

The LCF Connection

March 2017

A Soft Place to Land

by Theresa Hennis and Molly Rosati



God uses whatever it takes to draw us nearer to himself, and for Molly Rosati, he used a horse.

Molly had horses from the age of seven to 17. Before she learned about training horses using natural horsemanship techniques, she used the more traditional horsemanship techniques that she was taught.

She says, "I used pain, fear, and intimidation to bully my horse to do what I wanted. A harsher bit in the mouth, a lash of a whip, a punishing attitude—all ways to show the horse who was in control."

Like a horse comes to understand its leader, so comes our understanding of God from the "leaders" in our lives. Whether from a parent or other authority figure, patterns of trust or distrust are instilled in us from an early age.

"Horses are wired to feel safe in their herd," Molly says. "The herd has a leader, established by many factors, and leadership fitness is checked on daily. Does my horse think I'm fit to be the leader that day?"

If correct behaviors are established by the leader, the horse will be calm, trust the leader's requests, follow, and want to be with and do things with the leader.

An unfortunate experience in 2000 with a horse chosen for her family left Molly fearful and unsure of her ability to lead.

"I got Ginger, thinking she'd be a good family horse, but she didn't see me as a leader," Molly recalls. "When I used the chain under Ginger's chin to show her what was what, she reared up, her hooves flying."

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Lessons from Niger

by Bryce Swartz

I was blessed to be able to take a trip with my Dad to Niger, February 11-26. My time in Niger was a very humbling and learning experience. It was a great opportunity to see how God is at work in different parts of the world. I now realize that I have had a rather blind vision of the world. I kind of thought that the only strong Christians were here in America. This trip helped to open my eyes to the real truth. There are many wonderful Christians all over the world, sharing the same exact gospel message!

One highlight of this trip was that I was able to work closely with a kids soccer team, made up of about sixteen 10 to 12-year-olds. This was super special for me and very encouraging. It was great to be able to use the abilities and talents that God has given me to show his love to these kids. It was also cool to see how God could use me in spite of my limitations.

The missionary that was coaching the soccer team gave me the opportunity to talk to the team on our last day in Niger, while my cousin translated everything that I said into Zarma for the kids. I had a chance to share the gospel with them, and I took it. Honestly, up to this point in my life, I have shared the gospel very little so this was good for me. Watching the kids listen and think about what I was saying is a memory that I will never forget. This is one way in which this trip is going to change the way I live my life from here on out. Just witnessing the

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Listening to God's Voice

by Andrea Biscup

My Bible, journal, and a couple of devotional books are stacked on the table beside my recliner, as well as a page doodled with my favorite verses in colored pencil and a notebook scrawled with snippets of poems of thanks. These tools, as well as my piano and binders crammed with worship songs, help me connect with God daily. I have found that my time with Jesus is more life-giving when I have plenty of variety. My personality tends to idolize routine, and when I get trapped in one in my quiet time, the routine becomes my focus instead of actually hearing from God.

Lately, however, I've heard from God more clearly outside of quiet time. Through conversations with my husband, Aaron, I've been learning that I need to let go of my intense idealism and ease up the pressure I put on myself and others for things to turn out exactly according to my highest expectations.

Matthias, our 7-month-old, is teaching me about joy as I watch him welcome every new experience with shining eyes and giggles of utter excitement.

And Jesus whispers to my heart all throughout the day if I still my mind enough to listen, showing me his love and encouraging me to trust him when situations get crazy. He wants me to live in close, constant reliance on him, both during my quiet time and during the much louder times that fill every day.

Upcoming Activities

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| March 7 | Fundraiser Banquet for We Care Prison Ministry |
| March 12 | Open House for the new Student Center at Rosedale Bible College, 2 - 4- p.m. |
| April 2 | Bridal Shower for Rachel Troyer at LCF, 2:30 p.m. |

Council Update

by David Perkins

The LCF Council and newly established chair, Jim Jones, are off to a great start in 2017. We are tackling and completing a lot of projects that we had started from the inception of the Council.

- Currently, we are establishing authority for sale of the old church building through Elder and Council approval.
- Also, we are in the process of reviewing LCF Teams and determining term limits for leadership. We plan on meeting with individuals in each team to have a conversation about their desired term lengths.
- Another thing we are working on is refining the definition of what is the LCF Council and what it is we do. We feel that it will be very informative to those who may be confused about what we do, as well as good for the Council itself. Our team has definitely evolved over the last couple years and our definition needed an update.
- Lastly, we are considering conducting a survey for LCF Members to explore any interest you may have in developing a church cemetery at LCF. This topic has made several rounds through the Elders and Council so we are wondering if we should take it to the congregation to get a broader perspective.

If any of you have questions about the topics or projects currently happening in the council, please feel free to speak with Jim Jones, David Perkins, David Stewart, or Tasha Slabaugh. In the meantime, keep an eye out for your next Council Update.

Elders' Notes

by Donna Sauder

Your Elders Team met on Tuesday, February 7th, at Rob and Doris' house. We spent time praying for each of you at LCF and the concerns that were shared.

One of our primary concerns right now is to make sure that our senior pastor, Rob, is well cared for. We have encouraged him to step away from some of the practical responsibilities of running the church, since he has expressed feelings of burn-out and of being overwhelmed. He has taken some steps to relieve some of his stress. He has stopped serving on the council and is transitioning out of leading the youth. The moderator (instead of Rob) is now taking more responsibility for making sure the Sunday service runs smoothly. Rob will be more intentional about ministering in ways that line up with his natural giftings. With these changes, he will have more time to focus on things that refresh him spiritually. Sensing the need for a time of renewal, we have begun to discuss a sabbatical for Rob and Doris. The elders and Reuben will meet together to come up with a policy regarding how to implement this for LCF.

We discussed the importance of our children having the total picture of how God's story is portrayed throughout the whole Bible. We want to review the Sunday School curriculum and talk to the children's leaders to make sure the children of LCF are getting the best possible learning experience.

We are supportive to the idea of having Vacation Bible School again this summer as long as there are enough volunteers to do it well. We feel it is a good way to interact with the community. We recommend that VBS have good spiritual content and not just be a time of entertainment.

The council wanted to know our thoughts about if they should invest time in pursuing the possibility of creating a cemetery on LCF's property. We are concerned about the time, energy, and finances that it would incur as well as the limits it would put on our property in the future. Although we do not recommend that LCF have a cemetery, we feel that this is not a spiritual matter and that the final decision should be made by the congregation. Everyone would need to be aware of the commitment it would require for us now and for future generations.

We discussed the worship nights and are grateful for the leadership that has been given to this night. We are very supportive of this time of worship and prayer. On this note, we hope that you are enjoying the Sunday morning Bible readings. It is our goal to incorporate more Scripture reading in our services.

We will be meeting on the first Tuesday night of each month. If you have any concerns, questions, or suggestions of things you think would be good for us to discuss, please let us know.



A Special Friday Night Celebration

On Friday, February 24, the ladies of LCF enjoyed a lovely evening together. The theme of the evening was God's love for us and our friendships with one another.



The fondue supper included dipping a variety of delicious food bites in cheese sauces, barbecue sauces, and an awesome fountain of chocolate.

There were some fun activities to help us learn to know each other better and an inspirational talk on joy by Christian comedian, Ken Davis, that brought much laughter.



A Soft Place...continued

A friend, Tami, shared the method of Parelli Natural Horsemanship with Molly. She worked with Ginger for 20 minutes, and Molly saw an altogether different horse.

Parelli Natural Horsemanship is a frame of reference, a way of thinking about horses and a training approach using the instincts and neurological wiring of the horse to establish communication and cooperation between man and horse.

Molly went on to buy Whinny, a beautiful bay roan quarter horse, and she took her to a Parelli Natural Horsemanship Clinic. Her initial goal was to learn more about how to work with her horse, and she volunteered to go into the round pen (A 60-foot fenced ring where the horse is free to move with no halter or rope) with Whinny and follow instructor Jesse Peters' directions while participants observed. However, the instructor laid aside his initial goal to work on a skill when he observed Whinny was unable to look at Molly, or him, with both eyes.

"Whinny ran along the fence with one eye on him and the other eye looking over the fence, out the door and window, planning and holding on to a way of escape," Molly says. "She could not give him both eyes (and thus, the rest of herself) and trust him or be with him in total submission and feel at peace with him."

Jesse worked with Whinny, making it easy for her to come to him, but harder if she only gave him one eye. She had to move faster and run HARD if she looked away. "Make the right thing easy" is a training motto.

"Whinny was panting, dripping sweat, and we would think, this is it, she will rest with Jesse now," Molly says, "but at the last second she would lose her nerve and run out to the rail. Finally, she walked that slow walk to his chest, both of them looking into each others' eyes. We all were crying."

Sometimes, we walk a slow walk towards God, unsure if we will find rest. We search for a way out from what we see as the hard work of being in relationship with him.

Like the training motto "Make the right thing easy," God's word promises good for us.

Matthew 11:29-30 The Message (MSG): "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

There were more breakthroughs to come for Whinny. She was searching for patterns. "You don't get through hardship just once," Molly says. "You keep asking for the connection and trust again and again."

Whinny thought relief was connected to performing a certain action, but she had to learn that rest and relief were found when Jesse became her full focus.

Jesse put Molly in the ring and told her she had to become a soft place to land. "When he said that, it broke me," she says. "I realized I hadn't been safe for Whinny. I had an agenda, always needing her to perform a certain way to meet my expectations."

Tears come to her eyes as she remembers that moment. "It hit me; I keep one eye on an escape plan. I don't fully trust God to take care of me."

With that realization, as she watches Whinny approach her with trust, Molly is inspired to take another step closer to God.

He is her soft place to land.

Thailand Team Retreat

by Candice Mast



The Rosedale Mennonite Missions Thailand Team had a wonderful retreat the end of January with visiting speakers Steve and Phyllis Swartz! Our theme was "journey" and we learned so much and each heard from God in unique ways. The Swartz's first took us through a "hero's journey" where we learned the steps of a disciple maker's journey looking at the parallel story of Bilbo Baggins from The Hobbit. We talked about our call to adventure, our big steps over the threshold from known to unknown and the challenges and temptations that follow, eventually leading to death, resurrection and finally reproduction. "Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and

reproduces itself many times over." What an encouragement to us!

Steve and Phyllis also helped us stock a "toolkit" with new and fresh ways to study Bible stories. Some of those tools were: numbers, type scenes, words, motifs, and story arc. We looked closely at two stories with similar type scenes of "trial in the wilderness" (Hagar and Ismael/Abraham and Isaac) and learned how to dig deeper into the story to find God speaking on multiple levels. There were other interesting talks too on: water for the journey (pouring out, sacrifice), together on the journey (encouraging words, hard relationships) and rest for the journey (listening, leaning, landing, limiting). We had lots of time for sharing our thoughts in small and big groups, thinking and praying and writing to Jesus, and reflecting on quotes and scriptures. It was a wonderful time of being fed by God—a feast for our team!



The weekend was a great bonding time as a team as well. We had a fun pizza party and late night talks in our hotel rooms. The kids enjoyed special classes with the REACH team. We especially loved Karly's minute-to-win-it games. Steve and Phyllis tested our teamwork with a survival game in which most of us died in the snow (we're from Bangkok, we don't know how to survive freezing temps!). We are so thankful for this chance for input and growth as a team. Thanks for your prayers for our work here and to those of you who helped to send Steve and Phyllis our way. We are grateful to you for sharing them with us!

Dolly & Me Tea Party Youth Fundraiser

by Meredith Hochstetler



On Saturday, February 18, LCF youth had a fundraiser by helping with the Dolly & Me Tea Party. The theme this year was Mary Poppins. The girls who attended made Mary Poppins hats and kite book markers. They could also paint their nails and do their doll's hair at different stations. There were hair bows, doll dresses, and Katie's Craftations doll

food available for purchase. We raffled off an American Girl Doll, an American Girl Lego set, Katie's Craftations doll food, a Vera Bradley tote, and a doll outfit. The girls had a supercalifragilisticexpialidocious time and it was practically perfect in every way!



Niger...continued

missionary team that my cousin and his wife are a part of, sharing the gospel every time they get a chance, encouraged me to be more vocal with others about my own faith. It made me ask myself: "Why have I not been doing this in a place where I already speak the native language?"



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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 secretary@lcfweb.org. Editors: Theresa Hennis, Amie Smith, and Doris Swartz
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.