

The LCF Connection

March 2011

My First Trip Overseas

By Aaron Miller

I just returned from a trip that I will never forget. Dad has always said that when I turn thirteen he will take me on a trip overseas! He kept his promise. We went on a sixteen day trip to visit three short-term missions teams in South Asia, the Himalayas, and the Middle East.*



It took two days to get to our first destination. The really long flight made me air sick but I had plenty of time to recover in South Asia before the flight to the Himalayas. We flew to a valley surrounded by the mountains of the Himalaya. They looked spectacular from the air. The taxi ride to meet the team kept us on edge. I would venture to say that none of the people that learned to drive in the US would survive a day there! In the mornings we had worship on the roof with a great view of the city. Several evenings we played ultimate frisbee with some of the kids that lived there! One day we went to the zoo! They have some animals that I had never seen before. We went to see some Buddhists' temples that were very old. It was very cold at night and so we had to wear lots of clothes to bed. The electricity went on and off. One day it was off most of the day and the team needed it. We decided to pray for the electricity to come back on. In the middle of our prayer it came back on!

Our next stop was a city in South Asia, where we were picked up by a missionary and one of the short-term team members. It was a long taxi ride to their house. They live in a walled-in courtyard with a guard at the gate. The neighborhood kids came over and played games. Our transportation around the city was a motorized rickshaw. It has three wheels. I had to keep my legs in for fear of getting run into! The next day we went to a coffee shop and Dad had a meeting with a man. During the meeting several monkeys walked right past our window! While in South Asia we also went to the school where the short-term team teaches. I made a lot of friends there. The cow is sacred there so we had water buffalo on our pizza!

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The last team we visited was in a country in the Middle East. It is a beautiful country with blue skies and no trash. We stayed with a missionary family there. One day we went with the team to an ancient biblical city and saw lots of Roman ruins. We ate the famous kabobs the city where we stayed is known for.

The last day Dad and I toured Istanbul, Turkey, before we flew home. We saw the Blue Mosque which is one of the biggest mosques in the world! Right across from it is the Hagia Sophia which was a huge church that was turned into a mosque and now a museum. We also saw an amazingly old underground cistern and a palace of the sultans.

I see the world differently because of this trip. I will never forget the kids in the Himalayas, the shacks where people live in South Asia, or the huge mosques in Turkey where they worship a false god. Thanks for taking me, Dad!

**Editor's note: The teams Todd and Aaron visited are working in countries that are resistant to missions work. Since this newsletter appears online, we replaced country names with regional names to avoid identifying those locations and teams. If you want to know the names of the specific countries and cities, feel free to ask Aaron!*


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

Meetings, Meetings, Meetings

A Message from the Pastor

By Rob Swartz



Friday afternoon on March 4, Doris and I sat in traffic on I-70 as we attempted to get to Columbus for our leadership team retreat at the Rosedale International Center. It was already past 4, which was the time we were supposed to be there. My phone rang a couple times as others on the leadership team experienced the traffic and rerouted. We were all coming from a variety of places—Rosedale Bible College, Acorn Cabinet Company, and the WEEC radio station, to name a few. Some of our kids were left to fend for themselves while others were farmed out to friends and neighbors. Kris Freed's parents came from Indiana to watch their children. Each of us carved out this time from 4 p.m. Friday until 4 p.m. Saturday to talk, to discuss, and to pray about the ministry of London Christian Fellowship.

I don't know that any of us particularly like meetings, but we love the church. We want to see people grow in their relationships with God. We want to see people come to know Jesus, using their gifts, and impacting the world for Christ. And so we want to do our part in facilitating and providing leadership for the ministry of our church.

What did we do there? You can check out the Elders' Notes for some of the dry details, but basically, here's what we did. We worshipped and prayed together. We thanked God for his faithfulness to us, and reviewed some of the events of the past year. We talked about our worship service and how to improve that experience, and reviewed the building program and made some decisions on how to proceed. We discussed how we could better disciple individuals in a more structured approach to understanding, and looked at the next step in the pastoral review process. We reviewed our leadership team structure for the purpose of clarifying lines of accountability to each other and to the congregation.

Our overseer Roger Hazen and his wife Sharon drove down from Michigan early Saturday morning, after a fundraising meal with their own church on Friday evening. They participated in our discussions, and Roger brought some great challenges to us as pastors and elders on our responsibilities and our need to fulfill them to the best of our abilities.

Even though I know there were times we would have liked to be elsewhere on a weekend, it was a good time together. I'm very grateful to those on the leadership team. We have a variety of personalities, experiences, and opinions, but I believe that each one is committed to the Lord and desires to faithfully serve him and his church. It is a privilege to work with them. We, as a leadership team, are grateful for you as a congregation, who make LCF what it is. We count it a privilege to serve you and continue to invite your thoughts, ideas, and comments. Please pray for us and for LCF as we continue to grow in our love for God, for each other, and for the world.

Leadership Team Notes

Ideas and thoughts from recent meetings

The leadership team members and their spouses met at the Rosedale International Center in Columbus for a retreat March 4-5. The following are some highlights from that meeting.

Rob challenged the team to think about how well they are doing with loving God and loving others, based on the familiar verses in Matthew 22:37-40: *“Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

Everyone prayerfully reflected on the following questions and wrote our answers down:

1. What does Jesus mean? What does this look like? What doesn't it look like? What other scriptures come to mind?
2. How are you doing personally in loving God and loving others?
3. How have you experienced this love at LCF? “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:35)
4. What are ways you think God is calling us to grow or stretch in our love for him and for others?

Then they got back together and shared their answers. A few notes from the discussion:

- We should serve others with no strings attached, no expectations.
- We need to beware of just recycling our money and energies among our own “Christian” agencies.
- We need to equip the congregation to deal with everything our culture throws at us to distract us from God (busyness, materialism, etc.).
- We need to love and serve those in our community as well as one another in the church.
- Time is the big challenge! We need to learn how to manage it.
- Christ ministered to the whole person, we need to as well.
- As we love others, we need to allow them to love us too.



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Getting to Know... *Dave Walford*

How long have you been living in London?

It's been six years. We lived in Hilliard for, I don't even know how many years.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in a little town just north of Grand Rapids, Michigan, called Belmont. It's between Grand Rapids and Rockford, if anybody even knows where Rockford is. My mom and dad still live in the house that I grew up in. I was born the day my mom and dad moved in that house. They have been living there, it will be 40 years this June 10.

What do you do for a living?

I like to tell people I'm semi-retired, but I work for the Westerville fire department. I'm a firefighter/paramedic. Any time there's an emergency situation—somebody's hurt, sick, heart attacks, strokes, broken arms, broken legs, head injuries. When school's just started there are a few playground accidents. When the winter hits there are a couple sledding hills that we go to, people get hurt just being silly going down the hill—there's always somebody to build a ramp in the middle of the hill and someone

always gets hurt. I work 24 hours and have 48 off. So that's kind of a cool schedule, especially in the summer when the kids are out of school, because I'm with them. Ever since the kids were born we've actually had child care. I would watch the kids on my two days off. Colleen would work the days that I'm off, and stay home the days that I work.

What do you do for fun?

I'm really interested in anything radio-controlled. And I love airplanes. I have a couple of radio-controlled airplanes, but we bought this house that has consumed about three years of my lifetime that we've been working on, so I haven't done it in about three years. This spring I'm going to get back out and fly again. The house we have here is on the water on Lake Choctaw. I grew up boating and skiing and tubing, anything on the water. We taught the kids how to snow ski; I grew up snow skiing, so I thought we'd teach the kids how to snow ski so I could still continue that.

How did you and Colleen meet?

We met in college at Grand Valley State University. We took a psychology class together. I had broken up with my girlfriend from high school or whatever—I can't remember—and my dad's asking "Why don't you ask this girl out?" (My neighbor). I said, "There's another girl in this class that I want to ask out." And he said, "Well, when are you going to ask her out?" And it's the middle of the semester, I don't want to ask her out yet. So I waited for finals week to ask her out—if it didn't work out, I wouldn't feel silly sitting there in class. It was a psychology class, a really fun class. That's what I majored in too, a bachelor's in psychology.

What do you want to do when you retire?

What I'm actually going to probably end up doing is going to either North or South Carolina, have a nice little condo in a little quiet area, and make sure there's not a whole lot of cold weather. We're going to go with a little bit warmer. But my dream is to own a 47-foot cabin cruiser, a "fast boat," and just cruise the ocean.

So how's that coming? Yeah, it's not going to happen.

What something you're good at?

I'm fairly good with my hands. I used to try to fix things, but then I would get bored with it and it would never get fixed completely. And I have taken on this house, and basically we've rebuilt it. I enjoy woodworking, and I've made a few things that are hopefully going to get passed on and last, for the kids, so I enjoy that. My problem is that I worked for a wood shop at one point. And all I did there is sand. So I make something out of wood, I get to where I have to sand it and it sits there. I've had something sit there for six months just ready to be sanded and stained. I like to build it and finish it but I don't so much like to sand it down.

What's your favorite pizza topping?

I like ham and pineapple with a sprinkle of cinnamon on top. Donatos makes it, it's called a Hawaiian pizza, it's fantastic. Ham and pineapple are my favorite pizza toppings. And a little sprinkle of cinnamon on top, and a lot of times Donatos puts sliced almonds on it and it's fantastic.*



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Building Plans

The team analyzed the building plans and financial data. The finance team is comfortable with borrowing up to \$550,000 at LCF's current rate of giving, so for the original plan to become a reality, the church will need to find ways to get overall cost down and/or see an increase in the monthly pledge commitments to help cover the loan payment. The leadership team hopes to do both. They will present the current plans and payment options to the congregation in an upcoming meeting, then encourage everyone to make a monthly pledge of whatever amount they can afford, for a renewable, 2-year commitment (of course, they hope people will give beyond that time until the building is paid for).



Sunday Morning Structure

Service leaders have been experimenting with holding the prayer request time at different places in our Sunday morning service. Some prefer having it at the end after the sermon, and others like the ideal of incorporating it with the worship time before the sermon. We want to encourage the congregation to think of prayer as more than praying for personal needs. Prayer can be done lots of different ways. The service moderator will be asked to give some time and consideration to stretching prayer time to include various kinds of prayer, selecting and giving leadership to a specific prayer focus each Sunday. Ideas include praying for church concerns, our community, other area churches, the children, pastors, the world and current happenings, missionaries, etc. This prayer focus would be e-mailed out each week with any other request that are given.

The church currently has two elders, but the leadership team would like to have three elders. They will recommend to the congregation that an additional elder be added this fall, so there would be three elders on a three-year rotation.

Pastoral Reviews

About 30 pastoral reviews were completed. The elders will meet with Rob to go over his results, and Rob will meet with the associate pastors individually to go over their results. These meetings should take place sometime before the end of March.

Discipleship

Rob shared his desire for LCF to have an organized discipleship plan as a guide for people in the congregation, especially for new believers and the youth. The leadership team will work together to develop a discipleship plan. At upcoming meetings they will figure out the main areas to focus on, someone to teach each area, and supplemental materials they would recommend for those who want to go deeper.

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

- Steve and Phyllis Swartz (Ryan and Kris)
- Denny and Lisa Wilt (Richard and Robin)
- Dave and Colleen Wolford (Reuben and Vicki)
- Cletus Yoder (Keith and Shannon)
- Preston and Elizabeth Yoder (Rob and Doris)



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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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