

The LCF Connection

August 2022

Experiencing The Chosen

by Jeremy Hisey

In June, Richard Troyer and I were blessed with the opportunity to travel to Dallas, Texas, to participate in filming the episode of the feeding of the 5,000 for the series called The Chosen. If you are not familiar with The Chosen, I highly recommend checking it out. It is a crowd-funded series that you can watch on The Chosen app, YouTube, Amazon Prime Video, or check out the DVDs of Seasons 1 & 2 from LCF's library.

The series is about Jesus and His disciples, as well as many other people who encountered Jesus in the Bible. The creator of the series, Dallas Jenkins, advises the viewers that the intention of the show is not to replace the Bible but simply to point people to Jesus. Their goal is to reach 1 billion people with the good news of Jesus. They have currently had over 407 million views worldwide.

In my opinion, the show brings Jesus to life in a new way that I have not seen in any other show or movie. When I watch the show, I feel like I experience His grace and love through the people He encounters in each episode. The actor who portrays Jesus, Jonathan Roumie, does an excellent job of demonstrating the compassion and love of Jesus that I feel we sometimes miss when reading these stories in the Bible.

As I mentioned before, we traveled to Dallas, Texas, for this incredible opportunity to participate in the episode about the feeding of the 5,000. Richard and I, along with about 4500 people (another 4500 people the next day, as well) were "extras" in the scene. It was a neat experience for a few reasons.



First, just witnessing a small part of the process that is involved in recording an episode. We spent 12-13 hours there at the set and only several minutes of recording were actually completed. It was quite the experience.

Second, because we were able to be part of a scene that represents one of the greatest miracles Jesus performed, and it will be seen all over the world.

Lastly, as we sat there on the hill, on set, listening to Jonathan speak the words that Jesus once said to some 5,000+ people, we pondered what it must have been like to have been there during that time. It was a lot of excitement for us simply to be part of the show; I can only imagine how incredible it would have been to have been there to see Jesus perform such an incredible miracle!

At the end of the day, when we were bused back to our vehicles, we were met there by Dallas Jenkins and his wife. It might not seem like much, but to us it was going over and above on his part to take the time to greet each of us after a very long, hot day. I really appreciated the fact that he demonstrated how grateful he is for the opportunity God has given him to share the gospel through the donations and support of so many. ■

Inside this Issue	
Experiencing The Chosen	1
Getting to Know the Baker Family	2
Listen to That Voice	3
What Does It Mean to Thrive?	3
More Than An Assignment	4
Get Ready for Season 3	4



255 US 42 NE London, OH 43140
(740) 490-2121

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



From left: Jeremy, Dallas & Amanda, Richard

Getting to Know... The Baker Family

by Mike Baker

Hi! We are the Bakers—Mike and Karen, along with our five kids: Jada, Lydia, Josiah, Micah, and Isaiah (we call him Zane).

Karen and I both grew up in Indiana, and we met while Karen was a student at Huntington University. We will celebrate our 23rd wedding anniversary next spring. Our motto in life has been “Wherever the Lord leads us we will follow and whatever he feeds us we will swallow.” That has gotten us into some interesting places and eating some interesting things.

- I, Mike, work at Rosedale International. I started there last September, which is what brought our family to Columbus. Previously, I was a pastor, missionary, and youth pastor.
- My wife, Karen, homeschools our children, now just the youngest three.
- Jada recently got married to Graham Lyndaker and is living in Columbus, hoping to finish her degree at OSU. She graduated from RBC this past May.
- Lydia is starting her second year at Huntington University in northeast Indiana where she is majoring in Exercise Science and Nutrition while playing soccer for HU.
- Josiah turns 17 soon, hopes to get his license ASAP (moving threw that off for him), and he is starting his junior year and works at a local pizza shop.
- Micah is 14, starting her sophomore year, loves to babysit and ref soccer.
- Isaiah is 13, starting his 8th grade year and plays soccer as if it is his life.

We lived and worked in Fort Wayne for the first 8 years of our marriage. In 2004 I began work at a small country church as their youth pastor. Over the next ten years we grew in our faith, our experience with youth and young adults, and our family grew. Our kids have only known serving at church and are used to being one of the first there and the last to leave. In 2008, God took us to Pennsylvania, and that is where we first learned of the Anabaptist/Mennonite world. Our church was a part of Lancaster Mennonite Conference. We also got introduced to Eastern Mennonite Missions.

In 2011, Karen got the opportunity to travel to Guinea Bissau and Gambia to help start a pre-school in the small village of Catel. On her return she told me she felt God saying we would be moving our family to this village, but I thought she had gone nuts. Over the next 2 years our relationship strengthened with the missionary (Beryl Forrester) there in Guinea Bissau, EMM, and Catel. We had the opportunity to go over two more times to serve in Catel in various ways. Many of our youth during this time went through the YES program. Throughout this, I started seeing God pointing us toward moving our family to Guinea Bissau.

In summer 2012, we applied with EMM and began the process, which typically takes time. God had other plans, and by August of 2013, we were on a plane heading to West Africa. We lived in Guinea Bissau from 2013-2016. During this time, we learned the language, learned about village life, hosted visitors and interns, saw growth in the preschool and helped build a new clinic building. We also experienced heartache, grief, fear, hunger, sickness, and almost lost our Lydia to illness.

In 2016, we returned to the states for our kids to have a better environment for high school and the church, which we felt they needed to grow on their own. This was one of the hardest decisions we ever made. We have been blessed to continue serving in West Africa as regional reps for EMM and also regional director for RI.

At the airport on the day we left Guinea Bissau to move back to the states.



Pictured above from left: Micah, Isaiah, Jada, Josiah, Mike, Karen, and Lydia
Pictured below: Graham and Jada on their wedding day, June 25, 2022



Listen to That Voice

A Message from the Pastor - by Reuben Sairs



We excuse ourselves. We create standards and hold ideals, and then we make an exception of ourselves. It's called rationalizing—coming up with good reasons that justify us. Our rationalizations give us permission. We pronounce good, plausible reasons why an exception must be made in our case. I don't think the Bible or the Holy Spirit will let us get away with this without voicing objections. Listen to those voices!

The matters of Christian character aren't human inventions. They are the work Christ is doing in us. Those changes are what he expects to happen in us as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the process of our sanctification. Clearly we all fail and struggle in this, but that is a little different than simply turning away or laying aside what the scriptures teach us about Christian character. It's one thing to be weak, but another to be defiant.

We don't get to suspend Christian character because of someone else's behavior, or because of the times we live in, or because some behaviors become socially acceptable. You might say, "We have no excuse. There is no excuse."

We know what Christian character is supposed to be.

- We are commanded to love like Christ loved (John 13:34).
- We are taught to not judge (Matthew 7:13).
- We are told to consider others more important than ourselves (Philippians 2:3).
- We are told to live at peace with everyone inasmuch as it is up to us (Romans 12:18).

The Bible verses abound. We know all this and much more about who we are to become once we have given our lives to Christ. At the same time, we easily lay these markers aside with rationalizations, and allow the normal worldly pattern to proceed out of us. A really difficult thing about resisting the process of rationalization is that often we will fit right in with all our friends and neighbors. We will even be applauded and cheered on by the world. It will seem so normal, even good.

Ephesians 4 frames this in terms of an old and a new self, and tells us to embrace the new us. For example, verses 23 & 24 say: *"that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."*

There is nothing new about this struggle and effort, but I do believe that our times call for special regard to the dangers. It's not our job to judge who is truly a Christian or how well any particular Christian is doing as they grow in Christ. Yet what are we seeing in our world—noisy confessions of Christ matched with behavior, conduct, language, and attitudes that don't seem very much like Jesus.

My free pastoral advice is that this is a good time to watch ourselves closely, and to encourage one another to not just exhibit Christ-like character, but to become Christ-like in all we do. ■

Baker Family...continued

On our return God took us to Missouri, near Kansas City, to pastor a church. This was our home until moving to Columbus last summer. Our church in Missouri was looking for a conference and, in that process, we joined CMC. These years were some of the hardest and darkest in ministry, and are still painful to talk about. God was always with us and there were definite moments of light and hope in those years.

In 2021, it became clear for numerous reasons that it was time to move on, and so we resigned from pastoring, not knowing what was next. In a few short days, literally, we had a job at RI. We moved our family to Columbus last summer, and I began working at RI in September.

As we looked for a church home, God directed us to LCF, and here we are, so incredibly thankful and blessed to have a church home and a place to connect.

Thanks for introducing yourselves to us! We're so glad God brought you to be a part of our LCF family and are thankful for your willingness to jump right in and serve. We look forward to learning to know you better. ■

(In case you have not yet made the connection: Mike and Karen are LCF's new youth leaders—and it's great to have a few more kids in the youth group!)



Are We Thriving?

by Doris Swartz

Multiply, CMC's annual conference, was held July 22-24 at McHenry, Maryland—in the scenic mountains of Maryland, at a fairground by a

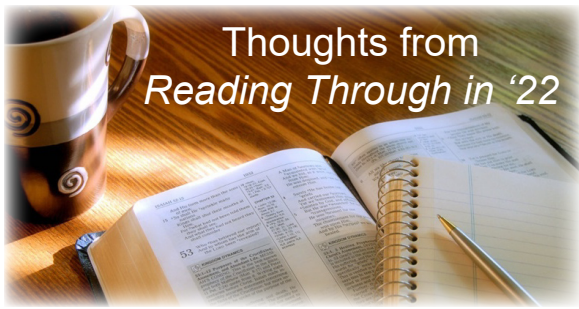
lake. It was a good time of gathering with believers from other churches in our conference to worship, grow, and fellowship together.

This year's theme was Thrive. We were challenged to think about what it means to thrive. We heard stories of people who are serving God in many different places and situations and were reminded of people in Scripture (like Daniel) who thrived in difficult circumstances.

On Saturday, Brad Roth shared about the Rural Church—challenging us to learn to live and love and minister right where we are, regardless of how small or insignificant it may seem. During one of his sessions he highlighted the high amount of unchurched people right here in Madison County, Ohio (since that is where RBC & CMC headquarters are located).

It was a weekend filled with lots of good input that left us with a renewed desire to be people and churches who thrive wherever God has called us with whatever he has given us. ■

If you were not able to attend Multiply, you can watch the sessions online at CMC's YouTube channel.



Thoughts from Reading Through in '22

More Than An Assignment

by Angie Stukey

When pastor Rob proposed the opportunity to read through the Bible this year, I wanted to jump in with both feet and hands! I was ready! Put me in, Coach! I was happy that when I asked my new-to-Christianity husband to join me, he said, "Sure!"

With that said, we needed to work out the logistics of reading together. You see, Joe is a night owl,

and I am a morning bird, plus our youngest son plays sports all year long. We carved out time every evening at 7:30 p.m. during January, February, and just into March. Everything was going smoothly until spring sports began. We were suddenly gone 3 evenings a week attending track meets. Then came summer with its busy schedules and becoming first time grandparents. Needless to say, our carefully carved out time to read together began to diminish. Pictured on the right is our trip to the National Adidas Track Meet with David in June and our new granddaughter, Agatha, who was born on June 30th.



We are hopeful to be able to pick back up with reading together soon; but even when we don't get to read as a couple, I try to read on my own before going to bed. Obviously, we have not been checking off all the boxes on the reading plan, but we continue to enjoy the opportunity to learn from God's Word, as we are able, and to grow spiritually. I've learned not to beat myself up if I miss a reading. I just pick back up again—and try to catch up later if I have time.

I have discovered that reading through the Bible this time is more than just an assignment for me—like it was when I was in college. It is a time to listen and hear God's voice and observe how others have followed him. I have discovered David's enduring love of God even after his sin, and how he continued to praise God. I love what he says in Psalm 101:



*"I will sing of steadfast love and justice; to you, O Lord,
I will make music, I will ponder the way that is blameless. Oh, when will you come to me?
I will walk with integrity of heart within my house;
I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless.
I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me...
Morning by morning I will destroy all the wicked in the land, cutting off all the evildoers from the city of the Lord."*

I believe that we view each reading of God's Word with new eyes because of the "season" we are in when we read it and how God's Spirit speaks to us. I love that both Paul and David praised God during their trials. Paul, while in pain, always gave glory to God, and that alone gives me encouragement to continue through my pain and to always, always, praise God with a new song each morning.

May God continue to bless each and every one of you, as you, too, continue reading (in and/or through) the Bible. I hope that you find joy in hearing God's voice and discovering his message to you. ■



Get Ready for Season 3

by Richard Troyer

Jesse Diller and I have been leading a small group at LCF this past year which has been meeting at the church to watch and discuss episodes of The Chosen together. It's been a great experience. We just finished up the last episode of Season 2 and can't wait for Season 3 to come out!

It looks like Season 3 will probably be released in November or December of this year. There is a possibility that the first 2 episodes of it may actually be shown in the theater. Our small group is looking forward to watching them together and would love to have you join us!



So...if you have not yet seen all of the episodes of Season 1 and 2, this would be a great time to catch up. (You can watch them online here, use the QR code, or check out the DVDs from LCF's library.) Each episode is about an hour long, and once you are "hooked" you can be caught up in no time! ☺ It's an easy show to binge watch and a great one to watch and discuss with friends or family! ■

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 secretary@lcfweb.org.

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