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SUMMER 2020 NEWSLETTER

During the first week of virtual camp in June, Katie, a college student, walked in to The Hill office. She had come to help out. I hadn't seen her in months. I did not even think; I called out her name and ran up and threw my arms around her and gave her a big hug just like I would normally do. Then, in a split second, I remembered that the most natural action in the world had become taboo. I jumped back.

"Oh my goodness, Katie," I said, "I am so sorry. You are the first person I've done that to, hugged you without thinking or asking. I am so sorry."

"It's okay," she said with a big grin, "I've just learned to hold my breath when that happens."

It was a scene worthy of a comedy routine and we giggled, but I couldn't help the sadness rising up in me. I miss hugging my friends and family. I miss walking in a coffee shop and sitting across a small table from a friend. I miss leaning over the counter at the post office talking with Jan without a plexiglass barrier. I miss visiting with friends without six feet between us. And I miss worshipping directly next to my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Wading through our new normal can cause sweaty palms and sleepless nights, and leave us wondering if God is aware or if he has disappeared. Fear is rampant and weariness is palpable. Thoughts of catching the virus or passing it on, losing our jobs, and worry over government control and our children's education is threatening to devour our peace. The correct mindset is essential but sometimes evasive. At times we need to fight for that upon



Our foursome of senior campers: Charles Andrew Collins, Ethan Edwards, Garrett Burke, and Paxton Pritchett.

which we meditate. A beautiful psalm of David, 139, is magnificent in its description of our security in God and His constant presence.

"O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me. 2 Thou dost know when I sit down and when I rise up; Thou dost understand my thoughts from afar. 3 Thou dost scrutinize my path and my lying down, and art intimately acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, Lord Thou dost know all. 6 Thou hast enclosed me behind and before. And laid Thy hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot contain it. 7 Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven Thou art there; 9 If I take the wings of the dawn If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, 10 Even there Thy hand will lead me, And Thy right hand will lay hold of me."

(Psalm 139:1-10)

The most isolated and inaccessible of places! And yet He remains and desires to be with us. He is our Abba, our intimate Father. Escaping His presence is impossible. He will not leave us for even a moment. No amount of fear, uncertainty, frustration, or anger can push him away. His love won't allow it.

Summer

At the ministry, we, too, have felt the dramatic effects of endlessly changing circumstances. A full slate of retreats and camps had to be wiped clean, along with all the doorknobs. The office staff juggled who would be where when and did much work from home. After the University and colleges closed their campuses our student residents decided to ride out the storm with us. It was a golden opportunity to give them a little more attention than summer typically allows. We have taken long walks and delved into Romans. We have watched Baahubali



Residents and staff traveling around The Hill by "mule."

movies (I didn't know what they were either) on a barn door, attempted to cultivate a garden, eaten a lot of berries and cream, banana, and Oreo paletas (amazing Mexican style popsicles), and enjoyed many porch conversations.

This summer would have marked thirty years of youth leadership camp. It seems a short time ago, right after Bob's and my marriage, that Bob stood in the Manna House talking to a friend and me about bringing kids in for week-long camps. Not being one to let grass grow under his size thirteen feet, we hosted our first camp the following summer, July 1990, with twenty-five teenagers. The number of applications increased each year. We now host two week-long camps with approximately fifty volunteers.

This summer, we prayed and turned to spirit-led creativity to develop virtual camps. I have never been

happier in all my life to have the talented millennial staffers on board with us! They speak the language of technology that may as well be Arabic to me. Their creative energy and humor were astounding and contagious. Brent commented it would have never happened had it been left up to the "older staffers," whoever that may be! The first week of "The Hill at Home" was a huge success, even with the bumps. Near the beginning of the week falling tree branches knocked out our electricity moments before we were to log on for the two o'clock afternoon session. Jenelle, the Zoom host, flew out the door to find a location with power. Brent scurried to pull his truck to the east side of the building near our office to use a camping battery to run the rest of our computers.

Both weeks, Danielle, administrative assistant, and "all things tech, girl" manned her screen the entire six hours of each day to provide technological support to participants. Jonathan Whistler, our summer intern and an unexpected gift from God, designed and hosted the virtual games which were a big success. The nearly sixty students vied for prizes (the best one, Brent doing a TikTok dance)

by competing in at home scavenger hunts and Kahoot quizzes. The daily camper videos left our jaws dropped and our bodies doubled over with laughter.

A camper Mom wrote to tell us her son's thoughts. "If you would have told me I would be sad when virtual camp was over, I would not have believed you."

Thank you to all volunteers. You are each invaluable.

During one of our post-camp meetings we decided we could safely bring in a small number of students for



A screen shot with some of the campers and volunteers during a Zoom meeting the first week of Virtual Summer Youth Leadership Camp.

a patched-together final year of camp. We knew it wouldn't be exactly the same but we were trying to fill in the gap for what they otherwise would be missing. Thus, four boys, all of whom graduated from high school this year, came to Hardin, Kentucky the first week of August.

It was personal. It was intentional. It was discipleship. It was a message of grace and identity. It was different faces, a different time, it was forty years later, but I could not help thinking of Bob, sitting in a circle with six college students, talking about Jesus.

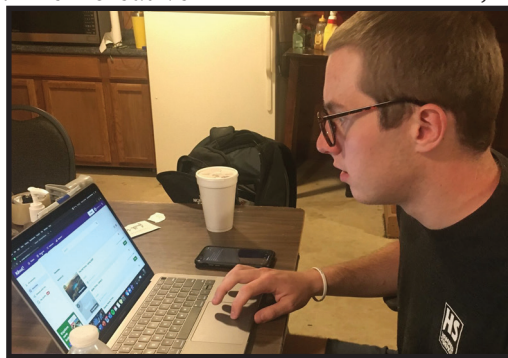
Gratitude

Our attempts to thank you can feel redundant. Messages from deep within the heart often defy words. Walking down our gravel drive this past week I began to pray, thanking God for each of you who volunteer, give financially, and pray for the ministry. Wanting to

convey to you the depth of our gratitude I asked The Father to give me words. Instead, I sensed Him saying, "Let me show them." So I will trust Him to do just that.

You are loved.

Kim



Jonathan Whistler, aka Big Dawg, handled all of the games during Virtual Summer Youth Leadership Camp.

Camp Notes

My first group of campers came to The Hill in the summer of 1993. My group consisted mostly of kids from Lexington KY. Most of them when I told them we would be working for half the day and doing Bible study the other half were ready to abandon ship. However, once they got here, they fell in love with the vision of Bob and The Hill—to teach the Bible in such a way that was just over their heads that it left them wanting to search for more and to learn and be able to use their hands. That group worked with wood, building lodges, bridges, driving tractors and wanted to do more in their free time. Who would have “thunk” it? That group now are husbands, wives, mothers, fathers involved in their own church bodies scattered throughout Kentucky. The truths and principles they learned are still being applied today.



Tony Jones with Steve, future camper and one of his two grandsons.

Fastforward 27 years later to 2020, now those same truths and principles are being passed on to new generations by those impacted by Bob and The Hill many years ago. I'm a special education teacher in a behavioral hospital and see and experience a lot. The world needs to hear and see these truths and principles lived out especially in this generation. On a daily basis I share in some way these with my family, church body, students and other staff members. These are troubled times needing a transformational truth that truly has and will continue to impact all that come in contact with it! It has been a privilege and a blessing to be a part of this camp for many years and hopefully many years to come!

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Tony Jones

Camper Comments

Virtual Camp was great! I'm so thankful we still got to have speakers and everything I felt like Satan was really trying to attack us but I was just as encouraged after virtual camp as I usually am after going to the Hill it was amazing! God really took a crazy circumstance and turned it for the good of those who love him. —Freda Henry

The Spirit led in such a unique way! I was encouraged by everyone's participation, given that doing things in the comfort of our own homes can sometimes lead to complacency. It was proof that God continues to unite His children regardless of the circumstances. —Garrett Burke

Upcoming Events

Awakened to Grace Conference, Sept. 25-27, 2020—Tim Chalas will be with us once again along with Andrew Farley. COVID-19 precautions have forced us to limit attendance to 200. The plan is to have the event outdoors with indoors as a backup. You'll have three ways to participate in the outdoor event: Drive up and stay in your vehicle, tailgate, or in socially distanced family circles on the lawn. You will need to bring your own lawn chair for sitting on the lawn. Registration is required.

The Fall Retreat has been canceled due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. We are considering alternative ways to bring the teaching of Frank Friedman to you on that weekend and still keep everyone safe. Please watch our website for the latest updates.

Rooted & Grounded, January 8-10, 2021—Our annual gathering of young adults (post high school/18-25) that are hungry for truth, a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, and fellowship with others in a similar pursuit.

Winter Youth Retreat, January 15-17, 2021—Our annual winter retreat for middle and high school students—39 hours filled with the Word, laughter, friendship, worship, fun, and a little bit of sleep.

For more info go to lifeonthehill.org



Our campers building an outdoor kitchen at the tobacco barn picnic area as their senior project.

The Quiet Cabin

Folks rent the Quiet Cabin at The Hill for several reasons, but the most common is to enjoy the peace and quiet the setting offers. Nestled in a secluded location at the edge of the woods, it is the perfect spot to relax, rekindle, or recharge. Some even find it a great place to work when you need a place with no distractions.

The Quiet Cabin has two bedrooms, three bathrooms and a sleeping loft that will accommodate a total of eight guests. Most enjoy the fact that there is no cable TV, phone line, or satellite dish to interrupt the peace. That's one of the reasons we call it the Quiet Cabin. Free wifi is available in case you don't want to leave all amenities behind.

Check our website for more information and to contact us about renting it for your next get away, lifeonthehill.org.



The Quiet Cabin

Over the past 16 months or so the Isaiah teaching audio and commentary has been available on our website for anyone interested in following along. The last session will be posted in the middle of September. We will leave all of those posted until the first of November for anyone who might need to catch up.

The next online series will be Ephesians. It will run for exactly one year beginning the first Monday in November. Please consider joining us for this wonderful study of Paul's letter to the church at

Ephesus. The audio and notes for each session will be posted weekly on Monday with a new lesson added each week. Those will remain posted for several months before being replaced by newer audio lessons.

Join us at lifeonthehill.org in November for this exciting series.

Memorial Stones

One of our teachers for the second virtual camp had us include a stone to be used as a teaching illustration in the supply box each camper received. None of us knew at the time, but for several years one camper had been collecting small stones from The Hill. Each served as a reminder of what God taught him during his stay.

Beginning with the 2017 Summer Youth Leadership Camp, Garrett Burke pocketed a stone, etching it with *Garrett's collection of stones commemorating his spiritual journey at The Hill.* the occasion and year. His next visit was the Romans Retreat in August of 2017, then the Men's Retreat in April of 2018. Continuing through the Winter Youth Retreat of 2020, he faithfully

collected a rock on each visit to remind him of His encounter with God.

Just as the stone record of his spiritual journey was about to be interrupted with a virtual summer camp,

God stepped in. Among the snacks, Monday thru Thursday envelopes, t-shirt and other goodies, there was a seemingly insignificant item—a stone from The Hill. For most it was nothing, but for him it was yet another



sign that we are loved by a God who takes seriously even the smallest of details.

Garrett has since added another stone memorial to his collection—Senior Summer Youth Leadership Camp 2020.

Your Friends at The Hill