

The LCF Connection

January 2011

Meeting of “Men’s Group to Be Named Later”



Over cinnamon rolls and orange juice, about a dozen or so men from the church were able to discuss important issues like “Should Michael Vick have a puppy?” on January 8 at Phat Daddy’s Pizza in London. After the icebreaker questions, they also listened to a talk from Marcus Freed on dealing with “speed bumps” in life. More meetings are planned for the next couple of months, on the first Saturday morning of the month.

These meetings are essentially a continuation of the men’s discipleship group “Strive” that has met over the past couple of years. In that group, however, more commitment was expected. Members generally were involved for a year or more and were expected to attend meetings and do assignments in an effort to grow and be challenged. Strive as it was before is now being phased out, and the new meetings are open to whoever wants to attend.

At the January 8 meeting, Marcus Freed shared from Psalm 13:1-6. Bob Zachrich was scheduled to share as well, but had to attend a funeral, so Marcus covered his presentation as well. In Psalm 13, David reflects on his struggles and sorrows, then comes to a place of worship, saying, “But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation.” Marcus talked about feelings of abandonment, self-pity, and what God brings to our lives through trial. He spoke about how God came through for him in his own life, and concluded that speed bumps in our lives refine us. While God rarely just takes us out of our trial, he noted, he does provide protection, comfort and guidance within the experience.

Rob Swartz, who led the Strive group and is providing vision for the new meetings, said the meeting was a good first step, and he will continue to work to refine it in the coming months. His vision, he said, was for the meetings to be very relevant to issues men face, enjoyable and engaging, and scripturally solid and challenging.

“I thought the best time was the time just to talk together and the sharing and prayer time around the tables at the end. At least it seemed to work well at our table,” he said. “I think the setting is good as well.”

“The breakfast was a blessing,” Marcus Freed said. “The men asked me some good questions after the presentation.”

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Seminary: A Near Death Experience?

By Preston Yoder

Have you ever heard someone say that seminaries are cemeteries? The idea in that sentence is that you go to seminary with a living faith, but your faith dies while you get lost in a stack of scholarship, theology, and philosophy. One friend told me that in his entrance interview to a certain seminary he was asked the following question. “Every student comes to a point in seminary where they lose their faith; how will you handle that?” My friend decided that was not a seminary he wanted to attend, so he joined Ashland Theological Seminary instead, where I met him in class.



I was on my guard when I started at seminary, determined not to lose my faith in Jesus Christ and praying I would not become a theological liberal. I found Ashland professors to be committed to the authority of scripture, while also informative as to what liberal scholars say and why. They also held some views on scripture that I had never heard before, such as believing that Paul did not write some of the books that have his name

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CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

London Christian Fellowship seeks to develop authentic and passionate followers of Jesus Christ.

Taking Jesus to Our Community

A Message from the Pastor

By Rob Swartz



One of the things I'd like to see us do this year at LCF is identify new ways that we can show the love of Jesus to our community. I challenged us this past Sunday to think of ways we can do this. I'd like to know what that looks like to you. What are your ideas? Feel free to let me know what you think in a variety of ways—through Facebook, comment cards at church, conversations, etc.

There are lots of ways to show love. When I look at the life of Jesus I see someone who came to meet the needs of the whole person. He spent much of his time teaching and preaching the good news, but that wasn't the only thing he did. He met the physical needs of the people by healing the sick and multiplying the bread and the fish. He stood up for people who were the castaways of society, offering hope and forgiveness. Jesus saw the needs of the people around him and he had compassion on them.

I would like us to show compassion in the same way to the community where our church is located. What are the needs here? Can we meet some of those needs for no other reason than to communicate the love of Jesus? Not to raise money, not to get people to come to church, not to promote LCF, not to make a statement, not to satisfy a guilty conscience, not to do a "project"... simply to share the love of Christ and make him known. I want to be known in our community the same way Christ was known in his community.

Here are some of my ideas:

- Provide a day of free computer repair or consulting for people who can't afford it. We have some good techies in our church. Maybe we could provide some reconditioned computers
- Pick up the trash in front of Wal Mart
- Provide resources the community needs, like recovery groups, financial counseling, etc.
- Provide volunteer help for our schools or community agencies
- Simply invite people to join us in seeking God as we have the opportunity

I'm sure you have even better ideas than I do. How would you like our church to be a light in this community? What is a need you recognize that we may be able to help meet? Share your thoughts with the rest of us and let's see where Jesus leads us.



Elders' Notes

Ideas and thoughts from recent meetings

The leadership team is finalizing a pastoral review form, and hopes to make it available to the congregation before the end of January.

From the bids coming in from contractors, it looks like the building project will cost about \$1.15 million. The finance team will look at what the numbers would be with different loan options, and will probably meet with the expansion team to hammer out a few more details on those options.

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

- Merv and Linda Schlabach (Ryan and Kris)
- Andrew and Stephanie Sharp (Richard and Robin)
- Kelvin Snider (Reuben and Vicki)
- Twila Snider (Keith and Shannon)
- Hans Stutzman (Rob and Doris)

Seminary continued...

signed to them! I heard much more talk about the human authorship of the Bible than I did about God's revelation. I started feeling confused about this and about the wide variety of theological convictions my classmates and professors held. How did I know that what I believed was true? Several people have helped me learn ways through the maze of confusion I was experiencing.

I met a wise looking man named Abe on break one day, and asked him for advice. His counsel was, "Keep your relationship with God strong, so you don't get thrown off track. Some of these books and ideas will mess you up." My academic advisor advised me to write out my convictions so that they do not get lost in the maze of other ideas I have to learn and respond to in seminary

I listened to both of these counsels and so far they have helped my faith in Christ to grow amid challenges that higher education brings.

A history class on "Liberalism and Fundamentalism" really freed me from a fear of theological liberalism. I had felt at times that liberals were the "smart people who thought about things," while I, leaning toward the fundamentalist side, was the ignorant person who believed without good reason. In that class I realized it was not true. I heard the story of a liberal scholar on the fast track to success in the theological world. She had written many books and was recognized as a great authority among other theologians. But she came to personally believe in Jesus. She came to faith and declared all her past studies to have been misguided and burned all the books that had brought her fame up to that point. My history professor made it clear to the class that ideas which undermine a person's faith in Christ do not have to be heard as the pure voice of reason, but they can be seen as ideas made up by people who are influenced and motivated by other scholars. After that class I was not afraid that I would become a liberal, and I did not feel embarrassed for believing the Bible is the Word of God, and that it accurately shows us the way to salvation in Jesus Christ.

Seminary has not become a cemetery for my faith. Through the challenges, I have gained a deeper knowledge of the Word, a broader perspective on what it means to have faith in Christ and love him with my mind, and a greater humility in sharing my faith in the Bible and in Christ to others.

Getting to Know... *Kelvin Snider*



From the Editor

What is religion all about? If you asked around, you'd probably get a lot of different answers. Sadly, some of them might be "Forcing others to conform to a set of beliefs," or "Judging people," or even "Terrorism." The fact is that being called religious is quickly becoming more of an insult than a compliment. Even followers of Jesus are eager to distance themselves from religion. You've likely heard the phrase, "It's not a religion, it's a relationship."

I'm very uneasy about the idea of religion as well. But as God defines it, it doesn't sound bad. Soon after Jesus' resurrection, James wrote to the believers, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."

How well have the believers listened to James in the centuries since he wrote? To answer, think of your impression of the church, in all its denominations and forms. Would you describe it as being patterned on this verse? Over time, the emphasis seems to have shifted to the second part of the verse—staying unpolluted by the world—with serving others seen as a nice extra to be tacked on.

In our service on January 9, Rob talked about figuring out what we can do for our community, and he writes about it in this issue as well. For me at least, it's an important reminder. My practice of faith is very unbalanced toward staying "unpolluted." Real faith, as James reminds us, is much more than that. Maybe if the church had more faithfully lived that way over the years, religion wouldn't be a dirty word at all.

Where are you from?

Well, I'm originally from Delphos, Ohio. That's about 85 miles northwest, up close to Lima...I'd been in VS, and then I moved back home and I and a cousin of mine moved down here.

Where were you in Voluntary Service?

I was in Jackson, Mississippi, with Rosedale Mennonite Missions. I was in a program called Jubilee Home Repair. We were doing a little bit of everything—roofing, some ceiling work, drywall work...it was a low-income neighborhood that we were in. The term was for one year.

Did you go to college anywhere?

I attended RBI. It wasn't a college back then. I was at RBI for five, maybe six terms.

What do you do for a living?

I do cabinet work, carpentry work. I lean toward trim work and finish carpentry, but right now with the economy I'm pretty much taking everything that comes down the road.

What other jobs have you done in the past?

Pretty much everything I've done has been related to construction. I've done framing and siding and just about everything in the construction field. My dad worked in a cabinet shop, so I guess that was probably my first introduction. He had a shop at home, so at an early age I was making projects out in the shop. In high school I went to tech school my junior and senior year in the carpentry field.

Any hobbies?

I enjoy doing Sudoku puzzles, I don't know if that counts as a hobby. I enjoy disc golf, and I like to play volleyball if the opportunity arises. I enjoy board games; it kind of depends on the group.

What's your best memory from last year?

Back in the early part of the year, probably around March, I ran into a guy I hadn't seen for four or five years. A number of years before I had worked with him on a job in downtown Columbus. I told him I wasn't really busy. He had a client that had called him about some work and he couldn't really do it, so he wanted to know if he could give him my name, and I said sure. It ended up being about five weeks of work. I really think that was an answer to prayer; I was pretty desperate for work at that time. So that's a good memory. Of course, probably the most memorable thing of this year is my sister getting engaged.

What would be something you're looking forward to in 2011?

I'm about ready to see if there are people at LCF wanting to do another MDS trip, maybe sometime this fall. Probably either Louisiana or Mississippi again. They are still working there from [hurricane] Katrina of course, and I think maybe Ike and Gustav.

What is something you have never done but would like to do?

There's probably a lot of things but...I think it would be cool to take a year off and just travel, probably somewhere in the U.S.

Opening for Softball Manager

Andrew Sharp, who managed LCF's softball team last summer, is looking for someone interested in replacing him this season, team sources say. The season doesn't start until May, but a new manager would need to start figuring out details for the season before then, including finding out if there are enough people to field a team.



The job is not very high-paying, although the manager does receive a free book of scoresheets from the league, and there are usually some scoresheets left over after the season. Andrew says he used a couple of them to score Baltimore Orioles games and they worked well.

The manager is in charge of notifying the team of game dates and times, rescheduling when necessary, making sure there are enough players for the game, coming up with a lineup, and making any substitutions during the game. A very dedicated manager might even schedule practices before and during the season, although this is not required.

Those interested in applying for the job can contact the team office at 614-288-5026 or andrewsharp1@gmail.com.

Small Group Update



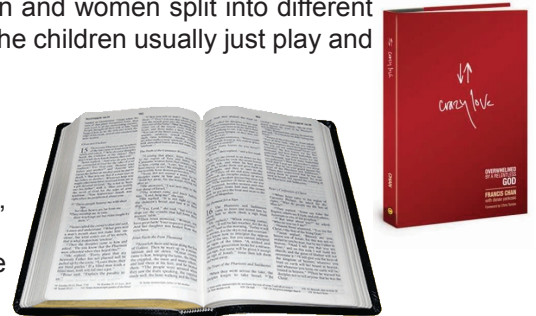
The small group led by Keith and Shannon Scheffel is finishing up a study of the book of Hosea. People currently attending the group include Keith, Shannon, Kendra and Mandi Scheffel; Phil, Lucy, and Derrek Elfrink; Abraham, Naomy, and Shepherd Ndungu; Dave Colleen, Amber, and Ashton Wolford; Richard and Robin Troyer, Audrey Maust, and Kelvin Snider. Twila Snider has been a part of the meetings but is getting ready for her wedding and her move to Pennsylvania.

They typically meet every other Sunday evening from 6 p.m. to about 7:30 or 8. The gatherings usually start with an icebreaker, move into Bible study, and then men and women split into different

groups for prayer. After that is informal fellowship over a snack. During the meeting, the children usually just play and entertain themselves.

The group is currently deciding what to study next. Ideas include:

- Studying the parables of Jesus
- Studying some basic theology topics like the perfections of God, scripture, angels, Satan, etc.
- Having people submit topics they'd like to study and then planning a schedule based on that
- Studying a New Testament book
- Reading "Crazy Love" by Francis Chan



The LCF Connection

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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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