



THE GATHERING

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND CHRIST

Cell Groups

(2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays)

Springbrook: 9:30 AM at the Springbrook Municipal Building, call Kevin and Kelly Kehoe (613) 395-4346

Stirling: 10:00 AM at 25 Demorest Rd, call Beth and Bill Devries at (613) 395-0227

Belleville: 9:30 AM at 39 Cooke Crt, call Jack and Jan Harris at (613) 967-6419

Kingston: (Sunday evenings) 1338 Princess St, call Terry and Dawn Harris at (613) 531-5283

Youth: (Wednesday evenings), 7:00 PM at the Hub, downtown Stirling, call Beth Devries at (613) 395-0227

Other Opportunities

Study of Daniel, Tuesdays 7:00 PM, 38 Mount Pleasant Rd, Stirling, call Esther Noel at (613) 395-3402

Men's breakfast at the Hub, Every Saturday, 7:30 to 9:00 AM, call Barry Cooper at 613 395-5990

A Culture of Hope Mark Norman

I was recently working with an organization that had a serious problem. According to them, their culture was "broken" and nobody knew how to fix. When I asked questions to understand what they meant, many people described feelings of being victims; others talked about feeling the weight of broken promises and dashed expectations. It was quite clear to me that they all felt unable to affect any change to their current situation. The result was that some just came in and did their job, others formed poses of discontent and spent a lot of time commiserating while some used every sick day available to them to avoid being in the contaminated environment. Seems pretty extreme but such is life in some places.

Culture is a funny thing, we have a lot of difficulty understanding it yet we find ourselves deeply affected by it. I'm not necessarily talking about our broad societal culture but the set of norms and unspoken understandings that develop between human beings as they meet together in families, business, and volunteer organizations and even in churches. These norms are very rarely expressed but are sensed very clearly. Do you remember meeting your mate's family for the first time?

Have you ever moved into a tight knit community or looked for a church family to hang out with? Think about the subtle signals you were using to figure out how things worked and if you could survive or thrive in the new set of relationships.

An author I read a long time ago put this issue of culture in an interesting light. He defined "culture" as a question we ask ourselves: "What do I have to do in order to fit in and belong?" To

find the answer, we watch behaviours of inclusion and exclusion. It's easy to imagine someone asking themselves if they should tell a certain joke in a group they just joined...what would happen if it was deemed misplaced? The great fear such a misstep provokes is exclusion. So, people figure out what to do or how to act in order to not be excluded and to have their voice heard. Again the

questions people ask themselves are the following: What do I have to do or say to matter in this setting? How do I need to behave in order to be taken seriously or be viewed as competent? What do I need to do to be heard and taken seriously? And they look to one another to find the answers. The results in the case I mentioned earlier was a culture in which, to fit in, people had to complain, feel like victims and find fault in others...anyone who dared to ask "what are we doing that's contributing to the darkness?" was immediately ostracized. (See HOPE on page 3)



Upcoming Events

March 14-22: Project Serve, Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Team, Youth Unlimited

March 25: Ride for Refugees information meeting, 25 Church Street, Stirling at 7:00pm, call Melanie at (613) 395-1276

March 30: Summerfest Business and Professionals Breakfast, Maranatha Church, Belleville, \$10, Mark (613) 398-8695

April 3-5: Women's weekend getaway at Pinecliff Resort, contact Christine Cooper (613) 395-5990

June 28: Church picnic, 12PM to 5PM at Avril and Bob's

45 East Front Street, P.O. Box 411, Stirling, Ontario K0K 3E0

(613) 395-4438

A Servant Leading *Lisa Barber*

Barry and Melanie made the papers! Both the Community Press and The Shield gave positive coverage of Barry and Mel's presentation at the council meeting on March 2nd. The council gave unanimous support in bringing the Ride For Refugees to Stirling on October 3, 2009. If you missed reading these articles they are currently posted on Barry's refrigerator!

Now Barry, by his own confession, is a 'behind-the-scenes' type of guy. So what has motivated him to step to the front to be the 'lead guy' in organizing a Ride for Refugees event here in Stirling?

When Barry offered to drive the trailer with our bikes to Waterloo last year I was relieved and extremely grateful – but not surprised. I just thought Barry was being Barry seeking to serve in a practical way. It was not until after the Ride that I learned that Barry's involvement was primarily due to the vision and passion of his son, Jordan.

Jordan, after carefully considering the presentations made at The Gathering regarding refugees, concluded that refugees were people just like him but without all the good stuff he had – parents, a home and lots of things to make life fun. When Jordan told his parents he wanted to raise money to help provide these things for the refugees Barry was hooked and determined to do all he could to support his son in fulfilling his passion.

I also recently discovered that Barry already had a heart for refugees. When he was a young boy his community took in a number of Vietnamese families. He witnessed how these 'boat people', who arrived with nothing, were able to take root and become contributing members



Barry and Jordan Cooper

in the community as a result of the acceptance and help they received. He saw this happen again when the Kosovo refugees were welcomed into our area and were able to integrate in positive ways.

"I believe," says Barry with a stern look of conviction, "that there is a lot we can do as a nation, as a community, as a church and as individuals to assist refugees world-wide who have been displaced."

Barry also believes that the people in our municipality want to be involved in a good cause. And that by bringing the Ride For Refugees to Stirling we, The Gathering, will have an opportunity to bring churches and community groups together to see "terrific things happen."

Last year Barry said there were many people in our community that told him they would have been involved if the Ride for Refugees had been closer to home. Well, those words were fuel to Barry's fire. If the way to serve others is to step forward and lead – then that is what he is willing to do.

I think Barry is providing us with a wonderful insight into leadership. There are

different types and styles of leadership and some form of leadership is needed in every area of life whether it is in relationships or projects. We may not consider ourselves to have a life-size gift or calling to leadership – but that does not exclude us from providing leadership at different times in different ways. In fact the very nature of discipleship has an essence of leadership. As we learn to follow Christ, He teaches us to lead others in their discovery of Him and He empowers us to fulfill the God-size assignments He gives us. So, if you consider yourself a servant, listen to what God is saying to you. If you discover that the best way to serve in an area where your passion has been stirred is to lead, then be bold and step forward. Chances are some terrific things will happen!

TWO Announcements regarding The Ride For Refugees:

1. An Information Meeting is planned for Wednesday, March 25th at Mel's Place (25 Church Street, Stirling) at 7:00 pm. This meeting is for anyone who is, or might be, interested, in being involved with the Ride For Refugees. PLEASE INVITE people you know from other churches and community groups that might potentially be interested.

2. It was pure JOY, on behalf of The Gathering, to give a cheque for the Mully Children's Family. These funds will assist them in providing daily food and education to the children in the Eldoret Refugee Camp in Kenya. This was 50% of the funds we raised during the Ride for Refugees in 2008.

Who is doing what at The Gathering?

- Working with the youth: Beth Devries, (613) 395-0227
- Intercession: Jane Aman (613) 395-3869
- Pastoral care: Alicia Lott (613) 395-5342, Jan Harris, (613) 967-6419
- Phone Chain: Avril O'Brien (613) 478-6461, Esther Noel (613) 395-3402
- Worship/Music: Sandy Norman (613) 398-8695, Bill Devries (613) 395-0227
- Technical Gear: Kevin Kehoe (613) 395-4346, Barry Cooper (613) 395-5990
- Projection and computers: Vince Brintnell (613) 395-0613

What lessons are you learning that are resulting in love, faith and action in your life? Would you be willing to share your story?

Contact me at lisa.barber@iteams.org

613-395-1276

Want to announce community events, don't forget to call UCB Canada: 613 966-4822

or visit the website at www.ucbcanada.com

UCB
Canada 102.3FM
Changing lives for good.

Hope

This is what I would qualify as a culture of fear.

What does that have to do with The Gathering? Well first of all, we are subject to the same human dynamics, we use the same questions to gauge how well we fit in and are pulled by the same human nature that compels us to look to one and other for answers. This makes us prone to the very same pressures. It's easy for church to be driven by fear of exclusion on two levels. The questions and comments that could express a culture of fear emerging in a church could be things like: "What will people think if we...?" "Will we lose members if we...? Won't that upset the people who have done it this way for years?" "If we don't...then God won't bless us" or "Here are the four steps to be blessed by God." These questions and comments aren't bad when they come from a loving concern for others and a desire to obey God. On the other hand, they can be symptoms of a deeper problem when they are driven by fear of people or a misconception of God's presence, blessings and grace. A culture of fear in a church breeds cliques, arguments over unimportant things and division. When afraid, people naturally rally together with people who agree with them, feel defensive and in some cases, go on the attack.

It's interesting that in his time with his disciples, Jesus talked a lot about fear with his followers. As he was preparing his disciples for the reality of his crucifixion and resurrection, he often told them not to fear and asked to trust in Him and obey as an antidote to fear. Here's a bit of challenge: Read John 14 and ask yourself how Jesus addressed his disciples need to belong. He knew they would be excluded from relationships, community and even the temple for following Him. He also knew that they would be viewed as traitors by the Romans for following his teachings. In this chapter of their lives together, as he prepares them for the time of loss and disillusionment that would happen as he was convicted, tortured and killed, he knew that they would be overcome by fear if not buoyed by deeper truth. The truth he told them of was of their belonging to God, to the Kingdom of Heaven and their continued connection with him despite the apparent circumstances.

He tells of the place he's preparing for them, of his return, of the Father's love for them. It's as if he's saying to them "You may be rejected by others and distraught by circumstances but you have

a place with me and the Father, you belong".

One facet of the good news that Jesus brought us is that, through him, our identity is sealed. His life, death and resurrection are an invitation into a relationship with God that is unshaken by time, failure and circumstances. The questions we use to feel safe are permanently answered in him. To Jesus, to the Spirit and to God, we matter, we are competent to fulfill a contribution through the working of the Holy Spirit and are created to influence through the presence of God in us. By answering these questions for us, Jesus frees us from fear and allows us to take our eyes off one another to satisfy that need for belonging and contribution and find those answers in His eternal love. In the New Testament, this notion is often translated as hope or joyful anticipation. Our hope is in Jesus, our hope is an eternal relationship with God, and our hope is partnership with the Holy Spirit in building the Kingdom of God here and now. Jesus has set us free from the slavery of emotional dependence on one another and, thus, from fear of rejection. A culture of hope could be described as a culture permeated with behaviours that flow out of such a reality.



So, if we are contributors to a culture of hope, the norms we use in dealing with one another stem from hope. We focus on the redemptive work of God in one another and in anyone who comes into contact with us. We see the opportunities to love, to bless, to forgive and to share. We accept people as they are, looking at them as God looks at

them and us. We open our arms in welcome. When we disagree, we don't interpret differences as threats but view them as building blocks for the Kingdom and we love lavishly always remembering the grace that was accorded us.

The apostle Paul understood this and made it part of his mission: Helping followers of Christ live out a culture of hope as they lived together in various contexts. Let me close with his words from his letter to the Ephesians, chapter 1:

¹⁷I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,

Belleville Pregnancy
and Family Care Centre

Where the first step counts...



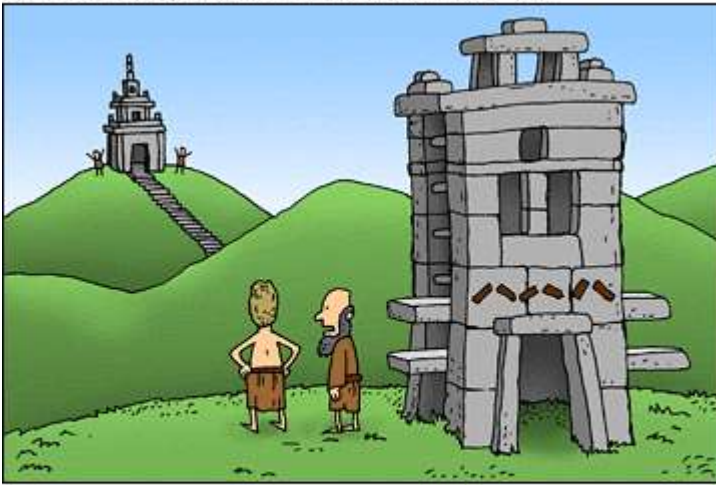
The Belleville Pregnancy and Family Care Centre is offering a Post Abortion Bible Study called "Forgiven and Set Free" which has been prepared for women who have experienced some degree of grief and regret from their abortion. The 8 week course will be held at the Centre starting Thursday evening March 26th.

To register call 613-969-7866 and ask for Heather or Joanne.

On-Going Needs at the Community Cupboard

Here are some of the needs the Cupboard has. Consider bringing some along when we get together for our next celebration:

- Dry pastas
- Kraft dinner
- Canned meats: tuna, fish, chicken, etc.
- Canned stews



THEIR TEMPLE IS TALLER AND SLIGHTLY MORE ORNATE THAN OURS ... WE MUST UPGRADE IF WE EXPECT OUR GOD TO WIN



June 28, 2009 from 12:00pm to 5:00pm at Bob and Avril O'Brien's, 305 Fuller Rd, Thomasburg, ON

(613) 478-6461

Please bring chairs, bathing suits (no skinny dipping) and towels.



Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder
7 p.m. • 6/12/09

Manic Drive
7 p.m. • 6/13/09



Pat Boone
7 p.m. • 6/14/09

Youth Day
6/13/09



Upcoming Events:

3/17/09 Youth Sharing Your Faith Course, 10 am-3 pm
Evangel Temple, Napanee, ON

3/18/09 Youth Sharing Your Faith Course, 10 am-3 pm
The Chocolate Church, Kingston, ON

3/27/09 Prayer Meeting, 7 pm
Napanee Standard Wesleyan Church, Napanee, ON

3/28/09 Men's Breakfast, 8:30 am
Strathcona Paper Centre, Napanee, ON

3/28/09 Sharing Your Faith Course, 9 am-12 pm
Baypark Baptist Church, Kingston, ON

3/28/09 Men's Breakfast, 8:30 a.m.
Strathcona Paper Centre, Napanee, ON

3/28/09 Youth Concert & Skate, 7:30 pm
Strathcona Paper Centre, Napanee, ON
[Click here to download the poster!](#)

3/29/09 Festival Support Sunday, All Day
All Churches

3/30/09 Ladies 'Come to the Table' Gala, 7 p.m.
Strathcona Paper Centre, Napanee, ON