

The LCF Connection

September 2020



Supporting Missions Here and Abroad

by Marcus Freed

Most of you remember, I was going to serve at a prison in Alabama this past January through May. I was thankful for that opportunity and the way God led me there. After being trained as an assistant chaplain. I began serving in my assigned prison the 2nd week of February. The chaplain I worked under commented, "Marcus hit the ground running." And I did! Within the first week plans were under way for me to begin leading 3 new groups: (1) a discipleship training for 4 interested and committed residents, (2) a Grief-Share support group with 15 of the men, and (3) a Bible study in the faith dorm every Tuesday afternoon.

Things were going smoothly into March. On March 7 I left for a preplanned trip to El Salvador with the Joni and Friends Organization to donate wheelchairs. This was my 8th trip, and I served once again as a wheelchair mechanic. We had a great week and gave away 200 chairs. I also got to meet with my friend, Silas, a man who found Christ in the prison here in London, Ohio. On

next to the last day of the trip, COVID-19 hit El Salvador and all incoming flights were cancelled. Thankfully, we were permitted to fly home to the States on March 14. I flew back to Alabama only to find that I was no longer able to go into the prison. I remained in Alabama until April 4, hoping to possibly get back into the prison. During that month I quarantined from people and got out only to get food and to bike.

Since there was little possibility of being able to get back into the prison, I decided to come back to Ohio on April 4. I stayed in contact with my Alabama prison and the prison organization that I was assigned to through weekly Zoom calls with the "We Care" Chaplains and weekly calls with the chaplain I was working with. It is highly likely that if things open back up by next year, I will return to Alabama to my assigned prison to give three months of service again.

I continued to bike regularly to stay in shape to participate in Rosedale International's annual Ride for Missions. On July 24-29 I participated in it for the 12th straight year in a row. This year's ride was quite different due to the pandemic. I biked with about 30 others who rode various bike paths that branch out from Xenia, OH. As of now (mid-August) I have biked 121 days this year, for a total of 3,250 miles. My goal is 4,000 by October 1st.

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Each Part is Needed

by Pam Stanforth

On July 19th, Pastor Rob preached about "Differences without Division." He talked about how the Bible describes us, as a church, like a body. It reminded me of something I wrote that I hope will be a reminder to us of the value and importance of each and every part.

One day a man woke from his sleep and, having forgotten what he looked like, he found a full-length mirror to take account. While gazing at himself in the mirror, his body members began to take account of themselves, and to make an argument as to which of his parts was of most value to the man. Each part declared its unique contributions to the man to convince the man that he should give most of his attention and care to that part.

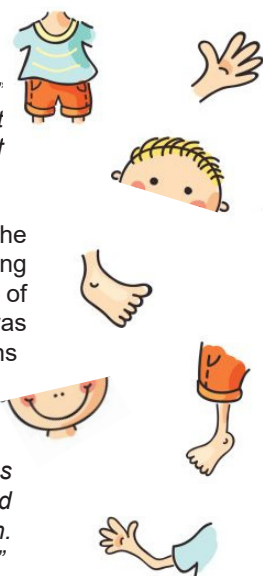
The eyes spoke first. "We are the eyes of this body. We see all things and without us, the rest of you members would not see where to go and would stumble about, perhaps falling to our death. Therefore, we are the most important to this body."



The ears spoke up, "Not so! We hear all things and keep the body safe. You may see, but you will not be able to distinguish what you see unless you hear what is being said. We know when calamity is near, we hear rocks falling or a child when they cry out for help. Surely, we are the most important members of this body!"

The hands reached up and covered the ears for a moment and then the eyes. "Eyes, you cannot see and ears you cannot hear if we cover you."

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Reading the Bible Well

A Message from the Pastor

by Reuben Sairs

LCF stands in a church tradition that emphasizes the idea that everyone should read the Bible, and that when we put our minds together in the congregation we come up with the best interpretations and applications. There is plenty of room there to give special attention to those who can speak with a little more certainty--pastors or scholars, for example. There's also room for some healthy disagreement. I think this is a good approach, but it does assume that everyone is equipped with the basic skills needed to join the conversation and be heard. What are those? All of us need to come to the task with more than opinions and sincerity. We need to come equipped with tools for good interpretation.

There are church traditions that don't share our approach. In some of those, like the Roman Catholic for instance, the church authority is responsible for interpreting and applying the Bible. Their approach is very stable and assures that kooky and ignorant interpretations are held back. Of course, that doesn't mean everyone agrees with their interpretations. The Protestant Reformation and the Orthodox departed in disagreement.

I think we need to step up our game in our tradition. There's more to literacy than simply reading words. A person reads words in contexts--in specific types of literature. The Bible is a library of types of literature and often they are embedded in one another: histories, poetry, prophecy, narratives, parables, personal and public letters, texts of sermons and prayers, apocalyptic writings (end times), proverbs, and more. The Bible uses figures of speech, metaphors, comedy, puns, and hyperbole (exaggerations that are meant to illustrate not deceive). Each of these types of literature needs to be understood according to its type. Reading the Bible with an awareness of the types of literature is what it means to read the Bible literally. And of course all those types of literature for us believers are scripture--they have special inspiration and authority like no other writings.

How we read the Bible and how we interpret it has consequences. The history of denominations and sects proves this. I would like to lay out 4 well-accepted principles that will help us to read the Bible well. There are several others, but these will get us started:

1. Always remember that if you are reading in English, you are reading a translation, and all translation involves some level of interpretation. There is no way around that.
2. The Bible was written for us, but not to us. The Bible contains at least 3 millennia of content in three languages, spanning different cultures and different epochs of God's people. Our job is to try to uncover what the author working under the Holy Spirit wrote to an original reading audience and how they would have interpreted it. This step requires learning about the Biblical world, its times and places, customs, its understanding of the natural world, its sense of time, its usages of teaching, etc.
3. Remember that using a Bible illustration is not necessarily making a Biblical point. Some sermons that give the impression of being expository are merely yanking pictures out of context.
4. The Old Testament and New Testament need to be interpreted differently. They are both scripture and both the product of God's mind, but for Christians the New Testament has to take priority. To apply national promises made to God's covenant people in the nation of Israel cannot be automatically applied to God's people in the Church who live in all lands, come from all groups and live in the new covenant.

I think we had better come back to this topic again soon! There's more. Much more. ■

Elders' Notes

by Jesse Diller

Throughout the last few months, we have been using Whatsapp to stay in communication with each other and with the church Council about how we could, and ought, to hold services in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have had discussions about face coverings, singing along with the worship songs, length of service, whether to continue in-person services, etc. We have also had quite a lot of discussion about leadership in the church, and what we can do to encourage it. This includes Rob's preparations for a preaching class and possible leadership structure adjustments at LCF.



For our July and August elders' meetings we met on Rob and Doris' patio. As always, we began in prayer, giving thanks for the church and God's blessings, praying for unity, and praying through the directory and for specific needs.

We continue to discuss our services and meetings, and ways to be flexible to the changing requirements and recommendations for public gatherings; especially as we add online components to our services and prayer meetings. For example, how do we do our quarterly communion service with how the church is spread out? We are excited that Rob and Reuben are starting a preaching class soon, and hope this can be a blessing to the church body and raise up more leaders in the Body of Christ. We also talked about upcoming leadership transitions in our youth group, and brainstormed about how we can understand the needs and gifts of our youth and their families. This resulted in a survey we sent to the parents of our youth. Small groups were another topic of discussion; we are hoping to add several new groups which will be starting up soon.

Finally, we have spent quite a bit of time in our last few meetings discussing the leadership responsibilities and structures we have in place. There is concern that we are placing too many responsibilities on too few people, especially on Rob and Doris. We have looked at our existing organizational layout, and have been brainstorming possible ways to distribute LCF's management and leadership in a way that is sustainable (i.e., not overloading our leaders) and realistic (i.e., a structure that we can find enough people to fill). We have been very grateful that the Church Council has taken up quite a few of these responsibilities, and will continue to look for ways to optimize leadership responsibilities so that jobs line up with the giftings and callings of our leaders. We hope to have more concrete proposals to present to the congregation by early 2021. ■

An interview with *The Stukey Family*

Interviewed by Theresa Hennis

Many of us have been enjoying learning to know the Stukeys. If you have not met them yet, we encourage you to do so. They are a lot of fun! Side facts to note: You can see their house from Rob & Doris's house. Their daughter Alex and Larissa played softball together 16 years ago.

Where are you and Joe from originally?

- Angie: I was born in Columbus, and I grew up in Whitehall, Ohio.
- Joe: I was born in Middletown and lived in the Dayton area until my family moved to Hilliard in 1978.

Do you and Joe work, volunteer, and if so, where? What inspired you to choose your career/profession?

- Angie: I am a middle-school ELA teacher in Springfield. I graduated from OSU in 1994 with a BA in English Literature. After Joe and I were married in 2001, we decided that I should substitute while the kids were in school. After David was born in 2004, I returned to school to get my teaching certification. I taught Sunday school for many years and felt called to teach.
- Joe: I work for Mussun Sales, as a manufacturing representative for the commercial HVAC industry. My father was in a similar field and got me involved in the industry.

How many children do you have?

We have a blended family. Joe has 2 boys from his first marriage. Daniel is 28 and works and lives in Cincinnati. Jared is 26 and lives in Columbus. Angie brought Alexandra to the marriage, and she is 28 and will complete her master's degree in December. She is a social worker in Columbus. David is ours together. David is almost 16 (November 1) and is a sports nut. He plays soccer, basketball, and runs track for LHS. He attended St. Patrick's through 8th grade and played 4 sports for them each year. David is also an excellent student and is in several honors classes. I don't believe that he has decided on a career, but I do know that he hopes to get a scholarship to college to play something.

How did you come to attend LCF?

Reid Gates is a good friend of David's and has been encouraging him to attend for 2+ years. Once David graduated from St. Pats, we were free to attend elsewhere. Reid always talked up the youth group and mission trips!

Do you and Joe have any special interests?

Joe: I enjoy home projects, tennis, and golf.

Angie: I enjoy reading, talking, and spending time with friends. We both like car shows and outdoor activities.

What is your and Joe's idea of a perfect vacation?

A house on the beach with a hot tub and pool. We both enjoy the water and have recently become spoiled on vacations with both amenities. This year, we went to the Smokey Mountains (planned in Dec. before Covid 19). We hiked and explored the National Forest.

Who has inspired you the most in your life and why?

- Angie: I am inspired by all people. Everyone brings something special to my life.
- Joe: I am inspired by my father and was inspired by my grandfather. They taught me everything that I know.

How did you meet?

I was in a book club and one of our members was Joe's best friend's wife. She wanted to set us up. I said yes, and the rest is history. On our first date, I discovered Joe's sense of humor. FYI - He's hilarious!!!

If you could go back in time, where would you go and why?

- Angie: I love all of history and would like to experience any time because I think/believe that I could help.
- Joe: I would like to explore the future, which is why I enjoy Science Fiction.

What is something that you'd like people to know about you?

- Angie: I'm pretty out there and what you see is what you get.
- Joe: I have an incredible sense of humor that most people do not see.

What is your favorite book?

Joe: I like science fiction, but because I spend most of my day reading specifications and blueprints, I don't enjoy reading for pleasure.

Angie: The next book I read! ☺

Who would you most like to meet and why?

Angie: I would really like to meet Paul to hear his version of his conversion.

Joe: Anyone from the future. ■





Water Tester and More

by Jim Jones, Council Chair

LCF's Building and Grounds Team does an incredible job caring for our building. This includes maintenance, upkeep, repairs, and compliance with regulations.

Pictured below is Merv Schlabach, "caught on the act" of testing the water from our well. This is a state mandate for wells of all public facilities. Each quarter Merv takes a water sample and sends it to a lab and the results are forwarded to the EPA.

Did you know that there is a \$500 fine for each required test that is late or not accomplished? Merv not only ensures compliance but he also saves on our costs by taking the samples himself and delivering them personally to the testing facility. Sometimes he may have to treat our well if bacteria is discovered. This is one of the many tasks that Merv accomplishes very faithfully behind the scenes. When you see him next, take a minute to express your appreciation to him. ■



Supporting Missions...continued

Currently I am meeting weekly with the Horizon volunteers and staff via Zoom calls. I continue to give platelets to the Red Cross about every two weeks. I am blessed to be able to give platelets with ease. I have donated 16 times this year so far.



As you can tell, not much grass grows under my retired feet. I am blessed. My family is well. My oldest son, Ryan, (who served as assistant pastor here at LCF from 2002-2013) and his family are in the process of moving to Mankato, Minnesota, where he will be the morning radio show host for Kinship Christian radio. I was in Colorado from June 18-25 visiting my son, Shaun, and his family. I biked every day there before they woke up because I wanted to stay on Ohio time. My daughter, Kara, and her family still live here in London, at the house where Brenda and I raised our family years ago. On June 27 my children and grandchildren finally got together for a mass birthday make-up celebration. We sang "Happy Birthday" five different times for the birthdays we had missed during COVID-19. It was so good to see all of them in person and get grandpa hugs!

I greatly appreciate the church family that supported me on the Ride for Missions. So many of you prayed and gave generously, and I easily met my goal for giving. At last count, all the riders together had raised over \$93,000 dollars for foreign missions. May God bless all of you! I encourage each of you to be on the lookout for the places that God wants to use you. There is no joy greater than seeing people come to know God and grow in him! ■

Each Part is Needed...continued

We are the most important part. We do all that is needed to care for each of you. We lift food to feed the entire body. We give hugs, prepare gardens that produce a harvest for sustenance. We must be the most valuable members."

At that comment, the feet began to stomp around quite loudly. "Without us, you will stand in one spot and never get where you need to be. We take you places. We run when there is danger, and we give support to each of you. We must be the greatest parts!"

"Please," said the mouth. "I get things done because I communicate all of your needs. I negotiate as needed and without me, you could not eat to sustain the body. Without me, you could not call out for help or warn others of danger. You could not sing, fa-la-la-la-la-la. Surely, I am the most valuable!"

Soon, all the members chimed in, loudly and chaotically declaring their works and great value to the body. The man listened to each for a while, but then, he took control over his mouth and yelled out—"STOP! It is for sure that each of you are equally as important to me. I cannot function at my best if I were to lose any one of you. You are not just individual parts. Together, you make me—ME! You are ONE whole body, and I am dependent on every single part. No other part can do exactly what each individual of my parts can do. You are unique and valuable, wonderfully made! Ears, you hear for me, you cannot see, yet I depend on you. Eyes, you are valuable because you see; although you cannot hear, I need you. Together, when each of you fulfill your purpose, my whole body works perfectly, as it should, as one."

The man stood staring at himself in the mirror. He began to thank Creator God for each part of his body, for their individual gifts, skills and unique contributions. As



he stepped away from the mirror, he quickly forgot what each part of his body looked like, but he was not at all concerned because all his parts were contentedly fulfilling their purpose according to God's plan and design, all were working together in unity—as ONE! May that be true of us here at London Christian Fellowship! ■

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 secretary@lcfweb.org. Editors: Theresa Hennis, Elisabeth Yoder, Kelli Dean, and Doris Swartz
If you prefer that we do not use photos of you in the Connection, you may opt out by emailing us.