



July 2006

*“Mobilizing Families
For God’s Kingdom Worldwide”*



Dear Friends in Christ,

On a beautiful Saturday in June, families and friends joined us for a bike tour of Gettysburg. Like many times before with college students and international students, I was the tour guide. As usual, the goal was to not only tell the story of the Battle of Gettysburg, but to also give some spiritual encouragement and challenge for us today. Since a number of people have asked for a copy of my notes, which until this letter have mostly only been in my head, we thought you would be blessed with even these brief summary thoughts . . .

3 Spiritual Lessons from the 3 Day “Battle of Gettysburg”

1. COMMITMENT (responsibility, duty, honor)

“At the time when kings go forth to battle . . . David stayed in Jerusalem.” ~ II Sam. 11:1

As the title of a famous children’s book says, the American Civil War was fought “Across Five Aprils.” From the firing on Fort Sumter in April 1861, to the assassination of President Lincoln on Good Friday in April 1865, more American blood was shed than ever in our history. To remember some of the major battles of the war, I use the acronym M.A.G.M.A. Magma is molten rock that flows from volcanoes, which is a symbolic image of the blood that flowed.

M - Manassas. 1861 (July 21) The first major battle of the war. Near Washington, DC.

A - Antietam. 1862 (Sept. 17) The worst single day of battle. Near Hagerstown, MD.

G - Gettysburg. 1863 (July 1-3) Casualties nearly totaled entire 12 year Vietnam War.

M - Monocacy. 1864 (July 9) “The battle that saved Washington.” Near Frederick, MD

A - Appomattox 1865 (Apr.19) Gen. Robert E. Lee surrenders, 4 days after Lincoln dies.

With great commitment to their respective causes, about 1/4 of all American men fought in the Civil War. Most battles were fought seasonally from Spring to Fall. David, on the other hand, in the verse above, “stayed in Jerusalem.” The next verse says that he soon was involved in grievous sin. There are battles worth fighting in life. Rather than shrinking back, answer God’s call to “stand in the gap” for God’s kingdom. And shrinking back can lead to other sin.

2. LOVE (biblical passion = what you are willing to die for)

“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.” ~John 15:13

Notably, the next thing Jesus said was, “You are My friends.” Pickett’s Charge, as it has come to be known, is one of the most spectacular examples in history when men marched shoulder to shoulder into the face of death *for one another & whom they love*. How about you?

3. FAITH (trust, hope, confidence)

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” ~Heb.11:1

With orders to “hold at all costs” and ammunition mostly gone, Col. Joshua Chamberlain on Little Roundtop gave his order to “fix bayonets” & charge. Their faith to follow Chamberlain’s command resulted in the miracle they had hoped for: the enemy was turned back. What steps of faith is your Commander calling you to? Obedience is the only sure path to hope revealed!

Strangers often listened in to my stories at Gettysburg. We hope they, and you, are blessed.

In Christ, *Bernie for the Bealls*

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Great Commission Families is a ministry program of Faith in the Family International



The Barry & Edith Beall Family - 1953

We will not conceal them from their children,
 But tell to the generation to come the praises of the Lord,
 And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done.

For He established a testimony in Jacob
 And appointed a law in Israel,
 Which He commanded our fathers
 That they should teach them to their children.

That the generation to come might know,
 Even the children yet to be born,
 That they may arise and tell them to their children.

That they should put their confidence in God
 And not forget the works of God,
 But keep His commandments.

~ Psalm 78:4-7

Grandchildren are the crown of old men,
 And the glory of sons is their fathers.”

~ Proverbs 17:6

Touching Two Centuries by Bernie Barry Beall, July 2006

Your life. “Threescore and ten. If by reason of strength, fourscore.”¹ But with a passion for multi-generational faithfulness, that can be ‘increased’ to tenscore, and beyond.

Consider this: It is not unusual for an average life to be touched by two centuries. For example, my father and my father’s father have had *significant* influence on my life, directly or indirectly. Though this grandfather died when I was under two, he knew me and touched my life in more ways than I know. Barry Ranson Beall was born in 1886. That’s 120 years ago. This year, our first grandchild is coming into the world. Lifespan is so unknowable for anyone, but there is good reason to believe that some of our grandchildren could live to the year 2086 (80 years from now). 1886 to 2086 is 200 years, two centuries.

It’s amazing to see how *your life* can be touched by, and touch, two full centuries. What have you learned? What are you passing along? 1. We learn from the past. 2. We look to the future. 3. But we live in the present. We only ever have the present. What we do with it, and *all* the lives we touch (whether or not we have descendants), means more than we can imagine.

And then there is eternity. “Life is a dot on the timeline of eternity. What will you do with your dot?”² Two months before my Dad passed away, he called me to tell me the serious medical news: it’s cancer, it’s fast. Then he said, ‘I always thought Jesus would come back, before I died. It looks like, I’m going home first.’”

That trust in Jesus (daily, practical, pervasive) is part of my heritage, the heritage I want to pass on to my children and grandchildren. A heritage that not only touches two centuries, but of infinitely more importance, it touches eternity.

*“The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;
 Indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me.” ~ Psalm 16:6*

¹ See Psalm 90:10 ² Blair Cook, Campus Crusade for Christ @ Penn State

P.S. These are reprints of a card we gave out at our recent Beall Reunion. There were over 100 people there. Most were descendants of Barry & Edith Beall (see photo). My dad, who passed away in 1997, is on the back right and was the 10th child. Six are still living. I wrote this devotional for our reunion. Enjoy!