

The LCF Connection

August 2013

Bethel Camp Reflections

By Danae Swartz

Clayhole, Kentucky. The heat overwhelmed us, sweat starting to dot our royal blue T-shirts that read STAFF on the back. One by one pick-up trucks and mini vans would start driving up and dropping off their children between the ages of 11 and 14. "Here goes nothing!" I thought as I followed one of my campers to her car to help her unload her belongings. This summer Harmony, Jessica, and I got the opportunity to be counselors at Bethel Mennonite Camp. Nothing could have possibly prepared us for the insane week that would follow, not even the staff book that we read every word of over and over again. While it was a very challenging and surprising week; from getting dead mice out of waterslides, getting everyone ready for bed in thirty minutes, carrying tired or sick campers up and down hills, to even bringing campers to Christ, I can confidently say that we each learned invaluable lessons in many different ways. I think that everyone should be a counselor at some point in their life. If you would have asked me after day one of camp, I would have told you I would never do it again. Ask me now; I would say that I'd love to be able to be down there for all eight weeks of camp.



Being a counselor is really a servant position, you're pouring into the lives of these campers 24/7. It's definitely one of the most draining things I've ever done- physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. But it's so worth it. Every minute of it. Something a lot of us counselors realized was just how blessed we have been to be raised in good, stable Christian homes. Clayhole is a really poor area, not only in Kentucky, but in the whole country and a lot of the kids who come to Bethel Camp come from really broken and messed up homes. It was really sad and discouraging to hear all the awful stories from the campers we were interacting with, and coming to grips with how to deal with all the pain that was there was very challenging. But, all of this is what reminds us of just how great the love of Jesus is and how desperately people need Jesus' love. For some campers, this week at Bethel is the highlight of their year. And to be able to be part of that-- part of giving them the hope and love that they're craving-- that is such a priceless experience. It would be awesome if I could say that the best part was that the week ended and all of

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MDS to the Rescue

By Audrey Maust

Blood, sweat and tears come to my mind when I think about our trip to Minot, North Dakota. Mennonite Disaster Service is not for the faint of heart. In fact, you need to have a big heart for those who are hurting to become involved with this organization. A group of four from here at LCF decided to take on the challenge to help the people of Minot in their recovery of a flood which occurred two years ago. Kevin Duncan, Kelvin Snider, Kate Mallery, and Audrey Maust began their 23 hour trip on June 22nd.



Many of those living in Minot had homes that were heavily damaged due to flooding because of water that needed to be released from a dam. For the past two years volunteers from the United States and Canada gave of their time and resources to assist in restoring homes to the home owners. Our day started at 6:15 and we

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



It Just So Happened...

A Message from the Pastor

By Rob Swartz

It just so happens, that for the past few years our family has not taken a vacation together. Our schedules have seemed impossible to coordinate with work, school, Bethel Camp, mission

trips, sports, etc., but this year I was determined we were going to have a "family vacation". 😊 However, once again it was looking like things were not going to line up. Finally, it appeared that several days in mid-July might work. By that time, it was a little late to plan and it was unclear where we should even go. We knew we wanted some place by the water; quiet, not touristy. Time flew by and still nothing seemed to rise to the surface. Was I just procrastinating? I do this from time to time. I didn't know.

The week before, we still did not know where we were going and I was tempted to worry about it. However, I simply did not have time to plan between pastoring and attending Xenos Summer Institute. It was then that I turned to God and said, "I'm trusting you with this vacation. As we seek first the kingdom of God, I'm trusting that you will provide the vacation our family needs." We were all in need of physical, emotional, and spiritual rest.

On Thursday (we were to leave the following Tuesday) some friends generously offered a timeshare that they had access to. Maybe this was how God was going to provide? They spent a good amount of time looking at some options for us along Myrtle Beach, Tennessee, Virginia...all to no avail. Of course, everything was booked up at that late date.

It was Sunday morning and still no place to go. Maybe we'd just do some day outings around Ohio. Maybe we'd go up to Lake Erie. "I'll work on it this afternoon," I told myself. However, God had other plans for the afternoon and opened a door for me to bike and talk with a friend. We'd been trying to get together for a while. I had a strange peace about it and thought to myself, "I guess God wants me to focus on more important things while He works this out."

In a conversation with my brother later that evening, I just so happened to discover that two weeks earlier, they had purchased the house next door to them, located right on the Saginaw Bay.



It just so happened that someone had just left, and it just so happened that someone was coming on the following Sunday, but Tuesday through Friday the house was available! It just so happened that God was at work!

We had a fantastic time! The house fit us perfectly. The weather was great. The sunrises were spectacular. The beach was quiet. The time together was special. The rest was blissful. The time with extended family was a bonus. I could go on. I couldn't have planned it any better. God gives good gifts to his children. Some are hard to see. Some are disguised amid pain and suffering. And some are as clear as the nose on your face. For all of them, I am increasingly grateful and am reminded that as we seek him, he will supply all our needs according to his riches in glory. I can't wait to see what he will do next.

Leadership Team Notes

Leadership Team works on becoming a lean, mean, meeting machine

By Vicki Sairs

At our July 8 meeting, Rob shared devotions and we prayed for each other and the church, then turned to the business at hand: how can we use our time together more efficiently?

Rob mentioned that we always have more on the agenda than we can actually process, and Bob expressed concern that sometimes he leaves the meetings not being sure of what we actually decided about the issues we've discussed.

Well, after we all stopped laughing (in a self-conscious and yikes-that's-happened-to-me-too way), we figured out some ways to solve the problem. Here's what we came up with. We will:

- Begin our meetings on time
- Rotate having each (willing) elder take a turn at chairing the meeting
- Try to incorporate some parliamentary procedures to bring clarity (although we want to continue making decisions by consensus)
- Clarify our agenda

Our agenda will now include devotional time and prayer (our top priority), items for information, items for discussion, and items for decision. We'll also try to do more business by email, to keep the agenda shorter.

Other business:

At our spring LT retreat, we discussed worship at LCF and creative ways to develop and expand it, including having a worship coordinator. The team asked Reuben and Vicki to come back with some thoughts on how this could work.

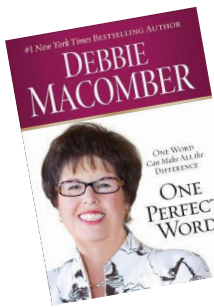
At our meeting, Reuben led a discussion on worship as a pastoral issue and shared a document on how we might incorporate a variety of elements in worship, including scripture reading, different kinds of prayer, testimonies, the arts, etc. The team was supportive of these ideas and asked Reuben and Vicki to work with Andrea Biscup and the worship leaders on coordinating the different aspects of the Sunday morning service.

In the area of finances, we proposed that each team responsible for buying items needed for the new building submit their requests to the finance team to consider for the 2014 budget. We also asked Bob Zachrich to be the LT representative on the finance team and to work on making sure the budget process is clearly documented and communicated to the congregation.

We renewed our church's missionary support for Tom and Candice Mast through the next budget cycle (until December 2014).

One Perfect Word...Really?

By Tricia Eaton



Is there really such a thing as ONE perfect word? We are barraged by tens of thousands of words daily, be it through the television, newspapers, magazines, emails, radio, Twitter, Facebook, and we even have from time to time (gasp!) conversations with real people! Heaven help the mother of a toddler who has just learned to ask "Why?" Words surround us on a daily basis and they have power. Just ask that same mother who has told one child yes, they may have a cookie and another child, "No, you must eat your vegetables first." Power indeed!

So what does Debbie Macomber mean by the title of her 2012 (and newly donated to our library) book, *One Perfect Word*? The idea that she proposes is that we take God's advice to "Be still..." and choose one word each year on which to really meditate deeply. In the early 90s, Debbie started meeting with a group of women entrepreneurs who challenged each other to do just that...select a word each January that would be the focus of their year. They would study the word's meaning, pray about its impact in their lives, and look for its importance in God's word.

In the book, Debbie details her explorations of fourteen different words; from brokenness to hope, and from hunger to obedience. She includes bits of scripture, quotes, stories, and many famous and not so famous anecdotes as she guides the reader through her process of selecting and studying her word for the year. I have decided to try her tactic and this year I have chosen the word "balance". I almost chuckle to myself as I announce this word, because God knows that is a concept with which I have struggled for quite some time. Between being a wife, a mom, a daughter, a middle school teacher, a friend, a writer, a cook, a baker but NOT a candle stick maker (thank goodness!) there are a lot of areas requiring balance in my life. I am trusting God to help me put first things first this coming year, with Him at the front of the line, and the rest falling in place as He sees fit. I think you'll enjoy this book and I'd be thrilled to hear what your perfect word for the year will be!

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were at our designated homes by 8:00. This is where the sweat began. Some of us cooked, painted, filled in endless nail holes, and cleaned a house from top to bottom to prepare for a dedication service. Others of us laid wooden floors, hung doors, installed kitchen counters, and trimmed the inside of a house. There were even a few splinters which caused some bleeding and an accidental gluing of a finger to the floor! At the end of the day we were able to relax a little. Some of us played games, but most of us were heading to bed by 10:00.



Getting to know other volunteers from other parts of the country was the most rewarding part of the MDS experience for me. Mary, the cook, is a teacher in a two room Amish school house. It was fascinating getting to know her and her teaching background. Students from Heston College were there to fulfill requirements for their degree. It's amazing how close you get to people when you have a common goal and you work side by side with them.



The last day all the volunteers were fortunate to witness a dedication. It was a mini service in which the keys of the house were handed over to the homeowner. The homeowner was given a wall hanging, towels, a loaf of bread, and a few other items. A meaningful message was read along with each of the items. To end the dedication we sang "Amazing Grace" and prayed. Tears of joy were shed from volunteers, friends of the homeowner, and the homeowner herself.

At the end of our trip, I asked myself, if it was worth the blood, sweat, and tears. I will always remember the homeowner's gratitude and the joy on her face when she was given her keys. The answer to that question is obvious.

Bethel Camp...continued from page 1

our campers went home completely on fire for God and we had tons of people give their lives to the Lord. But unfortunately that wasn't the case for all of our cabins. For many campers, yes, that was the case, and it was awesome to see! But for some campers that didn't happen, particularly in my cabin. We seemed to have a really unresponsive group of girls and it was really discouraging at times. But after the week was over and after praying about it I realized that it's part of ministry. Sometimes you're ministering to the rocky soil and you don't get to see any fruit come of it. But it's God's thing- it's nothing that we do, so we can't go around saying, "Wow! Look how I changed these kids' lives!". Because that's not how it works. Jesus changes lives. And we may not always get to see the results. We may just get to be part of laying foundations in people's lives. God calls us all to different steps in the process, and some are more rewarding than others. Regardless, it's all kingdom work, and with the right perspective, it's the most satisfying, fulfilling thing we will ever get to be a part of.

After a week with so much responsibility on our shoulders, needless to say we weren't really looking forward to being campers. But, as usual, God's plan is so much better than ours. It was actually really great to be a camper and not have to focus as much on watching our campers. The second week we got to focus more on Jesus (the theme!) and on our own relationships with Him. In our cabin all of us were actually staff the week before and it was really great for us to be able to reach out and encourage each other after a very draining week. We all left very encouraged in our faith and on fire for God, ready to accept the challenge of taking it home and keeping it real. Bethel Mennonite Camp is a place with equal opportunities to minister or be ministered to; whether you're a camper or a counselor doesn't matter. It's a place where you get sweaty (really sweaty), you work together, you pray for each other, and you're surrounded by a bunch of people who are crazy about Jesus. It's a place that brings hope and love to people who need it badly. It's a place where you get the honor and privilege of seeing God at work in people and experiencing what He is doing, and not just in Kentucky, but all over the world.



Filling Up My Cup

My Experience at Xenos Summer Institute 2013

By David L. Perkins

"Why do you believe?" This was a question asked by a friend of mine recently. I could not seem to come up with an answer right away. He told me that every person to whom he had asked that question had no reasonable answer or no answer at all. It was my first experience being asked the question. I have only declared myself a Christian for a few years now and I had felt the question was still pretty fresh in my own heart. Although I have accepted Christianity, it was still a hard question to answer. I wanted to give my friend an answer that would make him think as much as his question had intrigued me. He said he wished he could believe just like me. This was a great opportunity to practice my evangelism. After a while, I came to him and said, "I promise to give you an answer someday that is reasonable and not stupid. Give me some time with God and I'll find an answer for you."

The Xenos Summer Institute is held every July at the Xenos Christian Fellowship in Columbus, OH. The event is three days of guest speakers, scholars, and practitioners who come from all over the world. The speakers come to profess their theories, knowledge, and personal experiences with Christianity. They like to hit the hard subjects like 'Does God Exist?' and 'Has Science Buried God?'. For 17 years now, the Xenos Summer Institute has been equipping Christians of all types, whether pastors or new believers, to share the hope of the Gospel.

Just a couple weeks ago, I had the pleasure of attending XSI for the second year in a row. This year the subject was 'Apologetics: Explaining Our Hope'. Apologetics is the systematic argumentative discourse in defense of a doctrine or a branch of theology devoted to the defense of the divine origin and authority of Christianity. Understanding the concept of apologetics is a great tool to have in your everyday lives for sharing the gospel. It gives you all the answers you need to defend your beliefs against others as well as against yourself.

This year was a great experience for me and better than the previous year. I absorbed so much great information this year that my cup is beyond full. With legendary Christian speakers like William Lane Craig, Mark Mittelberg, and John Lennox delivering their quite powerful messages to you face-to-face, it was hard coming out of the conference WITHOUT feeling completely confident in your stance with God. Perhaps, they have given me the arsenal I need to answer the question my friend has presented to me, "Why do you believe?" For those who have not ever attended the Xenos Summer Institute, I definitely recommend going at least one time or maybe even twice like myself!

Healthy Choices

By Molly Rosati

"I want to make my body a healthy garden," I affirmed to myself after listening to a lecture by Dr. Glen Aukerman on his research connecting nutrition to health. He went on to affirm good food is good medicine. Where are we to find good food? Food that is pesticide free, locally grown, and that supports our community and environment?



Our first half share I picked up recently.



Rebekah Zimmerer, Farm Manager; Keifer Russel, Farm Intern; and myself selling produce at the North Market Farm Market.

Procter Center, just south of London is a great place to start! I started volunteering and bought a half share at their new CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). The farm and CSA branch of Procter Center uses natural, sustainable farming techniques. If you are interested in learning more about the farm and want to be involved, or just want more information, contact Rebekah Zimmerer, the farm manager, at procterfarm@diosohio.org. You could also bring the family to Farm Volunteer Days for a morning and experience life on a working farm with a free lunch to follow on Saturdays: August 10, September 14, or October 10.



Love God?
Enjoy writing?
Have a desire to encourage good communication at LCF? Well, then YOU are the person we are looking for!

The LCF Connection is a monthly (so far anyway!) newsletter designed to enhance communication here at London Christian Fellowship. Since fellow editor, Jennifer St. John and family will soon be moving, we are down one member of our team. We need someone to fill the gap Jennifer is leaving behind. If you are someone who enjoys putting a few sentences together, can tell a comma from a semi-colon, and are looking for a way to use those unique and wonderful gifts, please contact either Doris Swartz or Tricia Eaton. We'd love to welcome you to the team!

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. Editors: Doris Swartz and Trish Eaton. If you prefer that we do not use photos of you in the Connection, you may opt out by emailing us at connection@lcfweb.org.