

The Newsletter of the Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren
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Christ's body is found!

Living the Word

by pastor Ken Miller Rieman

As Marigold and I were eating breakfast this morning, The Today Show aired a most fascinating report. Jesus tomb has been found! Whaaaaaaat?

Turns out, evidence emerging in the last two weeks may shed some new light on an ossuary and a tomb that might actually have belonged to the family of Jesus of Nazareth.

Goldie didn't seem too impressed by the claims, but the story definitely caught my attention. I had just preached from the text where we learn that Jesus' tomb was empty, where Jesus himself asks Mary, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?' (Jn 20.15)

Now this story about the Jesus artifacts wasn't entirely new. The New York Times reported that the ossuary, a burial box for bones, bearing the Aramaic inscription 'James son of Joseph brother of Jesus' was bought from an East Jerusalem antiquities dealer in the 1970's. The Israel Antiquities Authority had declared the inscription a forgery but in 2012, a Jerusalem court ruled that the state failed to prove its case.

In 1980, a tomb in East Jerusalem was unearthed which eventually drew the attention of Simcha Jacobovici and James Cameron (Titanic) who wrote and produced



a documentary first broadcast on The Discovery Channel in 2007. This tomb contained 10 ossuaries, some of which bear inscriptions naming 'Jesus son of Joseph,' 'Mary' and other New Testament figures. They argue that this was 'probably the tomb of the family of Jesus of Nazareth.' (NYT, 4/5/2015)

Neither space nor time permit me to relate all of the details, but these claims were naturally quite controversial. Two objections cast the most doubt upon them. First, even if they weren't forged, the inscriptions were of names exceedingly common in First century Palestine. Second, there was nothing that conclusively connected the 'James Ossuary' to the 'Jesus Family tomb'.

This is where things get interesting. A University of Toledo statistician calculated that on their own, the names inscribed upon the ossuaries each separately composed about 8% of the population. But of that population who had the common names, only a very small percentage had a mother

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(‘Christ’s body...’ continued)

named Mary and a brother named Joseph. (The Jerusalem Post, 4/7/2015)

Perhaps more compelling was the discovery, two weeks ago, by a geoarcheologist that established a chemical signature definitively connecting the ossuary to the tomb. His full findings have yet to be peer-reviewed, published and replicated, but a lot of people are getting really excited.

There are some who are definitely NOT excited. I don’t know how we could ever conclude, with absolute certainty, to have found the bones of Jesus Christ. Beyond that, ossuaries identifying the bones of ‘Mary wife of Jesus’ and ‘Judah son of Jesus’ ensure that the probability scientists eventually attach to the authenticity of these artifacts will, to a similar degree, challenge some of Christianity’s most ancient teachings about Jesus.

So what does it all mean?

I guess it depends on that nature of our faith. If one’s decision to follow Jesus is built upon the assumption that Jesus ascended, in body, to heaven, and that he was surely never married, let alone that he conceived a child, one might be justifiably dismayed at strong evidence suggesting anything else. I would even understand if these folks felt it prudent to cast as much doubt upon the science as they could.

(below) In humble Brethren tradition, our footwashing ceremony at the Maundy Thursday Love Feast.

But I would surely hope that our faith was founded on stronger stuff than ancient creeds. For myself, much of the resurrection remains mysterious. I’ve never seen a dead body brought back to life. I’ve never seen a person ascend to heaven. I can’t even imagine just how that would happen, but that doesn’t mean resurrection isn’t real.

I have seen people hopelessly enslaved to their addictions who came back from the brink of death because someone in their life refused to give up on them. That’s resurrection!

I’ve known people who’ve made evil their life’s work, who did their level best to make everyone around them hurt like they did, who felt the flames of hell burning all around them, miraculously behold a voice call their name and summon them to back to love’s realm. That’s resurrection!

I’ve learned of whole nations brought low by slavery and apartheid and war and genocide who were blessed by the immeasurable grace and devotion of those who survive and give their lives wholly over to the truth, to bringing the wrongs of the past into the light where they might be confessed and repented of, and reconciled. Resurrection!

And I’ve seen the faithful prophets of our own day, whose love of the truth assured them of a showdown with hate--gunned down, never to walk the earth again. Proof





(‘Christ’s body...’ continued)

that might makes its own right? Never! Those who have buried these beings of the light never knew that they buried seeds which in the darkness sunk roots into the source of all life and love and burst forth in the hands and feet of those who continue their sacred and redeeming work. Resurrection!

In Luke’s Gospel account, the women who followed Jesus and saw how he was buried return to the tomb to anoint his body. They are the first to discover the stone rolled away, the tomb empty. Going in, they are terrified to find two angels who ask them, ‘Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.’ (Lk. 24.5) Resurrection!

Friends, those who need archeology to prop up their faith will be in trouble when archeologists dare to look underneath the stones which ‘must never be turned.’ Archeologists dig and ask deep questions because that is their job.

Those who left their nets in Galilee to follow Jesus didn’t know what to do after his execution. They couldn’t believe the news of his resurrection. In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus sends them word. ‘Meet me back in Galilee.’ (Mt. 28.10) So they return to where it all began, changed people with a new job, to change the world.

So let us not be troubled by the mystery of resurrection or the impossibility that is always trying to stand in the way of our healing and transformation. We are not owned by creeds or enslaved by doctrine. The Jesus who tended this earth’s least and lost reawakened the law of love in human hearts. We who continue his work are his hands and feet, his heart and mind. We are the living body of Christ. That’s resurrection!

Next General Assembly:

Sunday, April 26th, 2015

At least twice annually we come together as a congregation to take care of church business and ministries. We request your presence at this spring’s General Assembly on Sunday, April 26th. A potluck meal will serve as a prelude to the meeting as usual, so bring a fresh salad or hearty dish to share with the crowd! We’ll plan to break bread following worship and commence with business around 1:00 pm.

The spring meeting is where we call and confirm the officers and board members for the coming year. Please note that at this gathering we will be considering a proposal from the Board to suspend the constitutional rules relating to the number of board and officer positions that we fill. The Board would like to try streamlining our leadership for a year to better allocate time and energy to vital ministries of the church.

The status of our finances and ministries will be reviewed as usual. The amazing people of this church have given small and large gifts faithfully that have supplied 85 to 90% of our income goal and given generously \$12,000 per month to the ministries of the church. Despite your generosity, our cash reserve is severely depleted resulting from a long term trend of income 10% to 15% under expenses. Due to the rather severe financial shortfall for supporting our ministries that this has caused, the Board will bring some options to the GA that will address these problems. Together we will find a sustainable solution!

We’ll need your feedback and assistance in discerning these items, so please join us!



Grace Edmark, Kristi Morris & Sylvia Hershberger with their Easter smiles!



Food, fellowship and FUN were the themes at our St. Patty's Game Day & Potluck!

Thanks to everyone who shared in the good time with games, food and friendship.



Sylvia Hershberger entertaining moms and kids alike on Easter Sunday.



We were honored to celebrate Alice Dalrymple's 96th birthday with her family on March 22nd!

Update: Carlton Complex Disaster Rebuild Project Okanogan County, Washington

from Frosty Wilkinson

To you folks who have shown interest in disaster recovery projects, here is a brief update on what is happening with the Carlton Complex Fire. As you probably know, during July 2014 several lightning-caused wildfires caused a lot of damage in the Methow Valley and other areas of Okanogan County. Over 300 homes were destroyed. The "Washington Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster" or WAVOAD, is working together with the local "Carlton Complex Long Term Recovery Group" to help in recovery efforts.

The Church of the Brethren Disaster Ministries is a member of WAVOAD, along with American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Mennonite Disaster Services, and many Churches and other organizations.

Plans are in process to help build homes for folks who are uninsured or under insured, following guidelines to identify the people without resources to rebuild.

Brent Carlson and I have attended planning meetings in Pateros. The Brethren are cooperating together with the Mennonites to provide volunteers to build two homes.

I will be attending the next meeting of the Carlton Complex Fire Recovery Task Force on April 23 in Pateros.

At that time I hope I will have some concrete dates when we will be needed, so that volunteers can make plans. Building should get into high gear in May, with major efforts June and July!

Please talk with friends and family about thinking about volunteering a few days or a week or 2, and ask them to contact me for more information.

For questions, contact me by email at frostyw1@yahoo.com, or phone at 360-202-8859.

Thanks,

Frosty Wilkinson, NW District COB Disaster Relief Co-coordinator

Islam: What is it? What does it stand for?

with Rahim Nasserziayee

Tuesday, April 14, 7-8:30 pm
at Assumption Catholic Church
6201 33rd Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98115

The name Islam has its roots in the Arabic word "Salaam" which means "peace" or "submission". So why do some identify this faith with terrorism? Although there are over 1.3 billion people of the world who are Muslims, this religion remains an enigma to most of the Western world.

Rahim Nasserziayee was born in Kabul, Afghanistan. He is a retired engineer, educated in Afghanistan, Iran, US and the Netherlands.

He has been presenting to various US audiences to broaden understanding of his faith and to clarify that Islam is a faith of peace, not terror.

Organized by the Adult Education Committee at Assumption Parish.



The Death Penalty

with Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ

Friday, May 1, 7-9 pm
at Assumption Catholic Church
6201 33rd Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98115

Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States*, has been instrumental in sparking national dialogue on the death penalty. Her book became a best seller and was made into a movie, an opera and play for high schools and colleges around the country.

Since 1984, Sister Helen has divided her time between educating citizens about the death penalty and counseling individual death row prisoners.

Organized by the Adult Education Committee at Assumption Parish.



Interfaith Earth Day:

Indigenous Rights, Indignant Wrongs

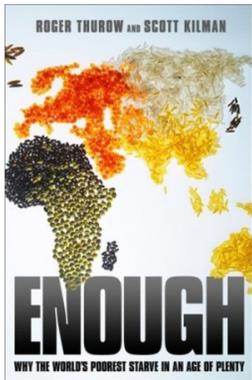
Tuesday, April 21, 2015
11:45am - 1:30pm
Seattle University Student Center, Rm 160
901 12th Ave, Seattle, WA 98122

Join Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power & Light and the SU School of Theology and Ministry for this year's Interfaith Earth Day. The theme, Indigenous Rights, Indignant Wrongs, will address the devastating impacts of fossil fuel mega-projects on Native American culture and spirituality, reminding us all of our shared responsibility to protect Mother Earth.

Lummi Nation elder and master carver Jewel James will tell the tale of the 2014 Totem Pole Journey that honored, united, and empowered communities in the destructive path of coal and oil exports. Mennonite activists Meg and Peter Lumsdaine will speak about their recent efforts to address mining injustice with Native communities in Mexico.

Our Earth Day celebration will include a stunning array of visual representation of Indigenous communities' connection to creation, including a performance by the Danza Quetzalcoatl de Olympia Dance Troupe and a display of the collaborative mural that was painted by communities along the Totem Pole Journey.

To RSVP (not required), please email Jessica at jessica@earthministry.org or call (206) 632-2426. We look forward to seeing you there!



ENOUGH

Why the World's Poorest Starve in an Age of Plenty

Our adult Sunday School class is starting a new study on this renowned 2009 book, where we'll connect this global issue with the roots of our faith and discuss ways in which we can begin to make a difference.

"Since the green revolution, we have known how to grow enough food to end chronic hunger worldwide. Yet more than 9 million people every year die of hunger, malnutrition, and related diseases-most of them children in Africa. In this powerful investigative narrative, two award-winning *Wall Street Journal* reporters show how, in the past few decades, American and European policies conspired to keep the world's poorest people hungry and unable to feed themselves. *Enough* is essential reading on a humanitarian issue of utmost urgency."

Books are available in the church office, with a \$15 suggested donation as you're able. Join our adult Sunday school group, 9:30 on Sunday mornings!



'Cinco de Mayo' Potluck

Sunday, May 3rd, 2015

Bring a Mexican-style dish to share and let's celebrate at one of our favorite annual events!

The fiesta starts after worship, and will be complete with music, tres leches cake, beverages and a piñata for the kids!

All are welcome at this fun-filled event where we'll have the chance to enjoy the flavors and traditions of Mexico with one another. *Provecho!*

Sharing Together in Prayer

In Our Community:

- For **Harumi Makiyama** and her family, in Japan caring for her mother with intestinal cancer; prayers for her mother's peace and comfort, and for Harumi and her family to find strength.
- For **Melissa Hinton**, undergoing intensive treatment for Sjögren's syndrome.
- Traveling mercies for our delegation visiting Unión Victoria, Guatemala from April 10-19: **Ken Miller Rieman, Aspen Colton, Andy Thill, and Shannon & Anaya Williams!**

In Our State, Nation, and World:

- Thanks for the generous donations that made it possible for the **women of Unión Victoria, Guatemala** to build a much needed women's community center!
- For our brothers and sisters of the **EYN (the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria)** as they work to find stability and bring aid to the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons within their country.



We welcome Pastor Jun and the Gerizim Korean Church to our facility, hosting worship services at 1:30 pm on Sunday afternoons!