

## Creative Barn Building



uring the past weeks, Shepherd's Knoll has bustled with workers busily erecting our new horse barn. Conceived several years ago, our construction plan continually evolved as my wife and I debated and discussed options and attributes for this dream horse barn. We settled on the location (east of our house, but well in view), overall size (dimensions 24 feet x 48 feet with 12-foot sidewalls), and basic components (four horse stalls, tack room, a loft, and storage areas for feed, bedding, hay, and tools). In June, our barn building project began with site excavation and then basic structural erection by a local agricultural construction company, who put up the pole framework and metal roof. The balance of the construction remains the responsibility of the Miller household.

In July, we attached barn siding, consisting of random-width shed-dried oak boards obtained from logs sawn on Shepherd's Knoll. The sounds of our radial arm saw and whine of electric drills filled the air when the Millers got busy. An important aspect of our barn building project is that Dad and Mom work with daughters Katerina (age 13) and Zoya (age 11). Family participation creates enthusiasm. Our daughters are motivated to work as they dream of the horses we will stable and future opportunities to canter those horses over the meadows and through the woods of Shepherd's Knoll.

During less busy times, I reflect on the creativity, energy, and errors involved in our barn-building project. For example, in meeting with the plumber, we made decisions about the location of water lines that differed from the original plan. Earlier, due to a miscommunication, the construction company ordered and installed the wrong metal roof color. While the color we originally selected matched our house and other

outbuilding roofs, the color of the new barn roof differed and clashed. Mistakes are costly; who pays for them? More importantly, what is the best way to rectify such a blunder? Creativity and resourcefulness are required both in planning details and in correcting errors.

The writer of Hebrews puts building in perspective by describing in principle the origin of the building impulse: "For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything" (Hebrews 3:4, NIV). Is not the urge and ability to build part of our creative nature, endowed to us by the great Builder and Designer? Did God in creation translate idea to drawing, to material acquisition, to construction, and finally to residence?

We plan, build, and hope that our constructions will endure for a time, maybe even beyond our life span! In designing a retaining wall, I was encouraged by our agricultural builder who said, "Make this a good wall, one that will last and not be a repair problem for your children." However, reality reminds us that building barns, ideologies, or fortunes are all subject to decay and destruction. Jesus extols us: "... store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal" (Matthew 6:20). At the end of the day, have I invested in heavenly treasures that endure? Does the urge to build a horse barn take too much of our priorities and make the heavenly "nestegg" paltry by default? I trust that is not the case. Can we not both build a horse barn and family relationships for the Kingdom of Christ? As we simultaneously build both for time and eternity, we will experience blessing and reward for work well done!

A Barn & Kingdom Builder, Roman J. Miller, Editor

## In this Issue

Again due to the sixteen extra pages supported by the contribution of a generous donor, this issue of *PSCF* contains eight interesting and informative articles, rather than the typical three or four found in many issues.

The first triplet of papers by Malcolm Jeeves, David Siemens, and Peter Rüst relates to the neurobiology theme of the 2004 Annual Meeting of the ASA. These three papers explore various aspects of the nature of humanness and the image of God.

The next two papers by D. Gareth Jones and Hessel Bouma describe issues of health care ethics as they impact our society.

Finally, the last triplet of papers portrays a variety of faith and science issues: Jerry Bergman reflects on the reasons for the extinction of the dodo bird; Randy Isaac takes up the theological issue of gaps in our understanding; and Giuseppe Tanzella-Nitti explores historical perspectives on the revelation of God through science and Scripture.

As normal, we follow our articles with a selection of book reviews and conclude our issue with one letter.