

The LCF Connection

July 2023

Sharing God's Love in Catel

by Mike Baker

LCF, thank you all for donating to the preschool and clinic in Catel, Guinea, Bissau. We had a fantastic time during our recent trip there from April 29th to May 20th. Honestly, it was hard for us to leave and return. As a family with about every acronym possible, where home is, is a difficult question for us, and Catel feels very much like home.

This trip was the closing of one chapter for us with Eastern Mennonite Missions; we served in Catel under EMM and continued as Regional Reps for the last ten years. When God closes a chapter, he generally opens a new one. We are excited that Rosedale International (RI) is actively recruiting for this part of the world and hopes to grow a team in that area.

Karen held roughly a dozen Bible studies with the women, which was beautiful, and the women were so hungry to learn. Most of these women cannot read and write, so studying is challenging. I (Mike) helped translate for a doctor in the clinic, had several meetings with the leaders, allowing them to navigate the better organization and discern new leaders, explored potential future RI activities in the capital, and taught/preached multiple times.



From left: Isaiah, Micah, Rebekah, Karen, Josiah, Mike.

Josiah thrived with old friends, ran errands, and became quite the coffee maker for our team. Micah and Isaiah engaged with friends, played soccer, helped in the clinic and preschool at times, and helped with the chores around the house, especially cooking at times when neither Karen nor I were home.

We ask that you would pray for Rebekah (pictured above with our family on the day we left), a young girl who feels like a part of our family. She will soon be sent off to who-knows-where for school and



We enjoyed special times of worship, hanging out with monkeys, fresh mangos & much more!

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Celebrating 4 Baptisms

by Rob Swartz

Baptisms are always a time of great joy for me! I love to see people make the public commitment to be fully-devoted followers of Christ. We rejoiced together as a church body on Sunday, June 11th, as we listened to the testimonies and witnessed the baptisms of Micah Baker, Isaiah Baker, Ella Hostetler, and Ethan Hostetler! We, as their church family, want to encourage them in their spiritual journey and pray faithfully for them.



I was reminded that day that God is sovereign and cares about the details of our lives. We were very grateful for the much-needed rain, but were also thankful that it was light enough immediately after church that we could go ahead with the baptisms as planned. The refreshing rain was a reminder, also, that God is the giver of all good things and that He provides exactly what we

need—both the rain and the sunshine—to help us grow and flourish. We want to do whatever we can to help each of these young people grow strong in Christ and trust Him with the details of their lives. We're grateful for each one of them! ■



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When You Think of Nations

A Message from the Pastor
by Reuben Sairs

Are you ready to look up some verses? It might help with this message. There are several references.

I'm not sure when I first took notice, and it could be that I wasn't paying attention. Perhaps it's sensitivity to the term because of the recent emergence of an unbiblical Christian nationalism. Perhaps it's just me being picky about the state of lyrics in our worship songs. But, in any case, I say with appropriate caution that I have noticed the frequent use of the term "nations" in worship songs recently. My interest in all this is having an accurate Biblical picture in my mind, and having the language of worship reflect it.

Nations is a fine Biblical word. In the OT it will usually be one of two words in Hebrew: some variation of GOY or AM. In the Greek NT it will be some variation of ETHNOS. In the NT usage it is often either in a quotation from the OT, or a reference to all the people who aren't Jewish. There are Jews and then there are the others—the nations.

When we think of nations today we almost can't think of anything other than modern governments. Our national identity is often our principle identity in the world, and everyone can be identified that way. We picture nations with all the modern dimensions of political and economic systems. We picture citizenship, passports, layers of government.

The world of the Bible was different in many of the ways we might think of nations. In the Bible, the words would have undoubtedly had some political dimensions but those would have been quite different than our own. There were empires and kingdoms, but nothing that I can think of matches well with a modern state, say the U.S. or Iceland.

I think that people groups, whether ethnic, regional or religious, would probably be closer to how an early Bible reader would have imagined the nations. I realize that would be hard to work with in song lyrics! We don't have to go back very far in our western history to imagine how that might have worked. Germany and Italy, for example, are relatively new (1848). There were lots of Germans and Italians around before that, but they weren't united in a single nation—they spoke fragmented dialects and lived under various jurisdictions all while identifying to some degree as Germans or Italians.

Nations and citizenship go hand in hand. There is nothing wrong with citizenship. Paul owned his Roman citizenship (Acts 16:37-38 and 21:39), Yet in Philippians 3:20 he says, *"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ."* Paul emphasized that the Kingdom of God—where the Christian's citizenship truly sits, is multi-ethnic and international, not founded on or dependent upon human political ideals, but on the work of Christ. See Galatians 3:28, Colossians 3:11.

Nationalism has many layers of meaning. Some of them can be positioned in a Christian worldview, others are clearly incompatible with the scriptures—ethno-centric, power-hungry, domineering. To be biblical we must recognize that our primary identity is that we are citizens of the kingdom of God. Our citizenship in God's kingdom unites us with all believers everywhere like Paul expressed in 1 Corinthians 1:2.

When we sing and pray about the nations, it might help us to think about the nations as people in groups—some live next door and some are across the globe. They live in various nations in our modern sense, but they have this in common: they have not given themselves to Christ. ■

Over The Edge!

by Kevin Duncan

Did you know that Ohio is fourth in the US for having the highest number of kids being abducted and trafficked?

Grace Haven is a Christian ministry in Columbus (associated with Youth For Christ) which helps troubled youth and those at risk for or rescued from being trafficked by providing them with counseling and a safe place to stay.

Each year they hold a special event as a way to raise awareness of and funds for their ministry. Since it is where my daughter, Kaleigh, is currently staying, I decided to participate.



On Friday morning, June 16th, I mustered up all of the courage I had to climb over the edge and rappel down the 300+ foot Chase Tower in Columbus. It felt like the longest half-hour of my

life, but it was worth it to see Kaleigh's excitement about my participation and to know that I was doing something to help her and others who are going through some really hard times. I was one of 94 participants, and together we raised \$206,964!

Thanks to each of you who supported and encouraged me with your cheers, prayers, and/or finances. Please continue to pray for Kaleigh and our family, as well as for the ministry of Grace Haven and the caring people who serve there. ■

Council Update

by Jim Jones

The Council met via phone on Tuesday, June 20th.

Phil Hostetler has volunteered to be our new Buildings and Grounds Manager. There is a lot that goes on behind the scenes involving the upkeep of our church building and property. We are grateful for Merv Schlabach and the great job he has been doing over the past number of years trying to stay on top of all the maintenance and repair work. There are a lot of things to be done and additional help is needed; thus, the need for a manager so that we can spread the work out and involve a broader group of people. If you would be interested in helping out occasionally with a project or would like to learn more about how you can be involved, please contact Phil.

Our electric rate has increased significantly. Please help in anyway you can by conserving energy when using the church during the week. Our next meeting will be July 18th. ■

Getting to Know...Susan Slaubaugh

by Elisabeth Yoder

Susan has been attending here at LCF for several years. She is a wonderful, thoughtful, and hilarious person that makes the lives of those around her better. I hope this interview helps you get to know her better and find points of connection with her.

Tell us a little bit about your life thus far! We'd love to get to know you better.

I am originally from North Dakota. I moved to Ohio about 5 years ago to go to Rosedale Bible College. After attending there for a year and half, I moved into the Columbus area while starting to pursue a bachelor's in psychology and working part-time at a counseling office.

Has there been an event or a season in your life that was especially impactful for you? How did it influence you and your outlook on life?

Attending Rosedale Bible College was a very influential season in my life. I began to really have a personal relationship with God and where I formed loving friendships with really incredible people.

What are three words that describe the person you aspire to be?

Thoughtful, caring, and joyful.

What is something you are passionate about? How do you enjoy engaging with that passion? How does that passion play into your long-term goals?

I am passionate about caring for others in the midst of their pain. I love listening to people. One of my goals is to create safe spaces for people for them to really be themselves. My long-term goal and desire of being a therapist goes right along with my passion.

What do you think is the most interesting fact about yourself?

I love to dance.

How do you enjoy spending your free time?

I enjoy hiking, being outside, being with friends, painting, writing, or anything creative.

Is there a passage or character from the Bible that is particularly meaningful to you? If so, what about it/them speaks to you?

Colossians 3: 2 has really been on my heart recently. I love being reminded about what we are called to do as God's children.

Is there an aspect of faith that you have been focused on nurturing and developing recently? How have you seen the fruit of it?

Recently I have been trying to focus on being thankful and trusting God in all circumstances. I have seen myself be more joyful and at peace in situations that normally would cause me to stress.

What is something you are excited about right now?

I am excited for summer and getting to spend more time than usual with family and friends.

What aspect of community is particularly meaningful to you? How can we as your church community best love and support you?

Walking alongside others and encouraging them in their walk with God. You can pray for continued growth in trusting God in all things.

Now that you've gotten an introduction, I encourage you to continue getting to know Susan as well as supporting her in prayer. We are thankful she's a part of our community! ■



Mike with pastors Djibi and Daniel

Catel...continued

is at risk for slavery. We figure that if she has to leave, why not come here and join our family, where she would be safe and protected as she learns. Please pray for her and for us as we consider the possibility of officially adopting her.

We are so thankful for this trip and the time we had to serve and share God's love in Catel. We look forward to the next time we can return to continue the work alongside these faithful men and women of God. ■



They Are Weak But He Is Strong

by Lance Beachy

A question that stuck with me since childhood is “If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” I understand the point of this question, but it wasn’t a good question for an extremely anxious kid who was terrified of going to the bad place when I died. I became a Christian after a revival meeting speaker “scared the hell out of me” when I was 12. And while I read about the more loving parts of God, it always seemed safer to be on the cautious side of things. Especially since it felt to me that spreading the Gospel was part of some weird pyramid scheme in which I must peddle this ideology onto enough others to make sure I’m still going to the good place.



I don’t know where all these thought processes came from. I know I have an overactive imagination; I am an anxious person (have dealt with severe generalized anxiety at points), and I was an undiagnosed autistic until last year. All those factors contributed to my fears doggedly hanging on despite both Biblical counseling (for depression) and secular therapy, and last August marked the start of panic attacks rising anytime I tried to read the Bible on my own.

As you might guess, these experiences caused some angst in this perfectionist who has spent most of his life basing his spiritual security on being “good enough.” But I reached a breaking point where I realized my salvation can’t depend simply on me—if this whole Christianity thing is truly about a relationship and not about rules, then my mindset had to change.

Three things come to mind as the stories and concepts that helped me with that process of change. The first is a quote from the epic fantasy series Stormlight Archives: “*Journey before Destination...How you lived will be far more important to the Almighty than what you accomplished.*” The second is a line from the children’s song “Jesus Loves Me”: “*Little ones to Him belong/they are weak but He is strong.*” And the third is the story of the widow and the two mites from Luke 21:1-4.

“And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, “Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.””

I am on a journey on this earth, and while I haven’t reached my destination in either this life or the next, I am content here. I am a little one—I am weak, yet He is strong. And finally, I am a widow with two mites. I am not a super Christian who has energy to turn the world upside down. Yet I will do what I can and let God handle the rest.

Nine months have passed, and I’m still not able to read the Bible without either panic attacks or strong anxiety. I still don’t know why. And yet I’m at peace, for I’ve turned the timing of working through that over to God. That decision leaves me less religious than ever and more trusting in God than ever; for I remain in His hands and rely on Him for my salvation, which is more than I ever did before. ■

C4 Connections

by Mike & Karen Baker

Summer is upon us, and we are excited about everything planned. C4 has grown to 12 kids over the spring, and on Sunday, June 11th, we all had the privilege of seeing 3 of the students be baptized. Working with Ella, Micah, and Isaiah, talking with them about their growing faith, and helping them put together their testimonies to share, was a lot of fun!

We are excited to have C4’s new logo finished and ready to incorporate with calendars, newsletters, and swag moving forward. Be on the lookout for some new goodies coming soon.



Our Summer will be hit-and-miss as we juggle schedules. Different activities, such as bowling, a pool party, mini-golf, and more, are planned. Check out the C4 summer calendar for all the details. If you are interested in helping with C4, please contact Mike or Karen. ■

Cabaret Night and Art Show

It was a great privilege for LCF to be able to host the MCBDD (Madison County Board of Developmental Disabilities) Cabaret Night and Art Show on Wednesday, May, 31st!



The evening was filled with laughter, tears, and much beauty, as a variety of artwork and talents were displayed.



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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, Delaney Yutzy, and Doris Swartz