

STOLTZFUS CHRISTIAN LIBRARY ANNUAL UPDATE

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Dear Library Member,

1/9/2016

Wow! I can hardly believe that the library has nearly seen it's first year already!

For those who are interested, I will start this first annual update letter with a story of how and why the Library came about.

My name is Sam Stoltzfus, Ever since I was young I have really enjoyed reading. I am the one in charge of the library, although, I look at the library as a family project because my other family members play a very important role in the library. Certainly the library could not survive without them!

The vision for the library was born after I had a life changing experience.

On June 16, 2014 I was working on a construction project, along with another employee, for my oldest brother who owned the business. Most of the work we did consisted of gravel and concrete shed foundations, landscaping, patios, and retaining walls. The day started out as usual with loading the trucks and getting the supplies that we needed, then as our tradition was before heading off to work, we paused and prayed Gods protection on the day. It proved to be a warm summer day. We got to the job site near Philadelphia, PA and began work, Today we would have to build a gravel shed foundation as well as pour some concrete sauna tubes to anchor the shed down, as this township required anchors. Everything went well at first, we dug out dirt for the shed foundation and drilled holes for the sauna tubes with our mini bobcat excavator. After we were done, as was normal for many jobs, we had extra dirt that we had to haul home on the trailer. I backed the truck and trailer in the driveway, set up the ramps on the trailer, and began taking scoop after scoop of dirt up the ramps onto the trailer and dumping it off, not knowing that I was about to have a life changing experience. We were just wrapping up the job, and getting ready to head home after a hard day of work. I was on the last load of dirt and was backing off of the trailer onto the ramps, I did not realize that I had forgotten to lower the bucket which of course made the machine top heavy, it reared up as I was frantically trying to keep it from rolling. I lost the battle! And for the first time in my life I felt what it was like to have a 3,000 pound machine come crashing down on my back. It pressed down on my back harder and harder until I had no breath left in me and I could feel bones cracking, crunching, and breaking beneath the weight. For the first time in my life I stood face to face with death, I just knew that I would die unless God would intervene. I cried out "GOD HELP ME". Suddenly, an overwhelming peace swept over me and I felt God's presence closer than ever before. It was glorious! Somehow I knew that everything would be alright. I felt very close to heaven, and if God would call me home I felt like I was ready and waiting, even anticipating. If not, I knew it would be a miracle if I would ever be totally back to normal. But if that was his will, then I would love and serve him for the rest of my life.

Almost the same instant that I cried "GOD HELP ME", God did choose to save my life. The excavator that was on my back suddenly counter balanced and rolled on its side off of me. If it wouldn't have rolled off of me I undoubtedly would have died from suffocation before the emergency crew could have arrived. I could finally breathe a little, but I thought that I might be seriously injured, maybe even paralyzed. I could hardly even tell because I was numb and in shock from being injured, and everything happening so fast. The other employee, who was just feet away and saw everything happen ran to my side and asked, "Sam, are you alright? By then I had come to my senses a little and I could feel that my leg was all twisted and that the bone in my femur wasn't connected anymore, also I had pain in my back, I was afraid that it was broken. I replied, "No, call the ambulance!" There I lay on my stomach as he was talking to the 911 dispatcher. Then, as I heard sirens of the ambulance coming, suddenly the thought hit me. This is not happening! How can this be happening?

You see, only a short time before this I had been running with the local fire department, serving as a firefighter. I was the one that was used to responding to serious accidents and seeing people that were hurt. Not me being the hurt one. And here it was happening to me!

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The ambulance arrived shortly and began putting all kinds of IVS on me. Then as they rolled me on the stretcher, that is when I first felt real pain! My leg twisted a little even though they tried to keep it straight and pain shot through my body like words cannot describe! They loaded me in the ambulance and after a bumpy ride we finally arrived at the hospital. The ambulance crew had radioed ahead to the hospital so they were all prepared for our arrival. They wheeled me into the hospital, and all of a sudden I had more attention than anticipated, it seemed like I had about 10-20 doctors or nurses all trying to work on me at once. They found that I had a broken femur and also had a chip off of my lumbar. So basically it came within a ½ inch of breaking my spinal cord. I had a huge blue bruise covering almost half of my back.

Through it all God has been good. I praise him for his mercy that he showed to me that day. It could have been much worse than what it was.

I have had quite a few accidents in my life. I broke my left arm twice, broke my nose, broke my femur, and had a chip break off of my back.

I am not saying all this to brag about how many accidents that I have had. Rather to tell of the mercy that God has shown to me. Today I am pretty much 100% back to normal. I do not know when I will have my final day or hour. And you don't either. That is why it is so important that we are right with God and that we live out our life like every day may be our last.

During the recovery time following the accident I had a lot of time to think, pray, and seek God's will. One day the thought came to me. Why doesn't someone start a Christian library? There is so much reading material available that can be very detrimental to Christian faith. For instance, the world now teaches Evolution as fact! On the other hand there are books available that are very spiritually up building. There are many people in our plain community who do not know what their children are reading and possibly some who don't even really care. I want to encourage you as parents to rise up to your Christian duty and take responsibility for the children that God has entrusted into your care, and teach them in the way of the Lord.

So how would we go about starting a Christian library? First I wanted time to fast and pray about it, which I did, and I felt like God was asking us to take a big step of faith and go ahead with it. I asked my family what they thought about it and if they could help out and support it if we would get one started. They all responded favorably and in fact encouraged the idea. When I talked to my Grandpa about it he kind of laughed at first and teasingly called it an air castle, because he knows that I have all kinds of brain storms about a lot of stuff, and frankly I think he thought that it might never happen. But after a course of a few weeks when he found out that we are actually serious about it and wanted to start working on it. He thought that it was a good idea and donated a storage room of his shop and even helped out with a lot of the remodeling work that had to be done.

After talking to Grandpa, I figured it would be a good idea to ask a lot of different people's opinion on starting a Christian library. I talked to each one of the ministers and many members of our church and got a lot of positive feedback. Almost everyone thought that it was a good idea.

Then on October 10, 2014 we started work on remodeling the storage room in the shop that would become the library, we had to take a lot of lumber out and move it to Grandpa's barn, insulate the room, do some framing, electrical, paneling, and order the book shelves etc.

We finally planned an opening date of March 14, 2015. Meanwhile, we had a lot of work to do. Almost all of my spare moments were spent doing something that included the library. Whether it was getting new books, typing book titles in the computer, wrapping paperback books with contact plastic, or setting up the library room. We made brochures and passed them out at our church and my mom took some to local Amish schools which distributed them amongst themselves.

Thankfully our family had quite a few books already, that we would donate for library use, that really helped save on cost as we didn't have to buy all of the books.

What my goal was, is to have all the initial cost of the library on us, we would fund the cost of remodeling the room and buying books that we need just to start off. We would volunteer our time, and then after the opening day, the library would be financially self-sufficient. The financial part of the library would basically come from donations, late book return fees, and small snacks and drinks that are available for purchase. Although, if needed, we would start charging membership fees in the future if there wasn't enough money coming in to support the library. We hoped we didn't need to because we didn't want to exclude people who could not afford a membership fee.

I am happy to announce that the library has been a success, God has been faithful, and we feel support from neighbors all around us, although the library doesn't bring in a lot of money it is enough to cover operating expenses plus add a few new books here and there. By God's grace we will continue to operate on a donation basis.

Our Grand Opening day started out well, we had free coffee, doughnuts, and snack available. I had almost no idea how many people to expect. I would have been happy to see fifty or more. Actually, it ended up being more like two hundred. Part way through the day I realized that we would better put a book limit on for that day or there wouldn't be many books left for the people coming toward the end of the day! So we made a limit of ten books per family for the opening day.

We started out with approximately 1,433 books and with your support along with people who donated many books we now to date have over 2,086 books. That is 653 more books than what we had almost a year ago! And we are constantly adding more as funds are available. In the near future we will likely have to add more book shelving.

I think this is exciting! We now have around 100 people who have signed up in the library. It shows that people have interest in reading, and not only in reading for pleasure but also in reading Christian books for spiritual enrichment and at the same time helping to keep a local Christian library in operation.

I want to take this time to thank everyone who contributed to the library in any way, whether financially, through book donations, donating time to help us out, or praying for us. Without your support we could not go on. Please pray for us as we continue to seek God's will about the future of the library, and for all the people that the library impacts. We will continue to expand our book selection and make improvements, as the Lord provides, and as we are financially able.

To us the future looks exciting, and I hope it does for you as well, when we all strive to work in God's kingdom wherever he may call us, is when we can feel true fulfillment and satisfaction. May God bless you!

Sincerely,

Sam Stoltzfus,
For Stoltzfus Christian Library

PS. Would you like to have an updated list of all the books that we have in the library? Now, when you send us a donation of any amount we will mail you an alphabetically ordered list of all the books that we have. That way if you know of a book that you really want to read, you can see if we have it available in the library. We have enclosed a reply card and envelope in case anyone wants to help support the library. If you do not need a list of available books please check the appropriate box on the card. Please note: Stoltzfus Christian Library operates like a nonprofit organization, but at this point in time we still are not recognized by the IRS as an official 501C3 organization, which in plain terms means that we cannot give out tax deductible receipts. If you still do want a receipt that is not tax deductible please specify and we will be happy to do so. Thank You for your support!

P.P.S. Mark your calendars! You are invited to our first annual open house on Saturday March 12, 2016. The hours of operation will be the usual fall and winter hours 8:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. (From 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. we will have free coffee and doughnuts available.)

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NEW FEATURE FOR THE LIBRARY

You will be able to continue renewing your books when you are at the library, but for your convenience, we now have a call in voice mail line for the library to renew your books. Previously we did not recommend people to call us to renew their books because most of the time we do not have staff on duty working in the library. If you want to use this new option, call phone # ~~(717) 874-0517~~. Here is a list of the information that we need when you are ready to renew your books. (Name of cardholder) (Library card #) (Statement # that you used when borrowing the books,) this # is located on the top right corner of the statement slip that you wrote the book titles on and if you are not renewing all of your books we also need, (Titles of the books that you want to renew.) Note that we will renew your books for two weeks at a time, and allow a maximum of two renewals. You will not be allowed to have your library books for more than six weeks until they have to be returned. We will start charging overdue fees on books that you have for more than six weeks even if you have been renewing them. If you want to speak to someone in person call the regular library phone # (717) 672-1587

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Books that are borrowed from the library will be due to be returned on or within two weeks of the day that they were borrowed, unless otherwise marked on the book. We now accept renewals by voice mail, call # (717) 874-0517. And, by renewing books in person at the library. Each renewal will add two weeks of time to your books. You cannot renew books for more than two times, or have books for more than six weeks total at one time. It is up to the cardholder to keep track of the due date. We will charge a fee of twenty cents per book, per day, for all overdue books, up to a maximum of Ten dollars. Also, you will be charged the full value for each book that is not returned after sixty days of the due date and they will become your property. Thank You, for your cooperation and support. If reasonable, Stoltzfus Christian Library has the right to revoke the validity of your library card at any time without prior notice.

NOTICE:

It is our desire as a Christian library to provide quality books and information that are Biblically sound. We do screen our books, however with the overwhelming amount of books available it is not possible for us to read every one. If you find something that is questionable please bring it to our attention and we will be happy to investigate.

Also, there are some books that are available, that are good, and are written by Christian authors, but are intended to be read by older teenagers or adults. It is still the responsibility of parents to know what your children are reading.

Please tell us how we can improve, if you like this library tell others, but if you don't, let us know. If you have a great book suggestion, or ways that we can improve etc. simply write it on a piece of paper and drop it in the donation box.

We do accept and appreciate book donations, but please donate only books that are of good quality and can be read for many years to come, also, leave your name and telephone number in case for some reason, we can contact you if they do not meet our standard. If they do not meet our standard, and no name and phone number is left, we will donate them to a local thrift store or dispose of them as we see fit. Thank You! Your continued support is what helps make this library possible!

MISSION STATEMENT

It is our desire to provide good quality, Biblically sound information, and literature. That God would use the information that we provide to his Honor and Glory. That many souls would be drawn to God, and come to salvation through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.