



Sharing the Good News!

Penn Northeast Conference of the United Church of Christ

“Six days without a cell phone and I lived to tell about it!”

by Alan C. Miller, Conference Minister

On Saturday morning August 30th I began my day following my usual routine. Shower, get dressed, retrieve the paper, prepare breakfast, eat breakfast while reading the paper, and then “fire up” my cell phone and review my calendar. However on August 30th my daily routine was abruptly interrupted when my cell (actually it’s a BlackBerry) refused to start. Instead of the normal screen, an icon of a battery with an “x” through it appeared. I immediately drove to the Verizon store with my cell phone barely breathing on the seat next to me. The technician at the store confirmed my worst fears -- my cell phone was dead! The battery had died. (Six months earlier than expected-- when I asked: “Why!” They said: “Bad luck.”) I needed a new battery, they had none in stock nor did any other Verizon store in the Lehigh Valley. They had to order one and with Labor Day upon us it was going to take six days before I would have a new battery.

Six days ... six whole days! How would I get around as I have been increasingly noticing that in Pennsylvania apparently you must talk on your cell phone in order to properly operate your car? How would I be able to make people think I was important without a cell phone to interrupt the meeting that I was attending? How would we eat as my wife would not be able to contact me at the grocery store? Life suddenly began to feel scary and uncertain.

In the years immediately following World War II, most of the factories that produced weapons for the war effort were re-tooled to produce labor-saving devices. So many devices were invented and produced that by the early 1960s sociologists were predicting that Americans

would become lazy due to all of the free time that these devices would give them. But to everyone’s surprise we did not become lazy; we used the extra time to become busier.

Somehow I can’t picture Jesus with a cell phone. He certainly made himself available to people wherever he went healing and teaching as many as his schedule permitted. But he also took very important time away simply to be quiet, to pray, and to listen to God. It was during these Sabbath moments that he restored and refreshed body, mind, and soul.

The last six days have been frightening as I scurried to find things to fill my days. I spent extra time talking with Candy over a cup of coffee, I read a book, and I did some journaling -- I think I am actually going to survive this ordeal.

Well now it’s Thursday and I just got the new battery for my cell phone. I am going to install it now -- lucky for me I have voice mail so that I will not lose the important messages of the thousands of people who need to talk to me. What? Only one message? It’s from my brother telling me he is going to be away for a few days taking some time for a retreat.

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