Aging and Communicating:
the changes
the challenges
the opportunities
Drive through the lush and rain-forested city of Corvallis, Oregon, and you’re bound to come across some of the handiwork of Francis and Betty Johnson. Francis, 82, is a master builder, a jack-of-all-trades who has maintained Oregon State University buildings, put up homes, and used his coarse, meaty hands to drag steelhead and sturgeon out of Oregon’s waterways. Betty, 85, is a social servant who has started six nonprofit organizations, written grant proposals and lobbied legislators, working tirelessly so that seniors can live independently in their own homes. Together, the Johnsons are a whirlwind for good, married for 55 years and still rapidly turning.

The Johnson Hotel
Throughout the Corvallis branch and beyond, the Johnsons’ big, barn-red house is known as the Johnson Hotel. Francis and Betty have welcomed families, transients, students, parish members and community members from Hawaii, New Orleans, Saskatoon and South Bend. A single man stayed with them for two and a half years and a homeless woman moved in one New Year’s Eve, carrying her possessions in eight plastic bags. Their only regret is that they never kept a guest book.

For four months in 2001, the Johnsons hosted John and Mary Lou Carey and their three children. The Johnsons and Careys had been neighbors for years, sharing chores and gardens, cars, a well, and even joint ownership of a cow. Betty likes to refer to “the conveyor belt” between their two homes. However, seven years ago that close sharing nearly came to an end.

The Careys own a two-story duplex, but health problems had made

Throughout the Corvallis branch, the Johnsons’ house is known as the Johnson Hotel, where travelers, strangers and families find first-rate food and friends.
walking the stairs troublesome for Mary Lou. John tried to come up with ways to expand the main floor so they could live there comfortably, but he couldn’t think of a way to make it work. He was heartbroken at the thought of moving. Then, in the car on the way to a men’s retreat, Francis had an idea.

“The Holy Spirit zapped him,” John recalls. “Francis asked if anyone had an envelope and he sketched out the remodeling of our house.”

That sketch became the plan. Later that day, Francis pulled John aside. “I’ll help you every step of the way,” he said. “You can come live with us.”

John and Mary Lou moved into the Johnsons’ living room, stretching a sheet across the doorway for some privacy. Before and after John’s workdays at Hewlett-Packard, he and Francis worked on the house.

“We couldn’t afford to hire a contractor,” John says. “We subcontracted out the skilled parts of the job, but Francis and I did the plumbing, electrical and flooring ourselves. He was the brains of the operation. He gave us a garage, living room and dining room area and a brand new kitchen. He created a paradise for us.”

**Constructing Community**
The Johnsons moved to Corvallis from Kansas City, Missouri, in 1970, carrying their four children along with them. They wanted to leave the big city behind, choosing Corvallis because it was close to water, close to a university (Oregon State) and within reach of classical music and opera venues in Portland. They bought a Coast to Coast hardware store and started attending St. Mary’s, the only Catholic Church in town.

One Sunday, they missed morning mass and instead went to an evening student mass, where Fr. Charlie Harris was preaching (see p. 6).

“His homily just blew us away,” Francis remembers. “After that, we would try to find out which mass he was going to be at, so we could hear him preach.”

The Johnsons enjoyed Charlie’s preaching, but they didn’t go to the charismatic prayer meetings he was leading at their parish. Then one day in 1976, they attended a fortuitous outdoor birthday party with some of the prayer meeting folks.

“Some of the men standing around the fire were talking about forming a community,” Francis recalls. “I walked away because what they were saying sounded like a foreign language. But later I came back and started listening a little more.”

The next Saturday, Francis met with Ted Gregg to learn more about community. “We talked for about three hours. I told him we wanted to be a part of that. Then I talked it over with Betty. The rest is history.”

They started in 1977. Charlie Harris, the Johnsons, Hackenbrucks, Nathmans, Taylors, Wagners and a few other families bought 12 acres of rolling farmland together, just beyond the Corvallis city limits. They planned to build houses and live close together, calling this protocity-building effort Christian Village. Many of the men were contractors or skilled workers who put up their own houses and helped one another along the way. Francis remembers a roofing party that involved 22 men and boys, beginning 8:00 a.m. and ending at noon with a completed roof.

Sweat cemented the Johnsons’ relationships with their new brothers and sisters. Sweat cemented the Johnsons’ relationships with their new brothers and sisters.
Francis and Chris Taylor started Christian Construction Company together with Ted and Chris’s brother Frank. The company oversaw construction of five out of 10 Christian Village houses and then went on to build more homes around Corvallis.

Fr. Charlie Harris moved into Christian Village in 1977, taking up residence in an old farmhouse next door to the Johnsons. He and Francis grew to be friends, fishing and gardening together and even learning to keep bees. The Johnsons and Charlie celebrated anniversaries and birthdays together with pies and home-cooked meals, and did so until his death in 1988.

“He and I were close brothers,” Francis says.

Helping Seniors Live at Home
When the Johnsons were running their hardware store, Betty felt like a fish out of water. She says she resigned from the job because she “couldn’t tell one kind of paint from another.” In 1972, she got a job as the director of the Area Agency on Aging, developing services for senior citizens in three counties.

“When I started, there was almost nothing available for older people in health and social services,” she remembers. She drafted a plan for a senior meals program and helped start a transportation service called Dial-A-Bus. Later, she and others organized one of the first Hospice chapters in the state, providing home health care for many. All three programs are still going strong.

“The most satisfying thing to me was that we were building a long-term care system that allowed people to stay at home,” she says. “I’m the first person who will send people to nursing homes if they really need it, but I try to help people stay in their own homes as long as they can.”

Betty and Francis have expanded that effort since their retirements in 1987. Betty helped start Volunteer Interfaith Caregivers in 1986 and still directs the organization. The board is actively trying to replace her, but they can’t find anyone to take on her load. The 200 or so volunteers she coordinates visit elderly residents in their homes, take them grocery shopping, drive them to medical appointments and even build wheelchair ramps for them. Francis oversaw the construction of more than 50 wheelchair ramps in 2007 alone, leading crews of retired men who

In the late 1970s, Francis Johnson and other Corvallis branch handymen such as Terry Hackenbruck and Chris Taylor helped build Christian Village, a cluster of 10 homes on some former farmland just outside Corvallis.
call him “Boss” and like to eat the cookies he bakes on their breaks.

Together Betty, Francis and others dreamed up, promoted, fundraised for and, in 2002, finished building Corvallis Caring Place, an assisted-living center for 42 residents. Francis served on the board until recently, and Betty is still a board member. Caring Place is the only assisted-living facility in Corvallis that accepts residents on Medicaid, but it doesn’t look or feel institutional. Residents sit around chatting cheerily in the large, naturally lit dining room. They get their hair done in the beauty salon and tend flowers in the garden.

Betty’s work with seniors got her interested in health-care reform. In 1991, she started Mid-Valley Health Care Advocates to work to bring health insurance and high-quality health care to the 600,000 Oregonians who are uninsured. Today she travels regularly to Salem and Portland to meet with other advocates. She’s on a committee that’s drafting sections of a health-care reform bill they hope will go before the Oregon legislature in 2009.

Though Francis is less active now—he suffers from chronic headaches—Betty still volunteers 50 hours a week. Her schedule is a tour de force: on a recent Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. she found out that she was expected to give a presentation on health-care reform the very next day in Portland. That evening, she stayed up talking to Francis until 10:30, and then began typing her presentation, finishing up around 2:00 a.m. The next morning, she traveled 90 miles to Portland, gave her presentation, and came back in time to welcome houseguests.

Betty’s activities bring about 20 e-mails each day. She responds to most of them, checking her messages throughout the day, even just before bed.

**Love Like Breathing**

Fifty-five years into their marriage, Francis and Betty are still very much in love. Late in the evenings, you can find them playing dominoes together at the dining room table or sitting on the sofa eating popcorn and cookies, surrounded by Francis’s fishing posters. “Some people ask us if we ever had a second honeymoon,” says Francis chuckling, “We’re still living off of our first.” Of course, they worry about each other—Francis about Betty’s frenetic pace, Betty about Francis’s headaches.

If you ask the Johnsons what keeps this whirlwind turning, you’ll get short and straightforward replies. “Fundamentally we both love the Lord and we know he loves us,” says Betty. “The next step is, How do you love others? To me it’s just like breathing.”

Francis simply quotes Scripture, “Christ lives in me.”

Betty adds, “We have the support of our brothers and sisters who love us. That helps us to fill up our tank, so that we can continue to reach out.”

“**We both love the Lord and we know he loves us. How do you love others? To me it’s just like breathing.”** —Betty Johnson
This year marks the 20th anniversary of the death of Fr. Charlie Harris, a physicist, teacher, blower on the fire of the Holy Spirit, founding leader of the Corvallis branch, early member of the community’s board of governors, gardener, classical music lover and baker of oversized pies. He was a fisher of men who liked to ask the lads he caught on his line a question (in connection with the pies), “Are you a man or a mouse?” No matter their answer, his strong hands always dished up a titanic helping.

Charlie was born into a farming family in Plymouth, Indiana, and entered the high-school seminary at the University of Notre Dame. In 1943, he was ordained a Holy Cross priest. Known as “the smart one” in a class that included legendary Notre Dame president Fr. Ted Hesburgh, he studied physics at the University of Michigan and at Yale. He took courses from some of the 20th century’s finest thinkers: Enrico Fermi, Kurt Gödel, Jacques Maritain and G.K. Chesterton.

While teaching at Notre Dame in the early 1960s, he met fellow physicist Paul DeCelles, and soon the two were working together to spread personal knowledge of the Lord via the Cursillo movement.

In 1967, Paul was among some faculty and students at Notre Dame who were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Soon after, he went to Oregon to visit Charlie, who was then an academic dean at the University of Portland. Paul stayed up until 2:00 in the morning telling Charlie and a handful of other young men all about it, ending by praying with them all.

Beginning then, Charlie had a new love in his life, and he drove up and down Oregon’s highways telling people about it, jumpstarting Catholic charismatic renewal in the Pacific Northwest. Once, on his way to a retreat, his car sputtered to a halt, its gas tank drained. He got out, put his hands on the hood, prayed, and then started the car and drove the rest of the way—60 miles, as Paul remembers.

He moved to Corvallis in 1969, serving as a chaplain to students at Oregon State University. Phil Monaco (Corvallis) shared meals with him in those days, and remembers his uproarious good humor. For example, a banner hung on the wall next to his table: “He welcomed sinners and ate with them.” Charlie led prayer meetings and delivered convicting sermons that won him repeat hearers such as Francis and Betty Johnson (see p. 2), Roman and Jean Schmitt (Corvallis) and many others.

Like others in the Corvallis prayer groups, Charlie wanted to live a more intense community life, so he began giving teachings about community. He was prolific, developing talks on every topic: gifts of the Holy Spirit, personal evangelism, Scriptural meditations, the love of God, friendship and prayer. His teachings shaped and inspired the men and women who formed The Vine and the Branches community in December, 1972.

The young covenant community accepted an invitation to become the People of Praise’s first branch in February, 1982. Though he tried to retire several times, and often joked about retiring, his services were very much in demand. He kept going in spite of painful arthritis and two artificial hips, giving retreats and maintaining extensive counseling, healing and deliverance ministries, as well as canning his own peaches and growing most of his own food. On January 4, 1988, he died of a heart seizure.

Twenty years later, his memory is still alive and his personality—as titanic as his pies—is still missed in Corvallis and among his friends. Shortly after his death, Phil Monaco wrote, “He played cards with us, he fished with us, he fed us, he bounced our babies on his knees. He counseled us, married us, prayed over us, corrected us and taught us. He was a father to us all.”

When he couldn’t catch any fish, Father Harris went fishing for men, and in this case caught Bill Kinkley.
Jesus Was Human

When Christians have been interested enough to take the Incarnation seriously, they have had difficulty keeping both terms in balance: Jesus is God and Jesus is man. There is certainly something very appealing about the helplessness of a baby, but we overlook the reality. The infant in our Christmas crib is so antiseptically clean we never think of him messing his diapers. He is so wondrously silent that we never think of his sharp cry of hunger in the middle of the night until a tired and weary mother nursed him.

The Gospel tells us that Jesus is worn out from a journey and he sits by a well, thirsty and tired. He is worn out by the crowds and falls asleep in a boat. He is hungry and there are no figs on the tree—and we think it is all kind of a put-on to show us that he could share our life, but that it never really bothered him, because he was God.

We hurt when we are not understood, but we think Jesus is unaffected when the Jews, his very own people, tell him that he casts out the devil because he is working with the prince of devils.

We are crushed when our love is rejected, but when his is rejected and he says with sadness, “Will you also go away?”, we think that this was just an opportunity to get a profession of faith from his apostles.

We experience devastating loneliness when friends leave us or turn their backs on us, but somehow we

while the apostles often had difficulty realizing that he was God, they never had any doubt that he was a man.

Cheerfulness

Cheerfulness is the very best weapon against temptations. For a moment think back over the temptations you have yielded to. How many times did you give in when you were joyous and light-hearted, bubbling with energy and filled with enthusiasm for life? Have our failures not come more often when we were depressed and discouraged, when seeming failure has dogged the whole day and nipped at our heels, when we have been morose and bitter or filled with self-pity? “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet various temptations” (Jas. 1:2-3) and they will not harm you.

God Suffers

What does God get out of loving us? Heartbreak and suffering. You know, I think there is no greater suffering than to love people and to see them willfully and deliberately turn to evil that warps and twists their lives.
Jesus and His Friends

For three years, the apostles were almost constant companions of Jesus. They shared many things: the festivity of a wedding over a cup of wine, the joy of a great catch of fish after a night of fruitless labor, the fresh, clear air as they walked the borderland of desert and mountain, the danger of a storm at sea. It was that profound friendship that made them live in him and he in them. . . . The apostles came close to Jesus not simply because they prayed together. Rather, they prepared for and entered into that human-divine relationship because they had shared all things human.

God’s Love

We are never really convinced of God’s love for us . . .

Let me prove this to you.

When you first heard that God loves you, did you break into tears, great prolonged sobs, that in spite of the way in which you have treated Father, Son and Holy Spirit there is but one word they have ever addressed to you: I have loved you with an everlasting love?

When you first heard this statement were you skeptical, and as you thought it over were you seized with a delirium of joy and happiness that you couldn’t contain and, like the man in Acts, you went about “leaping and praising God”?

When you first heard this statement did you immediately pass out, as if you were totally mind-blown?

I have a strong suspicion that none of these things happened, because based on our own experience God’s love seems so unreal, and because most of us think we’re rather unlovable . . .

The almost incomprehensible thing is that God stands at the door of the human heart and knocks, with all the dignity of a beggar. He takes the initiative and incurs the possibility of rejection. His attitude is one of waiting expectancy: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock” (Rev. 3:20). God has first loved us, indeed loved us with a creative and everlasting love. Love, however, is not friendship, for friendship is a mutual love, a mutual commitment. And so there must be a response.
Jesus Was Tired

Jesus’ body must have been as hardened as that of the trained athlete. His sheer physical endurance suggests that. After a long evening healing and comforting the sick, he would rise very early, go out into a wilderness place and pray. He took an obvious and healthy interest in nature. He loved to spend time on the hills and about the lake. After a long day’s work he would climb one of the hills or go with his disciples for a row on the Sea of Galilee. His whole public life was that of travel, over the mountains and valleys from Galilee to Judea. The roads were dusty in summer and ankle deep in mud in winter. He made these journeys with simple provisions. “Take nothing for your journey, neither staff, nor writing paper, nor bread, nor money, neither have coats” (Lk. 9:3). Often he knew hunger and thirst. “Give me to drink” (Jn. 4:8), he says to the Samaritan woman.

His last journey from Jericho to Jerusalem is fantastic. Under a burning sun, along a road which was at best cart tracks, through a desolate, rocky waste, he had to go up some 3,600 feet in his six-hour climb. And the most astonishing thing is that he wasn’t even tired. That very evening he took part in a dinner that Lazarus and his sisters had prepared for him.

His public life was spent for the most part in the open and exposed to the rigors of the climate. “The foxes have holes and the birds have nests but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (Lk. 9:58). Many, many times he spent the night in the open, often eating a handful of grain as he passed a field, or a cluster of grapes from a vineyard for his meal. He would be thoroughly tired and could fall asleep in a storm. Yes, and be awakened, too, and grasp the situation and deal with it without blowing his cool. There was something, indeed, of his great ancestor David about him . . . in his strength and vigor, his ability to lead men, his tenderness, his love.

Becoming Friends

To initiate a friendship is to begin something new, and despite our tradition of pioneering, few of us are pioneers. Moreover, it is to begin something and we do not know where that something will lead. It is a step into the unknown, a step in faith.

Takes Time

One must spend time to make friends and, above all, this needs to be a relaxed time. A quick telephone call, an hour between planes, may sustain contact but it will not deepen friendship. Friendship needs time to unfold—by an open fire, beneath the stars on a camping trip, over a beer at the end of a fishing trip—when no engagement presses and friends can be for one another. Great friendship ripens slowly.

And Produces Presence

Friends desire to be together. . . . Being together, being present to each other is something more than physical proximity. We sit beside a stranger on a plane or bus. We may say “hello,” exchange a few commonplace remarks, pick up a newspaper or book and be totally unmindful of the person with whom we are sharing this cramped seating area. To be present is to think of the other often, to love always, to serve when and where possible. . . .

I have often noted that, although distance prevents communication, people can simultaneously share the same thoughts, feel the same impulses, experience the same emotions. . . . Being present may not always seem so spontaneous. It may even have to result from deliberate effort, but it does not seem possible to care for each other and not to be concerned to be present to each other. As Paul says, “I long, with the deepest Christian love and affection, for your companionship” (Phl. 1:8).
H arold Meeks (South Bend) turned 80 on June 15. Recently, he had to get new glasses and a doctor’s letter to renew his driver’s license—a hassle he didn’t have to go through at 39. But along with health hurdles and outright challenges, he sees blessings coming his way as he ages.

“Getting older gives me more time for prayer. And health impediments remind me to rely on God as his child. Most young and healthy folks can rely on themselves for whatever they need. Anything that causes me to rely on God—even for my next breath—is a positive thing. Also, being older, I’ve accumulated more insights about God through the years.”

The average age of People of Praise members is trending upward. Fifty-four percent of us are age 51 or older, and 14 percent of us are beyond retirement age, according to 2006 numbers. If Harold’s experience is typical, then the whole community stands to reap much spiritual fruit from the lengthened prayer times and deeper knowledge of the Lord of our older members as these trends continue, not to mention accumulated wisdom in other areas.

Besides the blessings, aging brings with it physical changes. Senses weaken and reflexes slow naturally, even apart from sicknesses, accidents and injuries. Dressing, grooming, cooking, eating and more relational tasks like shopping, paying bills and making doctors’ appointments can become burdensome. In the U.S., about one-fourth of people 65 to 74, and half of those over 75, report difficulty in these areas.

Natural changes also impact older people’s abilities to perceive and communicate. “One way to get a sense of what it’s like for someone to grow older is to consider your own senses. Imagine a lessening of hearing, weakening of eyesight, difficulties with balance and depth perception that affect mobility,” says Bernarda Zenker (Servant Branch), a physician and expert in alternative remedies.

As an experiment, consider wearing a pair of glasses of the wrong prescription to alter your sense of space. Try wearing earplugs to muffle your hearing. Imagine what it would be like if your fingers didn’t feel the steam rising from the stove or you couldn’t answer the doorbell before the visitor walked away.

Here’s some more information on the impact that natural aging can have on communication:
Hearing
Twenty to 30 percent of people have hearing loss by the time they’re 65, and 40 to 50 percent suffer hearing loss by the time they’re 75. For many, hearing loss begins after age 30. Of course, no one likes losing any hearing! Experts say that it’s normal for people to suffer through 10 years of hearing loss before even bringing up the subject with doctors. Hearing loss is usually gradual, with aging people and even their doctors frequently unaware of it. Instead, many compensate by turning up the volume of the television, unconsciously tilting their heads toward sound or by asking for statements to be repeated.

In addition to hearing loss, many people begin to experience a sensitivity to pitch when they’re around 50 or 55. That means they might not recognize words with higher-frequency consonants. Nursing experts say that it can help to speak to an older person in lower tones, projecting from the diaphragm. Shouting can raise the pitch of words, making them more difficult to decipher, not easier.

Speech and Movement
Some changes in the body affect a person’s physical ability to speak. Voices often become deeper or shakier due to decreased respiration or changes to the voice box. Some bodies produce more mucus, leading to frequent throat-clearing. Others produce less saliva, which, when combined with weakened facial muscles, can affect pronunciation. Voices often change in their quality or tone as people age.

The aging person’s body may also be weakened in ways that make movement more difficult. Speed and accuracy of movement decrease, creating a greater risk of falling and communication difficulties besides. Older people may have less ability to add physical cues like talking with the hands to make their meaning clearer.

For obvious reasons, people with trouble speaking or gesturing may avoid or withdraw from conversation. Nursing experts say that a relaxing environment with minimal distractions can make a difference. Patient listening that avoids correcting speech mistakes can also encourage someone with vocal difficulties to say more.

Sight
Ninety-five percent of people over age 65 need glasses. Older people are more likely to be far-sighted, leading to jokes about “print size getting smaller” over time or about arms that are “shorter now than they used to be.” As we age, the lenses of our eyes becomes less flexible. Seventy percent less light reaches the retina, and the eyes tire more easily.

They are also more sensitive to light and glare. Aging eyes can have trouble seeing in low-light conditions and can have difficulty differentiating colors, especially in the blue-green range.

Obviously, sight is important for reading letters and newspapers. But it’s also important for catching the unspoken side of a personal encounter—smiles, frowns, winks, nods and leans. Seventy percent of all sensory information comes from our eyes.

Nursing experts say it’s important to position objects—including yourself, if you’re talking to a person with diminishing eyesight—within the visual field. If a person also suf-
data that older people can take in, they may be better at problem-solving.

“A broad attention span may enable older adults to ultimately know more about a situation and the indirect message of what’s going on than their younger peers,” notes Dr. Lynn Hasher in a recent New York Times article, “An Older Brain Really May Be a Wiser Brain.” “We believe that this characteristic may play a significant role in why we think of older people as wiser.”

What Does It All Mean?
Aging raises interesting and important questions about our life together as the People of Praise. How should our community meetings change as more of our members experience hearing loss? Many elderly people are much better at hearing in close-up, one-on-one encounters than in large group gatherings. Should that fact impact our meetings?

How will we handle the growing numbers of people who may not be able to drive to community events? Will we follow in the footsteps of our 85-year-old sister Betty Johnson (see p. 2), and become experts at helping elderly people live at home for as long as possible? Will our city-building efforts help us to address these challenges?

Committees of younger and older brothers and sisters in South Bend and Servant Branch are already discussing questions like these, and more widespread conversation may be on the way throughout the community. It’s important to remember that this article is about trends. One size does not fit all. Obviously, there is no universal experience of aging, and love doesn’t use categories or see exclusively through the eyes of statistics.

St. Paul says that nothing can separate us from the love of God, and that certainly applies to reduced eyesight, hearing or mobility! (Harold Meeks points out that the reverse is more likely true.) It may be challenging to overcome the natural separations and the challenges to communication that accompany aging, but they create opportunities for us to live up to our covenant with a love that lasts for all of life. ■
On March 22, watched over by his beloved wife Mary Ellen, his family, his large extended family and his People of Praise family, our brother Dave Naylor died and went to be with our Father.

John David Naylor loved the Lord, loved the community and delighted in music. He was a quiet man in most respects, but whenever he sang, his Irish tenor voice rang out strong, clear and pure. Dave was dedicated to his family and a loyal friend.

He was born in Mobile on October 20, 1945, and lived there all his life, growing up in a large, antebellum-style house. Next door was the Holley family, and in January, 1967, Dave married his childhood neighbor Mary Ellen Holley. Their son John was born in late 1967, Paul in 1970, Holley in 1973 and Robby in 1975.

Dave spent most of his career working for industrial supply companies. He stuck with it despite heat and unpleasant working conditions because he had a family to care for.

“Steadfast” and “persevering” are words that describe him well.

Dave spent 38 years in the Coast Guard Reserve, which may be a record in Mobile. Robby recalls the hour-long rides with his dad to the Dauphin Island Coast Guard Base where they delivered meals. They would listen to the oldies station and sing at the top of their lungs, even if they didn’t know the words!

For 10 years or so, while his sons were in Boy Scouts, Dave served as an assistant Scoutmaster and later as a Scoutmaster. He spent 13 years as a member of the Sheriff’s Flotilla, a volunteer organization that performs search and rescue missions on Mobile waterways. Even if a distress call came in moments before bedtime, Dave dutifully went out to man a boat or an on-shore station.

He and his sons watched Auburn football games and always donned their Auburn caps. They spent summer weeks at the Naylor beach house where Dave and his lifelong friend Mike often played guitars until the wee hours.

Dave sang in several choirs at St. Dominic Parish, including the folk choir, and he took every chance to share People of Praise songs with choir members.

In the mid-‘80s, Mary Ellen attended a prayer meeting sponsored by the Mobile branch, and later decided to attend a Life in the Spirit Seminar. She told Dave about it, but he declined, so she went without him. Then, to her great surprise, she heard him introducing himself to others there—he’d changed his mind. The Naylors came underway in January, 1987, and made the covenant on February 8, 1998.

Dave served in branch music ministry, and did all he possibly could to help the music run well. He had great fun on men’s retreats, staying up late singing bluegrass and old-time gospel standards. Always ready with a hug and greeting for each of us, he was easy-going and good-humored, with an endearing chuckle.

He used his Scouting and outdoor skills to lead a young boys’ group at our regional People of Praise Delta Camp (which his grandson John Thomas attended). With his easy-going patience, he was in his element there, loving every moment.

The Naylor family suffered a major blow in 1998, with their son John’s unexpected death from a stroke. As hard and dark as those days were, Dave and Mary Ellen remained stalwart and faith-filled, and soon began caring for their grandchildren. The last few years, Dave and Mary Ellen moved in with ill and aging family members to care for them.

In 2007, doctors discovered asbestosis in Dave’s lungs. He continued as best he could—reading Scripture, playing (and mostly losing at) dominoes with his men’s group. He stayed hope-filled and was open to all prayers.

His life was an overpowering example of the kind of service the Lord asks of us: “But the man who . . . perseveres, and is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, such a man shall be blessed in what he does” (Jas. 1:25).
The Action division is back for a seventh summer of work in Allendale, along with a first-ever effort in Indianapolis. The first team of summer volunteers arrived in Allendale on June 2. They’ve already been hard at work on home-repair projects for neighbors, and a summer day camp for local kids. This year is the first that teams will keep the day camp running all summer long—previous efforts have lasted just two weeks. Camp leader Jeanette Zimmel says volunteers will be teaching Bible stories to neighborhood children, using skits and other creative learning devices, as well as leading a variety of games and crafts. Altogether about 90 people are expected to travel to Allendale this summer.

In July, two Action teams totalling about 30 people will travel to Indianapolis to begin renovating a house purchased by the People of Praise in May. The house is in a neighborhood near the joint campus of Indiana University and Purdue University, and close to other houses occupied by our Indianapolis missionaries. The missionaries will be spending the summer doing evangelistic work in several South Side neighborhoods and hosting prayer meetings, meals, men’s and women’s meetings and children’s activities. Photos and videos from these Action and missionary efforts are being posted on the Internet at www.citybuilder.org.

Isaiah for Allendale

A new six-minute video about our work in Allendale has been making its way around the community and beyond, via e-mail and the Internet. The video is a recording of an event that took place in Shreveport last November. Dr. Ricky Moore, a Baptist minister and the pastor of Sunrise Baptist Church, read a poem about our work in Allendale (see the March, 2006, V&B) to his congregation, with Allendale missionaries and a small video-production crew on hand. To watch the video, go to www.youtube.com and search for “Isaiah for Allendale,” or you can find a link to the video on the home page of www.peopleofpraise.org.
LifeNotes
This page is the place to spread the word about key events and milestones, new babies, adoptions, college graduations, awards (academic or work-related), major promotions, accomplishments (sports, professional, hobby), retirement or job changes. Send items to Tom Noe at veritas@trinityschools.org.
When in doubt, send it in!

- Congratulations to Chris Dietzen (Bloomington, MN), upon his appointment to the Minnesota State Supreme Court.
- Congratulations to Michael Couch, son of Martin and Beth Couch (South Bend), who attained the rank of Eagle Scout at a court of honor on April 2. Martin was on leave from military duty in Iraq and was able to attend the ceremony.
- David and Jessica Hagens (Bloomington, MN) want us all to rejoice with them in God’s gift of Amelia Lea, born March 12.
- Paul and Grace Marie Rose have been transferred from the Colorado Springs branch to the New Orleans branch, effective upon their arrival there.
- Eric and Kristin Heintzelman (South Bend) are spreading the glad tidings of the arrival of Justin Patrick, who was born on March 16. Congratulations to community brothers and sisters who have recently graduated with college or postgraduate degrees:
  - Julie Conroy, Ph.D. in church history, specializing in early modern Catholicism, Catholic University of America. Her dissertation is titled, “A Preservative against Popery: The Use of Late Seventeenth-Century Polemical Works to Discourage Conversions from the Church of England.”
  - Joan Pingel, Master’s of Science and Instruction in educational leadership, Louisiana Tech University.
  - Catherine Bulger, B.A. in English literature/history, Saint Mary’s College.
  - Margaret DeCelles, B.A. in modern European history, University of Chicago.
  - Doug Long, B.S. in business (last January), St. Mary’s University of Minnesota.
  - Gina Massa, B.A. in American history, University of Chicago.
  - Therese McNichol, B.A. in theater and performing arts, George Mason University.
  - Theresa McNiff, B.S. in psychology and family health, Northwestern College.
  - Ed Preuss, B.A. in finance, University of Notre Dame.
  - Melissa Rader, B.S. in biology, Saint Mary’s College.

From the Executive Office
Servant Branch:
Mary Cracraft was released from the covenant of the People of Praise on March 31, 2008.

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