

The LCF Connection

April 2015



Pilgrims, Tourists, Learners

by Reuben Sairs



The beautiful snowy village of Trachselwald seen from a window in the castle.

Visiting places where important things happened can be a powerful experience. Battlefields, historic buildings, and family homesteads put pictures, sounds, sights, and smells into the mind and make stories richer forever. Pilgrimages to sites have been a big part of religious lives; too big sometimes. Vicki and I were on a pilgrimage of a modern sort just recently. It wasn't a vacation since we were responsible for 24 Rosedale Bible College students, but it sure was a sweet job assignment. As part of a class that I



A deceptively cozy looking cell in the castle. It was cold, it was bare, it was scary.

teach called MARR (Mennonites, Anabaptists and the Radical Reformation) we toured in France and Switzerland this past winter.*

London Christian Fellowship stands in the line of faith history that comes through Anabaptism. This movement started in the 16th century in Switzerland, Austria, Germany and Holland, before spreading to other places. Its early history is one of persecution and martyrdom. It's inspiring but it's a little frightening too. To visit sites today means to look at sites where people were killed, tortured, or from where they were exiled.

We not only visited places, but got to meet people. We worshipped with French Mennonites in Strasbourg. We toured Basel, Switzerland, with a famous Mennonite scholar who had spent time in jail for his belief that he shouldn't join the Swiss army

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Do I Have to Love Those Who Don't Love Me?

by Jeremy Hisey



As I grow in my faith and aspire to be a follower of Jesus Christ, I think about what Jesus did for us. "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." Isaiah 53:5

As I ponder the pain and suffering that he took in my place, I feel a variety of emotions. Joy, because of the act of love he displayed on my behalf, and relief, that through him I do not have to face condemnation. I feel sadness because I know he suffered for me and I am unworthy beyond any human description. I have hope thanks only to this act of love and grace he has shown me.

How should I respond to this indescribable gift he has given me? Do I just express gratitude and continue living my life as before? Paul says in Romans 12:1 "I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God."

If I truly aspire to be a follower of Jesus Christ, first I need to understand what that means. I know this: Jesus didn't take the easy road, so it is probably going to be tough at times. Jesus was persecuted because of what he taught; therefore, I can expect to face some opposition if I follow his teachings and share them with others. Jesus demonstrated the most amazing love, not only to those who loved him but also those who hated him.

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

as a combatant. We ate fondue and chocolate with a youth group at his church there, too. We heard a personal and general history from the retired pastor of the oldest continuing Mennonite congregation in the world in Langnau, Switzerland. His name was Hans Juetzi. Does that sound like a local name—Yutzzy?

One site we visited was the Trachselwald Castle in rural Switzerland. This was not a Disney castle, but a fortress that served as a prison. There are undoubtedly people who live in the vicinity of London and are within the larger network of LCF who would have ancestral connections to those who suffered there.



The Trachselwald castle from the outside. Anabaptist/Mennonite groups are trying to buy the castle as a landmark. You could be a part of that. <http://trachselwald-castle.ch>

The questions for us today are difficult. What did Anabaptists do to make people so mad? Actually in some cases, their neighbors defended and protected them, but the authorities, by varying degrees of severity, tried to destroy this Christian movement. What did they believe that was so dangerous? They held the same views as many Protestant Christians at that time, but they were persecuted by both Protestants and Catholics. They practiced believer's baptism. They held that you weren't born into Christian faith simply by being born in Europe or to Christian parents. Each person had to choose faith and make a knowledgeable commitment marked by baptism. Anabaptism doesn't mean anti-baptism. It means re-baptism, and they got this name since they regarded their state-enforced infant baptism as no baptism at all, and were baptized again. They believed that the church should not be connected formally to the state. The church was an institution apart, and not just from government but apart from the unbelieving world. Their whole view of society was different. They rejected the use of force and violence. There are other issues that can't be taken up in a short

article. In some ways, their beliefs have been broadly accepted in the church, and are very appropriate for our century and life in our plural, secular context. Some of the ideas still challenge—their concerns and questions about violence for example.

Vicki and I did not grow up in this expression of Christian faith, we adopted it. The visit to Trachselwald and other sites challenged us in many ways. Would we have been willing to



Another cell in the castle with Vicki and an RBC student looking in. In those days, you were held in cells before they decided what to do with you. Imprisonment in the modern sense wasn't an ordinary punishment.

pay the price that so many of these Christians paid for the practice of beliefs such as these? This question is not easy to answer. Our world is very different now and has new questions for Christians. What I would like to say here is that I think the questions need to be asked and the answers need to be discussed.

*Another class, Humanities, shares the trip and there is considerable overlap in interests. We were also in Italy. Photo credits: Reuben & Vicki Sairs

Elders' Notes

Farewell, little gavel—we'll miss you!

by Vicki Sairs



We opened our March 3 elders' meeting with prayer and noted the sad but necessary Passing of the Gavel to the new LCF Council. It's true that the Council will need it more, what with all the motions they'll be passing, but we will miss the satisfying thunk of wood on wood, signaling the completion of an agenda item.

What we discussed:

LCF's 2014 Surplus

The Finance Team proposed ways to use the 2014 surplus; we approved their recommendations, pending a few clarifications. Rob will share with the Council our desire to see sound panels added to the fellowship hall and lights installed in the parking lot.

Elders' Job Description

Rob proposed an addition to the list of elder responsibilities that we put together at our retreat last November: providing pastoral support and accountability. Everyone agreed.

Congregational Care

We shared updates about individuals at LCF and ways that we can pray for and care for them.

New Elder(s)

We set up a timeline for searching for new elders:

- On March 8, announce that the Elders' Team is working at coming up with a nomination or two to bring to the congregation for approval.
- Invite the congregation to pray about the process and let us know if they have any suggestions for us to consider by Sunday, March 22. They can give their suggestions informally by talking to anyone on the Leadership Team, or by replying to the email we will send out.
- The Elders will consider all suggestions and after discussion, choose one or two individuals to ask if they would be willing to serve as elder. If those individuals agree, their name(s) will be submitted to the congregation for affirmation.

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An interview with *Zach Freer*

Interviewed by Amie Smith

Where did you grow up?

I was born and grew up in Ashland, Ohio.

And what brought you to this area?

After college, I received a job offer in London and so I decided to move down here.

What do you do for a living and what's a favorite part of your job?

I teach video production, digital photography, and wood working at London High School. I also coach both boy's and girl's high school cross country teams. There are many things that I like about my job, but having the opportunity to be a positive role model for teenagers as they transition into adulthood is a big part of why I entered the profession.

What is something that people may not know about you?

I am older than my brother, although people often mistake us for the other way around.

What are some things you enjoy doing in your free time?

Besides working on my own projects at home, I enjoy hiking, camping, canoeing, reading, and a little gardening. I also have interests in maple syrup production and, in the future, would like to learn more about bee keeping.

Tell us a little bit about your soon-to-be wife Julie. How did you both meet?

Julie and I were in band together at Ohio Northern University. We met the first week of band camp freshman year and have known each other for about six and a half years. We've been dating for six years and have been engaged since October.

What is something God is teaching you right now?

God's teaching me to rely on him only. I realized this part way through my college career and he continues to remind me that he is upholding me with his righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10).

Anything else you would like to share?

I appreciate LCF welcoming me in a little over a year ago. I've been so blessed by this part of the body of Christ.



Elders' Notes...continued

Leadership Development:

We talked about ways to nurture and cultivate leaders at LCF. These would include creating space for an intern to serve (from RBC's Bridge program), and developing a leadership training place for people in the church who are interested in becoming leaders.

Other items that came up were: pastoral reviews; renewing our overseer Roger Hazen's term; Easter morning; and adult discipleship class (Reuben will teach from 1 & 2 Peter on Sunday mornings April 12 - May 31).

Do I Have to Love...continued

"God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

So I have to love even those who do not love me? Well, shouldn't I, as a follower of Christ, share with them what he did for me? What better way to show love than to share the greatest love. What better way to respond to the love Jesus has shown me, than to share it with those who do not know it? That is actually what he wants me to do. He knows it is going to be tough and reassures us that we won't be doing it alone.

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'" Matthew 28:18-20

Looking Ahead...

- April 2 Maundy Thursday Communion, 7 p.m.
- April 5 Easter Service and Brunch, 9:45 a.m.
- April 11 Men's Breakfast at Phat Daddy's, 8 a.m.
- April 11 Spring Workday at LCF, 9 a.m.
- April 12 Adult Discipleship Class begins; Reuben Sairs will lead our study of 1 & 2 Peter



The LCF Council is Up and Running!

by Pam Shay

The LCF Council was officially announced on Sunday, March 15, with the members presented to the church: Pam Shay (Chair), Dave Stewart (Vice Chair), David Perkins, Keith Scheffel, and Pastor Rob Swartz. The purpose of the Council is to manage the business and planning needs of LCF.

The tasks of the Council during their first year will include: talking with the committees, teams, and church members to understand our existing tasks, roles, and processes, and engage in strategic planning to guide the next 3-5 years of serving God's plans for LCF. The Council will lead an update of the Church's constitution, provide job reviews for those employed by LCF, and assure services are reviewed regularly to best serve LCF.



The LCF Council (from left): Dave Stewart, David Perkins, Rob Swartz, Pam Shay, and Keith Scheffel

A long list of activities to be addressed this year includes (but is not limited to): long-term plans for land, old building, and main building; how to use surplus budget from 2015; review vendors; evaluate insurance needs; update Constitution; regular review of church legal documents; annual church member meeting; strategic planning; and the list will continue. Regular updates will be shared with the congregation.

The Council will work closely with the Elders on the transition of many of the business-related responsibilities. Your prayers and support will be greatly appreciated during the initial weeks of the Council.

Servant Spotlight



Thanks to those who arrive at church early each Sunday morning to make sure that plenty of coffee is made and ready to serve by 9:30. Pictured below are LCF's youngest coffee helpers, Wesley and Emily Miller.



From left: Kendra, Bryce, Natalie, Lance, Stephanie, Shepherd, Layne, Reggie, and Autumn.

Challenge, July 1-5. City Challenge is a 4-day evangelistic "camp" put on by the SEND (Service, Evangelism, Nurture and Discipleship) department of Rosedale Mennonite Missions. It is held at the Rosedale International Center in Columbus. We took part in it two years ago by doing various outreach projects in downtown Columbus, and I am looking forward to going back again. It's a great opportunity to step out of our comfort zone and share the love of God with others.

We are always looking for more kids in high school to join our youth group, so if there is someone that you know who may be interested, please let us know or introduce them to one of us.

Youth Group Update

by Bryce Swartz

Our youth group meets on a weekly basis, on Sunday evenings from 5:30-8:30, at the church. We usually begin with a Bible lesson taught by Reggie, our fearless youth leader. After that we enjoy a snack together. We finish up by playing several games together - ranging from table games and silly games to Hide-and-Seek.

Right now we are getting ready to register for City

LCF PRAYER FOCUS

The LCF Youth Group

- Pray that God would bring more youth to join our group.
- Ask God to give Reggie wisdom as he gives leadership.
- Pray that each of us would grow spiritually.
- Pray that we would share God's love with the many people in our various high schools who do not know him.

The LCF Connection

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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 connection@lcfweb.org. Editors: Doris Swartz, Trish Eaton, Candice Mast, Theresa Hennis, and Amie Smith
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.