

The Christian life is a journey.

TrailNotes speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the “landscape” we are passing through in this trail-laced wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. *TrailNotes* is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we’re learning and doing.

ElderTalk: We Can Impact a Sphere of the Earth

ERIC BYROM

I remember high school and college chemistry classes and the experiments we did in those classes. One of my favorites was working with a supersaturated solution. The gist of it was that at higher temperatures, some substances will stay dissolved but when the temperature is lowered, the supersaturated solution will quickly form crystals when a solid was introduced to it. It was always interesting to see these crystals form rapidly to the solid.

This spring we are going through a study called “Gospel Saturation,” which deals with the idea of creating a movement of multiplication within our area of responsibility. What is our area of responsibility, one might ask? It is the sphere of this earth that we can impact. As I think of Grace Fellowship, our area of responsibility could be the school district in which we are located. Are we reaching the Madison school district for Christ and providing regular opportunities for the residents of Madison to hear and see the gospel demonstrated before them?

Along with this idea of an area of responsibility is the thought of a circle of influence. Our circle of influence includes the areas of relationship that we have impact upon on a regular basis. Some years ago, Matt Godsil referred to it with the 5 F’s: Factory, Family, Friends, Fellowship, and Fun. There are some circles where we most often relate to people and others where our influence is less. Our circles can fluctuate.

Several years ago, when I was evaluating my circle of influence, I realized that I did not have many people that would fall into the “Un” category within my circle of influence. This “Un” category includes The Unsaved, the Unchurched, and the Unconnected. My factory was the church, which included mostly Christians. My family also included mostly Christians. My friends were mostly Christians. Obviously, my fellowship was the same as my factory. Also, my fun, or interests, were mostly with Christian friends.

So, as a minister who was encouraging people at Grace Fellowship to be reaching out, I realized I needed to expand my influence within my responsibility in order to include more unsaved, unchurched or unconnected people that I could influence toward Jesus. I realized that the fun sphere was probably my best bet to do that. As I considered areas I enjoy that could connect me with people in the Madison school district, I realized that I like to play games.

Over a period of time, several others and I made overtures to start a game club at the Madison South Elementary and eventually in the Middle School. We found that lots of kids enjoyed and wanted to learn new games. In the process, they would start to share about their lives and build trust

(Continued on page 4.)

Asbury Professor: We’re Witnessing a ‘Surprising Work of God’

Why I’m hopeful about the revival breaking out in our chapel and its implications for the campus and beyond. TIM MCCALL – Feb. 13, 2023

Most Wednesday mornings at Asbury University are like any other. A few minutes before 10, students begin to gather in Hughes Auditorium for chapel. Students are required to attend a certain number of chapels each semester, so they tend to show up as a matter of routine. But this Wed. (Feb. 8) was different.



Asbury U. chapel is still packed on 2/13!

After the benediction, the gospel choir began to sing a final chorus—and then something began to happen that defies easy description. Students did not leave. They were struck by what seemed to be a quiet but powerful sense of transcendence, and they did not want to go. They stayed and continued to worship. They are still there.

(Continued on page 2.)

Asbury U. Revival *(Cont. from page 1)*

I teach theology across the street at Asbury Theological Seminary, and when I heard of what was happening, I immediately decided to go to the chapel to see for myself. When I arrived, I saw hundreds of students singing quietly. They were praising and praying earnestly for themselves and their neighbors and our world—expressing repentance and contrition for sin and interceding for healing, wholeness, peace, and justice.

Some were reading and reciting Scripture. Others were standing with arms raised. Several were clustered in small groups praying together. A few were kneeling at the altar rail in the front. Some were lying prostrate, while others were talking to one another, their faces bright with joy.

They were still worshipping when I left in the late afternoon and when I got back in the evening. They were still worshipping when I arrived early Thursday morning, and by mid-morning, hundreds were filling the auditorium again. I have seen multiple students running toward the chapel each day.

By Thursday evening there was standing room only. Students had begun to arrive from other universities: the U. of Ky., University of the Cumberlands, Purdue U., Mt. Vernon Nazarene U., Lee U., Georgetown College, Transylvania U., Cedarville U., and many others.

The worship continued through the day on Friday and, indeed, all through the night. On Saturday morning I had a hard time finding a seat; by evening the building was packed beyond capacity. Every night some students and others have stayed in the chapel to pray through the night. As of Sunday evening, the momentum shows no sign of slowing down.

Hundreds of students went out to share what happened with other schools.

But what many don't realize is that Asbury has an even more extensive history with revivals—including one that took place as early as 1905 and another as recent as 2006, when a student chapel led to four days of continuous worship, prayer and praise.

Many people say that in the chapel they hardly even realize how much time has elapsed. It is almost as though time and eternity blur together as heaven and earth meet. Anyone who has witnessed it can agree that something unusual and unscripted is happening.

As an analytic theologian, I am weary of hype and very wary of manipulation. I come from a background (in a particularly revivalist segment of the Methodist-holiness tradition) where I've seen efforts to manufacture "revivals" and "movements of the Spirit" that were sometimes not only hollow but harmful.

I do not want anything to do with that. And truth be told, this is nothing like that. There is no pressure or hype. There is no manipulation. There is no high-pitched emotional fervor.

To the contrary, it has so far been mostly calm and serene. The mix of hope and joy and peace is indescribably strange and, indeed, almost palpable—a vivid and incredibly powerful sense of *shalom*. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is undeniably powerful but also so gentle.

The holy love of the triune God is apparent, and there is an inexpressible sweetness and innate attractiveness to it. It is immediately obvious why no one wants to leave and why those who must leave want to come back as soon as they can. I know that God moves

in mysterious ways; Jesus tells us that "the Spirit blows where it will." And sometimes God does what Jonathan Edwards called "surprising work" and what John Wesley referred to as "extraordinary" ministry. I firmly believe that much of what is important and vital in the Christian life happens in the everyday moments—in the daily disciplines and liturgies (whether formal or informal), in-the-moment decisions to pursue righteousness, in acts of sacrificial love of neighbor, in prayers breathed in quiet desperation.

There is no doubt in my mind that God is present and active. Several students and recent alumni tell me that for many years they have been praying together for a move of God, and they are thrilled beyond words to see what is happening.

At lunch on Friday, my son Josiah found me and told me that he and his friends had been kneeling at the altar and praying together. There were four people in his group, and they were each praying in a different language. He later asked me, "Is this something like heaven will be?" I told him I thought it was, albeit the faintest reflections of what "no eye has seen, what no ear has heard." It is as if a tiny slice of heaven is meeting us here on earth.

The Gospel is not only true but also luminously wonderful and mysteriously beautiful. Every time I leave the chapel auditorium, I feel I have tasted and seen that the Lord is good!

THOMAS H. McCALL is Tennant Professor of Theology at Asbury Theological Seminary.

From CT Weekly
(used by permission)

Encho Sensei Kosuke Maki (1934-2023)
 円朝先生 真木浩介 (1934-2023)

At Home with Jesus

イエスと一緒に家にいる

DONNA KURTZ

Missions Chairman, Lori Barker notified GFC on February 20 through the prayer chain that our friend, Encho Sensei Maki from Japan had died. He was nearly 90 years of age.

“With a sad heart I share that our dear friend and brother, Mr. Maki, has passed on to his heavenly home. Praise God for the many he touched through his life of service. Please pray for the Lord to comfort the many who loved him here and in Japan, especially his wife, Tomoko; the church in Tamura; and those connected with the Wakakusa English program, the kindergarten and preschool.”

My first thought was, “I hope Karin was able to greet him!” Our daughter was the first of the Wakakusa English teachers. She loved Japan and Mr. and Mrs. Maki. Since she was the first and only solo teacher, she ate dinner with them every night.

Before she returned home at the end of her time there, we noticed that her handwriting had changed, and when she did return, it was obvious that so had her walking. She had developed a brain tumor which took her life two years later in 1988.

In Japan, Karin took koto lessons. A koto is an instrument about six feet long. It is played by a kneeling performer who plucks its strings. On one of his trips to Ohio, Mr. Maki brought Karin a huge gift—a koto! Karin enjoyed continuing to play, and it now has a treasured place in our music room. We remember Mr. Maki’s kindness every day.



.....
 “Encho Sensei” means
 “Head Teacher,” or
 “Principal”

 “Kosuke” means
 “To meet people,
 To help people”

 “Mr. Maki certainly lived
 up to the meaning of his
 name.”
 —Rebekah Stefaniuk
 2/22/23

“Goliath” Nethery met “David” Maki in Japan when he became Ray’s translator. Ray was there during his Campus Crusade days. Their friendship continued from those early times—and the nicknames stuck.

The Mr. Maki most of us never got to know:



...as “Chef” Maki
 -from the 1960s



...and still at it years later!
 Here he helps prepare a meal
 for the English Teachers.



...as a “sea captain”



...as an expert in
 Shotokan karate



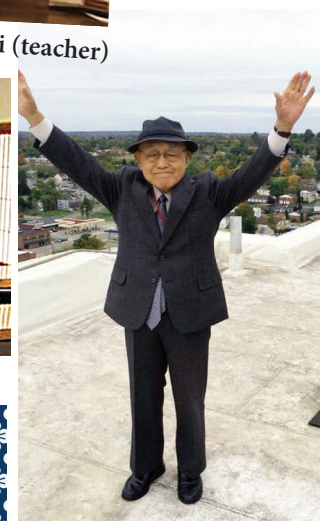
...as a lover of
 little children



...as Sensei (teacher)



...as pastor and preacher



Simply put:
 One Amazing Human Being!



Sayonara 左様なら
 Makisan...まきさん...
 until we meet again!
 また会うまで!

We Can Impact... *(continued from page 1.)*

with us. So, Reach Madison was born.

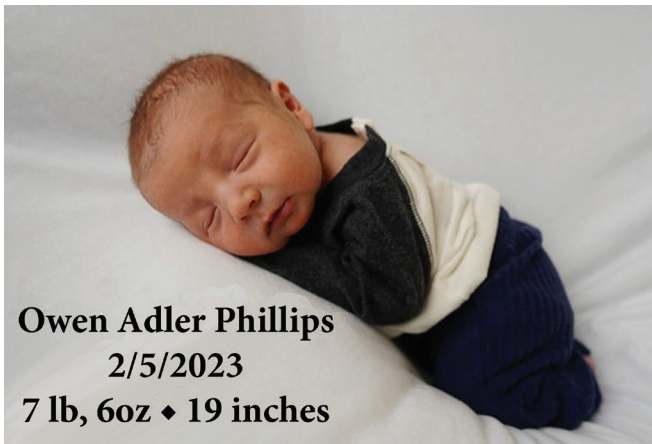
Fast forward four to five years, and now Reach Madison includes five other churches who are beginning to catch the vision of how we can work together to saturate the Madison School District with opportunities for the students to know Christians and see the Gospel demonstrated and explained to them.

The "Gospel Saturation" study focuses on how we can work together with other churches to saturate our area of responsibility with the Gospel in such a way that this "super-saturated" area results in a rapid multiplication of those who know Jesus in much the same way as the supersaturated solution in my chemistry experiments crystalized rapidly when a solid was introduced.

In such an environment, we could potentially see a massive revival or coming to Jesus Christ happen in our lifetimes. I am excited at the open door we have and at the prospect of working together for God's kindom to expand and explode in the Madison area. Let's work together for that vision and rejoice at what God will do!



Congratulations Steve and Pam Phillips: A New Grandson!



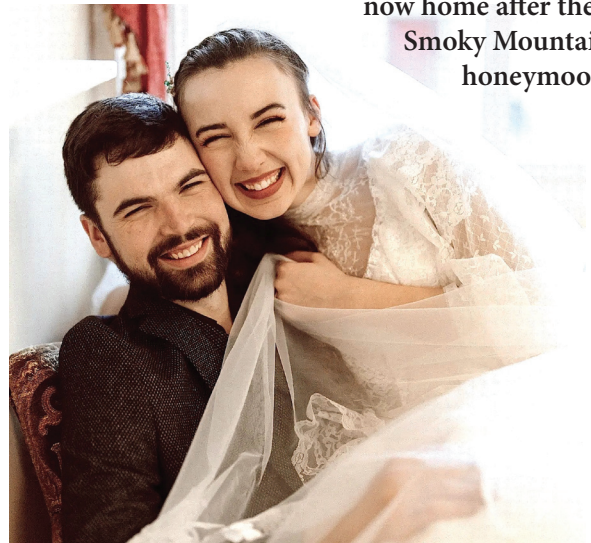
Owen Adler Phillips
 2/5/2023
 7 lb, 6oz ♦ 19 inches

Proud parents are Eric and Ashley Phillips. Big brother, Edison Eli is delighted with his baby brother.

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 419-526-4699 • gracefellowship01@gmail.com
 Eric Byrom Presiding Elder/ Pastor
 (A complete list of church functionaries will return next month)

Carol Heininger wed Jonathan Powell

on Feb. 4 at GFC. Jon Vega was the officiant. They're now home after their Smoky Mountain honeymoon.



March 2023

1-31 Community March of Prayer every evening from 6:00-8:00 pm in churches across the county. (Check email for the schedule and dates.)

3 OWLS meet at 8:30 am in the Multi-purpose Room
Connect Groups for all ages 6:30 to 8:00 pm every Wednesday.
Every Sunday: "Decluttering by Faith," 3-4:30, ladies' study, Upper Room

5 Elder Matt Godsil preaching:
 I Tim. 2:8-15

12 Pastor Eric Byrom preaching:
 I Tim. 3:1-13

13 GFC hosts the March of Prayer 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

19 Elder Jerry Mathias preaching:
 I Tim. 3:14-16

25 Women of Grace St. Patrick's Day
 Brunch begins at 10:30 am

26 Elder Jadaé Fox preaching:
 I Tim. 4:1-16

April 21-22: Table Fellowship Annual Conference in Toledo.