

“THE BELL”



BANGOR LIBERTY
FRIENDS
NEWSLETTER

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NEWSLETTER OF BANGOR LIBERTY FRIENDS—JUNE 2019

God of All Comfort

Recently, I had a conversation with someone who expressed considerable regret that it had taken them until they were older to come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. The thought expressed in that statement is not unique, nor rare. Many of us who have lived “interesting” lives look back at a certain point and wonder what would life have been like if I hadn’t had to hit rock bottom. Maybe then I wouldn’t have made all of those horrible decisions. Maybe then I wouldn’t have hurt the people I love the most in this world. If I hadn’t spent the first half of my life running away from God maybe then I wouldn’t have all of this emotional baggage and psychic scar tissue that I spend so much time trying to forget.

Whenever I am confronted by someone about this subject I point them to what the Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” We all recognize that God has changed our lives for the better. We can look back and see the places we traveled based on our own knowledge, our own wisdom and recognize that it wasn’t very good knowledge or very much wisdom.

There are two words that are linked in this passage. Trouble and comfort stand out and always go hand in hand. Today trouble is referred to as stress, pressure or anxiety. To some extent we all feel it every day to varying degrees. It is likely, whatever ties your stomach in knots, and makes you feel anxious or frightened about what lies ahead. Trouble is what keeps us up at night and turns out days into hectic marathons. Trouble is what you can’t leave alone or forget because it darkens our view of the future with possible disaster or more conflict.

For its part comfort means more than just friendly encouragement or to be cheered up. The word comfort comes from the Latin, Fortis, which means to strengthen. Paul describes the comfort of God that gave him peace and allowed his spirit to rest so that he could meet and deal with the pressure and stress that were a constant part of his life. Sadly, many of us never make use of this provision of God’s to help us deal with the pressures of life. Many believers react to the troubles in life the same way that non-believers—we try to escape the pressure. We pray to have our problems taken away. In turn we spend an inordinate amount of time worrying, complaining, fearing and doubting because the pressure, or trouble, persists. It is amazing to me how many

believers dread facing their lives each day. Many of us fail to make use of God’s provision to comfort us in our daily endeavors. These words of Paul’s, are not meant to be effective only for religious or spiritual problems. They are meant to confront each and every trouble, or pressure, we may encounter in life. God’s comfort, or strengthening, is available to us for whatever stress is in our lives.

Many feel a futility in their lives. They don’t see any good that could come of what they are experiencing. It is verse four in this passage that explains the purpose, or reward, for enduring this pressure in our lives. Whether that pressure is the form of illness, relationship trouble, financial problems, or any number of difficulties we can experience. None of it occurs in a vacuum. There is nothing we endure that does not have value. The value comes in what it prepares us for in the future. Paul says all of this happens, “so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” So just as God provided comfort and strength to us in our need, He enables us to provide comfort and strength to those we come in contact with in our lives. Just as Jesus endured temptation and affliction so that he could identify with us and show us a better way to live our lives, so God helps us to endure troubles that we might be prepared to show other a better way to live. We never seek advice from people who have never experienced anything. When a non-believer develops cancer it is a sure thing that a believer will as well. Not to prove that anyone can get it, but to show the difference in how they approach dealing with it.

God uses the troubles in our lives and the pressure of the daily grind to prepare us to be His ambassadors to the world. Bad things never happen to good people. James said we should consider it “pure joy whenever we face troubles of many kinds” because it “produces perseverance that we can be complete, lacking in nothing.” It is through our troubles, our pain and doubt that we are prepared to speak into the lives of others. We are all good at throwing pity parties for ourselves. When in reality we should be rejoicing that God has brought us out of these things to prepare us as a tool to accomplish His will in our lives and in the lives of others.

Mission Focus June

Caribbean, more specifically, Belize, Jamaica and Cuba.

LIBRARY LEDGE –

Quakers and Quaker Authors

Have you ever wondered how the early Quakers lived? What they went through, their beliefs? We have a large selection of books both about Quakers & by Quakers revealing our history. Come in and delve into our past.

New to our library are: Growing Up Plain – The Journey of a Public Friend by Wilmer A. Cooper,

The Quakers in Puritan England by Hugh Barbour,

Faith and Practice by the Indiana Yearly Meeting, Discipline of Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends 1990, and The Inward Journey of Isaac Pennington, which is a short publication of sections from the writings of Pennington.

We have so many more in our library including:

The Beginnings of Quakerism,

The Second Period of Quakerism, Imagination & Spirit –

A Contemporary Quaker Reader,

Friends for 300 years,

Silent Friends –

A Quaker Quilt,

Quaker Quotations on Faith & Practice,

Quakers on the American Frontier,

A Living Faith –

An Historical Study of Quaker Beliefs

A Near Sympat

The Timeless Quaker Wisdom of John Woolman, and No Cross, No Crown just to name a few.

Mystery Friend for July

Our Mystery Friend for July was born in Des Moines, IA. He/She went to school in Pocahontas Area K-8, Northeast Hamilton 9-12, and the University of Northern Iowa. In their current job they talk on the radio and create graphics for sporting events. Favorite foods include steak, burgers, pizza, wings, and spaghetti. Most people would not know that this person has a fear of spiders. He/She has traveled to Jamaica. They commented that everyone at Bangor Liberty has been very nice and welcoming and our Mystery Friend has felt welcome since day 1

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The answer will be in this Sunday's bulletin and next month's Bell

Mystery Friend for June —Vi Gray

Queries

3. Do you love one another as becomes the followers of Christ? Are you careful of reputation of others? When differences arise, so you make earnest effort to end them speedily?

4. Do you practice the daily reading of the Scriptures in your families, giving time for reverent meditation? Do you make your home a place of hospitality, friendliness, peace, and Christian fellowship? Do you promote the moral and spiritual life of your children through careful supervision of their education, recreation, and friendships?

More Queries each month in The Bell

Nursery

Due to the lack of volunteers, the Christian Education Committee has made the decision to only staff the nursery with volunteers for the Sunday School hour over the summer months! This change starts the first Sunday in June.

There will be NO Worship Nursery from June to after Labor Day.

In the fall the Nursery volunteer situation will be reviewed by the Christian Education Committee, and it will be decided at that time if we have enough volunteers to cover nursery for Sunday School, Worship, and Wednesday night DEEPER.

Please remember that our church policy is that you must be 18 years of age to watch children in the nursery and if you are not the parent of the children in the nursery there must be 2 adults, 18 years of age.

Christian Ed Committee

The Christian Ed committee would like to extend our heartfelt thank you to those who provided meals, and picked up the youth that needed rides, for DEEPER on Wednesday nights over the last year. It is rewarding to share that meal and fellowship after a long day and then take the time to grow in the spirit with other believers. It would not be possible without all of those who volunteered their time.

Starting in July Christian Ed would like to start having the Sunday School Nursery help out with the children singing in the fellowship hall at the start of the Sunday School time. This will be continued into the fall. Please try to be at church early the Sunday's you are in the Sunday School Nursery to help with the children at this time.

Vacation Bible School

We are still looking for volunteers for VBS, if you are interested please talk to Dani J.