

History of Blue Mountain Community Church, Part 1a

January 3, 1981 to 2000

1979 - Rick and Nancy moved back to PA from CA

- Graduated Fuller Seminary in Pasadena CA
- Pastored denominational church for one year in triple parish Leighton, Parryville and Bowmanstown
- Denomination and Rick mutually agreed he didn't fit



1980-81

- Rick and Nancy lived in a camper and tent while building a log house in the woods
- They started a Bible study in a neighbors home July 1980
- Nov. 1980 - God told Rick to start a church - disbanded bible study
- Put ad in paper for first service January 3, 1981







1981-82

- First service held in Bowmanstown cottage - 18 adults and 11 children
- Outgrew cottage quickly - went to Palmerton Borough Hall -
- Moved to Hutz's bar on Lehigh Street
- Built first church building on Rick and Nancy's property summer of 1982 - now our lobby, offices, kitchen, welcome room & bathrooms



1982 - 85

- Church grew to 150 in attendance, three services
- 1985
 - Rick & Nancy gift land to the church
 - Started Christian school - church broke up - went down to 50
 - Pastor Rick did a 30 day fast and came back with direction from the Lord to build a bigger sanctuary



1986-89

- New sanctuary built debt free by congregation
- Jen Blose baptized
- Cliff Eckhart baptized

With faith and commitment, a church rises

By PATTIE MIHALIK

Money makes the world go round. Or so they say.

Whoever coined that maxim would be surprised to see what's going on at Sonlife Full Gospel Church, Palmerton R.1.

It isn't money that's making the world go round at the Palmerton Church. It's love and commitment.

There, on a recent chilly day, dozens of "construction workers" hauled and pounded, never ceasing in their work until the framework for a new church

building stood silhouetted against the autumn sky.

A crane operator who watched the workers was impressed with their speed and diligence. "I see a lot of construction crews," he said, "but I never see workers as efficient as this."

Indeed, the scene at Sonlife looked like an Amish barnraising. There was an intensity about the work, but there was also a singleness of purpose and a comradeship that was reminiscent of the spirit that surrounds an Amish barnraising.

According to the crane operator, it would normally take at least 11 hours to raise the trusses. It took the crew at Sonlife a little over five hours.

"I've been working on construction crews for 12 years. I've never worked on one like this," said Walter T. Stenger, as he worked along with the others.

What impressed the crane operator, Stenger, and the other tradesmen who delivered supplies was not only the speed and efficiency of workers — it was

their attitude as well.

"I never saw a group of people work together so well — and have fun at the same time," Stenger observed.

The highly-motivated crew wasn't motivated by money. They weren't pushing for overtime pay or incentive bonuses. No one on the work crew was paid for their labor. In fact, many had to take time off from their regular jobs to be there.

According to the crane operator, he was surprised to learn the highly efficient

"crew" was made up of people from all walks of life.

"Of the dozens of people working on the building project, only a few are trained in construction," said the Rev. Rick Collins, pastor of Sonlife Church.

How then, did they set a record for the time it took to erect the framework of the church?

"Their motivation," said Rev. Collins, "is their love for God. They are working with one mind

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OF LOVE — It looked like an Amish barnraising recently at Sonlife Full Church, Palmerton R.1. In record breaking time, dozens of volunteers erected

the trusses for a new missionary building. The church facility is being built by faith, free of mortgage or debt. (Pattie Mihalik/TN)

CHURCH

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and one heart for an important goal."

That goal is the building of a 60' by 96' structure that will serve as a sanctuary, missionary training facility, gymnasium and all purpose room.

The "old church" — if one can call a five year old building old, — is too small to accommodate the crowds that come each week. "Each week, it's a case of standing room only. We've been averaging at least 132 people each week in a church that can hold a maximum of 130 people," said the pastor.

The new church, with seating for around 300 people, will solve the overcrowding problem.

When Rev. Collins started Sonlife Church in 1981 in his small Bowmanstown cottage, there were 16 adults and 11 children.

"We asked the Lord to provide," said Rev. Collins, who watched his congregation outgrow the cottage, a meeting room at Palmerton Borough Hall, and later, a small facility in Palmerton.

Involved at the time in building a log cabin for his family, Rev. Collins wasn't anxious to tackle a church building project at the same time.

"I told the Lord, if a church was to be built. He would have to do it, if that was His will," said Rev. Collins. "Ever since, he's brought people."

So many people, in fact, that the church soon had standing room only for each Sunday service.

But, Rev. Collins wasn't interested in "numbers." He wasn't concerned with how many people came to church. His concern was about the commitment of those who came.

"Church membership means more than paying dues and going to church on Sunday. It involves a total commitment. People with a true love for God want

to serve God," said

A requirement ship at Sonlife demonstrate "co becoming part ministry."

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"Some work some have m ministry; othe families. Every in some way," s who believes pe find fulfillment others.

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"I guess members a themselves a completed. amazed now church going easy," said Lord is leadi ing."

