

XL'ent News

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Editor's Note

Summer is a very busy time for me. There is so much going on that I move from event to event with just enough time to prepare and participate, but with little opportunity to evaluate. Therefore, with the coming of fall, it is time to slow down and try to put into words all that the Lord has done over the past several months. This is never easy. Evaluation forces me to take a hard look at myself, to analyze the motivations of my heart and to try and determine if all my activity has actually deepened my walk with the Lord and brought glory to Him.

The predominance of this summer was spent preparing for big trips, including two missions events, one to the Ogaiala Sioux Indian Reservation in Pine Ridge, South Dakota and the other to Puebla, Mexico. As I sift through the experienced memories of these trips, two major lessons emerge. First, is that my entire ministry depends, not on the amount of effort I put in, but on the amount of Jesus that people see in me.

John 3:29-30 states,

"He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. And so this joy of mine has been made full.

'He must increase, but I must decrease.'"

My only joy, and ultimate aim, must be to hear the voice of my Savior and decrease personally to the point where He is the only thing visible in my life. Only then will my ministry be effective.

The second challenge of my summer was that ministry is not a matter of where I am, but who I am. It is very easy for me to get caught up in holding big events or going to neat places and think that I am "doing" ministry. I have begun to realize that the effectiveness of my ministry is really only related to the amount of work that Jesus is doing in me personally. Therefore, whether I am in Mexico, Pine Ridge or Cape Girardeau, if I am not personally becoming a deeper man of God, through prayer, study of His Word and meditation on His attributes; my ministry is a sham, an empty shell.

My prayer is that you also will take some time to evaluate your summer and see what the Lord has been teaching you!

As the Stomach Churns Diaries of a Youth Camp Veteran

Taking large amounts of teenagers to exotic locations, setting up tents, and then pursuing a variety of wild and crazy activities, is one of the great joys of youth ministry. However, these camping experiences can, on occasion, be slightly trying. Thus, this quarter, Youth Ministry Summers presents, "As The Stomach Churns - Diaries of a Youth Camp Veteran." The "diary" is fictional, the events are real!

June 10, 1995 - Whew, got home about 12:00 am. We leave for camp tomorrow and I thought I had everything ready to go, boy was I wrong! Just as we finished loading our second trailer with equipment, Jeff noticed that the springs were touching the axle. I don't know much about trailers, but even I knew that this was not a happy thing. Denny saved us by taking the camper top off the homemade trailer and bolting it to his truck bed! We then loaded up and had exactly enough room - God is gracious.

June 12, 1995 - Arrived at camp today and set up. Naturally the weather was beautiful until we got the tents out. Instantly the sky began to dump buckets - you've never seen a group of teens move faster (the motivation of knowing you might have to sleep in two feet of water if you don't hurry, works wonders). It stopped raining just long enough for us to eat. I'm not sure this was a good thing. The lack of rain caused people to notice that I had forgotten the catsup and mustard for the hamburgers and fries, mutiny was narrowly avoided.

June 13, 1995 - It's six, o'clock in the morning and all 16 of the leaders are packed into the K.O.W.. We are trying to decide what in the world to do (as well as huddle together to avoid hypothermia, who would have thought that visiting -Georgia in June would be like running a sled dog expedition to the South pole!). It rained cats and dogs all last night. At one point I looked out of my tent expecting to see those guys in rescue boats with megaphones saying things like, "stay on your rooftop, the helicopters will be here soon!" It got so bad, that about 2:00 am my tent headed for the bus - we practically needed snorkels just to make it. Anyway, it's still raining and I have 70 wet, cold, tired people to convince that they are having a great time. I wonder what Noah would do in a situation like this?

June 14, 1995 - I am writing from the podunk hospital in Nowheresville, South Carolina. We went white water river rafting today and one of the girls got the business end of a hudge rock right in the kisser. It was a class five rapid and the boulder was aptly named "Decapitation Rock" (class five rapid? Decapitation Rock? Sometimes I wonder where my brain is when I plan some of this insane stuff). She started feeling dizzy and cold so we put her on a backboard, portaged over the rapids held her carefully while negotiating the last hour and a half of the raft trip, and drove an hour to the closest hospital. Just got word, she's going to be fine - Lord your graciousness is beyond description. Well, I've got to finish up, hopefully one of the

vans will be able to find the hospital so we can start the three hour drive home. It's hard to believe all this has happened and we've still got four days of camp left. Next thing you know I'll have to leave early for my wife to have our baby! I think next year I'll rent the local YMCA and sit in the Jacuzzi all week.

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