

Opinion / Local

Traveling preacher gives presentation on Jason Lee



Meghan Andersch / The Baker County Press

Aaron Auer speaks at the Agape Church.

BY MEGHAN ANDERSCH
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Traveling preacher Aaron Auer and wife Kimberly are making a whirlwind tour of every county in Oregon, presenting “Jason Lee: The True Father of Oregon.”

Auer previously visited all counties with John Sutton. They dressed as frontiersman John McLoughlin and Oregon’s first missionary Jason Lee.

Auer said they are returning with an update exactly seven years later and referenced the significance of seven in the Bible.

The Auers were in Baker County on Friday night, June 3rd at the Agape Church. Pastor Garth Johnson introduced Auer, calling him the “John the Baptist in Oregon”, preparing the way and calling to “take the State back.”

During the next two hours, in a presentation ranging from laughter to thundering to quiet reflection, Auer touched on everything from abortion to global warming to timber harvest, called for reform in education and within the church, and detailed Oregon’s historical heritage.

Auer started with the Nez Perce searching for the “Book of Heaven.” He said Creator God had sent the Nez Perce dreams of a book brought by pale-skinned people. Four warriors showed up in St. Louis in 1861 after walking nearly 3,000 miles. They were hosted by Captain William Clark. Two of the warriors died over the winter in St. Louis. Before the other two returned, one, H’co-a-h’co-a-h’cotes-min, spoke. He said the book was not in the places they’d been taken where the Great Spirit was worshipped, nor in the pictures they were shown, nor in the gifts they were given.

The speech concluded, “My people will die in darkness, and they will go on the long path to the other hunting grounds. No white man will go with them and no white man’s Book, to make the way plain. I have no more words.”

The matter was reported in newspapers of the time, Auer said, “stirring the nation.” Dr. Fisk, trainer of ministers, had a man in mind to go to the Native Americans. This man, Jason Lee, accepted the challenge. He traveled to the Oregon country in

1834, some nine or ten years before the Oregon Trail. Among other things, he founded the first mission in the northwest and helped start Salem, including founding Willamette University.

Auer stated that Webley Hauxhurst of Long Island showed up in 1839 and said he learned more in one week at the Mission School from the prayers and questions of the native children than he had learned in his previous 31 years. He turned to the Lord and served him the rest of his days.

Walla Walla chief Peopeomoxmox left his son, Elijah Hedding, at the mission in charge of Lee. Hedding was later shot by a group of “rowdy cowboys” in California as he knelt in prayer.

Lee was instrumental in Oregon obtaining statehood. He petitioned for statehood, saying, “If we don’t get it with God, someone without God is going to get it.”

In 1843 in Champoege the first vote was held to elect Oregon’s first 11 legislators. These included Joe Meek. Jason Lee and other preachers acted as the committee. A week later, starting July 5th, they held a camp meeting. At first, only 16 or 17 people came. By the last night, about 60 of the 200 settlers were present. Meek stood up and said, “Tell everyone you see, old mountain man Joe Meek’s turned to the Lord, and if he can, anyone can.”

Auer said they’re still spreading his message. Auer called for a return to our roots in education, saying, “We need to teach and be honest, whether we like it or not” and “education without God is godlessness.”

He read from a 1957 textbook from the Salem Public School district that told the story of the Nez Perce searching for the Book of Heaven and about Lee’s accomplishments.

Auer said the biggest challenge in the church today is not a problem of hearing but of hearing and not doing. He said, “If we don’t do the work assigned by the Lord, we will be deceived and not know it.”

Auer described the Circuit Rider Monument, placed on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds in 1924. The inscription reads, “Commemorating the labors and achievements of the ministers of

the gospel who as circuit riders became the friends, counselors, and evangelists to the pioneers on every American frontier.”

The Capitol Grounds also have a statue of Jason Lee, “Preaching Statesman.”

Auer then spoke of Abraham Lincoln instituting an act through the Senate to allow every state to send up to two representative statues to be placed in the Hall of Statuary in Washington DC.

In 1920, Oregon chose to send statues of John McLoughlin and Jason Lee. This was not actually accomplished until 1947. Schoolchildren collected coins to raise the money to send the statues.

In 2013, a bill was introduced in the Oregon legislature declaring that due to an imminent threat to public peace, health, and safety, an emergency was declared and that the Lee statue in Washington DC should be replaced with one most representative of “current Oregon.”

Auer said he testified “gently, kindly, and directly” to the committee and the bill miraculously died. It was brought forth again in 2014 as an emergency and again died. Governor Kitzhaber by executive order formed a commission to study who would be best to replace the Lee statue. The bill died in Senate a third time.

The bill came forward for the fourth time this year, again declared as an emergency. On March 3rd, fifty-nine of the sixty Oregon House members walked to Senate President Peter Courtney’s office and asked that a statue of Mark Hatfield replace the Lee statue.

Courtney said no. Auer said he prays Courtney stays strong to the end.

In closing, the Auers read several Scripture passages, including Proverbs 22:28 which states, “Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.” Auer said, “our state’s heritage is being trespassed on” and “Oregon is about to sell its birthright.” He then said, “but we don’t have to buy it.” Auer closed with a prayer for the county sheriff, judge, and citizens.

Kimberly Auer asked for prayers for the tour and for finances. More information on their ministry can be found at roaroregon.org.

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— GUEST OPINION —

SWAT robot still needed

By Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner

Several months ago this Department announced a campaign to receive donations to purchase a robot for use by law enforcement agencies in our region.

In particular the device would be used by the Northeast Oregon Regional SWAT Team (NEOSWAT) to enhance public safety, and bring to a peaceful resolution, incidents where violence is likely.

NEOSWAT is comprised of members of the Baker City Police Department, Baker County Sheriff’s Office, La Grande Police Department, and Union County Sheriff’s Office.

A robot, housed in Baker City, could be used by NEOSWAT or any of the individual law enforcement agencies when needed.

To date, some donations from individual citizens and community groups have been received and are very much appreciated.

We are, however, a long way from reaching our goal of \$25,000, which is the purchase price for the device.

We urge individuals, community organizations and businesses in our region to give serious consideration to this project.

Donations are tax deductible.

On the afternoon of June 2, 2016, and extending for a twelve-hour period, an armed, barricaded subject incident occurred in Baker City.

It resulted in a response from NEOSWAT including its team of Crisis Negotiators.

Ultimately the incident was peacefully resolved when a robot was loaned to NEOSWAT.

It was via the robot that the precise location of the suspect inside the residence was able to be ascertained.

It was via the robot that negotiators were finally able to converse with the suspect, ultimately convincing him to surrender.

Unfortunately the robot (and operators) loaned to us came from hundreds of miles away.

It took a great deal of time for the robot to arrive in Baker City and be deployed.

The longer an incident of this



Submitted Photo

Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner gets some love from one of his favorite little citizens just after responding to a call.

type continues unresolved the greater the risk and inconvenience to the public and the greater the hazard posed to the public safety personnel who must respond.

This incident, in the opinion of the Incident Commander and other experienced SWAT personnel most likely could, and would, have been resolved in a much more timely manner had a robot been immediately available here in Eastern Oregon.

Unfortunately there will be other incidents like this in our multi-county region in the future,

Each agency involved in NEOSWAT contributes substantially to the costs of maintaining the capability and expertise of the SWAT Team.

At the present time purchase of a robot by those agencies, without public donations, is simply impossible.

We encourage members of the communities we serve to send a donation to Baker City Police SWAT Fund 1768 Auburn Avenue, Baker City, Oregon 97814.

Your contribution will be acknowledged in writing for tax purposes.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact Reserve Commander Jerry Boyd at 541.519.8309. He is coordinating this effort on behalf of NEOSWAT.

— CONTACT US —

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