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THE LW MAGAZINE

REAL PEOPLE, LIVING RELEVANT LIVES, RELENTLESSLY PURSUING NEW LIFE

VISION UPDATE NEW LIFE STORY

LW OUTREACH

UPCOMING
EVENTS

OUR CALL:

REACHING OUT TO SHARE NEW LIFE
IN JESUS

livingwaterfmc.org

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WE ARE REAL PEOPLE, LIVING RELEVANT LIVES, RELENTLESSLY PURSUING NEW LIFE.



// Our Call: Reaching out to Share New Life in Jesus Christ

The epic story that we read in Scripture continues in our own lives today. This unfolding story is one of knowing God personally and sharing this experience and truth with others. Reaching out with the message of New Life is not something to do, it must become who we are. As the good news of Jesus Christ transforms us, God brings us many opportunities to share this grace and truth with others. Reaching out beyond ourselves can become a natural overflow of our lives when we understand the Father's heart. As He opens our eyes to the lost, the broken, and the hurting, we begin to understand that we are simply a conduit for His amazing transformation.

But here is the crazy part of the story, once we come to faith in Christ, one of our greatest temptations is to turn inward. Our preferences quickly become our priority. Our ability to share this life-changing message quickly diminishes as we lose the heart of our Father and embrace our own comfort rather than doing what it takes to reach those far from God.

How do we defeat this temptation? We aggressively and intentionally reach out! The way we think and act toward those who think differently than us needs examined. The way we operate as a church and the message we send to our community needs reviewed. Resourcing and empowering people to go beyond these walls to spread the gospel of Christ needs to increase. This issue of the LW magazine focuses on our outreach. Let it stir your passion for reaching out to others. May this just be the beginning of the impact we can have!



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Lead Pastor

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//Update: Vision 2013

It is crystal clear that God is asking LW to share what He has given us with those who do not yet understand His offer of New Life.

“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked” (Luke 12:48).

We are committed to fulfilling our vision of being real people, living relevant lives, and relentlessly pursuing New Life. As we fulfill our vision, holiness and outreach happen simultaneously. In other words, while we are becoming more like Christ in our everyday lives, people far from God are attracted to Jesus through us. We are already seeing this happen in 2013. Here is an update on a few specific areas where we are working to make a difference as a church...

- 1) We are investigating the options for going to a multi-site campus in 2014.
- 2) We are inviting others into community. New small groups have been started as well as many new people being invited to LW.
- 3) We are training our first group of mentors.
- 4) We are finishing a successful run of operating a food pantry and will soon begin the LW health and wellness food co-op.

BECOMING A MULTI-SITE CAMPUS

We are continuing our conversations, asking questions, and gathering details in four areas. As we do this we are asking that the congregation continues to pray and ask God to not only lead us in His direction, but provide the resources needed for this new initiative. The four areas we need to specifically identify are: the location of the new multi-site, the core group we will be sending, a campus Pastor, and a model for which to operate the multi-site (video presentation, live worship, etc.).



At the Good Friday Service, everyone tied a black string with a nail at the end to a cross to symbolize our sins that Jesus died for.

The best question to ask as we move forward with multi-site is, "why"? Why invest the time, money, energy and effort? It is simple. Because lost people matter to God and what matters to God matters to us (see Luke 15). There are literally thousands of ways to reach people, but the multi-site model is proving to be one of the best. While the old model of church denominationalism is dying, multi-site churches are stepping up and becoming the new move of God in our culture. LW is committed to advancing the Kingdom of God and not to sit back while other courageous churches live in adventurous obedience to God.

You will be hearing more about multi-site in the months to come. Don't miss a single Sunday!

- Mark Hirst, Lead Pastor

SMALL GROUPS

2013 is all about "multiplication." You see this vision in how we invest in others, look towards the future with our small groups, and replicate into a multi-site for greater influence for the Kingdom. I think it is important to note that multiplication is rarely easy. It needs to be acknowledged for what it is: difficult, self-sacrificing, risky, and downright uncomfortable. Multiplying your small group seems to go against every natural inclination you have. Why would I want to leave these people? What if my new small group isn't as good as this one? Will I have to be the leader? All these questions, and many more, hold us to the status quo. We never change, much less multiply, and the end result is we miss out on opportunities to influence the Kingdom. Don't let the fact that multiplication is hard keep you and your small group from taking the risk. When you create new small groups, you create opportunities for people to connect. When people are connected, life-transformation has the best chance to occur. So far this year, many small groups are taking the multiplication mindset to heart. Will you and your small group do the same? I challenge you to have the conversation together and determine how your small group will live out the multiplication vision.

- Marc Harvey, Director of Group Life

MENTORING

The focus of mentoring is on restoring and rebuilding relationships and helping people draw closer to God. Mentoring is an aspect of discipleship. It is important and imperative. In fact, this is the sum total of what the purpose of the church is all about. Christ calls us to encourage and equip people so that we can all worship Christ, thus living out a real, effectual life.

The first mentoring training class began on March 10th with 18 people participating. The class is 10 weeks and covers a workbook called *The Search for Significance* taught by Tim & Regina Miller. Although they will probably overlap at times, each of our mentors will focus on one area of individual, marital, financial, or spiritual development.

The goal is to launch the mentoring program in June. Those that desire to be mentored (mentees), will attend a meeting, complete an application, and then will be matched with a mentor. For more info, contact info@livingwaterfmc.org.

Another training class for mentors will be next Fall. This life changing program will have a great impact on Living Water as well as our community. We are thankful for those that have chosen to invest their lives in others. If you would like to become a mentor, contact debhimes@livingwaterfmc.org.

- Deb Himes, Director of Ministry Development

LW HEALTH & WELLNESS FOOD CO-OP

The vision of the co-op is to work with families struggling with food insecurity. We will supplement their food supply with nutritious food and teaching tools to help make incremental changes toward self-sufficiency.

We believe this will be a lifeline to struggling families experiencing stress from economic instability.

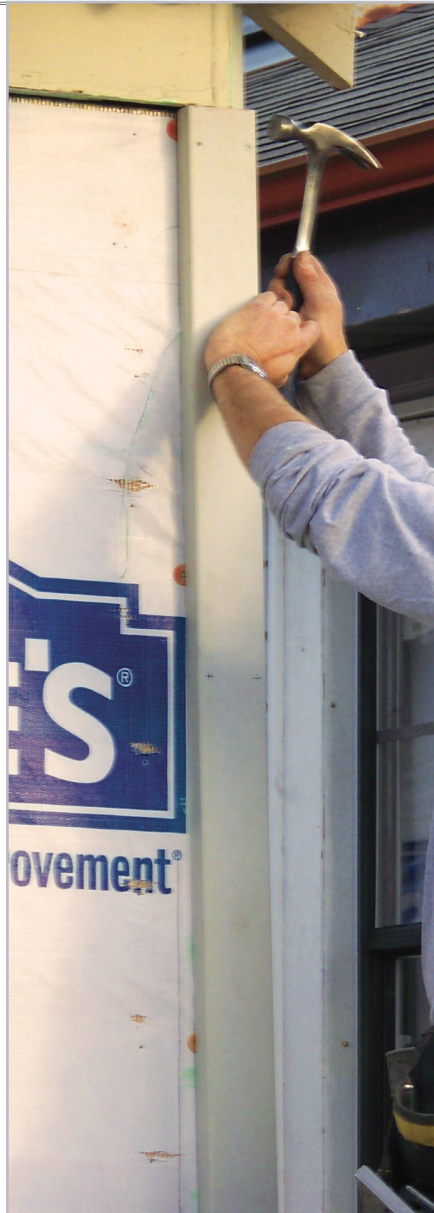
The co-op model is structured to involve members in active support roles, from stocking shelves to packing boxes of food; all members will have a job. As people are taught and encouraged in helping themselves and serving others, an opportunity will be created to build community. This opportunity allows us to care for others with the greatest possible dignity.

We still very much need your support to do this! The blue bags will be available in the foyer area with a list of items needed. Simply pick up a bag, buy the items listed, and return it to LW. Also, your monetary donations will help us to secure needed items.

The final distribution date for the existing food pantry is May 20th. An informational meeting on the co-op will be held Monday, May 13th at 6pm in the Student Ministry Room. Anyone interested in the co-op is invited to attend.

- Regina Miller, Pastor of Care

GO
AND
MAKE
DISCIPLES
OF
ALL
NATIONS...
MATTHEW
28:19



// LW Outreach

We were created to impact all nations for the glory of Christ. Matthew 28:19 commands us to, “go and make disciples of all nations...” The

testimony of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation is that we were created to enjoy God’s grace in relationship to Him so that we may extend His glory to the ends of the earth.

Because God’s heart is to make disciples across cultural boundaries, the LW Outreach Team exists to

constantly and creatively raise the level of prayer, financial support, awareness, and involvement in cross-cultural, disciple-making efforts among the people of LW.

Living Water partners with organizations whose mission is to spread the Word of Christ throughout the world and make known His gift of salvation. We also work in partnership with non-profit organizations locally and globally to feed the hungry, respond to the needs of people in crisis, and lead a generation to a life



of generosity and service.

When you give to the general fund at Living Water, 10% of your giving goes directly to support organizations that minister to our neighbors, whether they are next door or across the globe. We believe there is power in partnership. In the next few pages, you will see ten of our Outreach partners along with their mission statements, what they do, and their contact information.

Thank you for your partnership in fulfilling God's commission!

LW OUTREACH PARTNERS:

After the Storm
 Hearts of Hope for Honduras
 Go Forth Ministry
 Transport for Christ
 Vietnamese Ministries
 The Seed Company
 Axis Ministries
 Youth with a Mission
 Friend Ships Unlimited

LW Outreach Team:

Dan Hostetler, Coordinator
 Scott Ferrell
 Kathy Gadfield
 Jerry Hackett
 Laura Martin
 Pearl Nussbaum

If you would like to give directly to LW Outreach, indicate your donation on the LW outreach category of a giving envelope.



AFTER THE STORM

Mission: After The Storm (ATS) Disaster Response Team is a Christ-centered organization providing structure for those who desire to express His heart by assisting others whose lives have been devastated by natural disasters.

Financial Support:
Interlink Ministries
PO Box 460
Apple Creek, OH 44606

Contact:
Gary Snyder
330.317.3659
www.atsresponseteam.com

THE NEED

We need three teams of dedicated partners. Would you help in one or more of these ways?

Prayer Warriors:

Those who faithfully pray for the ministry and its volunteers. We will communicate requests to you.

Volunteers:

Those who go on an immediate response team when disaster strikes or later as part of a rebuilding effort.

Financial Supporters:

Those who financially support the effort to "give a cup of cold water," in Jesus' name, to persons in desperate need (Matthew 10:42).

GO SERVE & LEARN

I go to help others, but I get a whole lot more from the devotional time in the morning and the evening sessions of sharing together and hearing each other's God stories. - Jerry Hackett

I would say going to Tuscaloosa really opened my eyes to the needs of people who have been struck by natural disasters. Knowing that you are contributing your efforts and time in a meaningful way and helping people who desperately need, it is an awesome feeling. - Chris Himes

From my trip with ATS, I got to know other men from our church and the area on a more personal level. I also saw how God can use horrific and deadly situations (tornadoes) to draw people into personal relationships with Him. - Scott Ferrell

HEARTS OF HOPE FOR HONDURAS



Mission:

To walk alongside and provide steps for life for underprivileged young girls who have little or no family, so they can have hope for a future.

Bio:

Our first trip to Honduras was in July of 2008. I (Chris) met and had an instant connection with a young lady there named Carmen; she was 17 years old at the time. I came home with a changed heart, an overwhelming feeling to learn the Spanish language, and a desire to help this young lady be the best she could be in a very poor and difficult part of the world.

In 2009, we established Hearts of Hope for Honduras. We now have many girls that we encourage to make good decisions in life, provide spiritual growth, education at the University which is key in an attempt to have a better job, and English classes if they choose. Being bi-lingual is an advantage because it can provide more employment opportunities.

All of this builds their confidence, responsibility, and relationships. We are one big family both with good and bad times. We cry together, we laugh together, and our home is centered around serving our God.

With our rental house, we provide a safe place for young ladies high school age through college to live. We help the girls with the decision of receiving a college education and/or employment. Along with this, our hope is that they will experience New Life through a weekly small group atmosphere.

Financial Support:
Interlink Ministries
PO Box 460
Apple Creek, OH 44606

Contact:
Cam & Chris Rowley
cazbirdie324@gmail.com

Facebook:
Hearts of Hope for Honduras



Ongoing Fundraiser

Fresh Honduran Coffee - \$8 per bag,
whole bean or ground

Pure Clear Vanilla
(no coloring added) - \$10 per bottle



Real. Relevant. Relentless.

08

//Go Forth Ministry



Mission:

- We listen for God's voice.
- We partner with Jesus in His ongoing World Mission.
- We invest in God's Kingdom through the power of the Holy Spirit to gain the greatest eternal profit.

Vision:

- Being unlimited by geography, economics, governments, tradition and fear, we will set new standards in World Mission operation and strategy.

Go Forth Team:

- Wendell & Daisy Martin
- Garry Gerber
- John Weaver

Office: 330.698.1001

www.goforthinjesus.name

Financial Support:

- Go Forth Ministry
PO Box 24
Kidron, OH 44636



Go Forth Ministry started because of a focus on getting the Word of God to as many people as possible who wanted a Bible in China. We also wanted to get both the written Word as well as simply reading and explaining the Scriptures to people in the Vietnamese refugee camps in Hong Kong who were eager to learn. The result has been a profound multiplication of people who are enthusiastically spreading the gospel and reaping a large harvest in both China & Vietnam. This caused our ministry to evolve in its purpose so that now our primary focus is equipping and training spiritual leaders who can care for new believers in these regions.

We are very active in forming a rapidly growing Free Methodist Church community with many of the Vietnamese house church leaders. This includes gathering the leaders together periodically for training, strategy, and encouragement in the form of an Annual Conference. It also includes working with FMCUSA to fund the conferences and some of the projects until a solid financial base is established.

We also regularly lead short-term missions teams from the USA to a local Bible Courier Ministry in Hong Kong in order to take Bibles across the border into China for believers in the underground churches.

We serve in places where Christians are considered a threat to their own governments. We have had to learn how to not only protect ourselves, but even more, how to protect those we are called to serve.



China was a very humbling experience. To see the passion and desire they had to be followers and believers of Christ was amazing. They didn't care about anything else other than Jesus and about spreading His word to their family and friends. It doesn't compare to how things are here in the States, and it definitely taught me what it means to be sold out for Christ.
- Greg Blevins



Our trip forced me to get out of my comfort zone, and it opened my eyes to see God moving in ways I have never experienced. Sometimes it takes a change of culture to gain a deeper understanding of God's love.
- Luke Martin



Going with Go Forth was a stressful time for me because I was out of my comfort zone, but I got such joy in being able to be a part of getting God's Word into the hands of the Chinese people. It drew me closer to God because I had to trust Him in all facets of the trip, especially going through the border. It was amazing to really relax and trust the Lord in this. I learned to know the peace of God as I have never known before.
- Myron Hofstetter

// Transport for Christ



Gary & Pearl Nussbaum

gpntfc@aol.com
330.465.4587

Transport for Christ (TFC) is an International ministry to truck drivers whose purpose is to, “lead drivers as well as the trucking community to Jesus Christ and help them grow in their faith.” This ministry is conducted in semi-trailers that are converted into chapels with an office and living quarters. They are located throughout USA, Canada, Russia, and Africa.

Over the span of his 24 years in TFC, Gary Nussbaum has served as a full-time chaplain functioning as the lead chaplain in establishing the chapel located at the Travel Center of America in Lodi, OH. At the same time, he served as Great Lakes Regional Director. Currently, he serves as the Director of Church and Community Relations. His responsibility is to help TFC staff build relations with area churches and secure volunteers from local congregations who in turn will serve as chaplains at a specific chapel.

Over the years, his wife Pearl has served and as secretary and office manager to Gary. They travel together developing chapels and give assistance to the needs of existing chapels and their staff.

Financial Support:
Transport for Christ
PO Box 117
Marietta, PA 17547-0117

ifferent trials and situations prompted Jason Nussbaum to seek a deeper

Durpose and direction in his life. That’s when he started to get a strong desire to serve with TFC. His wife, Shannon, encouraged him to really pray about it because the truck driving industry was definitely out of her comfort zone. They both came together with a resolve to let the Lord do His will. Then the doors started opening in their lives for this desire to become a reality.

Since 2005, Jason has been a full-time chaplain with TFC in Lodi, Ohio. This is the chapel his father (Gary) started. He is responsible for manning the Chapel through volunteers to reach the goal of being open 24 hours a day for drivers. The Chapel also offers two Sunday services and a Bible study every Wednesday night. Each week, they see men and women come in the Chapel for refuge, salvation, and fellowship. They are grateful the ministry exists to encourage them on the lonely road.

They have implemented online tools to use as resources for the drivers leaving the Chapel. You can find links to programs like “Driver’s Wellness” and others on the TFC website that can help people through hard times when a Chapel is not easily accessible. They have also partnered with other ministries like “Truckers against Trafficking” who work to save people from the human trafficking industry, which can thrive in the truck-stop environment if gone unchecked.



Truck Show & Benefit Auction - June 14th & 15th at the Kidron Auction Barn & Mt. Hope

We need volunteers to help collect auction items, plan children's activities, and bake items for the bake sale. On the day of the truck show, we need people to help serve food, help with the children's activities such as face painting and monitoring the jump houses, as well as parking at the auction, and setup/cleanup.

The excitement of being a part of TFC is just when you think the day is going to be uneventful, a driver unexpectedly comes in the door and gives His life to Jesus. There is nothing more humbling than that.

Jason & Shannon Nussbaum

tfcloidi@yahoo.com
330.769.2196



www.transportforchrist.org
www.driverswellness.com
Facebook: TFC Ohio





// IMPACT THE WORLD

“If we were left to ourselves with the task of taking the gospel to the world, we would immediately begin planning innovative strategies and plotting elaborate schemes. We would organize conventions, develop programs, and create foundations... But Jesus is so different from us. With the task of taking the gospel to the world, he wandered through the streets and byways...All He wanted was a few men who would think as He did, love as He did, see as He did, teach as He did, and serve as He did. All He needed was to revolutionize the hearts of a few, and they would impact the world.” - David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream*

// Vietnamese Ministries



Pastor Khoa and his wife Tam Dinh are our connection to the mission of the Vietnamese Ministries. They went to Taiwan in the Fall of 2008 and raised up a body of believers they now train through regular cell phone communication. Currently there are over 80 believers, which they lead in each cell phone session.

Mission:

- Present the gospel so that God can draw non-believers to Himself.
- Raise up believers and prepare them to become pastors so they can return to North Vietnam to plant house churches.

How you can pray:

- Pray these new believers will become established so when they return to North Vietnam, which is a restricted country, they will raise up house churches without fear of persecution or jail time.
- Pray for leaders to be raised up to help with the teaching and preaching among the believers in Taipei, Taiwan. Many are coming to the Lord, but they are all not able to be trained at this time.
- Pray for the blessings of an open door at a nearby factory where three hundred people have accepted Jesus through the ministry of Pastor Khoa.

Financial Support:
Interlink Ministries
PO Box 460
Apple Creek, OH 44606

Contact:
khoad1965@yahoo.com



The SEED COMPANY

Mission: To accelerate Scripture translation and impact for people without God's Word through great commission partnerships.

Living Water is committed to partnering with The Seed Company, an affiliate of Wycliffe Bible Translators, in supporting a team of workers for the next three to five years to translate the Bible into their native language and then to teach them from Scripture what God desires for them.

Getting God's Word into the hands of every people group throughout the world has been a major goal for the church of Jesus Christ for the last one hundred years. Through the incredible efforts of the Seed Company, LW is now an active part of fulfilling the call to get the gospel to the world. Through your regular giving to LW, a portion of your tithe is now being invested in the remote Mechoacán group in Mexico. The Word of God is active and life-giving and will soon be available to these people. That is something worth celebrating!

Our specific project location is Mixteco, which is an area in the state of Oaxaca in southwestern Mexico. For the sake of this project, the language will be known as Mechoacán, which reflects one specific language of Mixteco.

The Mechoacán people consider themselves Christians. About 80 percent affiliates with a major liturgical tradition, another 18 percent identify themselves with more evangelical denominations, and a few have ties with imported cults. A historic schism between the majority church and other denominations makes Christians hesitant to attend non-liturgical services.

The people of Mixteco have never had access to Scripture they understand. They have incorporated into their Christian traditions long-held beliefs in territorial spirits and rituals to appease them. This project will provide the New Testament for these people who need to understand for themselves what it teaches.





Living Water is being matched in funds by another church to make this commitment possible for these people. What does this cost us? The commitment is \$8,000 dollars a year for three to five years. At the conclusion, there will be a celebration and dedication of the Word in their own native language. How important is this? Just think if you didn't have the Bible written for you in English. We take this blessing so much for granted, even to the point of having many extra Bibles in our homes.

Our representative from The Seed Company, Kent Hirschelman, states the translation process is already ahead of the schedule. Right now, the team involved in the translation is teaching and preaching the Word to the people even though they don't have a Bible for them to read.

How can you partner in this ministry? First of all, we ask that you would be in prayer for this project.

Pray for the translators that they can grasp some of the interpretation that is often missing from translating from one language to another. Pray for strength, clarity of mind, and for freshness each day as they get involved in the task each morning. Some days they may work up to twelve hours. This type of concentration takes so much from a person both physically, and mentally.

There is always the need of finances. If you feel called to support this ministry in any way, please pick up a giving envelope and write "The Seed Company" beside the LW Outreach category.

www.theseedcompany.org



AXIS MINISTRIES

Nick & Amanda Gerber

Axis creatively educates hearts by questioning assumptions, interpreting media, and equipping communities to move from apathy to compassionate action. The vision is to see communities worldwide proclaiming hope to restless generations.

It's not good enough to just say you believe in Christ. We exist to challenge students away from just saying they believe, but to actually live out their faith in real, tangible ways. Axis want students to serve in their communities, stand up for their faith, and make a lasting difference on the culture.

www.axis.org



YOUTH WITH A MISSION

Ryan Ferrell

Youth With A Mission is an international volunteer movement of Christians from many backgrounds, cultures, and Christian traditions that is dedicated to serving Jesus throughout the world. Also known as YWAM, the purpose is simply to know God and to make Him known. Today, they still focus on youth, but they have members of almost every age and many of their short-term efforts have grown into long-term endeavors that have impacted lives and nations.

YWAM encourages new vision and the exploration of new ways to change lives through training, conveying the message of the gospel, and caring for those in need. They are currently operating in more than 1000 locations in over 180 countries, with a staff of over 18,000.

www.ywam.org



FRIEND SHIPS UNLIMITED

Nelson & Jen Hicks

Friend Ships Unlimited is dedicated to fulfilling the Biblical Scriptures that teach us to help people in times of need and to encourage others to do likewise. The organization works through the collection, delivery, and distribution of food, medical supplies, clothing, and building materials and by providing medical services, disaster relief, and training. They provide aid to people of all races, nationalities, and religions. These ships exist to give help to children, families, and individuals who are impoverished, refugees, and/or victims of natural disasters, and to the institutions who assist them.

www.friendships.org

WHY “INSIDERS”

ARE KILLING YOUR CHURCH

by James Emery White

I asked for this article to be printed in the LW Magazine because it is relevant and in your face. When I first read it, I did not think of anyone except myself. What is my mentality? What are my motives? What do I really want? LW, you are doing a tremendous job in being the church, but we are only beginning to understand what God is doing through our outreach efforts. Let's grow the church rather than kill the church.

-Mark Hirst, Lead Pastor

CHURCH

Let's cut to the chase on something. Almost everybody who follows Christ, and almost every gathering of those Christ followers constituting a church, say the same thing: “We want to reach the world for Christ.”

Yet, most don't. So where's the breakdown?

It's not strategy. There are vast numbers of churches who are successfully penetrating the culture of the “nones,” growing through conversion growth, and who willingly offer their tried and true strategies to any and all who wish to learn.

It's not theology. As mentioned, almost every Christian church would have evangelism as part of their core values and integral to their mission statement.

It's not the new generation of leadership. Most young leaders got into the game to see a lost world won to Christ. They are sold out and ready to rock.

It's not the new generation of Christians. If you want to meet an evangelistic animal, spend time with a new believer. They are, in the best sense of the word, shameless with enthusiasm.

So what is the problem?

Jesus knew.

When challenged about His own missional emphasis toward those on the outside of faith, He responded, “Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? Go figure out what the Scripture means: ‘I'm after mercy, not religion. I'm here to invite outsiders, not coddle insiders.’” (Matthew 9:12-13, MSG).

The problem? Seemingly, long-term “insiders.”

Countless numbers of leaders and members of churches have

given in to a Christian consumerism. They embrace a mentality that gives ample rhetorical support to evangelistic intent, but resists violently at the point of implementation because – at the point of actually “doing” it – it “costs” them. In other words, scratch the surface of a sacrificial, pick-up-your-cross, to die is gain, eat my flesh and drink my blood, Christian and you have an it's-all-about-me, spiritually narcissistic, turned-inward, meet my needs, feed me, consumer.

Don't believe me?

Let's listen in:

“Of course I want to reach lost people,”

... but I'm not going to see us change the music.

... but I'm not going to park far away.

... but I'm not going to attend a different service time.

... but I'm not going to start a new church.

... but I'm not going to stand for the pastor dressing casually.

... but I'm not going to give money to launch a new site or relocate.

... but I'm not going to watch someone on a video.

... but I'm not going to volunteer after a 50 hour work week.

... but I'm not going to let them start playing drums.

... but I'm not going to give up my favorite seat.

... but I'm not going to turn things over to a bunch of 20-somethings.

... but I'm not going to ...

You fill in the rest of the blanks.

The problem with outreach today is that the most basic and elemental issues related to building a relationship with someone apart from Christ

... and then engaging in spiritual conversations,

... and then inviting them to an open and winsome and compelling “front door” so that they can come and see, come and hear, come and experience,

... is resisted by the very people who say they want those unchurched people to come and find Jesus.

Why? Because it would call for sacrifice or inconvenience of some kind. A leader would have to work harder, or invest in vision-casting and face potential opposition. Attenders would have to be part of a church that no longer exists solely to serve them, but to serve those who have yet to enter the doors.

Which means that evangelism is fine in theory, but not in practice because in practice evangelism almost always involves death-to-self, the complete anti-consumer state of mind.

So can we change? Sure. But only when we look in the mirror and own the truth about our consumerism: We say we want them in heaven,

... but we act like they can go to hell.

// EPIC Mission to LA

TEARING DOWN POVERTY PRISON

Poverty is an invisible prison only visible from the outside. Those trapped inside feel powerless in their predicament and can't seem to find a way out. Those on the outside see the prison but often turn a blind eye and blame those inside for their plight. With the insiders stuck on the inside and the outsiders stuck on the outside, a wall is erected that stands strong for generations until someone dares to tear it down.

As Christians, we are well aware of Poverty Prison. Out of compassion, we have given time and money to tear its walls down. We have taken on Jesus' mission to set the captives free with the power and love of Christ. But how effective have we really been? All-too-often, we see a need and attempt to fill that need without considering the longest-lasting remedy. We see someone hungry and give them food. We see a beggar and give him money. We put band-aids on mortal wounds.

In our ongoing efforts to rescue those in the Poverty Prison, we need to ask ourselves a question: "How can we bring true freedom to others in the most effective way?" This question leads us to choose ministries and missions to support who are asking the same questions we are and relentlessly searching for the best answers. A hungry man on the street needs more than a sandwich. A woman bound to the shackles of addiction needs more than a five dollar bill. This man and this woman need the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ to invade their lives in practical ways with lasting results.

As a student ministry, we looked Poverty Prison square in the face as we considered our mission trip for the summer of 2013. Former mission experiences left us desiring more. We knew we could be more effective at meeting real needs with lasting impact, but we weren't sure how to do that...until we discovered Next Step Ministries. This mission organization was asking the same tough questions we were and they were finding answers that worked. From beginning to end, Next Step is consumed with bringing the lasting hope and power of Jesus Christ to people in need through the hands, feet, and hearts of teenagers.

In the summer of 2012, Next Step went to the heart of Poverty Prison and planted their feet. They committed to reaching Skid Row, Los Angeles by partnering with local ministries who were active at tearing down the walls of poverty brick by brick. People often think of Los Angeles as a beautiful city with famous celebrities, huge mansions, and pristine beaches, but hidden behind the wealth and success exists thousands of people who are in a state of homelessness – and they live in a place called Skid Row. On these dirty streets, the contrast between the wealthy and the poor is one of the greatest in the country.

The disparity between the rich and the poor of Los Angeles is seen in the numbers. We cannot simply look at statistics and think we understand what is going on in a community. It is important for us to look into the reasons why these statistics exist. There is a story behind each number. Just as it is easier to understand a person when you know their story, it is easier to understand a community when you know its history. We know that it is vital to our mission to educate ourselves on the issues at hand and to do our best to understand the reasons why these statistics exist. Only then will we be able to grasp the situation and equip ourselves so that we can love like Christ calls us to.



Here are the numbers that represent the state of poverty in Los Angeles:

- 57,000 people experience homelessness each night in LA
- 2,000 people are literally living on the streets of Skid Row
- 18,259 shelter beds in Los Angeles
- 250,000 millionaires in Los Angeles County

This summer, EPIC Student Ministry will be joining Next Step's mission in Skid Row from July 21-27. Next Step will be organizing our ministry details, housing us, feeding us, and taking care of us while we are there (find out more about Next Step at www.nextstepministries.com). Through this partnership, we will make a lasting impact on LA and the surrounding communities. Along with Next Step, we will partner with organizations that are dedicated to empowering those in the city who are experiencing physical and spiritual oppression. Places like the Union Rescue Mission, which is a ministry that helps thousands of people get off the streets and build a new life. We will serve with ministries and homeless shelters on Skid Row by reaching out to at-risk youth and helping people living in poverty. By developing friendships and helping people meet their basic needs, we will have a chance to see Christ in action.

In LA, we will serve meals to the homeless and eat with them while sharing our hope in Jesus. We will renovate a community garden to empower residents to sustain themselves. We will lead an assembly at a school to bring hope to kids. We will host a community barbeque on the beach to build relationships and share the joy of Christ. Lastly, we will have some fun soaking in the sun and swimming at Santa Monica Beach. In all of our mission efforts, our passion is to meet the needs of a hurting community in order to trade despair for hope. On this mission, we will truly share in the joy that is found from connecting with the many dynamic residents of Los Angeles and realize that while we may be physically and economically worlds apart, we are not much different from each other.

UPCOMING FUNDRAISER

If you would like to support our trip financially, we will be having a Gerber's Chicken BBQ and Auction at Living Water on May 19th from 10am to 1:30pm. Carryout orders will be fulfilled from 10am-1:30pm and dine-in will be provided from 11am-1:30pm in the Student Ministry Room. Meals can be ordered day-of and donations will be accepted as payment. If you would like to support a student or leader directly, see our team members list and contact them directly. Thanks for your support!

THE TEAM

Candace Barrage	Devyn Rapp
Zac Denning	Mikaela Rapp
Isaac Donda	Anna Ressler
Ashley Gerber	Aubriana Ressler
Emily Gerber	Jacob Ressler
Ian Keim	Brent Shoup
Will Kelch	Cody Steiner
Laura Long	Gabrielle
Michala Madison	Swartzentruber
Andrew Martin	Logan
Trevor Martin	Swartzentruber
Justin McKenna	Ben Torgler
Christen Miller	Sylvia Troyer
Alyson Near	Daniel Wheeler
Madison Near	

Leaders:

Greg Blevins	Tony Martin
Andrea Denning	Jeff Rettig
Curt Denning	Alison Sprunger
John Grandy	Dawn Wagner
Jen Martin	

"I can't wait to interact with the people in LA and to hear their stories. My goal for this trip is to just be a good friend & to show each person that I interact with that they are loved. I'm hoping this trip will change the way I look at life and help me to not take so much for granted."

–Emily Gerber

"I'm going to serve God and have a good time doing it. I will admit I will most likely be stepping out of my comfort zone but if I am able to change someone's life, I think it will be worth it!"

–Michala Madison

"I am going on the LA mission trip because I need a chance to grow more with God and find who I am in Him. When I heard of this trip, I was looking for something that would help my faith grow in God more and this was it."

–Madison Near

"I am going on the LA trip because I hope to grow. I know this trip will get me out of my comfort zone and I realize that is what I need to do to grow spiritually."

–Sylvia Troyer



Anna Russell's New Life

My journey to New Life began about a year ago when I was struggling with a broken relationship. I started reading the book *Love Dare* that a friend gave me. Right then, I started to feel things changing. I realized that I needed to stop trying to change someone else, but rather change me. At that point, it may have been too late for my relationship to work. But, it was only the beginning of a brand new relationship with God.

The harder I struggled with this broken relationship, the more I was reaching for something, anything to help me ease the pain. Little did I know, I failed to realize God was right there. I continued to try and keep doing things my way. But of course, we all know it doesn't work that way. I began reading the Bible more often. I was really starting to like the way I was feeling, but I knew I still wasn't there yet. I started

to struggle and have a rough time again. I ended up running into some friends at the store and they invited me to church. I knew deep down God was calling me.

So the next Sunday, there I was sitting in church. It felt so good at LW that I just wanted to keep coming back. I realized I wanted more of what I was hearing on Sunday mornings. I knew I was on the right track. At that time, I had no idea I would be taking another step in my faith. LW announced that a baptism Sunday was coming up. I thought to myself that I'll wait and see how they do this before I make my decision.

When I realized that you had to go up on stage to speak, there was no way I was going to do that. Little did I know, God had other plans for me that day. They asked if there was anyone else that wanted to start a "new life" today. My heart started pounding uncontrollably. I wasn't sure what was exactly happening,

but I knew it was God. It was time. The next thing I knew, I was up on stage about to be baptized. It was one of the greatest experiences I have ever had. I felt so free, so light, and it was awesome! I used to dwell on my problems, but now God helps me release those quicker. When I feel myself going back and thinking about those issues, I remember my baptism and how I felt that day. I even made an 11x14 picture to hang in my living room to remind me of my new life. It was truly a new beginning. Don't ever doubt that God is there for you. All you have to do is open our hearts to Him. I was in a deep dark hole and couldn't get out by myself. When I let God in, the steps were lowered and all I had to do was take one step at a time.

Upcoming Events

Living Water desires to make a difference in both our community and the greater world. As we strive to be real, relevant, and relentless inside and outside our walls, LW will be partnering and organizing large events to build relationships in our community. Whatever we choose to do as a church, Christ will always be at the center. Yes, we will have fun. Yes, we will get to know people in our community. Yes, we will find that it is a lot of work to organize and be a part of these events. Yes, we will strive to make a positive impact on the community. But the real reason we do these events is to glorify God by reaching people with the gospel message of Christ's love. Let that be the core focus as you consider being a part of these events.

Even if you are not a part of the Dalton community, we encourage you to come and check them out. Or better yet, seek out events where you can invest in your own backyard. Either way, will you consider volunteering in a new way this year?



Trunk or Treat
Sunday, October 27th



Dalton Days in the Park is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to bring the community together. On July 12 & 13, Dalton Days in the Park will be held in the Dalton Village Green Park (south of downtown Dalton on Main Street). There are many people from LW who are helping make this happen. Dalton Days in the Park is a great opportunity for LW to connect with the community, so come meet someone new and bring the whole family! It's going to be a great time!

How You Can Help:

Volunteers are needed to attend to the inflatable playland on Friday and Saturday. Two hour shifts are available starting at 5pm on Friday and 9am on Saturday. Contact Jen Doerfler: jendoerfler@livingwaterfmc.org or 330.828.8356



SHARE
YOUR STORY
info@livingwaterfmc.org



LIVING WATER

www.livingwaterfmc.org

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