



THE MESSAGE BOARD
A Newsletter from
A. Roy Medley, General Secretary



Personal Reflections

Volume 4 – November 21, 2008

Faith—Family—Church—A Time for Thanksgiving

As Thanksgiving Day approaches, the country's mood is less than festive. This tough economic climate hangs over many Americans like the bleak rain cloud over Dogpatch denizen Joe Btfsplk from Al Capp's *Li'l Abner*.

We are pressed to look to the essentials—**faith, family and church**—for our source of thanksgiving.

Faith is bedrock. It shores us up when the bottom falls out. In crisis, it's Job's gritty faith that sustains us, not the glitzy, flimsy faith celebrated by religious sales folk who dress up greed in Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes and pander it as gospel. Job loses every gift but clings resolutely to faith in God's goodness. At times you can see the marks of his fingernails as he digs in to hold on. His faith carries him through because he loves most dearly, not the gifts, but the Giver. Faith trusts the Giver absolutely.

Family is good. The generations anchor us to the past and place our foot in the future. Family, with all its quirks, offers us belonging and identity, a place to nurture and be nurtured. Our family sat laughing around a table out-of-doors enjoying a leisurely meal in the waning days of summer. Our older son remarked, "It doesn't get any better than this." He was right.

Church plants the seed of faith, waters and grows it. Church offers us songs of praise and psalms of desolation sufficient to expose every reality to the blessing of God's presence. In Word spoken and living, we receive compass settings for life and the continual companionship we need as life jostles us and sometimes knocks us down. In cleansing waters, we die to death and fear. In bread and cup, we unite with Christ, the universe's deepest expression of love. In fellowship over after-church coffee, we bond and bless.

For these three things—**faith, family and church**—I thank you, O God.

Notable Events on Roy's Calendar

Prayer Matters

- **11/27/2008**
Thanksgiving Day – "Now Thank We All Our God"
- **12/6/2008**
Meeting with ABC Retirees, Jacksonville, FL
- **12/7/2008**
Preaching in Congregation – Jacksonville, FL
- **12/9/2008**
Meeting with Pastors from Malaysia, Valley Forge, PA
- **12/11/2008**
Retired General Secretary Edwin Tuller's 95th Birthday Celebration, Pittsburgh, PA
- **12/14/2008**
Preaching in Congregations – Chicago, IL

- Give thanks for the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches of Christ
- Give thanks for a blessed General Board meeting
- Pray for families living in shelters and on the streets
- Pray for sacrificial acts of mercy by Christians for persons in need
- Pray for strengthened family life
- Pray for those attempting to restore economic health
- Pray for the church in Asia
- Pray for ABCUSA mission work groups serving in the U.S. and around the world
- Pray for the 2009 Biennial Meeting in Pasadena, CA

American Baptists Serving as the Hands and Feet of Christ