

## Counting The Cost

Many of you know Steve and Katie Smith—part of our missionary family. They are spending a large portion of this year with us in Maryland, and Steve has devoted his gifts and energy to serving the pastoral staff and Forcey for this season. I asked Steve to share with us something that God has been teaching him—the burden of his heart right now. Here is what Steve wrote:

“Jesus’ earthly ministry was characterized by great crowds that accompanied or went with Him. Yet, sadly, far fewer people chose to follow Him. Perhaps this is because Jesus wanted those who were contemplating a relationship with Him to know just what it means ... to count the cost of discipleship. Discipleship is an intensely personal decision to enter into a life-long relationship with Christ, and should not be considered casually. Luke captures Jesus’ words on this topic in Luke 14:25-33. Jesus says that we ‘cannot be My disciple’ if we do not love Him preeminently, if we do not bear our own cross, and if we do not forsake all that we have. True discipleship requires us to love, to labor and to let go.

“Verse 26 expands on love. Jesus says that we need to love Him first and foremost, more than family and even our own life. The call to hate is not literal, but rhetorical, for ‘to hate’ would contradict His other teachings. Instead, Jesus is establishing a hierarchy that places the true disciple’s love for Him in the priority position. To be consumed by Christ is to put Him on the throne at the center of our lives.

“Continuing in v. 27, Jesus says that the life of a disciple will not be easy. Jesus, very literally, bore His cross; first as He proceeded to His crucifixion, and

even more profoundly as he bore and atoned for our sins on the cross. It was this cup of God’s wrath that Jesus prayed might pass from Him; ‘nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will’ (Matt 26:39). Jesus’ commitment to His Father’s will was preeminent, and we are called to the same level of commitment if we are to be followers of Christ.

“Following two illustrations of counting the cost in vv. 28-32, Jesus concludes with a final requirement for true disciples. Simply stated, we must let go. He says, a disciple must forsake all that he has (v. 33). By this Jesus addresses the very heart of what grips many of us, namely, our possessions. Instead, we should hold on to Him, the only possession worth grasping and the only one that has eternal impact.”



Let Go,  
Let God

For some of us, this will mean going to a distant country. For many of us this means a first step of telling our co-worker or boss that we will pray for them because we belong to Jesus and He answers prayer—a first step followed by more steps as we represent Christ in the fourth-largest unreached country of the world (the United States). But for all of us it means finally taking Jesus seriously and following Him at all cost.

# Elder & Trustee News

- I) Over the past five months the elders and pastors have been discussing methods to help parents disciple their teen-age children to prepare them for adulthood. These discussions resulted in changes to the Youth Pastor job description and recommendations about how to better incorporate teen-age children into various ministries. The search for a new Youth Pastor has continued, with candidates being evaluated and interviewed. The number of candidates has been reduced so that final screening and interviews may be conducted.
- II) The audio/visual ministry's plans for the coming year have been reviewed and approved. These plans include upgrades to video/sound/lighting equipment and additional training for the forty A/V volunteers.
- III) The Spiritual Life Survey was conducted. A special team has been organized to review the survey results and communicate the findings to the congregation.
- IV) The trustees have supervised the replacement of the sanctuary roof and evaluated other roof leaks throughout the building. Repairs have been made to emergency lighting. Several plumbing problems have been addressed and repaired. A new van has been purchased, and repairs and maintenance have been done for the other four vans and two buses. New shelving has been put up in the back room of the library. Significant progress has been made in unpacking books and entering information into the library database. The trustees are continuing to plan for upgrades to the external signs, to include relocating one sign to the corner of Randolph and Old Columbia roads. Repairs have been made to the parking lot paving, and curbs have been repainted.

~Bob Moore, Elder Chairman

## Pray for our church leaders

**But select capable men from all the people men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.  
Exodus 18:21**



Jesus gave His followers clear instructions: "make disciples of all nations." Putting that together with what Jesus said is the heart of a relationship with God (the "great commandment"), at Forcey we want everyone to "grow up to love God and people with head, heart, and hands like Jesus." The challenge, or question, is how to efficiently shepherd a flock of people at different stages of spiritual maturity toward this vision? A group of men and women from the Forcey leadership have joined together as the *MOVE Team* to evaluate your responses to the recent Spiritual Life Survey, to meet with other Forcey ministry leaders, and to prayerfully discern the few key steps that Forcey needs to provide to help everyone move closer to Christ. The first step was to create a framework to help people identify where they are in their journey with Christ: Curious, Convinced, Committed, or Consumed. The next step is to identify key activities to

help people grow . . . and once we have done so to align all of our energy and resources around these key activities. There are many "good things" we can do, but only a few "best things." Trying to be all things to all people will create chaos among the sheep. Our hope is to provide a clear path to help everyone *MOVE* toward being a consumed follower of Christ.

*Please pray for those involved in this process.*

They will be meeting for workshop discussions on April 6, 20, and May 4. Then in the month of May, they will be meeting with ministry leaders and groups. And in early June lay out the big picture of what discipleship looks like at Forcey.





“**A**nd let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal 6:9). It is important in a church visitation ministry to be very patient and persistent. Often many weeks can pass before a witnessing opportunity is realized. Even then there is no guarantee that the person

will be open to the message of the gospel. Thus, it is a time of great rejoicing when one meets those who are ready to receive the Lord Jesus as their Savior.

Recently one of the Forcey evangelism teams visited a young couple that had attended a service at Forcey a few weeks earlier. The Forcey team was greeted warmly at the door by both the wife and husband. After spending about ten minutes in general conversation to get to know one another, one of the members of the Forcey team then proceeded to direct the discussion toward spiritual matters. Based on their responses to a question regarding their assurance of going to Heaven, the Forcey member concluded that neither was saved. At this point, he began to

explain to them from the Scriptures God’s plan of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. At the end of the gospel presentation, both the young wife and her husband called upon the Lord Jesus to save their souls.

This witnessing encounter demonstrated the importance of endurance in getting out the gospel. After many weeks with no results, God provided two precious souls whose hearts were open to receive the message of salvation. “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (I Cor 3:6).

~ *Ralph Zimmerman,*  
*Evangelism Team*

**Pray about  
reaching  
our  
neighbors**

**For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."  
Galatians 5:13-14**

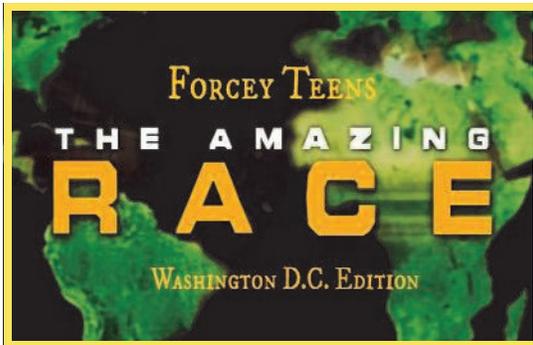
## MISSIONS CONFERENCE – BEST EVER?



**No!** The “Best Missions Conference Ever” will be next year’s, of course. It’s always next year’s. But the one we enjoyed last month may have been the “Best Missions Conference Ever So Far”! Everything was challenging, encouraging, heart-warming and heart-rending at the same time. In keeping with our theme, many people told us about how their eyes really were opened. Stephen Johnston and Mike Sprague were great on Sunday mornings, the various speakers in the ABFs were also outstanding, and the “Eyes on Asia” Wednesday night provided a whole new understanding of how the Lord is moving in that part of the world. Throw in a great banquet with more food than we could eat, a ladies’ luncheon and a men’s breakfast, and numerous opportunities for one-on-one interaction with “our people around the world”, and you have, well, the best conference ever – so far!

Comments received: “I am impressed by the prayer ministry that undergirds the church and the missions endeavors.” “I felt the spirit of Mission interest was so high, I wished I had invited our missions director from my church just so he could experience it as well.” “Loved the variety of exposure to different missionaries. “ “My eyes truly were opened by this conference.”

**Missions Conference  
continues on page 5**



**Time: 1-6 p.m. Cost: \$3.00**

**We will meet at Forcey at 1:00 p.m., travel by bus to D.C. and return to Forcey at 6:00 p.m.**

**Race around Washington D.C. in teams to the finish line! Middle and High School students will compete in fun and challenging tasks and a photo scavenger hunt all around the National Mall.**



**There will be an awesome prize for the winning team!**

**INVITE YOUR FRIENDS!!**

## Pray for our youth

Let no one show little respect for you because you are young. Show other Christians how to live by your life. They should be able to follow you in the way you talk and in what you do. Show them how to live in faith and in love and in holy living.

**1Timothy 4:12 (NLV)**

## AT FORCEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL,

children learn to excel for the Lord. The elementary school chess team demonstrated this very clearly by winning their division of the ACSI Chess Tournament. Meanwhile, the middle school team brought home a 3<sup>rd</sup> place trophy. But they were not the only Forcey teams to earn new trophies for our case. The Lady Falcons basketball team finished second in the GMCAC tournament. Congratulations to Coach Zarnez Campbell and the girls! Additionally, Forcey 8<sup>th</sup> graders won \$250 in cash prizes at the Montgomery County Science Fair. On top of all that, a team of Forcey student engineers took first place in the Destination Imagination Maryland West Central Regional Tournament.

Fine Arts Week was celebrated March 4-8, culminating in a program on the 15<sup>th</sup>. I wish everyone could have watched the great performances, read the creative writing stories, and viewed the artwork. I appreciate all the work Cheri Vislay and her team put into making the week such a success. Similarly, at the middle school talent show, organized by Rob Clark and our student leaders, we were treated to some very entertaining performances. We have so many talented students!

In March, we also enjoyed chapel visits from Forcey missionaries, including Alex Crum, Paul Adams, and the Lin-

colns. Our Haiti Club served at the Stockade regional Shape N Race to raise funds for children in Haiti. A number of our students also helped set up for the annual conference of the Interfaith Community against Domestic Violence.

With all the fun things that have already been happening at FCS, we don't want anyone to think that nothing else is coming up. On Saturday, April 27, kindergarten teacher Heidi Cordero and her team will be hosting our FCS International Night, a celebration of the 20+ cultures represented at our school. Then, on Saturday, May 4, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Timanda Wertz and her team will be hosting our STEM Night, emphasizing the importance of science, technology, engineering, and math at FCS.

If you know of families with school-aged children, please refer them to us. We are especially interested in having more Forcey Bible Church families enrolled at our school. Church members get their first registration free (a \$300 value)! Plus, financial aid is available. We want a Forcey education to be accessible to as many FBC families as possible. Several grades are just about full. Please check out our school web site at [www.forceychristianschool.org](http://www.forceychristianschool.org) today!

~ Rev. Zeke Wharton, FCS Administrator

## Missions Conference continued from page 3

Once again you amazed us with the generosity of your giving to the Missions Project. We received well over \$22,000 – meeting all the needs of the projects identified and enabling us to allocate the excess to those and other special needs of our missionaries in the year ahead. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

If I could change one thing about what we did, it would be to find a way to get more of you to join us for our Sunday evening time of prayer with our missionaries. For me, it is usually the highlight of the week, as we really get to know the needs and the burdens of these very special people. Nothing else during the week matches the closeness of that time. I'm sorry that so many of you miss it. Maybe next year...

After all, next year will be the Best Missions Conference Ever!!!

~ Bob Wiltrout, Missions Chair

# body and soul

*Me With(out) You*

*stay connected.*

The lead song in this session is Toby Mac's "Me Without You." It is a great, energetic song which carries a message we all need to keep in mind. *It describes life without God's help--when we try to be in control and find our own way, and it contrasts this with life WITH our God who rescues us—from sin and death, and from ourselves!*

The session title "*Me With (out) You*" reflects this contrast. We all know the difference when we walk day by day *with* God guiding every step—in contrast to times when we set out on our own. We need to be constantly alert to the times when we are tempted to make decisions without seeking God. We need to be more aware when we start straying from His path. We need to cling tightly to Him as this crazy world swirls around us!

*The session verse is John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in Him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."(NKJ)* We need to be branches that are tightly secured to our vine, the Lord. Abide means to remain, to continue, to stay, to be true to. The enemy of our hearts and the temptations of this world pull us away from this call to remain, stay and be true to our God. We must cling to Him, for without that connection we can do nothing—we cannot bear fruit. We cannot live productive lives for the kingdom.

Ladies are invited to the spring session of Body & Soul Fitness. The 75-minute workout includes cardio conditioning, strength training, flexibility, and Pilates which are choreographed to Christian contemporary music.

*Classes meet in the gym Saturday mornings at 8:30 beginning April 13.*

Bring your mat, water bottle and weights.

For more information, call Jennifer White 301-483-4986 or email

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