

The LCF Connection

September 2024

No Pain, No Gain

BY DORIS SWARTZ

Quite a few of them are recovering from recent surgeries; others are dealing with the unknown journey of a cancer diagnosis; some are dealing with anxiety and depression; others are grieving the recent loss of a loved one; some are struggling financially; some are dealing with the pain of seeing their child make wrong choices instead of following Christ; others are dealing with the challenges of aging minds and bodies; and so many other difficult situations! I can identify with pieces of many of these difficulties—especially as I have experienced my own journey with cancer and surgery over the past several months. It doesn't matter what kind of pain you are dealing with—when it is your heart that is aching and/or your body that is hurting—it is hard!! We want answers and solutions to help us get out of it as soon as we can.

Painful and difficult circumstances are not something we want or would choose for ourselves or for those we love. Many times, they are simply part of living in a broken and sinful world. Yet God can use them for His glory and for our good if we will allow Him to. I like how Nancy Demoss Wolgemuth says, *“Anything that makes me need God is a blessing.”* Paul says a similar thing in 2 Corinthians 4:17: *“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”* I would prefer to have the blessing and the eternal glory without going through the hard process to get it.

So what is it that we gain? What is the good that comes from hard times? Some of the good that God is accomplishing is hidden from our eyes. We don't know why the bad things happen or how He wants to use them for good. We may never know or understand some of the blessings until we get to heaven, but we can know and trust that God is with us and is working in ALL things for good (Romans 8:28).

(Continued on page 4)

Inside this Issue

No Pain, No Gain	1
Multiply Conference 2024	1
The Inspired Bible	2
Council Update	2
A Life of Service	3
Elders' Notes	4

Multiply Conference 2024

BY CODY MILLER

So, a little background nugget to start: This was my first time at the RNOC (formerly CMC) conference. This may not seem like a worthy talking point to most of us since it is normal for the majority of congregation members to not attend conference. But being a RBC student for a couple years, I had gotten my ear filled with many witnesses of conference. And guess what! The high expectations that were set for me were easily met.

Probably the biggest thing I was struck by was how warm the community of conference is. It felt almost like a big reunion even though I didn't know even a quarter of the people there. It is always a very special thing to be able to gather with people of shared experiences and values, and conference was definitely that, a good reminder of the bigger picture of Jesus' kingdom community. Hey! You should join next year in Montgomery, IN on July 25-27th.



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to develop authentic and passionate
followers of Jesus Christ.*

The Inspired Bible

A Message from the Pastor
BY REUBEN SAIRS

Christians say that the Bible is the inspired word of God. What do they mean?

We mean that the Bible is different from other books. Other books may be great or inspiring, but the Bible's inspiration is of a different kind. You will often hear 1 Timothy 3:16 quoted in which the word inspired—*theopneustos*, is rendered "God-breathed." That image is useful, but like most word-history illustrations it can be overplayed. It's best to simply leave it as "inspired."

You might hear phrases like the Bible has "plenary verbal inspiration." Plenary means full; verbal means that the inspiration is in the words. Which words? Usually you will hear that all the words are inspired in the original "autographs." Inspired? Well, back to God-breathed. Meaning? The Holy Spirit led the authors to their word choices. So what's an autograph? Autographs would be the works as they were originally created. That last point requires the original languages. Translation will always be one step out from that inspiration. We don't have original autographs, so we have to get as close as we can through study of ancient copies. This requires very advanced study. If you are trying to make the case to a skeptic there are many complicated questions to try to answer.

On the everyday level, I'm a believer in the plenary verbal inspiration of the scriptures. That belief doesn't mean I can be a blockhead about interpretation. The Bible consists of witnesses and languages spanning three millennia and three languages, and speaks and talks about things well outside of even that realm. Bible interpretation has to be thoughtful and deliberate, otherwise we easily read our own ideas rather than God's ideas out of the Bible.

I look to Jesus for my attitude and approach to the scriptures (obviously I have to do that by reading about it in the Bible, which a skeptic would say is circular reasoning. I'm afraid I can't go into that here). I have confidence that when we interpret correctly, the Bible will bring light into our lives, and create a harmony between us and God. I watch Jesus closely in this matter. I pay attention to how Jesus handled the Bible as it existed before there was a New Testament.

I've read, but can't verify, that Jesus quoted the Hebrew scriptures 78 times. I suppose people will always argue whether He quoted or alluded to passages, but the number looks reasonable to me. More important than pinning down a precise number, is how and when He used those scriptures. I think it is reasonable for me to

(Continued on page 4)

Council Update

BY RUSS HAUGE

Attendance: Sarah Eichorn, Rhoda Sommers, Zach Freer, and Russ Hauge by phone conference.

July income was \$18,057 which was more than our expenses of \$13,999 by \$4,058. Our YTD income is \$122,796 compared to our YTD expenses of \$104,721. That leaves us with a YTD balance of +\$18,075.

The quarterly payment to RNOC was made in late July, and the July payments to Rosedale International and Rosedale Bible College will be made in August. This will bring us back to being on schedule with all related payments.

The Council is in the process of documenting the steps undertaken when reviewing, setting, and communicating budget items—specifically related to compensation packages made to church staff. After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that Russ will craft an outline to be reviewed and modified during the next Council meeting. Initial items will include roles, responsibilities, effort estimates, experience, and comparison with similar roles outside of the church when feasible. The final step will be a review of all of those components related to our overall church budget and ultimately define the steps for communication to both impacted individuals and the congregation.

Sarah will be contacting Precision Hardscapes to obtain an estimate for snow removal at the church. Other suggestions are also welcome. Please send those to Russ Hauge.

The Premise Use Policy was also discussed with the need for further updates to remove ambiguous language resulting in almost every request being an exception. Russ has sent the current policy to the Council members for review and suggestions prior to the next Council meeting.

The Council will be reaching out to a couple of individuals in the Congregation that could possibly provide "a second set of eyes" on our financial reporting. There are no current issues, we are just attempting to take the pressure off our sole Treasurer in the future.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 24th.

A Life of Service

BY JODI TRAVERSE AND MARCUS FREED



Marcus Freed is one of the people who has been part of LCF since it began 40 years ago and has lived in London even longer. Marcus and his wife Brenda embarked on their journey in London in 1978 as house parents at a local children's home. They also raised three children and now have fifteen grandchildren.

Their London roots became more established when Marcus joined the London City Schools in 1979 as a fourth-grade teacher. He taught in that position for twelve years then served as a middle school counselor for twenty years. Brenda also taught for twenty-five years in the same school system. Marcus retired in 2011 having been part of the public school for over thirty years! Marcus and Brenda were truly dedicated to the education of our local children!

Marcus and Brenda found a passion for cycling in the late 1990s, leading them to participate in the Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure (GOBA) and other events. However, their joyous rides took an unexpected turn in 2007 when Herpes Encephalitis, a life-altering brain infection, struck Brenda. Later, Brenda battled cancer and passed away from that in 2014.



One of the ways Marcus found solace and purpose after Brenda's passing was in giving back. Marcus continued to participate in Ride for Missions, a yearly fundraising bicycling trip organized by Rosedale International. After Brenda's passing, the annual Ride for Missions became a way for Marcus to honor Brenda's legacy with cycling as well as spreading goodwill worldwide. Marcus rides countless miles every year and invites others to join him in supporting global missions.

When Marcus participated in the Ride for Missions this year, he managed to complete four hundred miles of cycling during the five-day ride July 27-31. Marcus and the forty-one other riders raised over \$100,000 this year for foreign workers with Rosedale International. This was the 16th Ride for Missions that Marcus has participated in.

Cycling is not the only way Marcus gives back. He has been volunteering in prisons here in Ohio since 1998 and more recently in 2018 became involved with the We Care Prison Ministry in Alabama. Marcus also spends a considerable amount of time at the Red Cross donating platelets to cancer patients. If you ever ask him, he can probably tell you how many gallons of blood he has donated at this point.

Marcus is currently gearing up for his 17th mission trip to El Salvador. He has lived a life full of service and hopes to inspire others to embrace a life of service and compassion. Marcus Freed's story is one full of hope, compassion, and unwavering dedication to making the world a better place, one pedal stroke at a time.



(Bible...continued from page 2)

take Jesus' approach to the Old Testament as my approach to His words recorded later in the New Testament.

Jesus said, Matthew 5:18 *"For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."* John 10:35, *"If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)."* It's impossible to say whether that was Jesus or John speaking in those parentheses.

Then for the New Testament, I read this: Luke 9:26, *"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels."*

(No Pain, No Gain...continued from page 1)

In my own life, here are some of the good gifts I have discovered that can come from times of pain and suffering:

- I cling more tightly to Jesus and experience His grace and presence in meaningful ways. I love when I get glimpses of what I like to call "God's fingerprints." When I see tangible reminders that God is with me and is at work in my circumstances, it gives me courage to know that "He's got this!" and I can trust that He will see me through.
- The Word of God and music frequently speak to my heart in fresh and meaningful ways. I find great encouragement from the songs and verses others share with me or the ones that seem to "come out of nowhere" which God uses to remind me that He sees me.
- God does a transforming work in my heart as He calls me to surrender everything to Him and helps me to grow to love and trust Him more.
- My perspective on life—the things of this world and what really matters—is often changed.
- I am encouraged by others and the many different ways they express their love and support. It means so much to know that people care and are praying! (Thank you, my dear LCF family, for doing this so well!!)
- As I experience the compassion of God and of others, I grow in my own compassion for others who are suffering and going through hard times. I also grow in understanding of how better to care for and support them. 2 Corinthians 1:3 tells us that our Heavenly Father is the *"God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."*

We all have hard stuff that we are dealing with right now (and if not, that we will be experiencing in the days or months to come). Instead of wondering, *"What's wrong? Why is this happening to me?"*, let's choose to reframe the situation by asking ourselves: *"What is God trying to teach me through this? How does He want to display His grace and goodness through this?"* Paul continues in 2 Corinthians 4:18 to say: *"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."* Let us encourage one another as we try to look for and focus on the eternal gain and not the "temporary" pain.

Elders' Notes

BY JEREMY HISEY

The Elders met on August 14th at Rob and Doris's home. In attendance were Gideon, Abraham and Naomy, Reuben and Vicki, Rob and Doris, and Jeremy. We kicked our time off by sharing our own prayer requests with each other while we enjoyed delicious peach crisp prepared by Doris, along with some ice cream. We moved on to discuss those in the congregation who are dealing with health issues as well as various other prayer needs.

Other topics that were discussed during our time were setting a date for the upcoming outdoor service, a preaching schedule conflict, finalizing a plan to bring back offering during worship and how we can ensure we are emphasizing giving as an act of worship. We also discussed offering the opportunity for baptism since we will be having an outdoor service. Reuben prayed for the topics that were discussed to close our time together. We planned our next meeting for September 25th .

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We would love to hear your feedback. Email us at secretary@lcfweb.org.

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