

Brent Mazzola and Esther Collard – some details

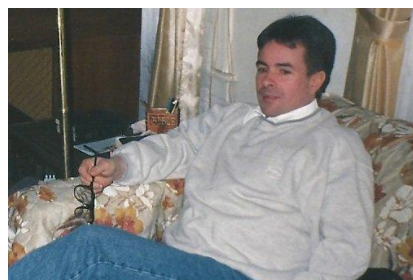
Contents: The story, Facebook comments by Esther and Jeremiah, Excerpts of Brent's letter (don't miss this!)

Years ago in the early 80's, a young single girl, Esther Collard, a Licensed Practical Nurse, moved into our upstairs apartment in a Chicago western suburb. At the time, our children, the bright spots in our lives, were small, some still arriving, and we were both unwell, working insane hours, and struggling. Esther was a conscious support and cheery encouragement during those very tough years and dark valleys.



Later Esther moved to southern Illinois, earned her RN, and over time adopted 8 precious special needs children, (Jacob, Josiah, Cameron, Amelia, Nathaniel, John Mark, Jeremiah and Tabitha) plus she cared for a number of foster children as well. Eventually, Esther herself developed diabetes with very painful complications, and we in turn watched and prayed as she and the children travelled some very tough years and dark valleys as the kids grew up. Those sweet kids are now mainly grown and in God's loving hands. Jeremiah, going on 17, is the last one left at home with Esther.

Meanwhile, in the late 80's, Brent Mazolla, a young attractive California Air Force veteran, a bachelor, mired in drugs, and in an unsatisfying lifestyle, turned to the Lord. He later attested that he literally fell flat on his face on the earth with the cry "God, be merciful to me a sinner!", a blessed fulfillment to his dear mother Carolyn's prayers, on her birthday. Soon after, he wandered onto a beach in California and sat down to read a Bible someone gave him. Ken Brimlow, a valued friend we all remember, found him there, and asked him if he understood what he read. That "God - purposed" meeting blossomed into friendship and he grew quickly as a Christian. Brent grasped acutely in his soul that the Lord loved him, and that his pressing debt of sin had been cancelled with Jesus' very lifeblood. (We perceive the love of God: because He laid down His life for us." 1 John 3:16) Several bouts of intense spiritual warfare ensued. Brent acquired a deep sense of the grace of God to him in his early faltering steps as a new Christian, reflected later in one of his favorite expressions, "Now there goes a good candidate for the grace of God." Over time, Brent's life changed dramatically. Drugs and their auxiliary habits were gradually abandoned, and he fixed his passion and purpose on the Lord Jesus. He earnestly shared Christ with everyone around him and encouraged others in practical matters of temptation. Brent understood and respected spiritual warfare and, conversely, made a personal commitment to boldly live in victory, in the personal knowledge of faith that "all will be well" no matter the situation. In his own words he preferred to "call those things which be not as though they were. Romans 4:17



A year after Brent met Christ, he moved from California back to Michigan near his family, and eventually purchased a home in Richmond just blocks from the small local Christian group

with whom he fellowshiped. (Consequently he drove an hour daily to his place of employment). He worked long hours as a well appreciated accountant for several firms, and over the next nearly 20 years matured to become a beloved encouragement and support to his family, his employers, his local church fellowship, and many children and young people in a local gospel outreach ministry.



It so happened that Esther was raised in Richmond, Michigan, and every summer she took her children there to visit family and participate in the same gospel outreach. On these trips she and her kids met that friendly, engaging, still single accountant who loved the Lord and enjoyed sharing the gospel story with others. Over the years, Brent paid individual attention to each of Esther's children, a habit Esther valued and which gained him her respect. But she assumed he was a LOT younger than her. Think again! He was 4 months older! And her kids warned her more than once, "Mom, when he shakes your hand, he holds it *entirely* too long!" ☺

Last summer, 2010, Esther stopped to visit us in the Chicago suburbs on her way back from the annual Richmond gospel activities. Confidentially, she had quite a tale for me about how Brent managed to spirit her away from the group for a drive during which he poured out his life story of God's grace, finagled a

spot next to her at a restaurant during a group outing, opened doors for her, and other "old fashioned" moves that raised my eyebrows and left her wondering and praying. I privately joined her. Then in October, Su and I spent a weekend with her at Keren and Robert Stepp's Florida wedding. She had "letters" to examine in private and in general matters looked, well, promising! ☺



Their courtship was entirely long distance after Esther's visit to Richmond in the summer, but the tempo of letters and phone calls picked up dramatically throughout the fall and winter. Brent not only courted Esther, he took detailed interest in her kids. At one point he encouraged one of them with one of his favorite passages, to, like Moses, "choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Hebrews 11:25 He understood.

Last summer 2010, Brent Mazzola triumphantly installed beside a somewhat stunned Esther Collard, in a restaurant group shot with other outreach workers.

Then 6 weeks ago, Feb 12, 2011, Ann Marie Hemmel, a mutual friend, called me, ecstatic, with news that Brent and Esther, both age 53, were engaged! Astonishment and joy spread at lightning speed through our close knit church group nationwide. Facebook sported a picture of a yard banner Esther had for weeks driven by in her neighborhood that boldly proclaimed



“Nothing’s too hard for God!!” It was thrilling news, and her kids, especially Jeremiah, were jubilant! Finally, the family would have a father.

Actually, Brent proposed to Esther over the phone Feb 11, while admitted to the VA hospital for tests. He had suffered protracted dental issues including a root canal, and hadn’t done well afterwards. Plus he’d struggled with underlying chronic health challenges and had a previous heart attack. But the tests all came back fine...until 5 days after their engagement announcement. The last test,...Hodgkin’s lymphoma! They hadn’t a clue this was coming! On the bright side, prognosis was hopeful, 80-90% success with this type of cancer, but an urgent need to begin chemo. Brent’s characteristically victorious optimism that “God would handle this” encouraged Esther to follow suit, trusting Brent’s health to God’s loving ways. In fact Brent’s deflecting comment to Esther when she expressed concern at the news of his lymphoma was “Well, my doctor (an atheist) isn’t saved yet.”

They decided to get married immediately and deal with the chemo together. Brent planned for Esther and Jeremiah (who is homeschooled) to join him in Richmond, they would marry ASAP, stay a short time in Richmond for initial chemo treatments, and then move to Esther’s home in southern Illinois. Ultimately he intended to semi retire and perform computer based consulting, but his primary motivation was to write tracts and evangelize on the streets of local communities.

Brent opted to replace Esther’s kid worn furniture with his less used pieces, verbally booted her goats!! ☺, and instructed her to purchase a new bed. As they feverishly adjusted the details, they earnestly sought the Lord’s blessing and direction for as much time as He had left for them to share.

Esther immediately that week disposed of the goats ☺ and several pieces of her household furniture as decreed, amid happy/urgent phone calls , taxes, shopping, *and* the arrival of her first grandchild. Brent directed her to “buy two new dresses, and NOT on sale!”, one for their wedding (not a traditional “wedding dress”, but a nice new dress), and another one. She cleaned out half her closet to make room for his clothes, and in only a few day’s time gave away her bed and donated or sold a number of other items to make room for his possessions when they returned together.

Brent was released from the hospital following tests, but when he returned home he didn’t feel well. As usual, he was optimistic, trusted the Lord to “take care of business”, (one of his favorite expressions), and true to his accountant mindset, immediately occupied himself with financial provision and long term plans for his “Queen Esther”, as he called her, and their life together.



In the midst of Esther’s marriage arrangements, her oldest daughter, Amelia, with husband Bo, returned to Esther’s home to be near her for their first baby’s arrival. Monday evening, February 21, baby boy Connor put in an appearance as Esther’s first grandchild. (She also has two lovely step granddaughters, Lexi and Rachel, Jacob’s wife Azure’s girls).



The morning following Connor’s birth, Tuesday the 22nd, Grandma Esther received a distress call from Brent. He felt much worse, missed her, and wanted her to come to him as soon as possible. Esther quickly tied up

loose ends, packed her wedding dress and the other dress, and took off with Jeremiah for Richmond that afternoon, to marry Brent.

They arrived at Richard and Joyce Mackewich's home Wednesday in the late afternoon, the 23rd, cleaned up, and left to find Brent a few blocks away, miserably ill and barely able to care for his personal needs. Gratified by their arrival, and the joy of that first sweet kiss, Brent pled for Esther not to leave him. Richard Mackewich agreed that under the circumstances and with Jeremiah present, they should stay near him, Esther in the guest room downstairs, and drive Brent to the VA hospital for a PET scan scheduled for early the next morning. From her vantage point below in the guest room, Esther heard Brent praying aloud all night long in his discomfort.

As dawn ended those restless night hours, Brent and Esther left Jeremiah with Mackewiches, and at 5 am Thursday the 24th they took off for a *three* hour, 80 mile, nightmare drive to the VA hospital in Ann Arbor in sleet, miserable morning traffic, and difficult directions. Brent could not get comfortable in the car, and when they arrived at the hospital he was sent to urgent care for treatment before undergoing the planned PET scan. They waited hours as he lay on a gurney and witnessed for the Lord to everyone near him. Esther remembers that the only time that he "teared up" was when he verbalized that so many dear folks around him were going to hell and "all I've ever wanted to do was tell them" [the gospel story] which he actually did as he prayed aloud. And Brent was so ecstatic to finally have Esther beside him that he told everyone in the facility she was his "Queen Esther", the love of his life, and he implored her to stay right there beside him.

He eventually underwent the PET scan, but instead of returning home that evening as expected, Brent was admitted to Intensive Care. The scan revealed lymphoma in his lymph nodes, liver, and bone marrow, and was staged between 3 and 4. He also had a stomach infection, so was not allowed any food or water. (He nearly checked himself out when they wouldn't feed him, ☹ but Esther persuaded him to stay). Instead he consumed ice chips at a great rate, and Esther kept him supplied with wet sponges to relieve his parched mouth. Chemo, which was originally slated for the next day, Friday the 25th, was delayed until Tuesday, March 1.

Brent and Esther spent Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday in the hospital at each other's side in urgent care and then in ICU. Esther ministered to Brent's needs; they shared their hearts and planned their wedding. They both intensely treasured those 5 days, even though Brent was so sick. Esther stayed on the hospital premises for 3 days straight, made do on an uncomfortable folding chair in his small ICU cubicle, washed up as best she could in rest rooms, and tried to snatch a little sleep on the only public couch available in a lobby in that large hospital,...until the nurses voted to put a recliner in Brent's room. They insisted she charmed him, and he was calmer and easier to care for when she was there. Finally, Lord's Day, Feb 27, Esther tore herself away just long enough to attend morning services 80 miles away, and to clean up, rest a little, and get fresh clothes. Even then Brent protested when she left. He craved her presence every possible moment.

On Saturday Brent held his hand up and mentioned a "fuzziness" that puzzled Esther. Then late Saturday night his heart rate rose to 145 beat per minute, with elevated cardiac enzymes. Early Sunday morning tests indicated a minor, otherwise symptom free heart attack during the night. At first this was not considered a big deal, but the enzymes continued to climb throughout the day, a worrisome situation to the medical staff and to Esther. On the other hand, Brent, thankfully, was unaware of the signs of increasing danger. Then, Sunday evening, the cardiac enzymes returned to normal, a cause for thanksgiving. Plans remained to start chemo on Tuesday due to the urgency of the lymphoma.

Sunday and Monday, Feb 27 and 28, Brent was alert but uncharacteristically quiet. Each time the meds wore off his heart rate climbed, a growing concern for Esther who as a nurse recognized the critical nature of his condition. She contacted his parents, and Mike and Carolyn hurried to his side Sunday evening. Brent's mom held his hand and spoke encouragingly to him. Brent appeared calm and aware of his surroundings, but his speech and his normally expressive nature seemed atypically muted. Dear Esther wept and prayed for him throughout that long night, lovingly supported in prayer by Joyce and Richard Mackewich and their family.

On Monday Brent sat up, attentive and watchful of his surroundings, but, although there was no sign of stroke, he spoke only one word, a reflexive but sincere "Hi!" when visitors arrived (Norma and Sara from work, and Burt and Pat Torrens, who kindly brought Jeremiah to visit), and nothing else all day. But when Jeremiah walked in the room at noon, Brent flashed his future son the only "real" spontaneous smile Esther remembers after he was admitted to the hospital. (Brent planned to adopt Jeremiah for his 17th birthday in May.) Jeremiah was thrilled and asked if he could call him "Dad" on the spot. ("Well, Jeremiah, not quite yet!") He held Brent's hand and told him over and over that he loved him.

But, Brent's heart rate still soared.

That afternoon, Brent and Esther, both exhausted, napped. At 5 pm Esther abruptly awakened as medical staff converged in the room amid shrieking alarms, and told her to leave. Brent had coded in his sleep. Every effort was made, unsuccessfully, to stabilize his heart, but when the option arose to install a ventilator, Esther, knowing his wishes, refused life support. They left her with him for 20 minutes while he took his last breaths, and, not sure what he could hear, she lovingly spoke to him until that vibrant spirit of his was ushered away. At 6:30 pm, Monday February 28, 2011, with Esther's gentle expressions of endearment in his ears, he peacefully slipped from the love of his natural life to join his precious Savior, the One he had loved and served open heartedly for nearly 20 years.



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John and I and our son Stephen drove with Nelson Santiago to Richmond, MI Friday evening, March 4, to attend Brent's funeral. Esther and Jeremiah stayed in Brent's home that week and we found them there. Her wedding dress and the "other dress" hung on a coat tree in the living room. Behind, on the wall, hung verses Brent had paired with a picture of Daniel facing the lions that fittingly expressed his sense of gratitude, victory and hope. "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all His benefits," Psalm 103:2, and "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. " Psalm 73:24 Throughout that weekend we missed him deeply, notwithstanding that we never personally knew him, through Esther's compelling desire to tell us about him. (May we be as urgent to speak of the Lord in such a manner.)



Predictably, Brent's lifestyle revealed simple priorities and his bachelor perspective. He focused his life on service to Lord in the gospel in his daily life, encouraged and supported his dear family in many practical ways, and maintained a 50-70 hour work week, (plus a daily 2 hour commute). Possessions on the other hand, including ten year old cars, were not important.

Brent and Esther had at first considered getting married in the hospital; but, thinking he would return home after chemo on Tuesday March 1, they planned instead to pick up the marriage license that day, wait the

required 3 days and marry on Saturday March 5, first before a legal official, and then have Richard Mackewich perform a simple ceremony at the meeting room in the presence of the local Richmond church group, Jeremiah, and Brent's parents.

Instead, Esther's wedding dress stayed on the coat tree, and Saturday, March 5, Esther wore the "other dress" to Brent's funeral.

It was a sweet and unusually comforting service. Richard Mackewich preached a clear gentle gospel. He reassured Brent's family of how much Brent loved them, prayed for them, and spoke constantly of them. Family members recalled with humor and affection memorable moments of Brent's childhood (quite the scamp, he and his brother!) A number of them agreed that they were never so pleased to see Brent's dad and mom appear as when they showed up to relieve them of babysitting duties! One of his employers testified with emotion how Brent had capably guided their company financially through the recession, helped them cut costs and stay afloat, and had been a real friend, almost like a brother, for many years. Brent's passionate love, generosity, and welcoming, trustful spirit radiated in the memories of others as a reflection of God's great loving kindness to him. The overarching theme of the service was love, Brent's love, the Lord's amazing limitless love and goodness, and our pressing, uncompromising need to love one another. No one who was there will forget that precious memorial of Brent's victorious, sacrificial, Christ centered spirit. May the Lord Himself take center stage in the hearts of the hearers, as Brent set us a shining personal example,

The Lord sustained Esther and she coped very well. She was quiet, calm and composed, almost as in shock. She dealt not only with her own crushing sadness in the final goodbye to her husband-to-be, but faced, at first somewhat awkwardly, a roomful of mourners whom she'd anticipated soon to be her family, most of whom had not met her nor she them. Gradually some came to more clearly understand *her* loss, as well as their own. In particular I had a conversation with Brent's aunt, Mary Joan, a lovely woman with an outstanding spirit, who quickly caught the vision and pathos of Esther's plight and who communicated in a very sweet and empathetic manner with her. I believe Mary Joan helped her sister, Brent's grief stricken mother, identify with Esther in a way that comforted dear Carolyn's aching heart.

It was very hard to watch Esther bend over her beloved Brent for the last time. We all had so expected something different. In his talk, Richard preached from Brent's favorite verse, "The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knows them that trust in Him". It applies, ever so much more vividly at such a time. The Lord's ways are infinitely higher than our ways, far past finding out. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. " Isaiah 55:9.

And they are good ways. Let's count a few.

- Esther has precious memories to cherish of a relationship she never dreamed she would share, a real time romantic love story with an awesome guy who loved her deeply and passionately.
- Jeremiah treasures even those fleeting yet lifetime memories of Brent as his coveted dad-to-be and his hero. (For his birthday in May, Jeremiah's name will change from Jeremiah Timothy Collard, to Jeremiah Brenton Collard.)

- Throughout the last 9 months of Brent's life, his lonely heart was immeasurably cheered by the ardor of his courtship of Esther, his joyful anticipation of a bride at last. He never dreamed to the very end that this was not to be. And she, unknowingly, "came...for such a time as this" * to calm, comfort and smooth those last trying steps Home with her gentle love and companionship.
- As time passes, Esther, her family, Brent's friends and family, and the rest of us, spectators, who watched this drama unfold will recognize many more of God's good ways as we choose to see His viewpoint.

How can we question a loving AND inscrutable God who makes plans like this? His work is significant, always, but does not this striking situation compel us once more to, "turn our eyes upon Jesus"? Like Brent, we do well to recalibrate our attention on eternity, our energies for the gospel, and expectations for victory in Christ, no matter the circumstances, as signs of His immediate return appear around us daily.

* Esther 4:14

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As we left Richmond, Esther separately asked John and I to tell the rest of you all, "I still know that God is good." She is resting in His love, caught in her emotions "somewhere between earth and heaven", vividly aware that Brent lives, victoriously, "in Christ", and they will reunite, possibly very very soon! \* He keeps her facing forward, to the ultimate eternal goal we all share, WITH CHRIST. \* Thessalonians 4: 13-18

But, the shock is wearing off. The exhaustion, overpowering loneliness and acute sense of loss engulf her often, and also Jeremiah, who so much anticipated Brent for a Dad. In those moments, fresh recollection of Brent's oft repeated admonition to "take care of business", and thoughts of heaven from an intimate perspective bring tears of joy to balance the natural grief.

[Esther's Facebook post March 10, "This afternoon has been the hardest-my heart literally feels as though it is being torn in pieces-it hurts so bad-I miss him so much-please especially pray for me now. I so appreciate everyone's encouraging notes and prayers."

March 12 – "Yesterday was so much better. I felt the uplifting as the prayers went up for Jeremiah and myself. I was even able to return items to the store that were meant for both of us. Thank you so much to each one who takes the time to comfort us."]

God keeps those tears "in His bottle". He will not permit this present suffering to be wasted.

"Put my tears into Your bottle: are they not in Your book?" Psalm 56:8

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy". Psalm 126:5

"He who goes forth bearing seed and weeping [at needing his precious supply of food grain for sowing] shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Psalm 126:6

"Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit." John 12:24

## How can you help?

Let Esther tell you about Brent. She loves and needs to talk about him, and you will be amazed and refreshed.

## Prayer requests

- Pray for Brent's dear heartbroken mother Carolyn, father Michael, brother Bill, sister Gina, and extended family. Pray for their eternal blessing as Brent's earnest and oft repeated spiritual encouragements ring in the stillness of his absence.
- Pray for Esther as she and Jeremiah return home to reassemble their lives, and buy another bed!
- Pray for blessing on all of Esther's kids and their families, including especially the new little member, Connor, that his babyhood and life will be a joy and comfort to lonely hearts.

Jacob, Azure, Lexi, and Rachel – married and living in the area.

Josiah and Katie – married, living in the area.

Cameron – in a nursing institution

Amelia, Bo, and Connor – married, living in the area

Nathaniel – on his own – no picture available

John Mark – on his own

Jeremiah – still at home

Tabitha – resides at Oblong Children's Christian Home temporarily

- Pray that both of these precious families, Brent's and Esther's, will be shielded from Satan's vicious attacks and stand together, victorious in Christ, as testimonies of God's abundant grace.
- Pray for the Richmond assembly. They acutely miss Brent's companionship and spiritual contributions in their very small assembly and gospel outreach.

Written by Mrs. Olive Kaiser, March 8-30, 2011



Jeremiah and Cameron



Tabitha



## Emails and Facebook posts by Esther and Jeremiah after Brent's Homegoing.

### Esther

~ "For those who do not know the Lord took Brent home to be with Himself at approx. 6:30pm on Monday, February 28th. As for God His way is perfect."

~ "Additional info: Five days after our engagement tests revealed widespread lymphoma(cancer). I arrived in Richmond last Wed. and took him to the hosp. where he was admitted to ICU. We had 5 wonderful days together for which I thank the Lord."

~ Question: Esther, was this expected?

~ "No, we had planned to be married this week and I had brought my dress up too. Found him very much sicker and took him to hosp-they thought the chemo would arrest it but he had a heart attack while there and never recovered. Thanks for prayers."

~ "Jeremiah and I are being sustained by the Lord Himself. We so greatly appreciate all the prayers for us. Although the pain is great we do not question the wisdom of Him who loves us beyond measure and give all glory and thanks to HIM."

### Some of Jeremiah's facebook posts:

~"The Lord was my shepherd, I did not want. Yea, though I walked through the valley of the shadow of death, I feared no evil for thou were with me, thy rod and thy staff did comfort me. Surely goodness and mercy did follow me all the days of my life; and I am dwelling in the house of the Lord forever!" Psalms 23:1,4,and 6

~ My heart is sadden by the loss of my dad to be,Brent Mazzola. He would have been an awesome dad. He was funny,smart,and had such a big heart for serving the Lord. I miss him alot and I wonder what would life would have been with him. At heart, I am Jeremiah Timothy Mazzola - son of Brent Mazzola. He is now with Jesus, suffering no more pain.

~ He was gonna adopt me and I would have been a Mazzola.

~ I do miss my dad, but he is in a better place.

~ I wished that everyone would have met my dad. and he was a great role model for me and would have been an awesome dad.



**James Brenton Mazzola**  
**Birth December 21, 1957**  
**Date of Death February 28, 2011**  
**Van Lerberghe Funeral Home**  
**30600 Harper Ave., St. Clair Shores, MI 48082**  
**visitation 1p-4pm with service at 4pm Saturday March 5<sup>th</sup>**

### Email from Esther to Olive after the funeral,

"He wanted to write his own tracts and go out on the streets of L"ville when he moved down here. His faith inspired me and he always prayed with confidence in the Lord-even loudly thanking and praising Him from his stretcher in urgent care.

One thing that meant a lot to him was when I told him that he inspired me. He bought a house in Richmond and drove an hour each way to work so that when he was tired he would still be able to go to the meetings. I told him I was spoon fed the word of God but he dug the truth out for himself and I really respected him for this. He loved talking to people about the Lord and was known to say "now there's a good candidate for the grace of God!"

I'm surprised you remembered, Olive that he was saying on the stretcher than first day-"God is doing something big Esther, and we are going to be part of it, you and I". It is my hope that by sharing some of his life and testimony that it may encourage and speak to others for the Lord's honor and glory. I would appreciate if you could share some of the things mentioned-I believe he truly had an inspiring testimony. And yes, I did think he was very attractive too-VERY!!

I'm trying to figure out how to get his last couple phone messages onto some kind of recording I could keep. I laugh when I hear them as he was being funny and calling himself my "husband -to-be" and me his "wife-to-be" and again seriously telling me that I was the Love of his life as he told everybody in the hospital. I think of him now so very happy and full of joy AND best of all he did not really die-he lives\* and I'll see him one day. That makes me so very, very happy!!! Love Esther .

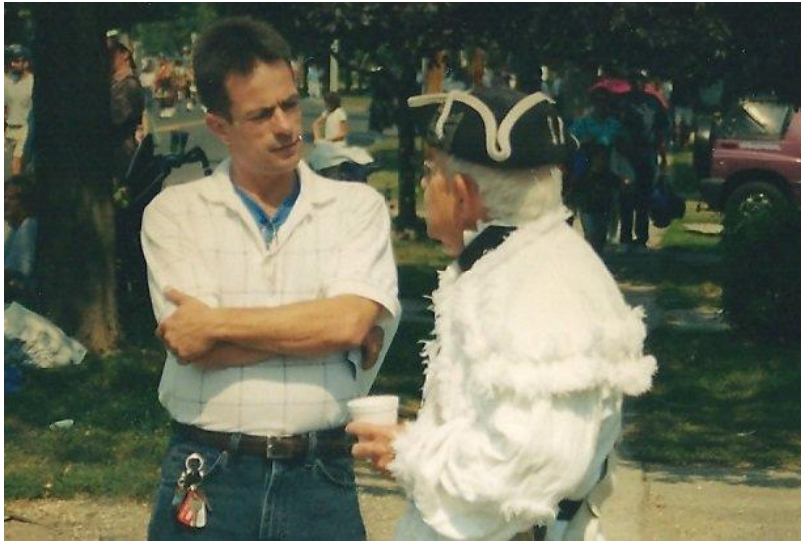
\*"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (2 Corinthians 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Esther Collard, RR 1 Box 90, Lawrenceville, IL 62439 email: hopehouse58@gmail.com

### Excerpts from Brent's letter to Esther, Sept. 2010, re: the gospel and young people

"The Lord has commissioned me to go to the poor and downtrodden and the baser elements of life, but I have been a disobedient son, and have not fully pursued the calling wherewith He has called me. The gospel is for everyone, but children and the poor and downtrodden accept the truth more readily than those whose life is going on well. The Lord has been so good to me, saving me in my mid 30s. We know that not many get saved later in life, and the older one gets the less likely they will get saved, but all things are possible with God. Queen Victoria thanked the Lord for the "m" in "many", and so do I, because if there were no "m" in "many, then 1 Cor. 1:26 would read, "not any wise men after the flesh, not any mighty and not any noble are called." This really doesn't apply to the poor and downtrodden. I find that they are .... happy to hear the truth. Some are saved, but have to endure suffering because of choices they make. What a blessing if "ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing." 1 Pet. 3:17



Brent Mazzola at Good Old Days gospel outreach

Young people need to actually hear and see that the enemy is trying to mess up their testimony, although I do believe much is gained from the believer's failures in the long run. Too bad that some of these lessons have to be learned the "hard" way.

Some examples of what they should be reminded of are as follows:

1. The consequences of not conferring with the Lord with respect to daily decisions that we are making. We can see from the Old Covenant that when Israel did not consult the Lord (Joshua) that the battle was lost, and they would have to turn tail and run. Then after asking and consulting with the Lord, Victory is gained by the Lord with less people and resources. Look at what happened with Ai.
2. The enemy is always looking for an advantage to lessen our effect on non-believers and those who are of the household of faith. We all are at different levels with respect to the warfare....We are not living in victory, not to say that our faith isn't tried, but it is the knowledge that all will be well no matter the situation.
3. Because they (the saved young people) are indwelt\* with the Spirit of God, there is no way they can be happy when satisfying the flesh. The fleeting moments of satisfaction or "fun" in the flesh grieves the Holy Spirit whereby we are sealed into the day of redemption. There is nothing any of us can do when we are saved but to submit to our Lord's will. If only all of us, especially the young people, would realize that depression and disappointment come from grieving the Spirit, there would be much less trouble in our lives and less trouble amongst the brethren. \*Note: "indwelt" means God's Spirit lives in our bodies.

I think that if young people could see and hear in the Word that because they are saved, that judgment begins in the household of God and that they will not get away with anything (chastisement). I've run into young believers who have all kinds of trouble, and I ask them, "Do you wonder why these other friends of yours are able to do what you do, but nothing seems to happen to them?" I try to impress upon them that it is because their judgment will come after death. We as believers do not get away with anything and for this I am happy. We all need to be reminded of this.

When I read the Scriptures, I always see the doctrine and the warfare. Too bad more attention isn't given to exhortation with respect to how we can use the Word to live in victory and to walk in the power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. "

## Here is a list of Brent's favorite gospel (good news) Scriptures:

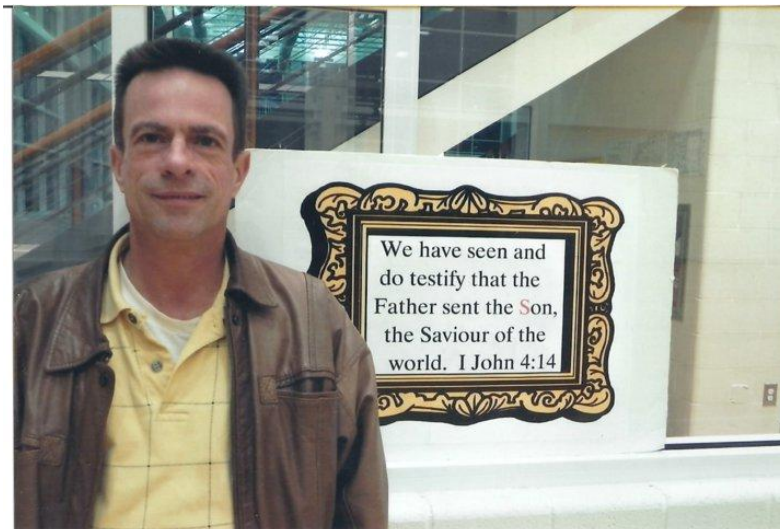
- God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16
- He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. Psalm 40:2
- The Name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runs into it, and is safe. Proverbs 18:10
- God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1
- But you are ...., a peculiar \* people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9 \* In this sentence, "peculiar" means "special".

Brent liked to use the illustration that we need to "get our ticket stamped" for heaven by receiving Christ's death as payment for our sins. ("Christ died for our sins." Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." 1 Corinthians 15:3, Acts 16:31)

Warning!! We don't know when we are going to die. Brent didn't. He was planning his wedding! ~ Also, world events are not going well. There seriously may be *very little time left, literally days or hours*, to take care of this very simple but extremely urgent and eternal matter. God has made it so easy, there will be no excuse for those who run roughshod over His message. "It is time to seek the Lord!" "God...commands all men everywhere to repent!" (Hosea 10:12, Acts 17:30)

It's easy to talk to God. Just open your mouth and tell Him you know you are a sinner, and that you believe Jesus is Lord, He bled and died for you, and ask for His mercy, like Brent did. ("God be merciful to me a sinner!" Luke 18:13) He can hear you, and promises to cancel your debt of sin if you ask Him. "Him that comes to me I will not at all cast out." John 6:37

"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9



For more information contact Bible Truth Publishers, PO Box 625, Addison, IL 60101 630-543-1441