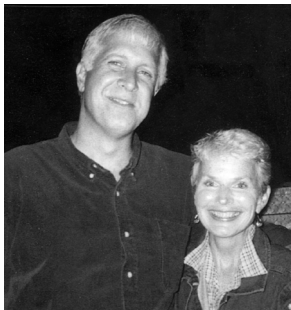


**New  
Direction**

**MAY 2011**

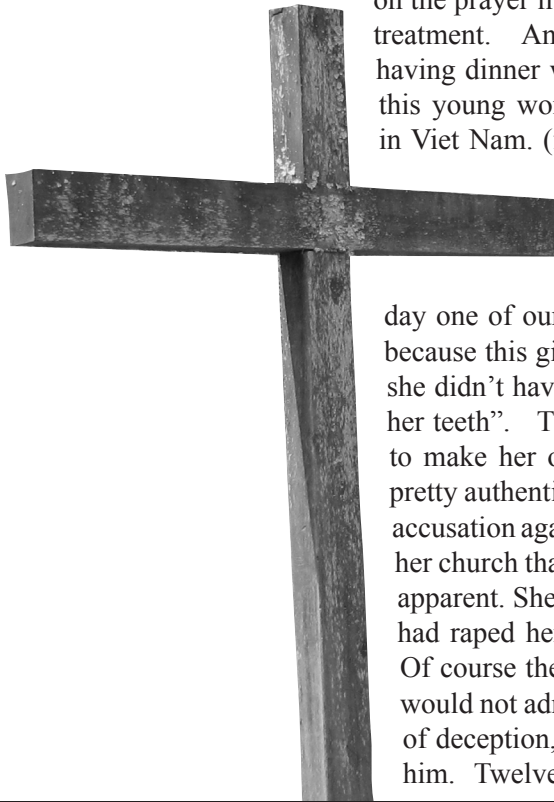
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*Dear Friends,*



Our first experience of being in community with an individual who preferred living in fantasy rather than reality was about 8 years ago. The more we lived and worked with this young lady the more apparent the seriousness of her “disconnect” from reality. I thought if I were to entitle a chapter about her it would be “Collage Girl” because she built her “reality” on desired snippets from the lives of others, whether students from school or characters in movies or television shows. She loved creating drama; particularly when she was the featured star. She was very bright, to the point of reading her mother’s medical manual and memorizing the symptoms and treatment for a rare cancer. It was quite a surprise to her family when her name showed up

on the prayer list in the church bulletin, requesting prayers for her cancer treatment. Another time after a group of adults had spent the evening having dinner with us one of the ladies commented how wonderful that this young woman had devoted an entire summer doing mission work in Viet Nam. (fantasy) Never having been to Viet Nam herself the lady was mesmerized by this girl’s vivid description of the people and their environment. She could almost smell the aroma of the food cooking over open fires in front of grass huts as meals were vicariously served. Another day one of our teachers called me to see if I could bring up some wax because this girl’s braces were cutting into her gums. I commented that she didn’t have braces but the teacher said, “yes she does. They are on her teeth”. Thinking that all teenagers get to have braces, she decided to make her own out of thin paper clips which at first glance looked pretty authentic. It was when her fantasy crossed the line into making an accusation against a young man who lived in her community and attended her church that the seriousness and evil of her fantasy became ever more apparent. She said this young man, who was truly a fine noble teenager, had raped her the previous week during a high school football game. Of course there were no physical signs but because the young woman would not admit her lie, the young man found himself trapped in her net of deception, mortified that such an accusation had been made against him. Twelve months later, we had a meeting in our living room with



the girl and her parents, this young man and several others from their church, and the truth finally came to light. She lied because she wanted his attention.

She was enacting an episode from a movie she had seen on television. I was struck by the immediate extension of forgiveness by this young man, but also by the celebration which occurred within that living room by her mother because it was the first time this young lady had ever told the truth. Her father, on the other hand, left the room disgusted that his daughter had, once again, expended such energy trapping so many in her web of lies.

Yesterday I received a phone call from a father who was seeking placement for his son. His description of his son fits that of many we have worked with or received calls about over the last couple of years. "My son prefers to live in a world of fantasy rather than reality. He wants to play video games all the time. When we take these away from him he sulks and pouts. He has no friends. Although quite bright, he is not applying himself at school." Soon after that call followed another. This time, a befuddled parent whose son refused to engage in relationship with the family. Although failing most of his high school courses he strongly believed he would pass because he was an academically gifted student. Future plans? He wanted to be a medical doctor. Asked how this would happen without him applying himself at this point in life his comment was "it just will. I know it will".

A popular sign that is often seen in gift shops or bookstores, says "believe". One taken a step further says, "believe and it will happen". I think this is the substance of what is occurring in many of the lives of these young people today...and it is quite shallow at that. There was a young girl who lived with us whose mother told her "you can be anything you want to be in life". Well her daughter "wanted to be a lawyer". There were some very realistic barriers to her being able to accomplish this wish, the first and most obvious being she had a low IQ and struggled with the simplest of subjects. But she "knew in her heart" that she was destined to be a lawyer and this "would happen." Eight years later, it hasn't happened; once leaving the farm she never completed her education. The last we heard she was working in a fast food restaurant, disappointed in "life's curve balls" that were thrown her way.

Something has shifted in our culture over the past five years. Have you noticed what most of America is

watching on television? They are immersing themselves in what they perceive to be the "reality" of other people's lives. The question is "why aren't they busily engaged in their own reality?" While Face Book is not a bad thing when used within certain constraints, there are many who present themselves as having purposeful and wonderful lives while the truth is their lives are painful and empty. Many teenagers will say they have 150 friends on Face Book. Years ago an older generation would designate most of these 150 as acquaintances or friends of a friend. This seems to suggest that our current concept of relationship has lost its sense of the intricate weaving which comes from stages of intimacy and time together which enables two to be "friends".

Whereas our early experience with the young girl who chose to live more in fantasy than reality was abnormal for us at one time, it has become one of our major challenges in the present. Confronting reality with one who chooses to live a life based on fanciful thoughts with little credibility is not an easy task. These individuals have low regard for relationship, preferring their own world of fantasy. The former requires give and take. The latter has a remote controlled by the individual. If left unchallenged these children and teens will, most likely, enter into the category of what a psychologist would call "personality disordered" as adults; meaning they will suffer alienation in relationships.

As the saying goes, "there isn't much new under the sun". This problem with deception has been going on since the Garden of Eden. But because of the amount of availability to visual stimulation and technical communication for today's children, which has increased exponentially over the past couple of years, many have become fixated through over-stimulation in these areas while robbed of the gift of daily, honest, from the heart interaction with other live human beings.....the most important being those within the family circle. Scripture tells us this is the time of hearts "waxing cold". Jesus' parable of the seed and the Sower would designate this as ground (hearts) that are hardened through the cares and pleasures of this world.

Yesterday we attended the funeral of a young woman whom the Lord called home to heaven at the young age of 30. A precious daughter, wife, sister, teacher, friend who lived her life trusting in Jesus as her Lord, subsequently being a living vessel of the fruit of the Spirit of God. In Him, "she lived and moved and had her being." (Acts 17: 28) Her family is now walking through that very dark time of grief and suffering but

because they, too, are redeemed they know they will one day see her again joining her, eternally, in heaven.

I don't think we need to look very far to know that much is happening in our world at this time of unrest: massive natural disasters, glorification and fixation upon people and their lives, mass murders, increased rate of suicide among young adults, young teen girls sending naked pictures of themselves to entire football teams, popular stores marketing sexually exploitive clothing to 5 and 6 year old little girls, our government on the fringe of financial collapse. This is reality. The stark reality of living in a fallen world. But the good news is that God is still on the throne. There are many fantasies about what happens when we physically leave this earth. Some believe we come back to life; some believe we go to a place where others can pray for our cleansing; some believe that everyone goes to heaven; some don't believe in God at all. Actually because we live in an age in which presumption and entitlement are tantamount, the majority believe we simply assume a position in heaven. Much like illegal aliens who want to come to America and therefore just "assume" a position in our country because it is a better place from which they come.

Heaven is a better place by far than this earth. It is a place where there is no sin and suffering. A place in which the family of God will live and reign with Christ. Jesus does not point to "a way". He is not just one of "many ways" to heaven. He is "The Way" the Only Way. 'Jesus answered "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." (John 14: 6-7) Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:35-40) Words of truth from the One Who is Truth.....not just one who points to an enlightened path, but the One Who entered reality, bore our sin, rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father.

We have a wonderful, outdoor chapel on top of the ridge which has an amazing view of many, far away mountain ranges. On a clear day you can see forever. A number of years ago we planned a time in which all of us, staff and students, would go up to the area around the chapel, seated far away from one another, reading the various passages in the Gospels of the week Jesus spent leading up to the final moment of His death on the Cross. The day before Joel and some of the boys erected a very large, heavy cross near the chapel. This would be our place of gathering and prayer to complete our time of reflection. It was a windy, March morning. Everyone was strategically planted in various places along the hillside. One of the housemothers, a young woman who was petrified of animals, was at the highest spot seated on an andirondack chair right in front of the chapel. Although, because of the wind, sound didn't travel well I could hear a panicked crying coming from her. From her seat she could see, Tex, a massive Texas longhorn bull coming into the area where all of the students were seated. Somehow he had gotten out of his gated area. I went up to where Maria was along with two of the teen girls who were in her area. We called out to Jesus asking for protection over those who were in harm's way. We knew if we yelled to them to run they would possibly stir him up and cause greater harm. Oddly enough none of the teens were even aware of his presence. As we prayed, he looked up the hill to where we were and began climbing up toward us. We quickly stepped inside the chapel, which is an open shelter surrounded by a picket fence with a gated opening. We closed the gate just in time to witness Tex picking up the andirondack chair with his horns and tossing it to the side. He then looked over to where the cross was erected, sauntered over, turned around and pooped right at the foot of the cross. What I have just written is 100% the truth; reality. It happened right in front of our eyes. He then turned on his heels and headed back down a path in the opposite direction of where everyone was seated. Well, 1 ½ hours later when it was time for all of us to gather around the cross did we have a story to share. And such a powerful reminder that whatever Satan means for evil, our God can use for good. After all wasn't this a tangible picture of what each of us, in reality, bring to the cross of Christ? Our sin?

We might shake our heads about the young girl who lived her life in collage form. How is it any different than the varied collage of beliefs regarding this whole issue of life after death? There is no truth regarding this apart from what is revealed in the inerrant Word of God.

May we all know Christ as did the young lady whose funeral we attended yesterday. She is now permanently in the presence of the One Who died for her.

All of us at New Direction Farm

*Bridget Lane*

*O what a wonderful, wonderful day.  
Day I will never forget.  
After I'd wandered in darkness away – Jesus my Savior I met.  
O what a tender, compassionate friend – He met the need of my heart;  
shadows dispelling- with joy I am telling, He made all the darkness depart!  
Heaven came down and glory filled my soul.  
When at the cross of the Savior made me whole.  
My sins were washed away, and my night was turned to day.  
Heaven came down and glory filled my soul! (Heaven Came Down)*

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