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Freedom

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."
—Galatians 5:1

The Newsletter of the Metropolitan Community Churches in Lancaster and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Vol. 2, No. 9

December, 1983

SIGNPOSTS

by Pattie Mae McKeon

One thing I have found helpful in my spiritual life is reflection on the past. In looking back, I can pinpoint influences, major and minor, good and bad, that have contributed to my present state. For me, this view of my spiritual journey is confirmation that God has directed my life even when I was oblivious to or even opposed to such direction.

A small, but important discovery in looking back has been the significance of single statements that I either heard or read. At the time of my exposure to these statements, I was not particularly struck by their significance, but, in rediscovering them, I was amazed at how the Omnipotent had dealt with me on a level of consciousness deeper than I had imagined. What follows are three statements that I heard or read in my past that I would like to share with you.

The first statement that I recall was addressed specifically to me. It was made by a woman from my church back home, the church I grew up in. I was standing with her and a few other adults after church talking. I don't recall the conversation. This woman was quite a character. She made a point of not minding her own business. She was the sort of person that adults privately complained about and we children, sometimes not so privately, made fun of. But God has chosen the foolish to confound the wise, and on that Sunday, in a forgotten conversation, she said, "The only one who will never fail you is the Lord." In difficult days ahead, her single statement has sustained me.

The second statement that has meant so much to me is from the book "The Scarlet Letter" which my 11th grade English class was required to read and discuss. The discussion, the details of the book, and my initial reaction to the book (probably negative) escape me. What did stick was an answer Hester Prynne, the protagonist, made to her accusers (she was, essentially, an unwed mother--an adulteress). Someone

Got a feelin' you're gonna meet Freedom's deadlines everytime from now on. Peas postage hot, Peas postage cold, Freedom must be in the pot 9-days before the month's out. If we don't have it 9-days before month's end. You won't see it. Dec. 23, next deadline!

accused her with the fact that her illegitimate child had no father. Her reply was "My child shall seek a Heavenly Father." That line has been tremendously significant to me since my own father and I had a very difficult relationship starting in my teens. Prior to that, he was emotionally aloof. He died before our relationship could be resolved. Even before his death, I considered myself "fatherless". In recent years I have experienced incredible spiritual healing from discovering that God is "a father of the fatherless" (Psalm 68). It has freed me from anger and bitterness that raged within me for many years. But somewhere deeper than the anger and bitterness were those words of Hester Prynne. They were fulfilled in my life, but in reverse. Instead of seeking a Heavenly Father, I was sought by Him.

Cont. p.2

The third statement was spoken during Daily Vacation Bible School a sort of 2 week half-day summer camp for kids. During one of the Bible classes, a teacher said: "The Devil doesn't like people who follow him." It seems axiomatic that the most evil being in the universe would not have a long list of favorite people, but consciously knowing this has helped me see the folly of not following God. God does have a lit of favorite people-- God loves all who follow him. In Job 13:15, Job says "Though he slay me, yet I will follow." In this verse, Job refers to God, not Satan. Even though God causes us to experience hard things, to follow God is to experience support and security from God, whereas support and security can never come from Satan.

I hope you have been encouraged by reading this article to examine your own spiritual journey. This has been an attempt to share with you part of the way my spiritual life has evolved. I could have spoken of things such as prayers dramatically answered, escape from extreme physical danger, unconscious prayers, etc. May you be receptive to the gentle promptings of the Spirit as you look at your own spiritual past. May you be able to say with the Psalmist (as the KJV so eloquently puts it: "Many, O Lord my God, are the wonderful works which thou hast done and thy thoughts which are to us-ward... they are more than can be numbered." (Ps. 40:5)

I don't believe in coincidence anymore because I know that which seems coincidental is exactly the plan. God is pursuing for my life with loving certainty. Above all coincidences I see the palms of hands into which is written my name: Ulrich Schaffer you belong to me, stay with me, I love you. —Ulrich Schaffer.

December 25th - Shari Gackstatter

MCC Harrisburg is planning something very special for Christmas Day this year. Falling on a Sunday, this gives us an excellent opportunity to spread love to more people. We will be gathering at the church at 7 p.m., as usual. Plans include a short singspiration, family prayer, and communion. After these important parts of our usual service, we will get together in cars and go to a place where we can share God's love and beauty with those not so fortunate as ourselves. We, as a group, are going to go to either an old folk's home, rest home, or a nursing home to just visit with people that have not been able to go out and enjoy Christmas. (We are currently working on finding a place where the people are not usually remembered by other organizations.)

I am the type of person that loves to give. I don't think I'm unusual in that way. The absolute best thing I can think of doing on Christmas is to share love, kindness, good blessings, and fellowship with others that might not have had all that great of a day. Please consider the benefits of spreading a few words of cheer to someone who might have just given up hope for having a nice Christmas. Please join us in this celebration of LOVE!

Just a personal note- I want to let everyone know that I am very grateful for their support of MCC. MCC has been an important part of my life for three years and the people are inside of me, helping me

To all of you, Merry Christmas!

<p>LANCASTER GAY/LESBIAN HELP LINE</p> <p>397-0691</p> <p>Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.</p>	<p>GAY SWITCHBOARD OF HARRISBURG</p> <p>234-0328</p> <p>Monday thru Friday 6:00 to 10:00 p.m.</p>
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REAP WHAT YOU SOW COLIN KREITZER

This farmer was going into his field one day with a sack of corn seeds and I asked him, "You planting pumpkin?"

He smiled, showed me the seeds and just in case I was not aware of the kind of seeds he held, he said, "Nope! Corn!"

"Corn?" I said, "But don't you expect some pumpkins at harvest?"

He laughed. My question was ridiculous.

This person goes into the world with a lie on his lips. With the clear purpose of using someone for his own sexual satisfaction. And to every question he's asked he lies. He wants to use you.

And you say to him, "If you use people, you yourself will be used."

He laughs. Then lies some more.

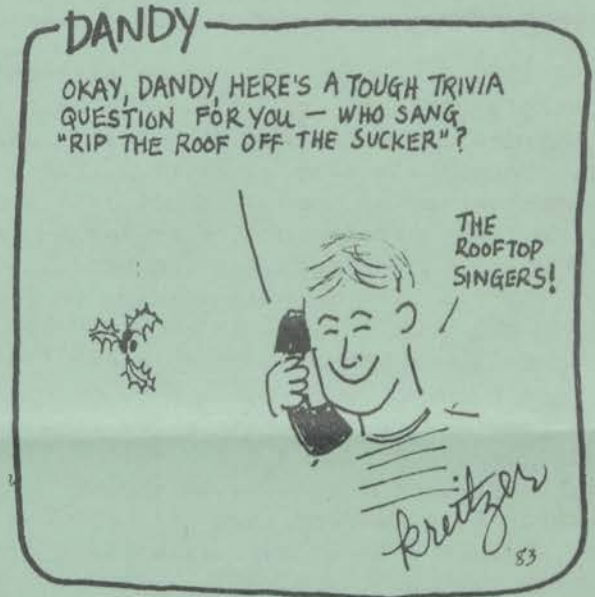
People don't really believe that they reap what they sow. But there is no getting around it, all of us do.

When I first started collecting records, Billy Stewart recorded his first chart record, Reap What You Sow. It wasn't a big hit, but I bought it. He repeatedly tells his ex-lover, "You got to reap just what-a you sow". And the background singers ask, "What you know?" repeatedly.

People really don't believe that we do reap what we sow (most people are background singers). Some people are nasty backstabbers and they think there is no penalty for such behavior. But there is. They will not reap happiness. Or peace. Or trust from others. And those things are important to every human being. A lot of people somehow believe some folks get by without dues. And it's not true.

I think perhaps the reason people don't believe the reaper's tale is that some awfully nice, good people are dished out some terrible brews. John F. Kennedy is a primary example. He was murdered by the creeps who didn't want him cleaning up the mafia or holding down prices for the benefit of all Americans. He fought evil and was murdered by it. He did not sow evil, but he was felled by it. He did recognize his failures and he tried to remedy them. His humanity and his

charitable spirit buoyed up America. We loved him.



We all face a variety of ugly experiences in life. All of them are not a direct result of our being ugly, since many are outside of anyone's control. But if our spirit is rejecting of other people, we can expect rejection of ourselves to occur with greater frequency. And if we are selfish with our money, we can expect others to be selfish with us. And if we use other people for any reason (sexual, monetary gain, status) then we can expect to likewise be used or abused for our immoral behavior.

Christmas is coming and a lot of people get depressed. As children we didn't have to do much. Christmas morning, Santa had been there and we were delighted. As we grew older some of us figured we would keep taking and never giving and we reaped a harvest of emptiness. There might be lots of presents that we've manipulated people to give to us because we're related and/or after all we did spend \$50. on them! And their gift to us may even cost more, but the hollowness there is unbelievable.

Give your smile away. Your laughter. Your joy, this Christmas. And see what you reap Christmas morning. Give til it hurts and you won't be depressed. You will reap what you sow!

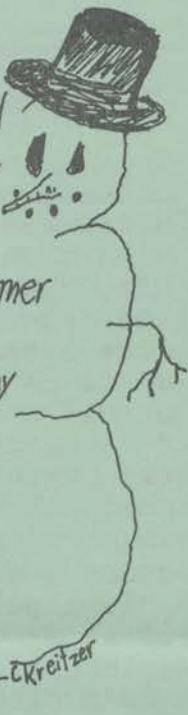
DAVE'S
CORNER-CORNER

CHURCH NEWS

MCC-HARRISBURG.....Fifty two people attended Rev. Lichty's installation. Mary Ann VanFossen gave a spirited sermon and a lot of love was present. Congratulations to Pat!!.....The first annual standing room only pot luck was held, since there are few chairs or tables in the library at the Friends Meeting House.... An older straight couple came seeking pastoral counseling and were invited to share in the dinner as well. A man also came in off the street, was offered some food and remained for the service.....Does some man in the congregation specialize in doing dyke haircuts??? in their homes...really!!!!.....District Coordinator, Adam DeBaugh, has been invited to visit with us some Sunday.....Will we give a Christmas gift to ourselves?? Two services have gone without the special offering for the telephone answering machine.....

MCC-LANCASTER.....Adam DeBaugh visited, offering ideas about finding a new pastor.....An important meeting, Dec 4, to find an interim worship coordinator.....Why?.....Because Arthur will be the new pastor of MCC RICHMOND. Congratulations!!! Give Art and Al our best wishes and our prayers, and for the moving party, Dec 31, our hands, arms, legs and, ouch, our backs.....Thanksgiving II...the annual leftover pot luck was held with lots of goodies.GAY, PROUD AND SOBER, the movie, was shown to a large GayRap group of about 40 people. There was much good discussion. Alcoholism and drug abuse are serious problems in the gay and lesbian community and deserve everyone's attention.Best wishes to Bryan, who has moved to New Jersey.....Art, Al, and Bryan will all be missed in Central PA.....

It's perfectly snow
From it's white to it's cold
It dresses the roof tops,
The trees and the poles.
I like it, I do.
It makes everything glimmer
And sparkle and shine
When the sun sends a ray
On its blanket of white
It's from winter and
Coldness and whiteness
It's SNOW
And I like it, I do.
For it's perfectly snow. -CKreitzer



Lancaster MCC News

Lancaster M.C.C. is going through some major changes. On December 4, at 6:30 p.m. a congregational meeting will be held. The purpose of this meeting will be to elect worship coordinators. This is necessitated by Arthur Runyons' call to the Richmond, Va. church. On December 25th at 5:00 p.m. a special Christmas Farewell Service will be held to honor Arthur and thank him for over three years with the Lancaster M.C.C. We invite all of our friends to join us for this celebration!

Allyson Green & Don Mowrer

Your friendly church news columnist would like to request that anyone in Harrisburg and Lancaster who has news (or gossip) for this column to telephone or write such information so this can be a bigger and better column.
Dave's phone - 737-6644, address - P.O. Box 452, Lemoyne, PA 17043.

FREEDOM Vol. 2, No. 9 December, 1983

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The views expressed in the articles are those of the writers and not necessarily those of MCC-Lancaster, MCC-Harrisburg, or the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. Publication of the name of any person, business, or organization should not be construed as indicative of the sexual orientation or ideological stance of that person, business, or organization.
The Metropolitan Community Church is an ecumenical, Christian church for all people with a special ministry to the lesbian and gay community.





CALL AMERICAN BOYS - FRANK MOSCA

A romantic gay novel? It's not exactly realistic. Oh the horrors in the story do too often occur in real life, but the wisdom of a high school boy, Paul, and his new found lover, Neil, seem a bit progressive.

Still my greatest hope is that Paul's will exist one day, and Neil's as well. Paul is filled with wisdom and Neil supports him through many trials. Paul stole my heart in one dramatic scene with Neil, when he speaks the heart of a healthy gay person in the face of the suppressive words that Neil hurls at him.

Brian, a local creep, visits Neil after Paul and Neil have become inseparable. He proceeds to tell Neil that his cousin, who works at the college, has told him that Paul was there to inquire about a Gay Student Union. Neil runs Brian off and then calls Paul to ask him over. When Paul arrives, Neil lites into him with angry words about his visit to the college and that Brian has probably told half the school that they are both "queer".

Paul is then center stage as he deals magnificently with Neil's accusations:

"First off," he said coolly but calmly, "I am not queer. Not to you, not to anyone. I'm gay. Second, you mentioned something about a GSU in town and with school starting next week I was simply trying to find out."

"I meant at the college, not the high school."

"Third," he continued as if he hadn't heard me, "Just who in hell do you think you are to jump all over me the second I walk in? If you want to play some weird macho trip, do it at the (kung-fu) studio. I don't play games."

Without another word he turned and walked out.

I watched him leave. . . .
. . . .I went flying out of the house and raced after Paul. I caught up to

him at the corner, grabbed him by the shoulder and spun him around.

He didn't say anything. He simply stared at my hand. I could feel myself blushing and released him.

"You have something to say?" he asked coldly. I could see he'd been crying.

"What can I say?" I asked softly.

"Try, 'I'm sorry' to start with."

I nodded. "I'm sorry. Really I am. It's just that well, just that I've been sitting around worrying and getting more and more scared for the last half-hour. I guess you got blasted by the first volley."

"Scared?"

"Yeah. Right now things are okay. But what if stories get back to Dad or to the studio? What then?"

"My god. You mean you're actually frightened that Brian MIGHT tell someone that you MAY be gay?"

I nodded again.

"Talk about closet mentality! Why are you so scared of that?"

"Let's face it," I said, "being known as a homosexual in this town doesn't exactly enhance your reputation. You do know what they say about us?"

"Sure, I sometimes get the feeling gays have been blamed for every ill mankind has ever seen, except maybe Legionnaire's disease. But so what? You're still the same person. If someone doesn't care for you that's his problem, not yours."

"You can say that. You don't have anything to lose."

He shook his head slowly.

"I'm willing to accept your apology. I can chalk up the yelling to a bad case of nerves. However, if you really believe your last statement then this conversation's gotten so asinine that I'm not going to bother sticking around to hear how it comes out."

"And just what's that suppose to mean?"

"Just what I said," he snarled.

"Even sunny California's not exactly heaven you know. But I refuse-- refuse, damn it -- to let a twerp like Brian upset me. My self-respect is important too. I actually happen to like myself. And no one, not Brian, not my folks, not even you is going to take that away from me."

And God bless you, Paul. -Colin Kreitzer

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Harrisburg Church.....

- Dec. 1 - Board Meeting - 527 Walnut St., Lemoyne. 7pm.
 9 - Potluck/Christmas Gathering, 527 Walnut St., Lemoyne. 7pm.
 18 - Community Worship Service w/Dignity - Methodist Church corner of Susq. & Harris Sts. 7pm. Refreshments follow the service in the Social Hall. Pastor Chester Snyder, Chaplain, Bloomsburg State College will speak.
 25 - Christmas Service. 7pm. FMH. Following the service an adventure into Giving-land.

Every Wednesday: Bible Study. 7pm. FMH
 Every Sunday: Women's Reading & Discussion Group- 1634 N. 3rd St., Harrisburg. 4:30pm. (ph. 232-7040).

Williamsport Church.....

- Dec. 17 - W.B. Support Group Bar Nite after Business meeting at Doug's. 5pm. Bar festivities at 'Old Corner' downtown.
 Dec. 18 - Christmas Service. Gary Norton installed as worship co-ordinator by Adam deBaugh. 1pm. YWCA.

Lancaster Church.....

- Dec. 1/15 - Gay Rap.
 4 - Congregational Meeting
 8 - Game Nite.
 18 - Community Service w/Harrisburg MCC, following short service 5pm. Lancaster MCC.
 22 - Community Outreach Christmas Party. Unitarian Church, 7:30pm
 25 - Christmas Service & Farewell Celebration for Arthur Runyan II.
 31 - Moving party for Al & Art. All hands welcome.
 Jan. 1 - Pot Luck Dinner - Unitarian Church.



Thank you from Art & Al everyone.



WORSHIP SCHEDULES

Harrisburg:

Sunday Evenings
 Friends Meeting House
 6th & Herr Streets
 Harrisburg, Pa.
 7:00 p.m.

Lancaster:

Sunday Evenings
 Unitarian Center of Lancaster
 538 W. Chestnut Street
 Lancaster, Pa.
 5:00 p.m.

Williamsport:

1st ^{and 3rd} Sunday of the Month
 YWCA - 815 W. 4th Street
 1:00 p.m.
 717-238-3746 for info.

