

# The LCF Connection

August 2011



## Are We Missing Something?

A Closer Look at “Godliness”

By Andrew Sharp

Someone unhappy with the Bible’s silence on hygiene once declared, “Cleanliness is next to godliness.” I wish I could invent moral rules like that. I think I would add, “Creative expression is godliness.” It might not catch on as a saying, but I think it’s true. Let me explain.

Most people focus on godliness as moral piety and virtue, defined along the lines of the fruits of the Spirit like love, joy, peace, etc. The New Testament definitely focuses strongly on

ideas like that. But I wonder, are we missing something very important if we define godliness that narrowly?

I think we might be, given the sometimes scant attention paid to art and creativity in the church. While some truly great Christian art has been produced—I nominate the rich beauty and meaning of Handel’s *Messiah* as a striking example—I don’t think Christians are leaders in the field of art and creativity.

Why is this? Maybe because the New Testament doesn’t come right out and command us to be creative, in so many words. But what is godliness but being like God? Christians are, boiled down to the most basic definition, followers of Jesus. And who created the universe, a staggering collection of color, sight and sound arranged with intricate attention to detail, obvious joy in beauty, and brimming over with creative expression? All things came into being by Jesus, the disciple John wrote—apart from him, *nothing* exists.

Not too many of God’s creatures are capable of imitating this creativity, or—as far as we can know—appreciating a masterpiece when they see it. We are told in Genesis that we are made in the image of God, and I think this creativity is one of the ways we are made uniquely in his image. How then can we relegate creativity to a sideline for those who have too much time on their hands, a non-essential part of life, and still be the kind of people we were meant to be? Certainly, I’d be very surprised if Jesus was displeased by people who simply aren’t creative or artistic. He made all kinds of personalities. In that sense, creative

*Continued on page 4...*

### Inside this Issue

Are We Missing Something?	1
Men’s Bike Trip	1
Time to Celebrate a New Year!	2
Leadership Team Notes	2
Interview with Larissa Swartz	3
LCFers at Conference	4

 215 US Rt. 42 NE  
London, OH 43140  
(740) 852-4268

[www.lcfweb.org](http://www.lcfweb.org)

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



*Men’s bike trip: a few LCF guys managed to get out of bed on Saturday morning, August 13 for an 8 a.m. bike ride east of London on the bike path leading toward Grove City. They biked about 13 miles round trip.*

## Time to Celebrate the New Year!

Message from the Pastor

By Rob Swartz



New Year's Day is months away, but a new church year is about to begin. At least that's how it seems to me. The summer is coming to a close, people are returning from vacation, and school is just around the corner. It's in the fall

that everyone returns home to stay and life takes on a more stable pattern. The church retreat is just around the corner, a chance to take a little time to catch our breath and find out what's really going on with each other. This season of change is also a good time to stop and think, "What does God want to do through us this next year?"

I've been thinking about that often, and I'm excited. Why? Because I've seen God do some amazing things this past year. I've seen people growing significantly in their walks with God as they are discipled and as they disciple others. I've seen people commit their lives to Jesus for the very first time. I can't wait to see what God is going to do next!

We play a part in what he is doing, of course, so it is helpful to think about what our vision is for the coming year. This is something we will be talking about in our leadership team meetings over the next couple months. I would like you to think about it as well and give us your thoughts. Several years ago we developed a vision statement with some areas of focus (see sidebar). Do these still adequately describe our purpose? If so, what areas are we doing well in, and what areas need work? Or, what new thing might God want to do among us?

*LCF seeks to develop authentic and passionate followers of Christ through:*

- *Worship*
- *Fellowship*
- *Discipleship*
- *Service*
- *Evangelism*

I looked up the definition of vision and found an intriguing description by Burt Nanus. "Vision is a realistic, credible, attractive future for an organization." While this definition may not apply perfectly to the church, it does give us a good framework to work within to help us be more effective in God's work.

Of course, our future hope of eternity with Christ completely dwarfs any other attractive future an organization might come up with, but what about the here and now? What is the "attractive future" for our church? If you couldn't tell, I'm very excited about the here and now! The things I've seen

*Continued on page 3...*

## Leadership Team Notes

*Ideas and thoughts from recent meetings*

Church campout is coming up August 27-28! Robin Troyer and Sharon Headings are working on the details. There will be activities like "LCF's Got Talent," a campfire, and a creek hike. If you have a talent you want to share—from the wacky and off-beat to the serious—let Danae Swartz know, and also make sure to register for the weekend if you haven't already.

There has been a good response from LCF for participating in "Be the Church." About 53 people have signed up. Since many of the people who would be involved in leading the Sunday morning service are participating, everyone is encouraged to attend the community service at Cowling Park, whether or not they plan to participate in the service projects. That means that since the preceding Sunday is the LCF camp-out, we will be relocating our Sunday morning service for two consecutive weeks.

### Building Project Update

Weaver Construction should have a new detailed budget for estimated costs very soon. The last estimate was higher than what the expansion team was expecting, considering they had made changes to the plans that should have brought some of the costs down.

The fundraising has reached the \$500,000 mark! The Leadership Team hopes to schedule a congregational meeting sometime in September to discuss the project. The Expansion Team will give an update, introduce the current plans and cost of construction, and then turn it over to a representative from Weaver Construction, who will walk the congregation through the current plans for the new building. Then there will be a time for questions and answers, and the Finance Team will present the financial picture, with potential payment plans and pledge options. After that, the congregation will be able to sign up for pledges or take more time to decide as needed.

### Elder Selection

Keith Scheffel ends his second consecutive three-year term as an elder this fall. The church will need to select an elder to replace him, and the Leadership Team would also like to select an additional elder if possible. They want the congregation to be well-represented on the Leadership Team and would also like to train younger leaders. They will ask the congregation to nominate two individuals, then will process the nominations and contact nominees about their willingness to serve. Two candidates will then be presented to the congregation for affirmation.

### Junior Youth Leaders

Tom and Lois Reninger will be serving as junior youth leaders until the end of October. Molly Rosati is still looking into finding new leaders to fill this role.

### Service Format

The "long format" for services, with Sunday school and Adult Discipleship Class, will begin September 18 and continue until November 20. Reuben Sairs will teach the adult class from the book of Acts. We will return to the shorter service format for the holidays and the rest of the winter.

The Leadership Team is praying specifically for the following people this month:

- Keith and Lisa Miller (Ryan and Kris)
- Kimberly Miller (Richard and Robin)
- Levi and Cora Miller (Reuben and Vicki)
- Todd and DeAnn Miller (Keith and Shannon)
- Mark and Rhonda Montrose (Rob and Doris)

## University-bound: An interview with *Larissa Swartz*

After spending a year at Rosedale Bible College, Larissa Swartz is heading to Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, where she plans to major in Spanish. She answered a few questions about her plans.

### How did you decide on Wright State?

That's a good question. I didn't initially decide on Wright State; I was looking at a bunch of different colleges, more at private schools like Capital and Bethel. I had done a bunch of college visits and I had several scholarship opportunities, but God closed those doors—none of them really went through. My dad suggested applying to a state school and comparing prices. So I applied to Wright State, and I later received a letter in the mail telling me I had a scholarship for full tuition. So that's where I started to really look at Wright State—thinking if they're going to give me money, maybe I'll check it out.

### When do you start?

Classes start on September 6 and I move in on the first—Wright State is still on quarters.

### What drew you to studying Spanish?

I started thinking about Spanish after I took my first trip to Nicaragua with my dad in January of 2009. Up until then I had been considering music as my major, basically because that's what I love and what I'm kind of good at. After I took that trip, I really fell in love with the culture. I did really well in school in Spanish class; I had a knack for the accent and I picked it up fast, so I figured I could use it in some way—that if I had a natural knack for it maybe I should just go ahead and pursue it as a major.

I'm thinking about TESOL, teaching English as a second language, as my minor. I still haven't quite decided on a minor yet, I'm still kind of playing around with it. Maybe linguistics, something with language.

### Do you know where you'll be living?

I'll be dorming in the honors dorm the first year, rooming with my friend Amanda Carignan. I went to school with her and we played softball together.

### Have you looked at options for student activities?

There are so many, I haven't really had time to narrow down my choices. I may do some intramural softball or something, and definitely stay active. They have so many clubs. I know there's Campus Crusade, so I'll probably be involved in that. I'll probably figure out more at the beginning of this quarter because I don't know yet what I'll have time for.

### Do you have any ideas on what you might do with your degree?

What I've been telling people so far is that I'm hoping to teach English to Spanish-speaking people, hopefully overseas. But that's the only real idea I have right now. Maybe interpretation, or I suppose I could teach Spanish here in the United States, but working with Spanish-speaking people is the only thing I've really considered at this point.

### What are your feelings as you get ready to start?

I definitely have mixed feelings. I'm excited—I like change, I'm always up for that. I'm maybe a little apprehensive about what it will be like, because it will definitely be a big adjustment from Rosedale to Wright State, the different atmosphere I'll be in and the different culture. I'm really hoping that I can take what I learned at Rosedale and not just let it fall by the wayside, but take it and apply it to relationships that I hopefully will develop.

---

*New Year continued...*

God do this past year have opened my eyes to the vast possibilities for what he desires to do—through us. What does that mean for you and me? I believe we should never get too comfortably settled, but always be watching and ready for the adventure God would like to take us on.

My prayer for us as a church is that as we make plans and look forward to a new year, we will passionately pursue the purposes and plans God has for us.

How can you be a part? One way is to consider this question: "What do you think God wants us to do in the coming year?" and send your answer to [connection@lcfweb.org](mailto:connection@lcfweb.org). Andrew would love see some emails from you so he knows you're reading the Connection! The leadership team will include those emails in our discussion.

Pray that God would lead us so that we can reach the potential he created us for, all for the glory of his name.

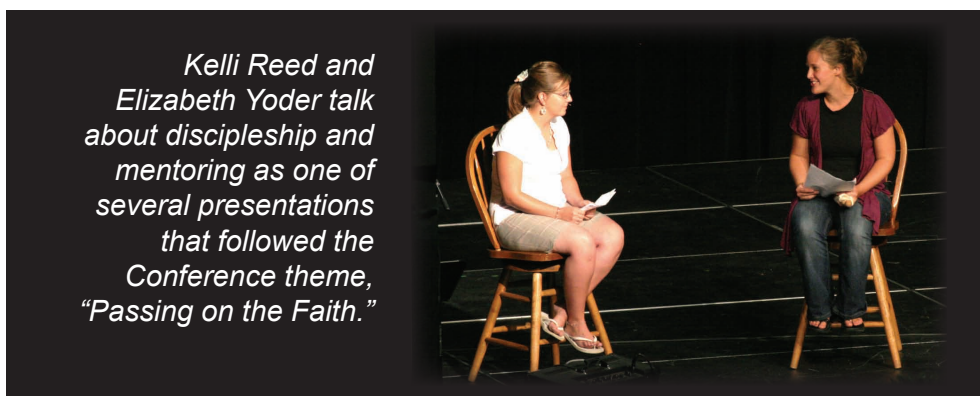


## LCFers at Conference

Many familiar faces from LCF could be spotted at CMC's Annual Conference in Frostburg, Maryland, at the end of July. Almost 50 made the trip. Here are some of them:



*Larissa Swartz sings with Salt and Light, a musical touring group from Rosedale Bible College. Ministry groups from RBC often give a final reunion performance at Conference.*



*Kelli Reed and Elizabeth Yoder talk about discipleship and mentoring as one of several presentations that followed the Conference theme, "Passing on the Faith."*



*Rob Swartz and Phyllis Swartz both led one of workshop sessions on Saturday. Rob examined the importance of sharing faith and how that plays out through interaction with neighbors and friends. Phyllis addressed the need for biblical literacy and introduced a tool for promoting it: the hornbook, an old-fashioned teaching aid revisited.*

*Missing Something continued...*

expression is a lower priority than interacting with God and other humans in a loving way (the exciting concept that some people have flattened into "not sinning"). But "lower priority" is not the same as "not important."

Paul's words in his letter to the Philippians take on new meaning when viewed in this light. "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

At different points in history, Christian thinkers have defined this much more broadly, but in our era a quick walk through a Christian bookstore might lead one to assume that this sentence basically means "Whatever has a picture of a cross or a lamb on it, or contains a cute poem, think about such things." Or in Colossians, "Whatever you do in word or deed, make sure the moral of the story focuses on a fruit of the Spirit, or contains some version of the Romans Road."

But I'd suggest that real creativity, godly creativity, can take many different forms, whether it's a meticulously planned flower garden, a painting that digs deep into human emotion, an expressively composed photo, or some other creation. Let's not marginalize such things as "unspiritual," but honor and enjoy them as reflections of the Divine (godliness).

If you're interested in reading more about this, I recommend this intriguing blog post: <http://imagejournal.org/page/blog/bad-christian-art>. You might not agree with everything the author says, but it's certainly thought-provoking. Comments or thoughts? Send letters to the editor at [connection@lcfweb.org](mailto:connection@lcfweb.org) to weigh in.

## The LCF Connection

*A monthly newsletter designed to enhance communication at London Christian Fellowship*

What did you think? If any of the stories in this Connection sparked an idea or opinion you'd like to share, email us at [connection@lcfweb.org](mailto:connection@lcfweb.org). Editor: Andrew Sharp; Layout: Doris Swartz