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# FRESH FACES

*Meet the Severns: Servants with a Heart for Kids*

By Victoria Fleenor

“Philosophical Phil” and “Silly Sandy” were the adjectives chosen by Phil and Sandy Severn to describe themselves in a “get to know you” activity at our youth Christmas Party in December. (If you’re interested □ some of the others were “Beautiful Brian,” “Luscious Levi,” “Bad Bill,” and “Precious Phil” (Ritchie)!) Our teen group has been spending time getting to know the Severns, as have many other groups in the church. We have decided to take this month’s “family feature” opportunity to share the Severns’ story with you as well!

Phil, along with Sandy, his wife, is the candidate our Pastors and Deacons have chosen to present to the church to fill the position of Assistant Pastor of Student Ministries and Outreach . The Severns are currently searching out God’s will for them concerning this opportunity.

Phil was born to a missionary family as a “surprise” baby after his parents’ ministry abroad had transitioned to a stateside job. Phil’s father became the Director of SEND International a year before his birth. So, even though Phil grew up as an “M.K.” (missionary kid), he calls the east side of Michigan (Detroit area) home.

He became a Christian at a very young age, and grew up (in his words) doing all the things a Christian is “supposed” to do.



However, during his junior high years, a new youth pastor came to his church and challenged him in many areas—mainly, to view his Christian faith as a *relationship*, not just a series of “do’s and don’t’s.” Through *Cross-Trainers Ministries*, the new leader also emphasized outreach, Bible study and a growing intimacy with God. He encouraged Phil to move out of his comfort zone by giving his testimony at a teen outreach event. Phil recalls being quite nervous about this, and thinking that his testimony was too “boring” to share. But the pastor emphasized that he should just share what God was doing in his life. So he did, and he felt God guiding his words. From then on, his passion for youth ministry grew, and he continued to learn that God would help him do whatever he led him to, and provide the means for him to do it.

Sandy was also raised on the east side of the state. Part of a blended family, she has five siblings. As she grew, she says she al-

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ways felt the call of God, but did not have the knowledge to discern what that was. As a teen, one of her friends invited her to church; there, she began to learn about God. On the night of September 10, 1995, Sandy felt very burdened and prayed a simple prayer: "I can't do this myself, I give my life to you...I need you to help me." She instantly felt peace and later would attribute this to the Holy Spirit. The next day, she excitedly shared this event with her friends, and they responded, "You asked Jesus into your heart!"

That Christmas, Sandy received her first Bible from her mother. She began to eagerly read and learn more about God. A short time later, the same friend invited her again to Wednesday night youth group, where a new youth pastor would be speaking. She agreed to go, and had a great time.

The new youth pastor happened to be the same one in Phil's story! Sandy was a sophomore at the time, and Phil was in eighth grade. After high school, Sandy headed to Pennsylvania to attend Philadelphia Biblical University with the goal of becoming a teacher. Phil soon joined her at PBU, studying youth ministry. They were married 2 years later. While in Pennsylvania, the Severns were finally able to begin fulfilling their passion as youth leaders in a small church with a very diverse group of teens; Phil served as the Youth Pastor there. After Sandy completed her Education degree, she taught fifth grade for a year in Pennsylvania before they decided to move back to Michigan to be closer to family.

Currently, Phil is in the final stages of completing his youth ministry degree at Cornerstone University. He interned at Kentwood Baptist Church as a volunteer youth leader; he and Sandy both attend Kentwood Baptist and have been very involved in various music and children's ministries there. (And, yes, all you D.C. Talk fans, Sandy has had a few "Kevin Max" sightings at Kentwood—I had to ask.) Sandy works as the Assistant Director of the AppleTree Christian Learning Center right down the street from First Baptist. They are also expecting their first child this next summer!

As Phil recounted his testimony in Sunday School in December, he summarized his experience by emphasizing that Christianity is not about lists, but about a

## God's Wife

**An eye witness account from New York City , on a cold day in December, some years ago: A little boy, about 10-years-old, was standing before a shoe store on the roadway, barefooted, peering**

**A lady approached the young boy and said, 'My, but you're in such deep thought staring in that**

**'I was asking God to give me a pair of shoes,'was**

**The lady took him by the hand, went into the store, and asked the clerk to get half a dozen pairs of socks for the boy.. She then asked if he could give her a basin of water and a towel. He**

**She took the little fellow to the back part of the store and, removing her gloves, knelt down, washed his little feet, and dried them with the**

**By this time, the clerk had returned with the socks.. Placing a pair upon the boy's feet, she pur-**

**She tied up the remaining pairs of socks and gave them to him.. She patted him on the head and said, 'No doubt, you will be more comfort-**

**As she turned to go, the astonished kid caught her by the hand, and looking up into her face,**

**'Are you God's wife?'**

growing, intimate relationship with God. He challenged the teens not to look at each day with the perspective of the Christian duties they need to "check off" their list (devotions in the morning, prayer, etc.), but rather to focus on their whole life being in communion with God.



## Observations on Growing Older

It's harder to tell navy from black!

Everything old is new again, but if you wore it before, you're too old to wear it the 2nd time around!

Your kids are becoming you...and you don't like them!...but your grandchildren are perfect!

**Yellow** becomes the big color... walls, hair, teeth!

Going out is good, coming home is better!

When people say you look "Great" they add "for your age"!

When you needed the discount you paid full price. Now you get discounts on everything... movies, hotels, flights.

You forget names but it's OK because other people forgot they even knew you.

The last 2 outfits you wore had spots on them.

You ask your husband or friend how your outfit looks and they tell you the truth!

The five pounds you wanted to lose is now 15 and you have a better chance of losing your keys than the 15 pounds.

You realize you're never going to be really good at anything, especially golf.

Your spouse is counting on you to remember things you don't remember.

The things you cared to do, you don't care to do but you care that you don't care to do them anymore.

Your husband sleeps better on a lounge chair with the TV blaring than he does in bed. It's called his "pre-sleep"

Remember when your mother said "Wear clean underwear in case you GET in an accident"? Now you bring clean underwear in case you HAVE an accident!

You used to say, "I hope my kids GET married". Now you hope they STAY married!

The best place to have a conversation with your husband is in the bathroom. You have his full attention.

Who wants to wear 3" heels anyway.

You miss the days when everything worked with just an "ON" and "OFF" switch.

Having read this far, you are wishing this had been set in **LARGE PRINT** like your Bible.

You remember when GOOGLE, ipod, email, modem were unheard of and a mouse was something that made you climb on a table.

You use more 4 letter words.."what?" "when?"???

Now that you can afford expensive jewelry, it's not safe to wear it anywhere.

Your husband has a night out with the guys but he's home by 9:00 P.M. -- next week it will be 8:30 P.M.

You read 100 pages into a book before you realize you've read it before.

Notice everything they sell in stores is "sleeveless"?

Most of the people in People Magazine you've never heard of.

Your concealer doesn't conceal.

Your lipstick bleeds.

Your mascara clumps and your eyebrows are disappearing.

You don't have hair under your arms and very little on your legs but your chin needs to be plucked daily!

What used to be freckles are now liver spots.

Everybody whispers.

Now that your husband has retired you'd give anything if he'd find a job!

You have 3 sizes of clothes in your closet, 2 of

But..old is good in some things: ..old songs.. old movies

**And best of all---OLD FRIENDS!!!!!!**

## Peter loves chocolate.

Peter loves chocolate.

It makes his eyes cross and his ears twitch.

But there is a problem.

In Creatures Hollow, where Peter lives, eating chocolate is against the **Ordinances of the His Imperial Majesty**.

*His Imperial Majesty* lives in Unreachable Castle atop Thunder Mountain on the other side of Fangy Snake Swamp.

No one here in Creatures Hollow has ever seen *His Imperial Majesty* but everyone knows he is there and he makes the rules.

Down here in Creatures Hollow, where Peter lives, disobeying any **Ordinance of His Imperial Majesty** is punishable by death. And in Creatures Hollow, justice is always sure and swift.

*His Imperial Majesty* sees to it personally.

How he does this no one knows.

Peter's mother says its because justice always runs down hill.

*His Imperial Majesty* is VERY HIGH.

The creatures are very low.

So what's a poor chocolate lover like Peter to do?

Can he hide under a pwimblocker and nibble chocolate?

It would do no good.

The Eye Creatures are everywhere.

There's no hiding from the Eye Creatures.

Can he disguise the chocolate inside a peanut butter sandwich?

NO!

The Chocolate-Sniffer Dogs are on every street corner and the

**Chocolate Detector Machines** are hidden in every door post.

Can he put the chocolate in his coffee and call it mochah?

Not a chance!

No one has ever fooled the dreaded **SICIS**,

whose video monitors scan every kitchen.

Peter has tried all these tricks.

Every trick has failed.

He is already sentenced to 156 consecutive deaths and he cannot pay.

But what is this?!!

In the Imperial Mail, Peter receives this unbelievable notice.

A cold sweat instantly pops on his forehead when he sees the official envelope.

Inside is this hand written letter.

To: Peter

From: *His Imperial Majesty*

*His Imperial Majesty's Kingdom*  
have been reviewed in my presence.

has sentenced you to die 156 consecutive deaths beginning on the first day of the month in which you were born.

as yet you have paid none of these penalties.

Be informed, therefore, that: Whereas, it is quite impossible for you to pay these penalties either by death or by works of

*His Imperial Majesty's*  
presence;

supreme wish that all his subjects in Creatures Hollow should live with him in peace;

humbly requests your permission to come live with you in your house and to declare you, irrevocably, his Royal Brother.

*His Imperial Majesty*

*His Imperial Majesty's Kingdom*

*His Imperial Majesty*  
himself, personally.

*His Imperial Majesty's*

You may, if you wish, accept banishment.

humble request, you may do so by writing your name below and returning this letter in the postage paid envelope enclosed.

will come to live with you. But be alert. He will appear in an unexpected form. And if you do not invite him in when he appears, you will be banished.

*His Imperial Majesty's own hand.*

I am humbly waiting for your reply.

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**FBC Mission Statement**

*We endeavor to...*

**Magnify**

*The Lord, by bringing people to Jesus Christ and*

**Membership**

*In His Family, seeking to develop them to Christ-like*

**Maturity,**

*Equipping them for their*

**Ministry**

*In the Church.... And their life*

**Mission**

*In the world.*

**December Birthdays and Anniversaries**

Name	Happy Birthday to..	Happy Anniversary to..
Joshua & Dianne Milley		1/01
Aaron & Wendy Tenney		1/03
Linda Bennett	1/03	
John Gerard	1/05	
Mike Long	1/05	
Phillip Raimer	1/05	
Don Green	1/06	
Pam Sigafoose	1/10	
Kathi McIntire (Missionary)	1/12	
Karen Bennett	1/12	
Dianne Milley	1/13	
IlaJean Pomeroy	1/13	
Brent Bradley	1/14	
Dennis Burns	1/15	
Randy & Victoria Fleenor		1/15
Bill & Dolly Johnson		1/15
Lori Raimer	1/17	
Jim Rhoades	1/17	
Natalie VanLaan	1/17	
Vonnie Gauger	1/19	
Clayton Gregory	1/19	
Edward & Sandy Smiley		1/19
Mike Raimer	1/20	
Terry & Elisabeth Tarchala		1/20
Ron & Chris Self (Missionary)		1/22
Lynn Mitchell	1/27	
Abigail Gregory	1/29	

**Live joyfully**

**Give generously**

**Serve gladly**

**Love liberally**

*I have set the Lord always before me.  
Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.  
Psalm 16:8*