

Kid Kits *By Candice Mast*

To the kids of LCF:

Jesus loves children! He wants to put his hand on you and bless you (see Matthew 19:13-15). He also wants children to come to Him who don't know him or serve him yet. Some kids here in Thailand don't know much about Jesus and some have very sad and difficult lives. Instead of going to school, some children are forced to live on the streets and beg for money. Some are even taken from their families.



Our family often sees these children sitting on sidewalks and bridges asking for money. We don't want to give them money because adults will take it from them and it will create a reason for them to stay on the street begging. So we asked ourselves, "How can we show mercy to these kids and help them feel the love of Jesus and know they are special?"

We decided to make "Kid Kits," a special gift that says "We care about you." Claire and Eliza like to make the kits by collecting toys and other items, putting them in plastic bags and decorating them with ribbons.

- Here's what is in each kit:
- Small toy
 - Sucker or wrapped candy
 - Toothbrush
 - Milk box



We make some kits for girls, some for boys and some for babies. When we go to the city of Bangkok we make sure to take some Kid Kits along, and we keep our eye out for needy kids.

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Word of the Month *By Reuben Sairs*

δεισιδαιμονεστερους (deisidaimonesterous) – "religious"

Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious." (Acts 17:22)

Most people in the world are religious to some degree. Sometimes preachers say that religion is a human effort to reach God, but that our faith is in the God who reaches us. In other words, everybody else has a religion, but we have a relationship. That is not a bad idea, but it oversimplifies to make a point. Being religious isn't the same thing as being a Christian, but clearly there is some overlap. So what does it mean to be religious?

In Acts 17.22 the word is deisidaimonesterous or δεισιδαιμονεστερους (a real mouthful!). In almost all modern translations, it's rendered "religious." The King James translation, though, used "superstitious." Even before that John Wycliffe translated it as "vain worshipers." Is Paul meaning to denigrate the religion of the Athenians?

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Commitment to be a Kingdom Builder

A Message from the Pastor

By Rob Swartz



I am building God's kingdom. This kingdom does not have boundaries. It ignores race, age, and socioeconomic status. It stretches across churches, denominations, neighborhoods, countries—the entire world.

Rob's kingdom has boundaries. It stops with what's good for Rob. It's primarily concerned with what benefits Rob and the interests that Rob has. God's kingdom is not limited. It's concerned not only with Rob, but with all the people around Rob and beyond. I want to build God's kingdom, not Rob's kingdom.

I am building God's kingdom, not LCF's kingdom. If I were, I would be concerned primarily with building the church into a socially recognized, prosperous organization. I would be preoccupied with the tools rather than the message. I would promote LCF's ministry over other parts of God's kingdom. I might even be critical of other kingdom work. I would protect our resources instead of contributing generously to other work. I would look to keep rather than to send, to maintain rather than to stretch. I would look to placate rather than to challenge. I would look to minister primarily to those inside the church. I would not be concerned with working with other churches, denominations, or organizations. An LCF kingdom has boundaries, while God's kingdom does not.

I am building God's kingdom, not a kingdom for others. I want to minister to whomever God brings across my path, to reach across the defined boundaries. I will speak the truth in love regardless of whether it is appreciated or I am rejected. I will not be a people pleaser. I will seek to build the kingdom of God even if it does not show up favorably on a stat sheet. I will be willing to give up my personal and professional reputation for the kingdom. I will hold loosely to praise and criticism. I will strive for unity and seek for better understanding. I will give others space to make mistakes. I will learn from my mistakes, but I will not dwell on them. I will accept the pain and hurt that result from showing compassion and love. I will not give up on people.

I am building God's kingdom. It has no limits. It brings freedom, joy and peace. All other organizations and institutions will fall. All other accomplishments and accolades will fade. But this kingdom will last forever!

I have not necessarily lived up to these ideals, but they help me keep my focus in a confusing world of competing kingdoms.

Elders' Notes

Ideas and thoughts from recent meetings

The benevolence team has met twice. They reviewed past policies from previous teams and worked to condense all these ideas into a new working policy. Once they have finalized these ideas the elders' team will review them for final approval and the benevolence team will make sure the rest of the church is aware of the results.

The elders had quite a bit of discussion on the topics of healing, faith and prayer, looking at several different biblical passages. All of them came out of this discussion with concerns about biblical interpretations that mandate that God must heal those who have faith—in other words, that we can use faith to force his hand. They felt that Christians should have faith in God, not faith in faith itself.

By the next meeting, the elders want to have a rough draft of a form for pastoral review ready to look over. There is a possibility that the congregation will be able to do the reviews by early August.

Rob floated the idea of forming an evangelism team if enough people are interested. The elders affirmed such a team if it were an interest group for those who want to do evangelism, open to everyone, but without pressure to join.

The elders' team is praying specifically for the following people this month:

Mark and Danielle Call (Ryan and Kris)
Jesse Diller (Richard and Robin)
Kevin and Kristen Duncan (Reuben and Vicki)
Phil and Lucy Elfrink (Keith and Shannon)
Dan and Sarah Frederick (Rob and Doris)



Recent LCF Events & Activities

May 23: Church Social at Lake Choctaw
Graduation open houses (Larissa Swartz & Brenda Zachrich)
Tuesday and Friday night softball games

Looking Ahead...

June 14-19: Seven junior youth go to Bethel Camp
June 20: Father's Day potluck meal
June 21: Six youth go to Bethel Camp
July 7-16: LCF youth group to Costa Rica

Getting to Know... *Becky Hostetler*

Where did you grow up?

I grew up outside Plain City. I went to Jonathan Alder High School and graduated in '94. My husband [Phil] and I grew up about three miles apart. We rode the same bus when we were little. It was kind of an acquaintance, and then we met when we were both working at Der Dutchman.

How long have you been going to LCF? What made you want to be a part?

I think we've been coming for eight and a half years. The people were so friendly, welcoming, and open to us. Rob and Doris really connected with us, and we got into a small group right away, and got to know people through the small group. There were several of us that came about the same time, like Tom and Candice [Mast, now in Thailand], Bob and Bettyjo, Merv and Linda. Not right in the same month, but in that year or two.

What are your hobbies?

After I got married I got into scrapbooking. And I like to read. When I was a kid I was in 4-H and I showed dairy cows. I always liked cows. My grandfather had a dairy farm. My dad had shown dairy cows growing up when he was in 4-H, so it was a really good bonding time for us.

I'm not into camping. Phil likes backpacking. To me camping is in an RV with a toilet and a refrigerator. We've done a couple of camping trips with a tent and it's just like "Why do people think this is fun?" I have to pack up half the house and we've got to walk a half a mile to the bathroom and the shower.

You have a part in Vicki's upcoming drama at CMC Conference. Do you have any acting experience or is this your first try?

I've been in a couple of other plays that Vicki has done. The first play I was in was a Christmas play, maybe five years ago. She was in charge of the Christmas program, and she asked me if I would be in the Christmas play. And I was like "Sure." I'm thinking it's going to be a ten-minute thing with little kids. She gave me a forty-page script! I didn't know what I was getting into. But it was a really good experience, and she was very encouraging. I never would have thought I had any talent in that area or really even considered it. I really enjoy it. Being up in front of people really isn't my thing; I don't like to talk in front of people. But when you have something rehearsed and practiced it seems different to me.

What were your favorite subjects in school?

I really liked math, especially algebra. I just liked the logic and order that went with it. I also thought about being an interior decorator, which sounds very opposite I guess. I liked art in high school; I did a lot of art, and then did a little bit in college.

Where did you go to college?

I went to Bluffton College. I got a degree in math and a certification in secondary education, and I taught for four years. The first year I taught I was at a public school, and I taught 8th grade math and algebra. And then the next three years I taught at [Shekinah Christian School] and I taught all subjects. So it was a very stretching time. The worst was when they wanted me to do gym with my class, and I always knew that one thing I did not want to be was a gym teacher, because I am terrible at any athletic thing. I don't have an athletic bone in my body.

What's your favorite kind of music?

I like 104.9, I like contemporary Christian. I also like a little bit of classical.



Does your heart feel mercy when you think about these kids? Would you like to help? Here are a couple of ways you can share Jesus' love with a needy child:

Prayer

Pray for them—that they will learn about Jesus, that they will be safe, that they will feel loved and be able to go to school.

Giving money

Give your own money to make Kid Kits. These kits are not expensive so we don't need lots of money. Just a few dollars from your allowance or money that you earn in some way can help us buy milk, toothbrushes, and more. All you have to do is give your money, marked "Kid Kits," to Twila Snider and she will send the money to us.

Giving toys

You can send toys. They have to be small—think tiny dolls or matchbox cars, small art supplies, or stickers. They can be used but need to be in great shape! You can mail them to us in an envelope to this address:

Claire and Eliza Mast (Kid Kits)
419/216 Moo 5
Soi 12 Thippawan 1
T. Bang Muang Mai
A. Muang
Samut Prakan
10270
Thailand

Some children we give the kits to are so happy and excited they jump up and down and say thank you many times. Other just stare in amazement like they can't believe the gift is for them! Let's pray that all the kids who receive a kid kit will feel loved and special and that a seed of faith will be planted in their hearts.

In our minds, there is a difference between a superstition and a religion. A superstition is irrational and ignorant. Religions get more respect. We might admit Christians are religious, but we don't want anyone to say we are superstitious.

It turns out that the Greek word could be used in both senses. Walter Bauer's *Greek English Lexicon* says, "In the laudatory introduction of Paul's speech before the Areopagus it must mean 'religious.'" The *Tyndale Bible Commentary* says, "The word could be used in a positive sense or in a derogatory fashion. It is most likely that Paul meant it in a good sense, to provide a way in to his address that would engage the attention of the audience." The commentary goes on to say that Luke, the author of Acts, might have intended his readers to catch the irony that "for all their religiosity the Athenians were thoroughly superstitious and lacking in knowledge of the true God."

My take on this is that Paul would not have started his speech by insulting his audience. He thought their religious impulse was good, but that it needed to be rescued from ignorance. That idea might go a long way in our Christian witness.

From the Editor Secrets to Prayer

What would it take to get God to listen to you? How can you channel his power into your life? What is the key to getting God to transform your life?

I hope those questions trouble you a little. In fact, I would argue that they could be symptoms of a heart that is starting to have a flawed outlook on prayer. Yet it seems we almost can't help looking at prayer this way—as something we can use to get God to do things for us rather than a means of getting in touch with God. The difference is subtle but important.

I've been reading *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire* by Jim Cymbala, an assignment for the "Strive" men's group. In it he emphasizes the crucial importance of prayer, which has gotten me thinking about the topic.

I realized how uncomfortable I am with the "prayer as a tool" idea which has been so prevalent in Christian teaching and writing. I propose that prayer is so important primarily because it's the way we have of communicating with God, *not* because it's some kind of magic way to get results.

I wonder if we sometimes need to stop and realize that it's not *prayer* in and of itself that's important, it's the urgent need to get in touch with our Creator. To be completely honest with him, and let him be honest with us. To worship him. And yes, to make requests to him, believing that he can answer.

In other words, I think we need to be careful not to take our eyes off the God we are praying to, focusing on prayer itself as a thing of power.

"And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him." (Matthew 6:7-8)

The LCF Connection

A monthly newsletter designed to enhance communication at London Christian Fellowship

If you'd like to make comments on any of the stories or "LCF Connection" in general, email us at: connection@lcfweb.org.

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