

Chronicles of Diversity

Your leadership weekly



*Moose Jaw Lake on the Wonder Springs
Solitude Center*

Camp of the Cross

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On our recent church planting trip to Minnesota, just before we reached Bemidji we spent the last night in a church camp run by the Lutherans called “The Camp of the Cross.”

It was a long drive from Billings, Montana to the Camp of the Cross so we arrived near sundown to the shores of Lake Sakakawea, a reservoir on the Missouri River. The young people had their first challenge, to pitch their large army tent. I had my first challenge to prepare a dinner of rice and refried beans for the group of fifty plus. The kids had their first opportunity to sleep in this huge tent, I had the opportunity to sleep on my thin mat on a cement floor under a metal roofed picnic shelter.

Dawn came early after this restful slumber, and as others prepared the breakfast oatmeal, I had some time to explore this facility. This was really our first and only opportunity to see the sun rise over a rural prairie. A small arm of the lake provided the swimming and boat launch area for the camp, with a large hill (by flat land standards) silhouetting the first rays of the rising sun.

These iridescent strands of the warming sun were met with a chorus of birds, praising God in song. What an opportunity to behold, something new to a boy raised always within view of the mountains and the rolling landscape of Washington.

From the swimming area I walked up the road toward the main area of the camp. As I walked, taking in the sound of the bird chorus, I was struck by the number of wooden crosses on the facility. Everywhere there was some sort of outlook on God’s creation, there was a small teaching area, with a cross right in the middle of the view. “I suppose that is why they call this place the Camp of the Cross.” The only problem was their was not just one cross, but many, maybe tens, no hundreds, no thousands, no millions of crosses of various sizes and configurations. (Actually there were only tens, but still it was impossible to go anywhere on the camp grounds and not be confronted by a cross.)

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I was the only one of the crew that had the opportunity to get to see all the crosses, just lucky I guess. That is, if I believed in luck. When was the last time you were confronted with a wooden cross?

The central theme of historic Christianity is the Cross and what took place there. When was the last time you were accosted by that cross? I would hope that it was in church, but then again when was that specifically? Date and time. Did you buy a shirt?

In the context of what we have been looking at these last few weeks, in order to move in your work beyond your natural fruit, you must pass through the cross. For purposes of illustration, not “pass by the cross,” but “pass through the cross.” I suppose the Bible term used by Jesus is, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. (Luke 9:23)

Now assuming your recollection of your last confrontation with the cross was in church in your memorable past, when were you confronted, in your face, by a daily cross?

I used to work with a woman married to a Greek Orthodox. The way they covered their conscience on this verse was to wear a crucifix around their neck. I think the Greeks missed the point, but at least they ask the question. Most of modern American Evangelicalism wouldn't even consider the question except perhaps in the context of “WWJD.” (What would Jesus Do?) The problem from my point of view is “What Jesus did is really not something I could imagine unless I had been taught the truth.” This still begs the question, “If you know what Jesus did, you are commanded in Luke 9:23 to go and do likewise.”

Crosses, of this true Christian nature, are not something you confront in civil society, is it any wonder it is not used to build a ministry? Will tens, no hundreds, no thousands, no millions of people around the world support your ministry if it is based on the gospel of the cross? How can they “get saved” unless the preacher preaches (and collects an offering). (Romans 10:14,15a out of context).

The gospel of peace described in Romans 10:15b is not a gospel for you to make peace with your own righteousness, it isn't even a gospel for you to “get right with God.” The gospel of peace is only offered by grace through faith, by God. The God man Jesus Christ who died on the cross and raised for our justification (Romans 4:25) and became and is our only righteousness before God. That finished work is the only source of true and everlasting peace.

The only gospel that saves you is the gospel that saved Abraham, these verses in Chapter 4 in context. Which again begs the question, can any “gospel” message that does not contain the power of justification in the context of propitiation, really be a true gospel presentation?

“Here is a warm fuzzy, that God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life! Go in peace and give thanks to God. (In this gospel you are not released from the bondage of the curse of sin and death, but I don't really give a damn, its not about you anyway, it is about me and my ministry.” So says and thinks many a false evangelist.

Now unless you have led a very sheltered life, you have heard a presentation of a warm and fuzzy gospel, some time, some where. If not just turn on the television, to just about any channel and wait. Soon one of these programs will evolve out of the primordial ooze of electronic chaos.

However, as you pass through the cross, that life changing confrontation that it hits you with, contains the power to over come the fears in your life, not by fear and trembling, that you are working in your own power, but in the finished work of the cross. The finished work of Jesus Christ

The power that raised Jesus from the dead, and created the universe for His own good pleasure, now is available to carry your cross, you just need to personalize it and thereby find meaning in life and the reason you were created.

Seeds for Prayer

It seems as about every six months or so something happens to our ability to email this message. This happened two weeks ago, as Comcast changed the former ATT software, and of course told no one, or in no way allowed you to find out without asking. In short, our chat was not too cordial on either side.

Now I am told to believe that spam is the main problem (What about pornography that pays many of the ISP bills?) on the internet, and the ISP's want to do something about limiting the amount of email on the net, without providing increased capacity, so they limit the number of emails you can send at one time to a incredibly low number and blame it on spammers who send out millions. Seems quite similar to the price rip off we now face at the gas pumps. But all this is seeds for another time.

Our current email software can handle the problem as long as I know what the parameters set by the ISP are. But anyway if you have trouble receiving this message or multiple messages please let me know. For the next few weeks this may be a work in progress.

Yesterday, I sent one email to the real estate agent who listed the potential Wonder Springs Center. I hope to meet with him, and or others, later this week to is if in trade for some work, we can live and study the property for the purpose of raising funds to one day purchase this remarkable facility. Please intercede for this trip and the other things I need to do in Eastern Washington on this trip.