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City Challenge

Perspectives from those who went on the youth group's recent trip to Columbus

The Youth

What will you remember most about the week?

Brenda Zachrich

Working in the homeless shelter. I guess you would call it a culture shock, seeing how these people are so grateful for such little food. It kind of made me think twice.

Larissa Swartz

The ministry time where we broke up into groups and had a special prayer time for each other. The LCF girls had a real bonding time together and we could really feel God's presence.



What was your least favorite part of the week?

Joy Church

Being hot. There was no air conditioning—it was windows open and fans blowing.

What was the most difficult?

Amy Rosati

The most difficult part would have to be praying out loud. It's really hard to pray out loud, because there is a lot of pressure. It was a good challenge; it was just kind of hard too.

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Raining Money

A Message from the Pastor

By Rob Swartz



Will we be able to begin constructing our new building by December 2010? It's a question that comes back to me periodically as we begin our fundraising plans. After collecting the pledges and observing the first two months of our fundraising drive, it is becoming clear to me that we face a significant challenge.

It has been encouraging to see the giving increase for the building project, but it seems that without some intervention, we will not reach our goal of \$500,000 by December 2010. So what should be done? As the lead pastor, what should be my response?

We could cut back on our library funding and add slot machines, or we could ratchet up the emotional pressure on people. We could sell pizzas or have a church yard sale. We could cut the pastor's salary.

In the end, I like Andrew's suggestion the best. In last month's Connection, he mentioned God "raining down cash from the skies". As he pointed out, God hasn't promised to do this. But we do see that time after time God has provided what was needed as his people stepped out in faith.

So what motivates people to step out in faith? It's when they have a problem bigger than they can solve, a problem that they can't find a human solution for. They have to depend on a power greater than themselves.

In that light I find our situation very encouraging, because we are facing some problems we can't solve. It seems evident that we do not have the financial resources to meet this challenge. Do we back down? Do we decide this isn't God's will? Or...do we jump out into space believing our Heavenly Father will catch us? I would encourage us to jump.

As we jump, however, we need to keep some important points in mind. First, this building must be for God's purposes. It must be about furthering God's kingdom and accomplishing His purposes. It's not for us.

Second, we must give sacrificially, not just for the project but for all the needs that God brings our way. This is a demonstration of faith. We often ask God to provide resources that He has already entrusted into our care, when what we really need is to show our faith by giving at a level beyond where we feel comfortable.

The third thing to keep in mind is that we must pray. We must show our faith by asking our Father to provide what we need to carry out the work, and believing that He can do it.

Will God rain down money from the skies? It's not for us to say or dictate, but I do know that God will honor the faith of his children and provide for their every need.

Elders' Notes

Ideas and thoughts from recent meetings

The building fund

The elders spent time praying about the need for a fundraising coordinator for the building fund. The coordinator would collect ideas for fundraising and figure out how to implement those ideas. Another responsibility would be communicating with the congregation about where the funds are and where they need to be. An ideal candidate would have some administrative skills and enthusiasm for the project.

Ideally, the coordinator would serve until the building is completed, or at least until the first goal is met and construction begins. Anyone, however, would be welcome to act as coordinator for a shorter period of time as they are able.

Sunday school

The new children's church format is going well this summer. The children seem to be enjoying it and the teachers are getting a refreshing break. The format will continue through August.

Shannon Scheffel, the Sunday school coordinator, said there is a good possibility they will have children's church again next summer, if enough people are willing to help with it. She said she would like to keep the normal Sunday school format during the rest of the year for several reasons. First, the material is geared for the appropriate age groups, and can be covered more thoroughly. Also, teachers are more likely to be willing to teach smaller groups of children than larger ones with wide age ranges.

Worship team

The team is using an online Google document to create its own schedule, which is more or less working. A coordinator is still needed.

Pastors

The elders approved a pastoral agreement put together by Keith and Phil that specifies salary and benefit details for each of the pastors. They are working on finalizing job descriptions for each pastor that would specify specific responsibilities and expectations. After final revision and approval these job descriptions will be made available to the congregation.

Getting to Know... *Barb Sabulsky*

How do you like to spend your spare time?

With family of course, and then anything outdoors or at the beach. My mom lives down at Myrtle Beach, so we get to go once a year. I like biking or hiking.

What brings you to the Columbus area?

We actually grew up in a small town in northern Ohio, and jobs are what brought us down to the Columbus area years ago.

What's your job?

I'm working at Qwest Communications as a planning engineer. That involves growing the network for Qwest, so I look at planning future growth for them.

What's your favorite season of the year?

Fall. I just like the changing of the weather, the leaves, and being able to go outside without getting too hot or cold.

What does your family usually do for the fourth of July?

For the fourth of July every year we head down to Myrtle Beach, and we watch the fireworks on the beach. You can find them everywhere, almost throughout the whole week. You could watch fireworks every night if you wanted to.

What is something you'd like to accomplish in the next year?

Probably finish my degree. I'm working towards a bachelor's degree in finance from Franklin University. I do all the classes online because of the kids.

Do you have a favorite kind of music?

No. I like all types of music other than rap, anything but rap. The music I usually listen to ranges from 104.9 for Christian music to the pop on 97.9.



About the New Small Group

By Bob Zachrich, Marcus Freed, and Brenda Freed

The new adult bible study at LCF actually had its beginnings last fall as a small informal group made up of our families, the Zachrichs and the Freed. Neither family had been involved in such a group during 2007 because of major health issues, so we were ready for a small support group.

We can't remember exactly how our group formed. It seemed like a "God thing." As couples, we had both experienced life-changing health issues. Because of those similar circumstances we began to discuss our problems together.

The problems began early in March of 2007. After a long battle with neck pain, Bettyjo had what was to be a routine surgery. The surgery, however, was not successful and led to 12-13 more surgeries over a two-year period.

Then in April of 2007, Brenda suddenly came down with Herpes Encephalitis. It is impossible to describe how it felt to see Brenda totally fade in a week's time into a comatose state. After spending 17 days in ICU and numerous weeks in rehab, she finally came home on June 6, 2007. Reflecting back, that summer seems like a nightmare. Brenda had to relearn everything.

As we dealt with these issues, our small group started as a support for both families. We began by studying a book by Michael M. Smith called, "Following God in Tough Times." We went through the book in great detail and at our own pace. After we finished the book in the spring of 2009, we realized that we needed to decide on the future of the group. We could disband, or we could continue and even expand.

We ended up deciding to become a formal LCF small group and have invited others to join us from the church. Our group now contains three couples with the addition of Charlie and Sandy Gregg. We are reading the book "Becoming More like Jesus," also written by Michael M. Smith. We would like to complete this book by sometime this fall.

We are open to adding other people who are interested in being part of a small group. Please contact any of us for more information.

The Leaders

What did the youth learn or develop that you would like to keep going from the trip?

Tonya Brenneman

I think the accountability that they found at the ministry night. People were sharing things that they were struggling with or issues that they were having, and everybody prayed for them. I've heard several of them say 'that's what I want to keep'—that closeness, and the awareness of the need for prayer.

What do you think they got out of city challenge?

Ryan Freed

I hope, and I think this is the case, that they got a sense of confidence in themselves. That they can be bold in their faith to anybody, because they had to talk to strangers, and I think almost all of them did that.

What do you see as the advantages of taking a trip like this?

Tonya

I think it helps them realize that it's not just overseas that people need Christ, there are people right here in our community that are struggling and don't know, so I think it opens their eyes a little bit more to that.

Ryan Freed

I like City Challenge because it is a lot more doctrinally intensive than some of our work trips. Those are more service-oriented, and while we did some of that this time, I like that they actually get a lot of "meat" in the sessions. That's the strength I see of City Challenge. I really like that they not only get them out of their comfort zone but at the same time give them deeper teaching.

From the Editor

The youth group recently had a chance to step out of their comfort zones on City Challenge and share their faith with words and actions. That's something that has intimidated me for a long time. When I was younger, I knew that I was supposed to share my faith. I also knew, or thought I did, that God was a demanding sort of person who might very well send me to hell if I didn't obey Him and witness to people. This way of thinking, as you might imagine, did not produce a joyful sharing of good news.

I remember particularly one awkward attempt when I was about 12. I knew that many of the other players on my Little League baseball team weren't Christians, and I felt increasingly guilty about not witnessing to them. My sense of guilt and fear finally overcame my social embarrassment one day while I was tossing a ball with one of the other guys before a game.

"Do you believe in Jesus?" I blurted out. "No," the guy said, looking a little surprised. "Well, you should," I said, and gratefully let the conversation go.

Although I don't know the effect that conversation had on him, I doubt it led him to Jesus. At all. After experiences like that I tended to just stay quiet and blend in. But recently, I've realized that there is a better way to share my faith, one that doesn't startle people with out of the blue awkward questions. It's not a marketing tactic, a great new method, or even a special discovery. It's as simple as being honest.

At my two part-time jobs, UPS and Subway, people talk about matters of worldview and philosophy of life all the time, although they usually don't realize it. A guy might say something like "You never want to get married until you've lived with the person for a couple of years to see if you get along" (obscenity deleted).

My tendency has been to more or less brush that kind of statement off, blend in, and not make waves. But God has been showing me that all I have to do is be honest about who I am and what I believe, and I *am* sharing my faith, without so much of the awkwardness.

I think God wants commitment and that it makes a relationship better, not worse. It doesn't offend anyone when I explain that. Similar situations and conversations come up all the time. Who you are and what you believe just come out naturally, if you are honest.

Sharing simple beliefs might not convert anyone right away, but it can get them thinking. Suddenly "witnessing" becomes something much more natural, simple and genuine. It's not easy, but honesty rarely is.

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