especially people my age, have the same problem for different reasons. They go to school and want to be popular or to fit into a certain group, but they know that they never really fit because they're no longer themselves. They've become someone else, someone that God did not create them to be.

It's difficult not to be accepted by others but, in my life, I struggle with not accepting myself. I know that God created me to be the person that he wanted me to be, but I stumble so often that I've become someone completely different from the person he truly wants me to be. I become frustrated and irritated with myself for all the mistakes I make. I've been unkind to my brothers, I've disobeyed my parents, I've lied, and done many, many things I never should have done.

Something that God has shown me over and over again as I continue to grow in my relationship with him is that he will always forgive me. There is no reason for me to feel guilty or to be angry with myself for making a mistake that God has already forgotten about. Being a perfectionist and an over-achiever, I've been struggling for a long time to accept God's forgiveness for my sins. God continues to point out to me that "Love...keeps no records of wrongs." (1 Corinthians 13:5)

Someone once told me that when we sin, we should first ask God's forgiveness and then we should realize that when God forgives us, we have to forgive ourselves. If we don't it's like telling God that our standards are higher than his standards. We, being lower than God, cannot possibly have standards as high as his are. This has helped me to not only accept myself, but also to realize that God, in his infinite love and wisdom, made me to be who I am and accepts me, even with all of my faults.

Alix Bohler, Grade 10 – North Royalton, Ohio, Broadview Heights Friends Church

JUNIOR DIVISION: FIRST PLACE

God Loves Me Like Nothing Else

When I think about how great God is, how wonderful, how good, how almighty and powerful He is, I am amazed. He knows everything, He sees everything, He hears everything. And God loves me just as I am!!!

You can do what you think is the worst and most wrong thing anyone has ever done, and try to get away with it. When you think you have...you haven't. HE knows! You got away with nothing. You know you're not worthy of being forgiven. He knows it too, but you ask Him anyway. What He says shocks you! He says, "I FORGIVE YOU!!!"

That's how God is. He forgives you no matter if it's something you think is a really big sin, like robbing the World National Bank, or something that seems as small as watching TV when your parents say no! No matter how big or how small the wrong thing seems to be...He will forgive you if you come to Him with a sincere heart. 1 John 1:10 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

He's the same way with acceptance too! I remember a while back when I didn't feel like anyone liked me, or accepted me because of how goofy I acted. Because of that I wanted to try to change how I acted just so that they would like me. I thought that after I did that they might like me more. But I realized that I wouldn't have liked myself anymore. And I remembered that God accepts me just how I am!!! And since the heart of acceptance is love, and since I love him too, any changes I make should be in order to become more like him, not to try and get others to like me.

God doesn't care what you look like, or how "bad" you have been! He loves you and accepts you just the way you

are! All you have to do is ask Him with a sincere heart! It's as simple as that! No questions asked!

Devon Spain Grade 7 – Marysville, Ohio, Shiloh Chapel

Expressions of Gratitude:

"I'm thankful for the people and the sense of family love that continues to grow." - Richard Linger

Expressions of Gratitude:

"I'm thankful for elders and leaders in our church." - Dale Diggs

Second Place, Senior Division: *Just As I Am*

When I was younger, at about the age of nine, I was beginning to become overweight. I had started to gain weight after my mother died when I was eight years old. Many people enjoy eating in order to try to avoid their sadness; I was one of those people. Many kids began to make fun of me for being fat. This of course upset me even more. I was not terribly fat, but I was significantly overweight, and to the children that I went to school with, this was comical. Many times the reason for making fun of someone is that they are not as fortunate as you or else they are different from you. I was different, and being overweight looked funny. At this time, I decided to take out my anger on others who were not as fortunate as me. I began to hang around with kids who liked to make fun of others, and they let me join their group. They did not really care about me or my feelings, but they accepted me. As long as I made jokes about other kids, I fit right in. This went on throughout fifth grade until the following summer, when I went to Friends Youth Camp.

At Camp, the speaker spoke one night about all of the people with whom we were given an opportunity to share God's love but instead mistreated them. I felt that God, through the speaker, was speaking directly to me. I felt terrible about all of those in whose life I could have made a difference but may have missed my chance. I saw that God loves the people that I tried to hurt and I needed to change. That summer, I also learned something else about God's love: it is unconditional. God did not care that I was overweight; he will love me no matter what I look like. He was also willing to forgive me for my cruelty. That summer I rededicated my life to Christ, decided to get some real friends who would respect me and others, and I decided to make an effort to love everyone. I also stopped caring so much about what other people thought about me and decided to just be myself, because, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). This verse reminds us that what God thinks about us is the more important than what others think about us.

I never want to be who I was in fifth grade again. I do not believe I will be because I know that God loves me for who I am and will never give up on me. That is a promise I will always remember.

*Dusty Jenkins Grade 10 – Dublin, Ohio
Water of Life Evangelical Friends*

Christian Modesty - A New Look for the New Generation

"We really felt the issue of modesty in dress needed to be covered with our young women," explained Melissa Duriga of Alliance (OH) Friends Church. "It seems that too many times as Christian women, we let fashion and the media dictate what is "fashionable" or "acceptable" attire and our young women need to be educated and shown alternatives to really model Christ's excellence in every area of their lives, including what they wear."

During the past year, both Alliance and Canton First Friends offered weekend retreats for their young women. In both cases, time was set aside for some very frank, educational, and helpful conversations with the young women. Both groups included "sleep-overs" at the homes of leaders with lots of laughter, sharing, crafts (pearl necklaces), intimate tea parties, and especially meaningful times of sharing.

Canton Friends Middle School Youth Pastor, Darrell Troyer was pleased with the outcome of their retreat. "Through the use of video, interactive teaching, crazy sing along songs, transparency of the speakers, and an intimate tea party, many lives were changed."

Darrell added, "I was very pleased that moms were welcome to be there and in some cases even led a small group. At one point in the weekend a few moms were honest about their past mistakes and it went a long way toward them growing closer to their daughters along with holding the attention of everyone else. We're grateful that three students gave their lives to Christ during the weekend."

Both overnight retreats used resources and/or videos and speakers provided by Dannah Gresh (see resources below).

Alliance Friends followed up their weekend with a "Purely Fun Fashion Show" during a women's luncheon. Volunteers modeled fashionable, modest clothing and skits were used to teach principles of modesty in a light and meaningful way.

Information provided by Melissa Duriga of Alliance (OH) Friends Church and Darrell Troyer of Canton (OH) First Friends.

Suggested References:

- [*Becoming a Woman of Discretion in a Sensual World and*](#)
- [*The Look-Does God really Care What I Wear?*](#)
both by Nancy Leigh DeMoss
- [*And the Bride Wore White and Secret Keeper*](#)
both by Dannah Gresh
- [*Beauty and the Best*](#) by Beneth Peters Jones
- [*Christian Modesty and the Public Undressing of America*](#)
by Jeff Pollard
- [*And, for the guys: Who Moved the Goalpost?*](#) by Bob Gresh

What we wear + how we look = a picture of what we believe.



Spotlights, continued from page 3

Community Basketball Clinic Scores Big

Alliance Friends Church in Alliance Ohio, hosted their seventh annual Basketball Clinic with 150 kids from first to sixth grades participating. The clinic runs for five consecutive Saturdays during January and February each year. "This Outreach Basketball Clinic is consistently rated as 'Best in the Area' by participants' parents and is one I never miss," explained Pastor Rick Sams. The clinic has also become a special time of outreach to the parents as many of the adult members mingle with parents, fix refreshments, do crafts for bored younger brothers and sisters "watching."

"The gospel is shared in each session," continued Pastor Rick. "Then there's a big festival the last day where breakfast and lunch are served, parents do the basketball drills, and prizes and team pictures are awarded. This clinic pumps up this pastor just watching our leaders have so much fun ministering to kids and their parents, many of whom are unchurched."

Alliance Friends Sports and Recreation Director, Pete Donahue, added, "I spend so much time with the kids that they recognize me around town at the stores or other events. In a short time, bonding is established that can last for several years as the kids return to this and other clinics."

Information submitted by Pastor Rick Sams, Alliance Friends Church



Top: Kim Knowles teaches some basic basketball strategy.

Bottom: Each participant receives hands-on help with their techniques.



Top: Six Shiloh Chapel families volunteered their homes or yards to host the clubs.
Left: All ages enjoyed the crafts and snacks.

Some Testimonials:

- One mom shared that her son told her on the way home, "this was the *funnest* thing ever!"
- Another couldn't help but overhear her 6 year old sing loudly from her bath, "I John 4:4, the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." (All the songs were actually the memory verses too.)
- One teacher kept hearing her name be called from above ~ well, at least from the upstairs window of her little neighbor who had been to club the night before and wanted to say her memory verse.
- One grandma said she hadn't seen her grandchildren sit still for anything ever, but there they sat engrossed in the Bible story.

Expressions of Gratitude: "Thankful for growth of love and depth of caring. Also for the five people led to the Lord -- and not by the pastor!" Bruce Bell

Shiloh Chapel Neighborhood Bible Clubs

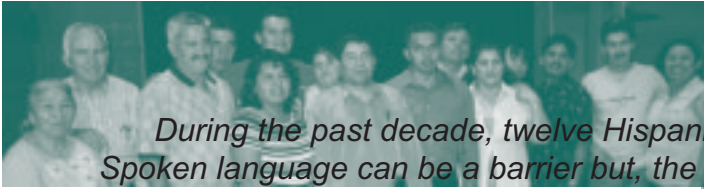
"When the first Neighborhood Bible Club (NBC) servant volunteers to step forward were Prayer Warriors, I knew NBCs were going to be okay!" commented Trudy Wilkerson, Director of Children's Programs for Shiloh Chapel. Prayer Warriors were assigned to a particular club and prayed for the children, by name, throughout the week. God's canopy and hedge were in place at every club—you could sense it. 38 Shiloh folks (a very inter-generational group) were involved in the Prep, Hostess, Teaching and Prayer Teams for the 6 locations. They shared four common traits—love for kids, huge smiles, lots of enthusiasm, and the commitment to do things "heartily as unto the Lord."

Neighborhood Bible Clubs (NBC) take bible teaching to the place where children live, right in their own backyards. In six different neighborhoods, church folks made their homes available for the children to meet. Each club included Bible lessons, songs, fun yard activities, snacks, crafts, and games. Their theme was "I am a Child of God," featuring 5 lessons from the story of David, using colorful flip charts. There is a gospel presentation every evening, explaining to the children at their level how they can come to know Christ.

A total of 98 children were enrolled, 75 who were NOT from Shiloh. Sometimes parents chose to stay too. Several children had never been to church before. One was a 10 year old girl who prayed to receive Jesus the third night of club! At least 25 children prayed to receive Jesus! The Lord answered prayers and fulfilled the mission of taking Jesus to children who might never get to come to church. He kept His promise verses—"the fields are white for harvest" and "they that go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless return with harvest."

The goal in this outreach was to reach those children without the opportunity to get to a church. Each group created a banner and the children and parents were invited to church on Sunday, July 31st to see them on display. A special rally was hosted by Shiloh's Puppet Team and candid pictures of clubs were also on display.

Submitted by Trudy Wilkerson, Director of Children's Programs for Shiloh Chapel in Marysville, Ohio



A Closer Look at our Hispanic Friends in Eastern Region

During the past decade, twelve Hispanic churches have become a part of EFC-ER. Spoken language can be a barrier but, the common language of Christ brings us close.

For several years, our annual sessions have taken on a distinctive international flavor as translators work to make sessions available to spanish - speaking Friends.

Traditionally, Hispanic Friends gathered for fellowship and leadership training prior to the Missions Banquet on Saturday. In 2005, over 150 arrived and a desire for deeper fellowship and sharing of ministry across the language barrier was expressed. The leadership team at EFC-ER responded by initiating an EFC-ER Hispanic Leadership Conference to be held in September.

Eleven of our twelve Hispanic churches sent leaders. Some pastors drove through the night for this time of fellowship. The sessions were led by a team from EFC-ER with David Byrne, Director of Coalition for Hispanic Ministries, translating. Highlights included encouragement, sharing goals, and discussion of how Hispanic churches are linked to Friends through fellowship, doctrine, and participation in ministry.

"The conference went very well," explained Area Superintendent, John Ryser. "We wanted to set aside some time to really share with these pastors a little more of our vision and leadership principles for this Region."

Times for fellowship were also tossed into the mix. The soccer goal competition was won by one of the few women attending (pictured in the leadership photo holding the soccer ball). Friday night's field trip was a high school football game -a first for some of our Hispanic leaders.

Cross-Cultural Ministries are Next Door!

The Coalition for Hispanic Ministries(CHM), coordinated by David Byrne (pictured below), is a part of God's strategy today to help Friends and others to reach the special people group of Hispanics in North America.

According David Byrne, Hispanics in the U.S. have become the largest minority group in the United States with a growth rate of 9% in the last 2 years. Today, 40 million latinos live in the U.S., many spiritually lost and alone, sending money to support families abroad.

"This is a people group that must not be ignored by the American church," explained Byrnes. "CHM is actively involved in calling the church to this mission field and helping to develop and promote those ministries that advance the Hispanic church." For more information, check out the CHM website at:www.institutoalma.org



Pictured left: CHM Director, David Byrne translating the 2005 Missions Banquet for Hispanic Friends.

CONTEST KEY : Correct Order - 4, 1, 3, 5, 2



A Little Contest:
Can you match the names of these leaders to their pictures?

____ Pastors **José & Sonia Urrutia** of Kingston, NY.

____ Pastor **Hermógenes Mendez** of Baltimore, MD

HINT: NOT pictured with his wife, Bertha.

____ Pastor **Daniel Morales & wife** from Toronto Canada

____ Pastor **Ovidio Ipina with wife** of Blue Island, Illinois

____ **Omar & Arlene Castillo** (Arlene is daughter and intprepter for pastor of Blue Island, IL)

A Few Facts About EFC-ER Hispanic Churches:

- EFC-ER has 12 Hispanic churches.
- Several of our Hispanic pastors came to the U.S. with seminary degrees from Friends seminaries in Central or South America.
- Many of our Hispanic pastors hold full-time, secular jobs to support their families while ministering to their congregations.
- Churches minister to immigrants from countries including Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico and more.
- Most churches hold services at untraditional times due to the work schedules of their congregations.
- Each EFC-ER Hispanic church has an English/Spanish website available to learn more details about individual churches, their pastors, and their vision for future ministry.

Kingston, NY.



Pastors José & Sonia Urrutia Blue Island, IL



Pastor: Ovidio Ipina Toronto Canada



Pastor: Daniel Morales Trinity Friends in Martinsville, VA



Pastor: Jaime Herrera

EFC-ER

**5350 Broadmoor Circle N.W.
Canton, OH 44709**

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CANTON, OH 44714
PERMIT NO. 1188

For Post Office Use Only

IN MEMORIAM

BLACKBURN–Geraldine.

Wife of retired Friends pastor Ralph Blackburn passed away on October 14, 2005 at the age of 87.

FYE – Charles (Chuck) Howard.

Friends pastor, passed away on March 10, 2005. He was 65 years old and is survived by his wife of 45 years, Donna, four children, and five grandchildren.

PIPKIN – Sylvia. Retired Friends pastor and evangelist, passed away on May 24, 2005 at the age of 97.

ROBERTS – Claude. Retired Friends pastor, passed away in August 2005.

TAYLOR–Marie Jones. Wife of retired pastor Roy Taylor for 38 years, passed away on February 7, 2005 at the age of 79. She is survived one daughter, two grandchildren, and six great grandchildren.

TEAGUE–Marjorie. Wife of retired pastor Gerald Teague for 58 years, passed away on June 29, 2005 at the age of 80. She is survived by her husband, three children, nine grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

VOLTZ – Norman A. (Bud).

Friends pastor, passed away on August 30, 2005. He was 87 years old. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Arline, three children and seven grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

WORDEN–Ruth E. Widow of retired pastor Richard E. Worden. She passed away on December 15, 2004 at the age of 83. She is survived by four children, thirteen grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

NEW BIRTHS

BARTOLETT - *Zayna Elizabeth* to Pastor Jeff and Laura of Hunter Hills Friends Church in Greensboro, North Carolina (May 26, 2005)

HALL –*Serenity Grace* to Pastor Stephen and Cynthia of Saxapahaw Friends Church in Graham, North Carolina, through adoption. (May 14, 2005)

WINNER - *Lily Elizabeth* to Mark and Jennifer of Cornerstone Friends Church in Madison, Ohio (October 2005)

VOL.27, No2

THE FACING BENCH

Summer/Fall 2005

The Facing Bench is published bi-annually by the Evangelical Friends Church - Eastern Region;
5350 Broadmoor Circle NW, Canton, OH 44709
General Superintendent: Dr. John P. Williams, Jr.

Area Superintendents: Wayne Evans, John Ryser, Duane Rice

Editor: Donna C. Neff

This publication is designed for information and inspiration. Any suggestions or comments from readers are welcomed.