



"... I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus ... the goal for the prize of the upward call of God ..."

Philippians 3:12, 14



April 30, 2007



Carl Wierda, Randy Van Osdol and Tim co-labor toward the mission.

In September of 2005, the same question came from a friend of 15+ years, Randy Van Osdol (who has pastored from Maryland to South Dakota to Montana). With Randy's call, we renewed our friendship and began a journey of seeking to answer this question for Bozeman Christian Reformed Church. Randy's (and the Aussie's) question is THE question for the Church of Jesus -- "How will we be intentional in building followers of the Lord Jesus who then live as He would in the sacred workplace, the sacred family, the sacred community?"

Twice monthly, I connect on the phone (plus many e-mails!) with Randy and the small group director, Carl Wierda! Carl ably develops small group leaders so they can shepherd and lead the church in their groups to love their neighbors. Carl diligently labors, all the while working and managing the construction company he owns.

Would you diligently pray for these saints in Bozeman (for Amy and me!) (and yourself?) as we order our lives for loving our neighbors and chattering the good news of Jesus and His Kingdom?

The Lewis and Clark Expedition ventured into this valley of unspeakable beauty in 1805 and were safely led by Sacagawea through the Bozeman Pass of the Rocky Mountains. Similarly, Randy and the other leaders must navigate BCRC past the jagged peaks of self-consumption, ineffective methodologies and relational isolation while leading through to the mission: *living and discipling among their neighbors.*



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Parenting in Montana

On April 20-22, I (Amy) led a 'Parenting with Purpose' Conference, sponsored by several churches in Bozeman, Montana.

In January, God had laid on my heart to pray Ezekiel 36:26 for the conference participants: *"Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."*

Change is never easy and can even be painful. Learning to nurture and motivate children 'from the inside out' rather than controlling them 'from the outside' is a major shift in thinking for some. I often doubted and asked, "Could such learning occur with just eleven hours of instruction and interaction?"

How God worked in the lives of the conference attendees! Truly, many were renewed with 'hearts of flesh' during our time together. When asked to evaluate what was most valuable, the responses were precious:

- "Learning how to develop internal motivation"
- "Learning about *myself* for changing *my* behaviors"
- "Our family is very low income. It was great to get help and not feel like I'm struggling alone."
- "Learning that there is another option to arguing with my girls! I am empowered to plan ahead so I am not scrambling in the heat of the moment."
- "Since we don't have any children yet, learning about myself, my boundary problems and temperaments were great – all useful even in my marriage."
- "Learning to listen to my children and giving them respect like I want them to respect me."
- "Actually, looking at *my own personal* issues!"
- "Very helpful (Thank you!). The weekend gave me many things that I will use with my grandchildren, children and with the children at my school. I hope Amy comes back again and the room is filled to the max – it will make a big difference in the future of the world!"

On Sunday, after the conference, I equipped the small group leaders from the sponsoring churches for using my materials. Folks are gathering in groups for support and encouragement toward life-change. Randy and Shirley, along with the other pastoral leaders, are committed to nurturing the work God began during the conference.

Would you pray for these parents and the Bozeman community to be transformed by His love and grace?

*With Our Love,
Tim, for Amy*



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