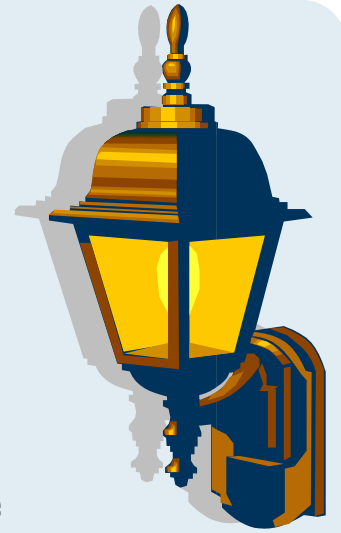


Lamplighter



Carlisle Congregational Church

And Yet There is Reason for Hope

Pastor Steven James Weibley

And yet there is reason for hope

Charles Schulz managed to capture in the Peanuts gang all the fragility of youth and change. In the Broadway show developed from the cartoon strip, Lucy as psychiatrist, tells Charlie, "You're not very much of a person." Then, as if to encourage him, she says, "yet there is reason for hope. For although you are no good at music, like Schroeder, or happy like Snoopy, or lovely like me, you have the distinction to be no one else but the singular, remarkable, unique Charlie Brown." Sadly what is unique about Charlie Brown is that he fails at everything he attempts. The whole show is about this little boy finding out that everything he pins his hope on only ends up disappointing him. At the end of the first act, he finds hope in a last leaf of fall hanging to a deserted tree and takes courage in the leaf's existential bravery. But, as he leaves the stage, the act ends with the powerless leaf floating to the ground.

God's people in the old Covenant had to learn Charlie's lesson, too. Israel had to be brought to nothing but the Red Sea before them and the terrors of Pharaoh's army hot behind them. Nothing they had, nothing they could do could give them hope; they had come to the end of themselves. They had no choice but to hope in the Lord. "The Rock, his work is perfect," sang Moses afterwards. Who that day could have guessed that only in their hopeless moment they would find lasting hope? But that day they saw Him do another perfect work in them.

Paul tells us this is the way of life in this world for believers. "More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because



God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Romans 5:3-5)." *We rejoice in our sufferings?! Speaking from a depth of suffering (and maturity) above my own, Paul is saying that suffering always ends. AND that this temporary suffering ends in a crop of endurance as God gives us grace to look to Him and see His provision in the midst of it. That endurance produces character: it shapes the kind of people we are. And when we see that sort of character, that sort of moral reality, built in us incrementally over time, we realize that our hope in Christ isn't foolish. We realize that the Lord really is at work in us as painfully and slowly over time in awkward and lonely and unpleasant circumstances, using suffering as the tool in His hand that shapes us, we are made to look like Jesus at the very center of who we are. Suffering in sickness, in relationships, in financial uncertainty is never wasted. Jesus Himself learned obedience in what He suffered (Hebrews 5:8), **THOUGH HE WAS A SON.** So do we learn more-than-skin-deep obedience when, as His true sons, we see that He is faithful, that it is really His love that enables us to last when it seems we can't, to speak the truth in love when we neither want to speak nor feel the love, to hold out for His promise, for His Holy City.*

And Yet There is Reason For HOPE:

"...using suffering as the tool in His hand that shapes us, we are made to look like Jesus at the very center of who we are."

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"...if you find yourself disappointed in the fall of your dreams, there is a reality broader and deeper and higher than anything you can conceive"

That's why John Newton in his great hymn on the heavenly city to which we go, Zion, says, "lasting joys and solid treasures none but Zion's children know." These joys and treasures are hard won, but they are not illusions that fade. These joys, these treasures last. They are real. Unlike the those of this world's system.

The "Vanity Fair" of our world seeks to distract us or deceive us, that we may never have a life/day like Charlie Brown's where lying "hopes" show their eternal colors. Our world tells us Disney has it right . . . happiness here, holiness later. But Jesus says . . . we are called to holiness now in the midst of a world that, like Pilgrim's enemies in Vanity Fair, wars against the gospel. "Don't be sur-

prised when you face trials of many kinds," writes Peter. If we are at peace with this world, we are at war with God, writes James. Fading is the *worldling's* pleasure, all his boasted pomp and show, writes Newton. But there, in that City, there will be a happiness of an eternal and immeasurable kind that we only have a foretaste of now through God's supernatural love poured out into and through our own hearts to others.

And yet there is reason for hope. Whatever you face today, if you find yourself disappointed in the fall of your dreams, there is a reality broader and deeper and higher than anything you can conceive. Dear child of Zion, this is your legacy: Real hope. Grounded hope. Solid hope.

One Student's Summer 'Vacation'

P. Tracy

"Essentially, I had more independence than ever before, and I had to decide what was important to me. I always knew my Christian faith was my own, but I actually saw that it was in Arizona"

The summer is typically a slower time when many go on vacation to interesting places or engage in activities that are not possible during the rest of the year. This is also true of the college students in our church family. One of the college students in our midst who had a unique experience this past summer is Bryan Crompton. You may know Bryan as a young man who serves us all by playing clarinet in our services. This past summer, he participated in a Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program at Northern Arizona University (NAU) in Flagstaff.

Bryan has been a member of this church all nineteen years of his life and received his early education (K-12) from his parents (*i.e.*, home schooled) and is currently a senior at UMass-Lowell studying mathematics and physics. He has such a love for mathematics that he hopes to eventually earn a PhD. As an undergraduate student in good academic standing he was able to participate in the REI and was accepted into the program after submitting an application with an essay and letters of recommendations from his professors. So early in the summer, he flew out to Flagstaff which is at an elevation of 7,000 feet and had much more pleasant weather than we did locally this summer.

Bryan was assigned an advisor and worked in an area known as 'iterated maps'. To get up to speed on the subject matter, he needed to read and study technical papers as well as watch video lectures. Each day he would make his way to the math building or library to work out some of the math on paper or blackboard and do some computer programming to understand how computers can be used to calculate the iterated maps. The final product of his technical work was a 22 page paper and a one hour presentation. If you are interested in finding out more details of his work, I am sure Bryan would enjoy talking to you about it.

Aside from the work, this was also a summer of 'firsts' for Bryan. Since he had never flown on a commercial airliner he had never felt a take-off or landing before. This was also the first time he had visited the southwest and Bryan noted that Flagstaff, located in the plateau region of Arizona, is actually at a higher elevation than all of New England and looks quite different from Massachusetts. He had opportunities to hike up two of the mountains in Arizona and enjoy the beautiful and geologically interesting rock formations in Sedona. This was also the first time that Bryan had lived away from home. This meant he enjoyed more freedom than ever before and



Sedona, Arizona

this gave him the opportunity to affirm that his Christian faith was very real to him. Bryan was welcomed into a local church and participated and received encouragement from that church's college group. This is a picture of how Christians all over the country and world are united in a common belief in the work of the Savior.

Song on the Wind

B. Antognoni

SONG ON THE WIND presented by New Life Fine Arts Musical Theater was held at the Emerson Umbrella Center for the Arts in helping to celebrate Concord's 375th anniversary. Song On The Wind written by David MacAdam tells the story of the Native Americans of Musketequid and their relationship with the early English settlers.

The relationships of the Praying Indians and John Elliott and Peter Bulkeley are told with great historical accuracy through drama and

Hopefully, this summary of Bryan's experiences provides you with some insight what is going on in the life of one of the students in our fellowship. This is but one story and there are others. Please take the time to find out what these talented young folks are up to. You might just be surprised!

original scores. Many in our church family were privileged to be a part of this production. Noah Meneghini played Joseph Bulkeley, Joey Antognoni was the narrator and John Hoar. Emily Crompton played her horn in the orchestra. Laura Antognoni was the photographer and helped with makeup. Karen and Christina Meneghini and Babette Antognoni were busy with makeup as well. Thanks to all who came out to see the performance!



Joey Antognoni as John Hoar



Noah Meneghini as Joseph Bulkeley

Have a Little Faith? (Book Report)

T. Tracy

Have a Little Faith is the title of a book by Mitch Albom, the author of **Tuesdays with Morrie**. The title of the book does not have the question mark. I guess the question came from Pastor Weibley's sermon of October 17th, 2010.. Little Faiths? Why not have Big Faiths? For Mitch, as a Jewish person, it's tough without the sacrifices; the God of the Old Testament can only be known by tradition. Even in Christ's time the traditions were getting in the way of a relationship with God. (Matthew 15:6)

Mitch writes a meaningful book in which he parallels the lives of two clergymen: one Henry a former drug dealer and ex-convict and the other his rabbi, whom he calls the Reb. The Reb advocates a pick-and-choose religion the old "smorgasbord" approach. Of course, this leads to contradictory beliefs that don't allow for very big faiths.

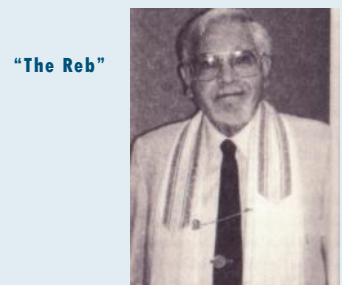
Fortunately, Mitch writes about Henry. Henry had chosen a dramatic way of degrading his

life. He was a drug dealer and addict who used the drugs he was supposed to sell. As a result his life was endangered. He reached out to Jesus, Who gave His own life to save ours. That is the ultimate up lifting of mankind and Henry got it. Henry's life was spared. Christ did more than save Henry's life from degradation. He put Henry's life in the inspiring column. Henry became pastor of about 100 homeless persons. They met in a cathedral type building with a hole in the roof. Mitch put Henry in touch with a pastor of a suburban Christian church. Henry's message to that congregation drew a standing ovation. That church gave the money to fix the roof on Henry's church. The book also includes a wonderful explanation of grace not works. Some would say Henry deserves credit for turning his life around, but you'll never convince Henry of that. He knows it's because of God's grace; the bigger the faith investment in Christ the bigger and sweeter the Relationship with the Savior God of our Universe.

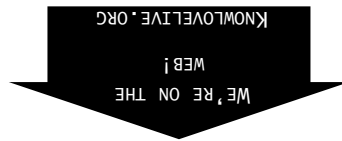
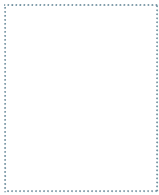
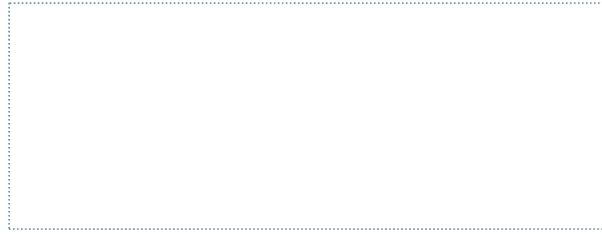


Henry

"This book also includes a wonderful explanation of salvation by faith, not works."



"The Reb"



Carlisle Congregational Church
147 School Street
P. O. Box 191
Carlisle, MA 01741

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December 14, 2010	Deacons' Meeting
December 21, 2010	Women's Morning Bible Study
December 24, 2010	Christmas Eve Service
January 4, 2011	Women's Morning Bible Study
January 6, 2011	Women's Evening Bible Study
January 11, 2011	Deacons' Meeting
January 18, 2011	Women's Morning Bible Study
January 20, 2011	Women's Evening Bible Study
March 4 & 5	SleepOver