

## Belvidere Final Service..... 9-25-05

Barb and I have many pleasant memories of Belvidere. Our parents both have attended here. Barb's parents when the church was large and thriving.

My father was involved in the life of Belvidere for appo. 15 years. He served as moderator. Mom served as our reminder to always read the "Practical Points" in the S.S. booklet.

Dad was something of a maverick. He was very conservative in his beliefs and practices. Belvidere wasn't quite as conservative, but that was never an issue. Dad simply loved you and gently led you as a shepherd leads a flock.

That love was returned. Many of you have fond memories of Daddy and I am grateful to all of you for the way you loved and respected him.

Carol Hoover told me that when Dad was called to be moderator he refused. He was visited by Jim Oberdick and Jim Chronister, and when they refused to take no for an answer he agreed to try it.

As Paul Harvey says, "now you know the rest of the story".

Dad served as moderator from 1980 to 1988. He continued to attend and help in ministry till shortly before his stroke. He had a special place in his heart for young people. He and Dale Chronister shared the teaching of the young people's S.S. class.

Dad was a great mentor. He saw potential in young men. John Knapp and Jim Hoover were both invited to come to Belvidere and take up ministry.

At Pleasant Hill Dad mentored at least three ministers by asking for an assistant to be elected to share his preaching appointments with him.

Iverson Doll is our resident court jester sometimes. He keeps us smiling. He tells how one Sunday Dad was sitting in the bench when Iverson began to tweet like a bird. Dad could not figure out how that bird got into the service.

We can all take a lesson from Dad's faithfulness, his gentleness and his love. Iverson can also teach us with his love of humor and his ready smile.

My own involvement with this congregation goes back at least 25 years.

While we were still living in New York State, Dad would ask me to come and preach. That was long before I was licensed to preach.

Dad tried very hard to persuade us to come and join the group at Belvidere, but God had other plans.

Barb and I remember singing for special music together and as a family when the boys were young.

We weren't terrifically good, but Belvidere was a great place to learn.

Barb remembers playing the piano for your services.

We remember Darryl playing the organ and Sherry leading singing.

We remember Velma playing the piano.

During the years that Dad was here, Barb and I always sat up front with him and Mom.

During the early years of my ministry here, I taught prayer meeting downstairs.

I loved the annual candlelight services and the way you decorated the church for the season.

I remember when the pulpit was divided and when it was changed as it is today.

Barb and I would like to thank you all for allowing us to serve you.

Thanks for your love and fellowship.

May you go from this place into wider fields of service.

Remember your God will always go with you.

He will keep you and comfort you.

He will empower you for His service.

He will give you His love and comfort so you in turn can give that love and comfort to a hurting world.

Most of you know that Dad was a great lover of poetry.

He wrote a poem about the lovefeast service.

Allow me to share it with you...

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In Numbers 6, verse 23, the Lord told Moses to give Aaron and his sons a blessing for the sons of Israel. I like to picture Aaron spreading his arms over the people as they assembled at the tabernacle.

The blessing is in vv. 24-26, and I'd like to leave it with you as we all go from this place...

24The LORD bless you, and keep you;

25The LORD make His face shine on you,

And be gracious to you;

26The LORD lift up His countenance on you,

And give you peace.<sup>1</sup>

Amen.

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<sup>1</sup>*The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update*, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1996.