

who is in CONTROL?

editorial by todd miller



As North Americans, we really like to control things. We like to know what time things begin and what time they end. We get frustrated when it doesn't go as planned. We get impatient when we have to wait in line for 15 minutes. It can ruin our day if demands are put on us that we were not expecting or perceive as unfair. It can irritate me when I have plans to watch the news but my wife has plans for me to bathe the children. I have a difficult time with rude or slow drivers. What right do they have to slow me down! I have to reign in the temptation to send words of death their way. But, then again... what right do I have to get angry? Why do we have this need to be in control of the world around us? Does it not go back to selfishness and pride?

Earlier this year one of the girls on our Thailand REACH Team experienced things being out of her control. She had worked hard at building a good relationship with her Thai landlady and was excited to be invited for the weekend to her hometown twelve hours away. Everything started well. However, by the end of the weekend her landlady wasn't ready to come home. Nor was she ready the next day or the next. She ended up being there for around ten days. This was not the plan!

As disciples of Jesus, we have chosen to be slaves to Christ, to put on His attitude. We have given up our rights and our need for control. I have always been impressed with how the disciples dropped everything to follow the master. They left their family, friends, livelihood, and everything stable to follow Jesus. Jesus said in Luke 14:33, "So no one can become my disciple without giving up everything for me." This includes the "rights" I feel entitled to. I am amazed how after Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers and with the life that followed, he chose not to be bitter. He did not even take revenge when he had the opportunity but gave God the credit for his situation. This is the attitude of a servant. This is dying to self. What areas of your life are you feeling the need to control? As a disciple of Christ, give it over to Him.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus..." Philippians 2:2-8 MSG



The SEND Ministries Department exists to equip and motivate youth to be Christ-centered, world Christians who make disciples.

www.send-me.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Irwin, Ohio, 43029
Permit No. 1

caleb REPORT

Rosedale Mennonite Missions
SEND Department
9920 Rosedale Milford Center Rd.
Irwin OH 43029-9537

Change Service Requested

www.send-me.org

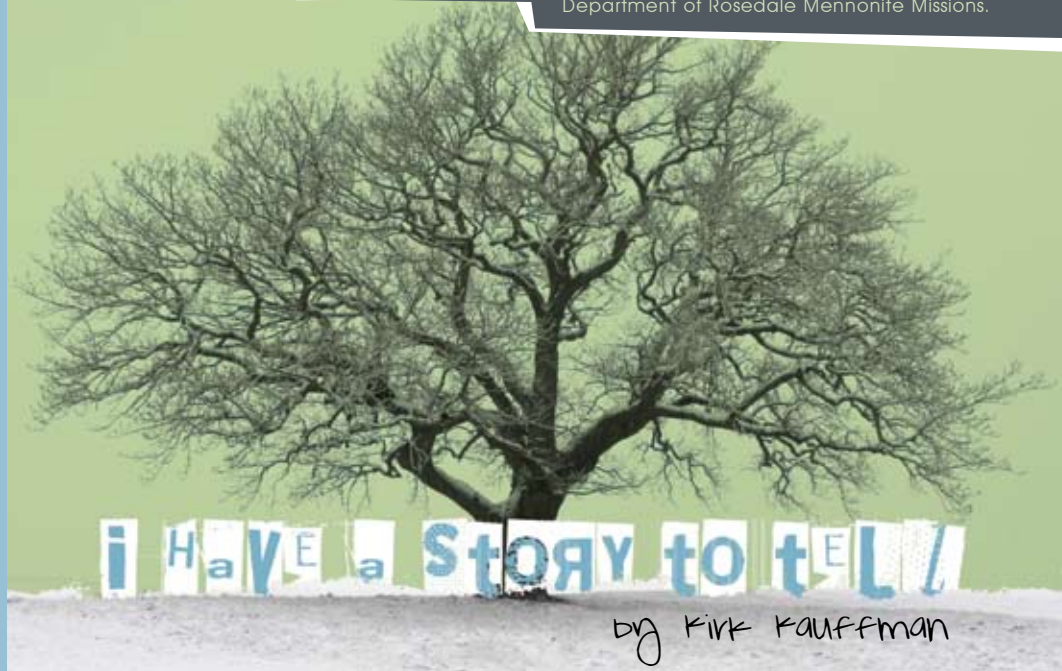
But my servant Caleb,

because he has a different spirit and has followed me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land into which he went, and his descendants will inherit it. Numbers 14:24 (NRSV)

caleb REPORT

FALL 2008

The Caleb Report is the quarterly newsletter of the SEND Ministries Department of Rosedale Mennonite Missions.



by Kirk Kauffman

The winter of 2007 was a very difficult winter for me. I had just entered my first quarter at the Ohio State University after transferring from Columbus State Community College and was trying to get acclimated to my new collegiate environment. After growing up in Latin America as a missionary kid and joining a couple of short-term mission ventures through REACH, you would think that I would be excited about sharing my faith in a secular environment, right? The truth is, at that point in my life I had little to no faith. My faith was much like my winter surroundings: cold, drab, gray...and lifeless.

It had not always been this way, had it? After all, I did experience God in a real way during my time in REACH, living overseas, and after that working in my local church. Before deciding to go to public university I had been profusely warned about the dangers of a secular environment and how I needed to keep my guard up. I would like to say that I had no problems with the adjustment, that I easily overcame the intellectual difficulties, that I lived my faith authentically, but I would be dishonest. Don't get me wrong. My struggle was not that with the openly immoral lifestyle that is assumed (rightly or wrongly) of college students. My struggle was not with the secular perspective presented in class. Rather my struggle was that it seemed to me that my faith had very little to say about the questions others and myself were asking about our world.

After all, what does the gospel have anything to do with the big questions in our world? What about the HIV/AIDS pandemic, poverty, the ecological crisis, human trafficking, senseless violence? In my mind it made complete sense that approximately 50% of Christian youth leave the church within the first eighteen months after they go off to college¹. I, too, was wondering how to deal with

"It made complete sense that approximately 50% of christian youth leave the church within the first eighteen months after they go off to college"

some of these issues I had even witnessed first hand. For instance, I grew up in Guayaquil, Ecuador, no more than a couple of miles from the city's shantytowns. I lived for six months in India while in REACH where nearly every day I was confronted with the ugly face of absolute poverty. And yet the gospel that I had been taught, at least the gospel I had chosen to believe, said very little about these issues. So I asked myself, if the faith that I believe in really has nothing to say about the 34,000 children who will die today because of hunger and preventable diseases², what is the point of adhering to it? The gospel that had been presented to me was simply far too compartmentalized and privatized for something like that, right?

I was desperate. I needed something. I was quickly losing faith and at the same time trying to be in a position of leadership. It seemed a bit hypocritical, to say the least.

All these thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and experiences came to a head one dreary January weekend when God changed something inside of me. Although it is hard to describe exactly what happened, I often say it felt like my worldview was cracked open, like my heart exploded. I got the strange sense that God was close to me, closer than ever before, and that Jesus was

a real, live human being for whom I was living. Suddenly, I had a genuine, unconditional love for people, even strangers! My heart broke for those suffering from injustice. Looking back, God showed me that my fundamental issue was not that my questions and probing were too big, but that the Jesus I followed and the gospel I believed were too small.

I needed a big gospel. I needed to know a gospel where Jesus really did conquer death, where He really is the Lord of the earth, and where, through the power of the resurrection, the process of new life and new creation have begun. I needed to realize that this formerly miniscule gospel was not simply for my personal, small relationship with God, but that it also extends to absolutely all areas of human existence.

This is the simple truth: Jesus is Lord. "The kingdom of God is at hand" is not a declaration for some far off future existence, rather it is for a reality to be embraced here and now. And even though it will not be fully established until a future epoch, the kingdom is here. Eternal life begins right now.

What I had been longing for all along was hope. Hope that, although Jesus did initially conquer death on the cross, in the end all suffering, pain, tears, and sin will be wiped away. Hope that compels me to live out the future (yet strangely present) reality of Jesus' reign right now. I want a faith that moves me to share Jesus freely with other people, to serve the poor, and to fight injustice. I want a faith that is holistic and not dualistic, authentic and not fake.

For a moment, in the winter of 2007, I felt in my bones that I had a glimpse of that kind of hopeful reality and that I did in fact have the whole gospel, not just crumbs. When I tell my friends about that experience, I usually say that, where before I had seen everything in black and white, I was now seeing life in high-definition. But to be completely honest, Jesus always was there, wooing me, calling me into a deeper, fuller existence of surrendering to Him as Lord and Savior. I just was not listening.

That is my story.

1: http://blog.christianitytoday.com/outofur/archives/2008/04/live_from_shift_5.html
2: Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, pg. 1, ed. 1997

here is a list of books

I recommend to gain more insight into a holistic understanding of the gospel in our contemporary society.

Surprised by Hope - N.T. Wright
Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger - Ron Sider
The Myth of a Christian Nation - Gregory Boyd
Mere Discipleship - Lee C. Camp
The Upside-Down Kingdom - Donald Kraybill
Evil and the Justice of God - N.T. Wright
Irresistible Revolution - Shane Claiborne
Blue Like Jazz - Donald Miller

alumni happenings

BIRTHS

Anita (Kauffman, R 01) & Keith Martin had a baby girl, Elizabeth Anne, on July 20, 2008.

Karen (Kramer, S 02) & Greg Helmuth had a baby boy, Chase Braxton, on August 5, 2008. Older brother Brock.

Ethan (R 04, R 05) & Queena (Yoder, R 02) Mast had a baby girl, named Dorthea, on August 8, 2008.

Tom Mast (R 96) & Candice (Rhodes, R 96) had a baby boy, Silas Rhodes, on August 23, 2008.

Ray (R '00) & LaVissa Reimer of Arborg Manitoba had a baby boy, Keaghan Graeme Lloyd, on January 16, 2008.

Matthew Showalter (R 94, 95) & Colleen (Miller, R 94) had a baby girl, Nava Collette, on July 7, 2008.

Carla (Eby, R 03) & Caleb Hilty had a baby girl, Hailey Cheyenne, on October 22, 2008.

Training Center Directors, Kirk (R 00, 02) & Karla (Nisly, R 00, 02) Kauffman had a baby girl, Mayah Grace, on October 28, 2008.

MARRIAGES

Lisa Lopez (R 98) married Aaron Evelsizer on August 9, 2008.

Clay Mast (S 01) married Morgan Embleton on May 24, 2008.

Rebekah Rhodes (R 06) married Jared Stutzman on July 21, 2008.

Rachel Slaubaugh (R 99) married Dave Chapman on August 9, 2008.

Tamara Widrick (R 02) married Matthew Schrag on October 11, 2008.

Raphael Yutzy (R 06) married Regina Yoder on August 16, 2008.

Norma Jean Shank (R 01, 06, 07) married Jim Stutzman on October 10, 2008.

Tirzah DiGennaro (R 06) married Chadwick Miller on October 12, 2008.

Please inform us of any births, weddings, missionary appointments, or change of address. (karen@rmmoffice.org)