EDIFY

The Newsletter of Character Building Ministries

Character Building Ministries
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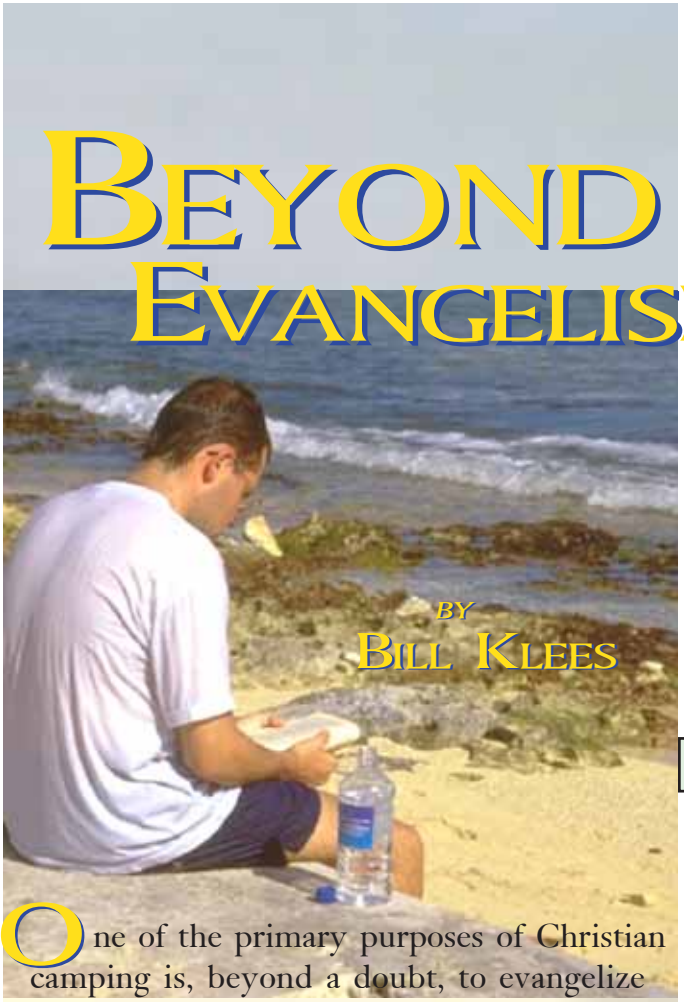
Spring 2004

Character Building Ministries is dedicated to the edification of Christian camp staff by equipping them in the Word of God.



Beyond Evangelism

BY BILL KLEES

One of the primary purposes of Christian camping is, beyond a doubt, to evangelize campers. But the challenge for leaders in Christian camping is to make sure that we move beyond "simple" evangelism. Today's youth are encountering a world that is increasingly anti-God. This shouldn't surprise us since Jesus declared that the world hated Him and would hate those who call upon His name (John 15:18-19). Our camping ministries then, must seek to not only present the truth of Jesus Christ and mankind's need for a Savior, but must also begin to build within the campers a process that equips them to withstand

Continued inside ...

This free Newsletter is sent to leaders and directors of Christian youth camps who are concerned about the spiritual growth and development of their staff.

What's Inside?

The Passion

Have you seen Mel Gibson's new movie yet? What do you think about it? Of course, there are pros and cons, but are you preparing your staff to seize this unique opportunity?

Oh, Canada

CBM is now a business member of CCI/Canada. Our promotion and distribution into Canada is ready to launch this year.

Sectionals

The best way to learn the benefits of CBM's devotional books is to see one. This year our resources are being displayed at several CCI sectionals. Call today for a free sample.

the hostility with which the world seeks to destroy faith. Our teaching must help campers look to God for direction in all areas of life.

Statistics given by various Christian ministries show that anywhere from 60-80 percent of evangelical Christians abandon their faith while in college. This isn't a new problem, but one that has not been sufficiently addressed to counter the increasingly hostile worldviews of secular professors. What is needed is a fuller understanding of the power of the gospel (Romans 1:16).

If you attended the CCI National Conference at Keystone, Colorado, then you received a one-week devotional book from Character Building Ministries. It contained devotions excerpted from *Living Water*, our 2004 summer devotional book. Thank you to CCI for allowing us to provide this resource and to Register Graphics for printing it for us.

CCI/CANADA
The Christian Camp & Conference Association

Character Building Ministries has just become a business member of CCI/Canada. Now Canadian camps have access to the leader in camp devotional resources for staff. For more information, contact Service@CBMinistries.com.

CBM Resources Available at Your Sectional

Feb 23-25 — Allegheny sectional @ Jumonville in Uniontown, PA
Feb 23-25 — Ohio sectional @ Heartland Conference Retreat Center, Marengo, OH
March 1-3 — Tennessee/Kentucky sectional @ Cedine Bible Camp & Conference Center, Spring City, TN
March 2-4 — Northern Rockies sectional @ Quaker Hill Conference, McCall, ID

Paul tells us that the gospel is the power of God. It not only breaks the power of canceled sin, it sets us free—free from a life trapped in the lies of the world and slavery to the father of lies. The gospel is the very power of God to lead us down the paths of righteousness from which, if left to ourselves, we would soon stray.

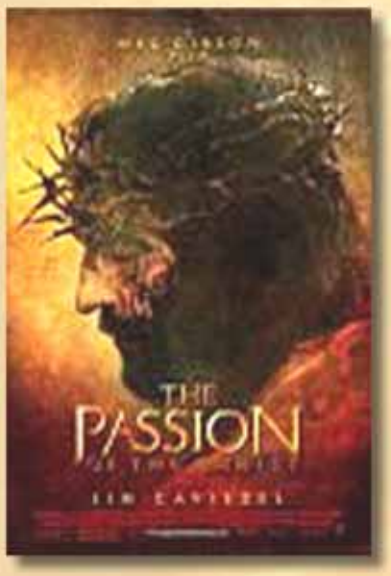
In this sense, the gospel we share moves beyond simply the goal of having campers make a confession of faith. Our goal and hope should be for a total pervasion of truth in the camper's life. Our desire should be for campers to love cross centered lives where every thought and action is held captive to God's truth. Signing a sheet of paper, throwing a stick in the fire, or coming forward is just the beginning in what will hopefully be a lifelong journey. But unless something more is done, statistics show that the journey will likely end when they confront the philosophy of the world in college.

Our evangelistic message cannot stop at the confession. It must seek to wholly evangelize the campers. Paul declares in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that those *in Christ* are a new creation; "old things have passed away; behold all things have become new." Notice Paul does not say that some things have become new, but that all things have become new. We come to Christ in our flesh with all of our sins and failures—the old ways. Evangelism begins with this point; come as you are.

But Biblical evangelism moves beyond that. It moves us to a new creation—one that makes all things new. Our thoughts and desires and motivations are radically transformed. We no longer see things through the eyes of the flesh, which is controlled by our love for the world, but rather through the eyes of Christ changed by our love for the Father (1 John 2:15-17). Evangelism seeks not only to tell campers that there is a Savior and that they need Him

What do you think about *The Passion of the Christ*?

How often does a movie come out that can be an entry-point for you to present the gospel? That's how we view Mel Gibson's new movie, *The Passion of the Christ*. Technically, the movie itself is simply an art form portraying the last hours of Jesus Christ. Apart from a few minor details, it is very accurate to the Scriptures. But we must be reminded that the content of the gospel cannot be conveyed visually (which is why the movie by itself will not save anyone). It depicts *how* Christ died, but it doesn't explain *why* Christ died, other than the brief flash at the very beginning of Isaiah 53:5, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." Rather, the content of the gospel must be conveyed through the communication of truth. So seize this unique opportunity we have right now presented by *The Passion of the Christ*. People—believers and unbelievers alike—will be talking about the movie. You can ask someone if they saw the movie and what they thought of it. Then be prepared to give them the gospel and explain what the death of Christ means to those who believe in Jesus: He died on the cross in my place for my sins. We encourage you to engage our culture whether you see this movie or not. Be judicious though, because it is rated R for graphic depictions of violence. www.ThePassionoftheChrist.com



(justification), but that we need that Savior for our whole life (sanctification).

Jesus doesn't only cure the sin problem, He provides the solution and power for overcoming the world (1 John 2:12-14). Our evangelism must teach campers that God's truth should pervade their entire being. God's Word must abide in them—it must grip their conscience. The writer of Hebrews tells us that God's Word is sharper than any two-edged sword. He writes that it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). God's truth is to be the measure of all that we do.

This is a radical thought for our youth who are indoctrinated by our postmodern culture, which says that you are the measure of all truth. If we hope for new Christians to stand firm in their faith while in college and beyond, the gospel we preach must declare how Christianity offers a radical alternative to our culture. We must declare the power of Jesus to transform the mind and wholly change us from the inside out (Romans 12:1-2). In familiar terms, it means that Christ isn't just our Savior providing atonement for sin; He is our Lord, and we are His servants. He is to have supreme hold of our thoughts and intents. Our new creation in Christ includes the heart, soul, and mind which no long love self, but fulfil the greatest commandment of loving God our Father (Matthew 22:37). The whole being is transformed to filter out the garbage of the world, which hates God, so that young Christians can know the truth and boldly declare it to others.

This, of course, is a lifelong process and involves discipleship. It requires the cultivation of a desire to become like Christ. Our evangelism should prepare new believers for this total change. We cannot leave them with the false assurance that "raising a hand" means what is to come is an easy path, but rather is a journey filled with trials as well as victories. Seeing a camper saved should not be an end in itself. The goal is seeing campers take the journey to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18). We must provide them with the foundational truths that will start them on their journey, guided by God's Word and led by Jesus Christ. This journey begins with you and your commitment to move "beyond evangelism." Your challenge and calling is to put evangelism in a Christian worldview context.

Bill Klees is the Director of Camp Relations for CBM and Program Director for Camp Susque in Trout Run, Pennsylvania, where he lives with his wife Heather, son Avery, and new daughter Natalie. You can email him at Bill@CBMinistries.com.

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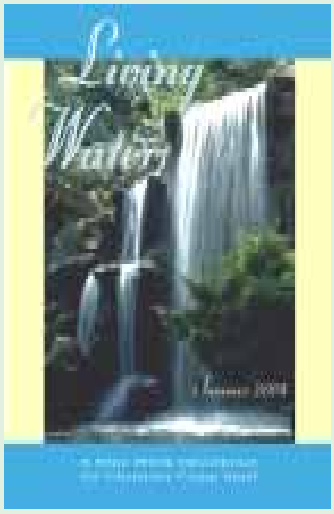
Order Your Copy of CBM's 2004 Devotional Book

I wasn't expecting to be challenged and taught as much through the devotions as I was. The book is really easy to follow, too.
~ Camp Hebron (Halifax, PA)

It seems to get better each year.
~ Lake Koronis (Paynesville, MN)



Here's what fellow Camp Directors said about last summer's Staff Devotional Book.

I was thoroughly challenged and I've been a believer for 26 year
~ Adirondack Camp Cherith (Corinth, NY)

It is a daily guide to help staff in their own personal relationship with Jesus.
~ Camp Ojibway (Richfield, MN)

Excellent! Look forward to next year's.
~ WLD Ranch (Girard, PA)

Theologically very sound ... meets a wide variety of needs.
~ Beaver Camp (Lowville, NY)

Camp Name _____
Contact Person _____
Address _____
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Return this card for a FREE sample copy of *Alpha & Omega.*
Discover why CBM devotional books are the most widely used devotionals for summer camps.