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Community

May 2007

The Word of God **NEWSLETTER**

Men's Retreat 2007

Released for His Glory

Editor: at the end of March The Word of God held its first Men's Retreat in many years. It was long overdue! The challenges facing men in our culture have not diminished in the intervening years. A great blessing of this retreat was having several young men, sons, and guests along to share with us.

Below are reports from a couple of the brothers

Stu Collins

When Phil Tiews recently announced that it had been 20 years since the last Word of God's men's retreat...I realized I had to go. Not only was I personally ready for a men's retreat, but I figured my 18 year old son Brendan was ready to experience his first one. I've been on many men's retreats over the years... I've also lived with men, prayed with men, & been a part of men's groups ... experiencing all the while, 'how good it is when brothers dwell in unity... like oil flowing down the beard of Aaron...'

Men fully alive in Christ

I just know that when I'm around good men who love God it makes me want to be a better man.... and that's why I went. It certainly didn't hurt that the retreat speaker, Pete Emhoff, had a timely message for us that called us as men to be fully alive in Christ.... because that is what gives God the

most glory!

Pete emphasized that Christ wants to really set us free to be all that He created us to be. He challenged us to overcome our three well-known enemies: the world, our own flesh, and the devil. Using scenes from various popular movies, as well as drawing examples from his own life growing up (such as authority figures humiliating him in public) he told us how he himself went from fulfilling his high school principal's prediction that, 'he would never amount to anything', in the few short years after high school by living a life of drifting & debauchery ... to

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Brothers young and old, veterans, and guests experienced the Lord speaking to us at the men's retreat about freedom and destiny in Christ. It was powerful to worship, learn, and share together.

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And More ...

Seems to me ...

Take Heart!

Those of you who are fans of the *Lord of the Rings* books and movies may remember the scene when Sam and Frodo, two small hobbits, are on the borders of Mordor, the horrific land of the Dark Lord, and Sam asks, 'I wonder what sort of tale we have fallen into?' They have seen battles and Balrogs, wizards and wonders, gore and glories, and at the moment it looks pretty bleak.

I think we can relate. We have been blessed to experience some absolutely thrilling times in the Spirit, to see healings and deliverances, deep tragedies, historic gatherings of God's people, and heart-wrenching separations. But a lot of the time we are just in 'normal life' and the way ahead can look dangerous and dark.

Enter the resurrection—or should we say, exit Jesus ... from the tomb!

Jesus' resurrection blazes across all time and history telling us that THIS is the tale we have fallen into, or rather been caught up into by the grace of God! Human history and our own lives are not a random set of events or the outcome of human or demonic agendas. We are part of His Story—you know, History — the tale of God's rescue mission which reached its climax when Jesus rose from the dead and exited the tomb. Now we are part of Phase II of the mission, witnessing to the ends of the earth and preparing for the GRAND FINALE!

Well, I find it a little easier to get up every day and go to work, do the email, answer the phone, deal with crises, deal with boredom, deal with people, deal with my own flesh ... knowing what Tale I am part of. It adds meaning to every moment and action and it provides hope and endurance in the face of every obstacle.

At the end of the *Lord of the Rings* the hobbits finally get to return to their homeland. They are ready for some peace and quiet, but they find out that evil has entered and devastated it. However, they have been through a sort of death and resurrection experience and they know that the power of Hell has been broken. As a result, they are equipped to deal with the situation fearlessly and effectively.

Knowing that our lives are now united to the Risen One and that sin and death no longer have the victory over us changes the way we can engage our world, as well. As the old hymn puts it,

Lead on O King Eternal,
We follow not with fear...



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P.C.' or similar initials.

Stu Collins

'...a time to be challenged

becoming a Christian.

He then enrolled in & attended a Bible college where his life was so controlled that he didn't quite know what to do with himself when he got out. After many years of ups and downs in positions of Christian ministry God has sent him to the Ann Arbor area where he feels that the Lord is really using him to restore men to real manhood.

He also gave us several examples of where he personally just stepped out in faith and was amazed at how God used him to extend His kingdom.

The thought I had as Pete was talking to us was, 'Yes, he should be doing the very thing he is doing right now: working with & inspiring men to be all that they can be for Christ.....he's really good at it!' He was an honest, articulate, zealous, and inspiring retreat master. I think he made all us men want God's power to work similarly in our own situations.



Years of successful Christian ministry could not guarantee that Pete Emhoff, former area director of Young Life, experienced wholeness as a Christian man. Out of his personal experience, Pete, our speaker, brought us a strong message of the healing and calling we have in Jesus Christ.



Lots of brothers took turns leading worship, morning and evening prayers and different sessions. In the process some of the many gifts God has given got expressed and we were blessed with a variety of styles.

to walk daily as brothers in the life-transforming power of Jesus Christ.'

Next generation of men

Since my son Brendan is not really into sports, and since he does not yet have his driver's license, during the Saturday recreation time I allowed him to drive our car on the area country roads ('twas a beautiful day). Brendan's driving saved me from being shown up by the younger brothers in the afternoon all-men's game of Ultimate Frisbee. (hey...wait a minute...I can still do the things I did when I was 20... it's just that now I look a lot sillier doing them!). For sure, I was not sore or bruised on Sunday as some were who don't realize this.



It was very encouraging having young brothers and several guests attend the retreat. We benefited from their youthful zeal (especially during the Ultimate Frisbee game) and they enjoyed the chance to really get to know older brothers in the Lord.

Though he did not personally express this to me, I know Brendan was touched by all the other men reaching out to him on the retreat weekend (as I knew they would). I was really glad I went... the men's retreat was a time to renew friendships, meet a few new good men, and to be challenged to walk daily as brothers in the life-transforming power of Jesus Christ.

Hey Phil..... let's not wait / another/ whole 20 years for our next Word of God's men retreat!

Don Mierendorf

It's been quite a few years since the men of The Word of God went on retreat together. The last one I recall was for district heads in the fall of 1990.

It was refreshing to get away from my usual concerns and routine for a whole weekend. The camp was just about right--an hour's scenic drive west of Ann Arbor, in a nice setting with not-really-rustic facilities.

It was worthwhile catching up with old friends and getting to know some of the younger guys in the community--the prayer times, recreation, meals and requisite talent show all facilitated that.

Pete Emhoff was the main speaker and struck me as a likable, normal guy who's been serving the Lord directly for most of his adult life.



Things are bound to get a little crazy after a long week and a day and a half of teaching. Maybe better you don't ask what this was all about, ... but it is good to know that it was relevant to the topic!

He helped us to ask some questions, both of ourselves and better yet, of the Lord:

- "What's the ONE thing that the Lord wants me to be?"
- "What are the deepest desires of my heart, that have always been there, from boyhood to the present?"
- "Where has the enemy (or just normal life) diminished these desires?"
- "What makes me come alive? What needs to come alive in me?"

We took some time in small groups to discuss our answers and pray over each other. For myself, the Lord reawakened a desire to love him and serve him, and encourage others to do the same.

Hosanna 2007

Over 50 Churches and ministries of every ethnic and theological background as co-sponsors. More than 900 Christians of great diversity worshipping in unity. Young and old enjoying one another and the Lord together. Just a little taste of the Lord's kingdom come! That is what Hosanna 2007 was this past Palm Sunday, April 1st. Here is what brothers and sisters from the community had to say:

Jim and Judy Marks

We enjoyed Hosanna a lot! The inclusion of the various ethnic groups certainly was an added benefit. The music was to our liking. We appreciated the appeal directed toward the younger people. Attendance of a young population was quite evident in those who sat in front of us. They appeared to be involved in the celebration and that was encouraging to us.

Seeing friends from a variety of churches, as well as some we haven't seen for a long time, really brightened our week! Witnessing that so many Christians are capable of worshipping together was a major blessing and gives us a peek at what could be possible.



Teri and Michelle Flanagan served as interpreters for the hearing impaired again this year so that these brothers and sisters could join in the Hosanna celebration, too.

Joan O'Connell

Getting there a little early to usher, I was refreshed, watching people come in: people I knew. People I don't know. Pastors, elders, young people. Lots of variety in the ethnicity and cultural background. Young people on the platform! Singing and dancing and praising the Lord "in the great congregation." People in the balcony. People being patient with one another. Bearing with one another. People praying for one another. Leaders. Workers. All cooperating with the program: to the glory and honor the Lord Jesus.



Martha Balmer

I had the *best* time singing in the Hosanna Choir, and I highly recommend it to anyone who's every thought, "I wonder if I should do that some time?" (Contrary to appearances, you don't have to be female to join.) Those ladies at Christian Love Fellowship are positively dynamite. Each rehearsal began with a prayer of dedication and ended with a prayer of gratitude, and there was plenty of love and joy in between. What a blast! And it was a pleasure to be surrounded by people who know how significant Hosanna is.

I'm still frustrated and disappointed by the fact that too many Christians I talk to blatantly undervalue this clear answer-in-progress to Jesus' prayer for the church, but it was easy to see how invaluable precious this little opportunity to serve together is to the people in the choir.



Abbie Stauffer, one of the student leaders in MissionChrist, blessed us along with the U of M a Cappella Gospel Choir, itself a very diverse Christian ministry.

Global Day of Prayer

**Sunday, May 27th
6-9 pm
Towsley Auditorium, WCC**



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Join us in May & June

- 5/20 Prayer Meeting, 4:30–6:00 pm
Covenant Presbyterian Church
5171 Jackson Road**
- 6/3 Prayer Meeting, 4:30–6:00 pm
Covenant Presbyterian Church
5171 Jackson Road**
- 6/9 Women's Breakfast 9-10:30 am
Community Meeting room
230 Collingwood, Ste. 150**
- 6/24 Prayer Meeting, 4:30–6:00 pm
Covenant Presbyterian Church
5171 Jackson Road**

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