

I Corinthians 12:3-14
June 12, '11

"TO EACH IS GIVEN"

(Before Scripture)

TODAY BEING PENTECOST SUNDAY, WE EXPECT TO HEAR THE TRADITIONAL PASSAGE THAT WE ALWAYS HEAR ON THIS DAY – THE PASSAGE FROM THE SECOND CHAPTER OF ACTS THAT GIVES US LUKE'S ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS OF THAT DAY –

THE DAY THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME UPON THE BELIEVERS, APPEARING LIKE TONGUES OF FIRE UPON THEIR HEADS –

THE DAY ALL THE LANGUAGES OF THE KNOWN WORLD WERE UNDERSTOOD BY ONE AND ALL –

THE DAY PETER'S PREACHING SAVED THOUSANDS OF SOULS WHO HAD NEVER HEARD THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST –

THE DAY THE CHURCH WAS BORN.

THAT, OF COURSE, IS ONE OF THE LECTIONARY PASSAGES FOR TODAY, AS IT IS EVERY PENTECOST.

BUT THERE'S ANOTHER LECTIONARY PASSAGE FOR TODAY THAT SPEAKS – NOT ONLY TO THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL ON THIS DAY - BUT TO THIS PARTICULAR CHURCH ON THIS DAY.

THE MISSION TEAM TO THE BUCKHORN LAKE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN EASTERN KENTUCKY THAT WE COMMISSIONED LAST SUNDAY, RETURNED YESTERDAY.

I THINK THE WORDS OF ONE OF THE OTHER LECTIONARY READINGS FOR TODAY WORKS PERFECTLY IN CONSIDERING THAT EXPERIENCE.

IN THE 12TH CHAPTER OF PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH, HE INTRODUCES A CONCEPT THAT WE WILL FIND THROUGHOUT HIS WRITINGS – A CONCEPT THAT HAS ENCOURAGED & STRENGTHENED BELIEVERS FOR 2,000 YEARS.

IT'S THE CONCEPT OF THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST & THE VITAL ROLE EACH MEMBER PLAYS IN KEEPING THE BODY STRONG & EFFECTIVE.

THERE IS A UNITY FOUND WITHIN THE CHURCH THAT CAN BE FOUND NOWHERE ELSE ON EARTH.

LISTEN TO WHAT PAUL SAYS ABOUT ALL THIS IN I CORINTHIANS 12:3-14.

(Following scripture)

MANY YEARS AGO, WHEN WE LIVED IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA, EMMA SUE & I WENT TO HEINZ HALL IN PITTSBURGH, TO SEE JOHNNY MATHIS IN CONCERT.

WE HAD GREAT SEATS ON THE LOWER LEVEL, NEAR THE CENTER OF THE STAGE.

WHAT MADE IT EVEN BETTER WAS THAT THE SEAT DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF EMMA SUE WAS EMPTY.

SHE HAD AN UNIMPEDED VIEW OF THE ENTIRE STAGE.

IT WAS PERFECT.

JUST AS THE LIGHTS WERE BEING TURNED OFF & ON TO INDICATE THE SHOW WAS ABOUT TO START, A MAN WALKED DOWN THE ROW IN FRONT OF US & SAT IN THAT EMPTY SEAT.

IT WASN'T JUST ANY MAN, THOUGH.

IT WAS A MAN WHO STOOD 6' 5".

I KNOW HE WAS 6' 5" BECAUSE I RECOGNIZED HIM.

EMMA SUE LEANED OVER TO ME & SAID, “DO YOU THINK YOU COULD ASK HIM TO SLOUCH DOWN A LITTLE?”
I SAID, “I DON’T THINK THAT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA. IN CASE YOU DON’T RECOGNIZE HIM, THAT’S JACK
LAMBERT.”

JACK LAMBERT WAS ONE OF THE MEANEST FOOTBALL PLAYERS EVER TO PLAY THE GAME.
THEY CALLED HIM “DRACULA IN CLEATS” BECAUSE HE HAD TWO MISSING FRONT TEETH, PRONOUNCED
CANINES & THE MOST MENACING STARE THIS SIDE OF TRANSYLVANIA!
JACK LAMBERT SUSTAINED MORE INJURIES IN A GIVEN SEASON THAN SOME PLAYERS DO IN AN ENTIRE
CAREER.

HE ALSO CAUSED MORE AS WELL.
HIS CAREER WAS ENDED BY ONE OF THOSE INJURIES.
IT WASN’T A CONCUSSION OR A BLOWN KNEE OR A BROKEN ARM OR LEG.
JACK LAMBERT HAD A NAGGING INJURY THAT INTERRUPTED AN ENTIRE SEASON & EVENTUALLY PUT AN
END TO HIS CAREER.

IT WAS A BROKEN TOE.
PAUL TELLS US, IN THIS PASSAGE, THAT EVERYONE IS IMPORTANT IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.
NO ONE’S GIFTS ARE MORE OR LESS IMPORTANT THAN ANYONE ELSE’S.
NO MATTER HOW STRONG & POWERFUL THE REST OF JACK LAMBERT’S BODY WAS, IF JUST ONE OF HIS
TEN TOES WASN’T WORKING PROPERLY, HE COULDN’T PLAY THE GAME OF FOOTBALL.

LAST WEEK, IT WAS 12 PEOPLE WORKING IN UNISON THAT MADE OUR EXPERIENCE IN BUCKHORN
MEANINGFUL FOR US & THE PEOPLE THERE.

BUT IT WAS MORE THAN THAT – IT WAS EVERY ONE OF YOU HERE – IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER – DOING
YOUR PART TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.

IT WAS SOMEONE LOANING EQUIPMENT & SOMEONE ELSE A VEHICLE.
YOUR OFFERINGS BOUGHT SUPPLIES & HELPED COVER EXPENSES.
YOUR PRAYERS HELPED KEEP US SAFE & BUOYED OUR SPIRITS.
IT WASN’T 12 PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER – IT WAS NEARLY 400 & THAT’S WHAT IT TOOK TO MAKE IT
HAPPEN.

EMMA SUE, DONNA & BARB HAVE OFFERED TO SHARE THEIR REFLECTIONS OF OUR EXPERIENCE – EACH
ONE OF THEM REPRESENTING ONE OF THREE GENERAL AREAS OF OUR WORK – QUILTING, PAINTING/
RESTORATION & MINISTRY TO THE YOUTH OF THE BUCKHORN CHILDREN’S CENTER.

EMMA SUE DAVENPORT

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO WE WERE PLANNING A TRIP TO BELARUS. INSTEAD, GOD LED US TO BUCKHORN,
KENTUCKY WHERE WE WERE SURROUNDED BY THE MAJESTY AND BEAUTY OF THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS.
AS WE STUDIED THE SCRIPTURE, WE DISCOVERED THAT WHEN GOD OUR FATHER OR JESUS OUR SAVIOR TOOK
SOMEONE TO THE MOUNTAINS, IT WAS FOR A PURPOSE.

WHEN GOD CALLED MOSES TO MT. HOREB, HE WAS TOLD HE WAS STANDING ON HOLY GROUND.
ON MT. NEBO, MOSES WAS SHOWN THE PROMISED LAND.

ABRAHAM WAS TESTED ON A MOUNTAIN AND LEARNED TO TRUST GOD.

EZEKIEL TELLS US THE GLORY OF GOD STOOD ON THE MOUNTAIN.

JESUS TOOK HIS DISCIPLES TO THE MOUNTAINS TO TEACH THEM.

FROM THE MOUNTAIN, JESUS COMMISSIONED HIS FOLLOWERS THAT DAY TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST.

THIS PAST WEEK WE FOUND WE HAD BEEN TAKEN TO THE MOUNTAINS FOR A PURPOSE. WE QUICKLY FOUND WE WERE HAVING A MOUNTAIN-TOP EXPERIENCE WHILE SHARING THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST USING PARTICULAR SKILLS GOD HAD GIVEN US.

PATSY SPROAT, MARY JANE HUDASCEK AND I WERE TRYING SOMETHING BRAND NEW FOR AN EASTMINSTER MISSION TEAM. WE WERE GOING TO SPEND THE WEEK TEACHING MACHINE QUILTING TO THOSE WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY CHALLENGING BECAUSE IT MEANT WE HAD TO PROVIDE NOT ONLY MATERIAL, BUT CUTTING MATS, ROTARY CUTTERS, SCISSORS, RIPPERS, THREAD, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY SEWING MACHINES.

THE CHURCH HAD A MACHINE WE COULD USE, PATSY AND I HAD MACHINES WE COULD TAKE, JO ELLEN COHORST VOLUNTEERED HER MACHINE AND EPW DONATED A MACHINE FROM THE RUMMAGE SALE. BY THE TIME WE GATHERED UP OUR MACHINES, YOUR DONATIONS OF MATERIAL, AND THE OTHER SUPPLIES WE WERE GOING TO NEED, WE HAD THE MOGAVRO'S SUV PACKED FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER.

WHEN WE WENT TO SET UP EARLY MONDAY MORNING, WE DISCOVERED THE LARGER ROOM WE WERE ASSIGNED TO QUILT IN WAS ALSO SCHEDULED TO BE PAINTED. WE QUICKLY SWITCHED TO 2 SMALLER SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOMS--MAKING ONE INTO A CUTTING ROOM AND THE OTHER INTO A SEWING ROOM. WHETHER THAT WAS COINCIDENCE OR PROVIDENCE I WILL LET YOU DECIDE BUT IT TURNED OUT TO BE THE PERFECT SETUP FOR US.

WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN THE QUILTING SESSION BEGAN THAT AFTERNOON. WE DIDN'T KNOW IF ANYONE WOULD SHOW UP. THE CHURCH SERVES 75 FAMILIES AND AVERAGES 35 IN WORSHIP. THAT FIRST AFTERNOON WE HAD 12 QUILTERS AND ADDED ONE AS THE WEEK WENT ON. THE QUILTERS RANGED IN AGE FROM ONE 8-YEAR-OLD TO ONE WHO WAS OVER 80.

OUR YOUNGEST QUILTER HAD NEVER SEEN A SEWING MACHINE BEFORE. WHILE THE MAJORITY OF THEM WERE EXCELLENT SEAMSTRESSES, MANY OF OUR GROUP HAD NEVER MACHINE QUILTED BEFORE. THREE OF THEM WERE VERY SKILLED HAND QUILTERS.

WHEN THE LADIES SAW THE MATERIAL WE HAD BROUGHT THEY WERE OVERJOYED. THE CLOSEST PLACE THEY HAVE TO BUY FABRIC IS 45 MINUTES AWAY AT A WALMART WITH A SMALL SELECTION OF FABRIC.

THEY SPENT QUITE A BIT OF TIME PUTTING TOGETHER THE COLORS AND FABRICS TO MAKE THEIR QUILTS. BY THE END OF THE WEEK, 10 QUILTS, 4 POTHOLDERS, AND 1 TABLE RUNNER HAD BEEN COMPLETED.

BUT TEACHING QUILTING WASN'T REALLY THE REASON GOD HAD CALLED US TO THE MOUNTAINS. GOD HAD CALLED US TO FELLOWSHIP TOGETHER. AS WE SEWED WE SHARED OUR LIVES. WE LEARNED ABOUT THEIR FAMILIES—AND EXTENDED FAMILIES, THEIR ILLNESSES, THEIR HARDSHIPS, THEIR JOYS, ABOUT THEIR HOPES AND THEIR FEARS, THEIR DEEP LOVE FOR BUCKHORN AND THEIR COMMUNITY. AS WE SEWED WE FORMED FRIENDSHIPS THROUGH OUR FELLOWSHIP.

FELLOWSHIP WASN'T THE ONLY REASON WE HAD BEEN CALLED TO THE MOUNTAINS. AS WE QUILTED AND TALKED WE ALSO LEARNED THERE WAS A NEED AT THE CHURCH FOR STRONGER OUTREACH.

THERE ARE FEW YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH. THE CHURCH RARELY NEEDS A NURSERY. AS WE QUILTED WE TALKED ABOUT POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITIES IN THEIR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAMS. AND WE BEGAN TO TALK TO THE WOMEN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF FORMING A QUILTING MINISTRY SUCH AS WE HAVE AT EASTMINSTER.

AT FIRST THE WOMEN WERE HESITANT. WE SAID WE WOULD FIND SPONSORS TO PAY FOR THE QUILTS AND SEND MATERIAL TO THEM. FIVE OF THE WOMEN VOLUNTEERED TO MAKE QUILTS FOR SUCH A MINISTRY AT BUCKHORN. WE TOLD THEM WE WOULD ALSO MAKE THEIR CHURCH NAMEPLATE SQUARES FOR THEM TO SEW ONTO THE BACK OF THEIR QUILTS AS WE DO HERE AT EASTMINSTER.

TOWARD THE END OF THE WEEK MARY JANE HAD THE IDEA OF MAKING A FRIENDSHIP QUILT. IN THE QUILT SHE PLACED MUSLIN BLOCKS WHERE EVERYONE WHO HAD TAKEN PART IN OUR QUILTING SESSIONS COULD SIGN THEIR NAME. WE LEFT THE QUILT WITH THEM TO HANG IN THE CHURCH AS A BEAUTIFUL DECORATION AND A BEAUTIFUL REMINDER OF THE FRIENDSHIPS WE HAD FORMED DURING OUR TIME TOGETHER. IN GOD'S WORD WE READ "*HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS ARE THE FEET OF MESSENGERS BRINGING GOOD NEWS OF PEACE, SALVATION AND OF GOD'S LOVE AND REIGN.*"

OUR MISSION TEAM MEMBERS HOPED AND PRAYED THAT WE WOULD LEAVE BEAUTIFUL IMPRINTS UPON THE MOUNTAINS DURING OUR TIME THERE. WHAT WE HAVE FOUND IS THAT THE MOUNTAINS AND THEIR PEOPLE HAVE ALSO LEFT BEAUTIFUL IMPRINTS UPON US.

DONNA COOKE

AS THE MISSION TRIP TO BUCKHORN APPROACHED, I WAS EXCITED...AND A BIT UNSURE. THE MISSION TEAM HAD A GENERAL PLAN OF WORK, BUT SPECIFICS WERE STILL SLIGHTLY UNSETTLED FOR THE "CONSTRUCTION" TEAM. ACTUALLY, I THINK WE WERE ALL A BIT ANXIOUS. ALL OF US WERE STEPPING OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONES.

BARB, WHO HAD TAKEN THE LEAD ROLE AT THE LAST MOMENT, WAS WELL PREPARED AND ORGANIZED, BUT SOME ON THE "YOUTH" TEAM HAD NOT WORKED WITH "TROUBLED TEENS" BEFORE. THE QUILTERS HAD ALL THEIR EQUIPMENT AND ORGANIZATION WELL SET, BUT WHO KNEW HOW MANY, IF ANY, QUILTING STUDENTS WOULD SHOW UP? AS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION TEAM, WELL, WE KNEW WE WERE PAINTING...AND MAYBE MOVING A GAZEBO...OR MAYBE BUILDING GAZEBO BENCHES. WE HAD AN OUTSTANDING LEADER IN JIM STEVENS, BUT THE PLANS WERE STILL PRETTY NEBULOUS.

I WAS VERY HAPPY WITH BEING ON THE "MANUAL LABOR" TEAM. THE IDEA OF WORKING WITH TEENS WAS NOT IN MY COMFORT RANGE. I'M A NURSE, BUT COME ON, I DELIBERATELY CHOSE EARLY IN MY CAREER TO WORK IN THE OR. THERE, THE PATIENTS ARE ASLEEP...THEY RARELY GIVE YOU A HARD TIME.

AS FOR QUILTING, IF CALLED ON TO OPERATE A SEWING MACHINE, THE BEST I COULD HOPE FOR WAS TO NOT SEW MY FINGERS TOGETHER. THE FAILING GRADE I GOT IN HOME EC. IN 8TH GRADE WAS NEVER DISPUTED BY ME OR MY PARENTS FOR A REASON.

PAINTING? WELL, MY EXPERIENCE IN PAINTING WAS ENTIRELY CONFINED TO PAINTING THE GARAGE LAST SUMMER. THE PAINTED SURROUNDING GRASS AND GROUND HAS NOT YET RECOVERED. THE GARAGE IS ONLY SLIGHTLY MORE FORTUNATE. BUT AT LEAST I COULD WIELD A ROLLER WITHOUT TOO MUCH DAMAGE.

WHAT REALLY CONCERNED ME WAS IF I WAS GOING TO BE DOING ANYTHING OF ANY BENEFIT. WORKING WITH TEENS IS A TOUGH BUT VERY IMPORTANT JOB. TEACHING QUILTING COULD HELP BUILD FELLOWSHIP AND FRIENDSHIPS. BUT PAINTING THE LOWER HALF OF A SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOM AND UPPER HALF AND CEILING OF THE FELLOWSHIP HALL DIDN'T SEEM LIKE IT WAS TOO TERRIBLY VITAL. ANYBODY COULD DO IT. AND WHEN WE FIRST ARRIVED AND SAW OUR OBJECTIVES, WE WERE NOT ALL THAT CONVINCED.

IT DIDN'T LOOK THAT BAD. TRUE, IT WAS PRETTY DARK IN THE HALL, BUT IT WAS STILL JUST PAINTING. HOW COULD THAT IMPACT ANYONE? FORTUNATELY, MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT GOD'S THOUGHTS, AND MY PLANS ARE NOT GOD'S PLANS.

GOD DID HAVE A PURPOSE FOR PAINTING, AND IT WAS A GOOD ONE. WE LEARNED THAT PAINTING AND REDECORATING HAD BEEN A DEBATED ISSUE, AND INDEED, WAS STILL UNSETTLED. PEOPLE WERE DIVIDED OVER PAINTING, THE NEW FANS PLANNED FOR THE HALL, THE LIGHTS, EVEN REARRANGING THE FURNITURE IN THE CLASSROOM.

SO WE DECIDED WE WOULD ONLY DO WHAT WAS DEFINITELY DECIDED ON, WHICH WAS PAINTING THE CEILING AND "THE PURPLE" WHICH WAS ON THE LOWER HALF OF ONE OF THE WALLS.

WORKING WITH US WERE SEVERAL GENTLEMEN FROM THE CHURCH. THEIR HUMOR, STORIES, AND WARMTH TURNED THE JOBS INTO JOY AND LAUGHTER. WE LEARNED SO MUCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH AND PEOPLE AND BEGAN TO SEE THE WONDERFUL CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH AND THE AREA. PAINTING WAS THE MEANS TO DISCOVER AND SHARE IN THE UNIQUENESS AND RICHNESS OF THE COMMUNITY. HOW BLESSED WE WERE!

AS WE WORKED, WE BEGAN TO SEE CHANGE ON MANY LEVELS. THE NEWLY PAINTED CEILING AND NEW LIGHTS AND FANS BROUGHT A FRESHNESS AND RENEWAL TO THE BUILDING. THE DARKNESS WAS GONE. THE HALL WAS BRIGHT, INVITING, AND ALIVE. NOW THE MEMBERS BEGAN TO MAKE PLANS FOR MORE CHANGE. IT WAS DECIDED NOT TO PAINT THE UPPER PART OF THE FELLOWSHIP HALL, BUT NOW A NEW SCREEN DOOR WAS BEING PUT IN. OTHER PANELS IN THE WALL WERE REFRESHED WITH NEW, BRIGHTER PAINT.

AND NOW ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED ITSELF. AS WE FINISHED COVERING "THE PURPLE" WITH A NEW COAT OF WARM BROWN PAINT, WE REALIZED MORE NEEDED TO BE DONE. THE DULL, PALER BROWN ABOVE THE CHAIR RAIL WAS DARK AND WORN, AND REALLY NEEDED REDOING. AND LO AND BEHOLD! THE OFF-WHITE PAINT WE HAD BROUGHT FOR THE FELLOWSHIP HALL, THAT WAS NOT NOW BEING USED, WAS PERFECT FOR THE CLASSROOM! WE ASKED IF WE COULD REPAINT THE UPPER PART WITH THE NEW PAINT, AND IT MADE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE. THE ROOM WAS NOW BRIGHTER AND SEEMED LARGER. WE OPENED THE CURTAINS...AND MADE AN INTERESTING DISCOVERY. DAYLIGHT FLOODED THE ROOM, AND WE SAW THE WINDOW FRAMES, A DULL MUSTARDY ORANGE COLOR. AND WE SAW THE CLASSROOM DOOR, ALSO ORANGE. WE WISHED WE HAD SOME SEMI-GLOSS PAINT TO MATCH THE CHAIR RAIL, SO WE COULD REDO THE WINDOWS AND DOOR PROPERLY, AND MENTIONED IT TO ONE OF THE GENTLEMEN WORKING WITH US.

LESS THAN ONE HOUR LATER, HE ARRIVED WITH THE PAINT! THE TRIM PAINT FOR THE CHAIR RAIL HAD BEEN IN STORAGE, AND HE BROUGHT IT OUT FOR US. AND THERE WAS ENOUGH TO PAINT THE WINDOWS, THE DOOR, THE DOOR FRAME AND THE ADJOINING KITCHEN DOOR AND FRAME! IT LOOKED BEAUTIFUL.

AS WE ADMIRING OUR WORK, GAIL, ONE OF THE PASTORS, REMARKED HOW SHE WISHED WE COULD REARRANGE THE SCHOOLROOM & SO WE DID. GAIL WAS DELIGHTED AS WE GOT RID OF CLUTTER AND REARRANGED THE ROOM.

NOW THERE WAS ROOM FOR MANY MORE CHAIRS, THE WINDOWS WERE UNCOVERED, AND FURNITURE PLACED IN A MORE OPEN MANNER. THE TEAM MEMBERS FELT AS IF WE HAD DONE A MORE COMPLETE JOB NOW, NOT JUST A COSMETIC CHANGE. BUT THE REAL TEST WOULD BE THE WEDNESDAY NIGHT CHURCH DINNER.

THAT NIGHT, THE MEMBERS CAME IN, AND THE REACTIONS WERE WONDERFUL. PEOPLE WERE PLEASED WITH HOW MUCH LIGHTER, COOLER AND FRESHER THE FELLOWSHIP HALL WAS. THEY LOVED THE NEW FANS AND LIGHTS.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER SAW HIS NEWLY REDONE ROOM AND WAS DELIGHTED! THERE WAS A FEELING OF FELLOWSHIP AND NEW PRIDE IN THEIR SURROUNDINGS, AND TALK OF FURTHER CHANGES THAT COULD BE MADE. A RENEWED SPIRIT COULD BE FELT IN THE CHURCH.

NOW I REALIZED THAT GOD HAD PLANNED FOR A NOT VERY DIFFICULT TASK TO RENEW AND REFRESH MORE THAN WALLS. HOW BIG OR GLAMOROUS THE JOB WASN'T IMPORTANT...IT WAS OUR FAITHFULNESS TO THE JOB GIVEN US. GOD USED IT TO HIS PURPOSE.

DAVID JEREMIAH NOTED THAT IN MATTHEW 25 IN THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS, "*JESUS STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING FAITHFUL TO THE WORK ASSIGNED US*". THE MASTER TELLS HIS SERVANT "*WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT; YOU WERE FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS, I WILL MAKE YOU RULER OVER MANY THINGS. ENTER INTO THE JOY OF YOUR LORD.*" WHO DOESN'T WANT TO HEAR THAT ONE DAY?

AND IT DOESN'T EVEN HAVE TO BE SOMETHING WE THINK IS IMPORTANT. JESUS SAYS "*COME, YOU BLESSED OF MY FATHER, INHERIT THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD: FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME FOOD; I WAS THIRSTY AND YOU GAVE ME DRINK; I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU TOOK ME IN; I WAS NAKED AND YOU CLOTHED ME; I WAS SICK AND YOU VISITED ME; I WAS IN PRISON AND YOU CAME TO ME. THEN THE RIGHTEOUS WILL ANSWER HIM, SAYING "LORD, WHEN DID WE SEE YOU HUNGRY AND FEED YOU, OR THIRST AND GIVE YOU DRINK? WHEN DID WE SEE YOU A STRANGER AND TAKE YOU IN, OR NAKED AND CLOTHE YOU? OR WHEN DID WE SEE YOU SICK, OR IN PRISON, AND COME TO YOU? AND THE KING WILL ANSWER AND SAY TO THEM "ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, INASMUCH AS YOU DID IT TO ONE OF LEAST OF THESE MY BRETHREN, YOU DID IT TO ME."*

IF GOD HAS GIVEN US WORK TO DO, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, OUR JOB IS TO DO IT FAITHFULLY AND WELL. GOD WILL MAKE SURE THAT IT WILL PRODUCE AN ETERNAL HARVEST, EVEN IF WE CAN'T SEE IT.

BARB FERGUSON

FIVE OF US WORKED WITH THE YOUTH: DENNIS, MARY AND TREY FULKERSON, DEBBIE VAN ZANDT AND I. THE YOUTH RANGED FROM 13-17 AND WERE RESIDENTS OF BUCKHORN CHILDREN'S CENTER. THEY HAD BEEN SENT TO BUCKHORN FROM ALL OVER KENTUCKY. MOST WERE SENT BY A JUDGE FOR VARIOUS PROBLEMS

RANGING FROM DRUG AND ALCOHOL TO FAMILY DYSFUNCTION RESULTING IN PERSONAL ISSUES FOR THEM. A FEW WERE PRIVATE PAY. THEY NUMBERED 24ISH THOUGH ON MOST DAYS WE HAD 19-20 FOR VARIOUS REASONS.

WE HAD PLANNED A FOUR DAY PROGRAM FOR THEM INVOLVING PHOTOGRAPHY AND REFLECTION ON SCRIPTURE WITH AN END PRODUCT OF A BOOK CREATED BY THEM. SINCE WE HAD THEM FROM 1-4 DAILY AND FOLLOWING A MORNING OF SCHOOL, WE ALSO BUILT IN ACTIVE GAMES.

THESE WERE THE THINGS WE KNEW GOING INTO THE FIRST DAY AND WE BEGAN WITH BOTH APPREHENSION AND EXCITEMENT. WE BELIEVED THAT WE HAD BEEN CALLED BY GOD TO SERVE THIS GROUP BUT WE WEREN'T SURE EXACTLY WHAT THAT WOULD MEAN.

DAY 1 WAS CHAOTIC. THE KIDS WERE NOT USED TO BEING COMBINED AS MALE AND FEMALE AND THAT BROUGHT THE EXPECTED TEENAGE TWITTERING AND DISPLAY OF MACHO BEHAVIOR. THEY DIDN'T KNOW US AND WERE BUSY TESTING THE BOUNDARIES OF WHAT BEHAVIORS THEY COULD GET BY WITH.

DENNIS WAS CALLED AWAY TO GO TO HAZARD TO BUY MORE PAINT AND DEBBIE WAS PULLED OUT TO MAKE A PHONE CALL TO HER HUSBAND ABOUT THE PAINT. WHEN I WOULD GIVE INSTRUCTIONS I FOUND MYSELF UNABLE TO GET FULL ATTENTION AND OFTEN GAVE THEM WITHOUT ALL EARS MY WAY. THE ACTIVITIES I HAD PLANNED CONCEPTUALLY ASKED THEM TO TRUST ONE ANOTHER AND THEREFORE US AND THEY COULDN'T EVEN TRUST THEMSELVES.

THESE ENDED WITH ONE KID PUSHING ANOTHER AND US HAVING TO HANDLE THE BEHAVIOR. THE 3 HOURS PLANNED ONLY TOOK THEM 2 HOURS AND SO WE DIPPED INTO THE NEXT DAY.

HOWEVER, THERE WERE GLIMPSES OF A DIFFERENT GROUP BEHAVIOR. DURING SERIOUS TIMES LIKE READING A REFLECTION BOOK OR WRITING A PRAYER, THEY WERE ATTENTIVE, QUIET AND FOCUSED. AT THE END OF THE DAY WE LOOKED LIKE DEER IN HEADLIGHTS.

WE REFUSED TO SHARE WITH ANYONE WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED BEFORE WE GATHERED AND PROCESSED THE DAY. THERE IS A HYMN WE SING THAT BEST DESCRIBES WHAT OCCURRED IN THAT ROOM WHERE WE GATHERED.

"SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD BREATHE AFRESH ON ME. SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD BREATHE AFRESH ON ME. MELT ME, MOLD ME, FILL ME USE ME."

THE SPIRIT OF GOD DESCENDED ON OUR GROUP AND CHRIST MOLDED US INTO HIS BODY-HIS HANDS, HIS FEET, HIS MOUTH AND HIS EARS. WE ACKNOWLEDGED THOSE THINGS THAT HAD HAPPENED NEGATIVELY BUT RECOGNIZED THEM FOR THE FIRST DAY THINGS. WE FOCUSED ON THE POSITIVES WE HAD EXPERIENCED AND LEFT THE ROOM READY TO EMBRACE THESE YOUNGSTERS FOR WHO THEY WERE AND WHAT THEY NEEDED.

FOR THE REST OF THE WEEK WE WERE USED ACCORDING TO OUR TALENTS. DENNIS TAUGHT THE WHOLE GROUP GAMES AND WORKED WITH ½ THE BOYS WITH ENTHUSIASM BUT ALSO MODELING A DIFFERENT MALE FIGURE THAN MANY OF THESE YOUNGSTERS HAD EXPERIENCED.

TREY HIGHLIGHTED THE WAYS IN WHICH THEY WERE THE SAME AND GAVE THEM PERMISSION TO LOVE GOD AND EACH OTHER EVEN AS A MALE TEENAGER.

DEBBIE AFFIRMED AND AFFIRMED THEM FOR WHO THEY WERE AND WHO THEY COULD BE WHILE WORKING WITH THE GIRLS.

MARY MODELED PATIENCE AND LOVE WHILE SHE ANSWERED THEIR TINIEST NEED. I CONTINUED TO ACT AS ADMINISTRATOR AND PROVIDED THE STRUCTURE THROUGH WHICH WE FORMED THE RELATIONSHIPS. BY THE END OF THE WEEK, GOD'S IMPACT WAS VISIBLE. EACH YOUNGSTER HAD A BOOK.

THE TRUST OF US WAS EVIDENT AS THE STORIES OF THEIR LIVES CAME TUMBLING AND THEIR PAIN BECAME KNOWN THROUGH WORDS, RATHER THAN ANGRY ACTIONS. AND AT THE FINAL NIGHT COOKOUT THEY ALL SHARED THEIR BOOKS WITH THE WHOLE MISSION TEAM DURING WORSHIP AND EVERY ONE OF THEM CAME FORWARD TO SHARE COMMUNION.

I HAVE PARTICIPATED IN MANY A PENTECOST SUNDAY BUT I'M NOT SURE THAT I HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED IT MORE POWERFULLY THAN I DID LAST WEEK AT BUCKHORN.