

TrailNotes speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the “landscape” we are passing through in this trail-laced wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. *TrailNotes* is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we’re learning and doing.

ElderTalk Wrestling with God’s Word in the Sunday Teen Group JON VEGA

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Genesis 32:28

Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.”

For me, nothing gets a conversation going like a good question...and good questions aren’t the first ones that get asked. Similarly, good answers aren’t usually the first thing said. They both have to be flushed out of the tall grass.

It takes time to know what to listen for. You have to know the person you’re speaking to, their likes and dislikes, their passions, the things that irritate them, and the things they truly love. If you know that, you can know what buttons to push in order to get more out of an answer than just a report. If you know where they stand, you can get them moving.

In an effort to get to know the GFC teens better and get discussion going, we start each meeting with a segment affectionately called “Ketchup” (catch up). We hear about their pets, friends, school projects, and other highlights from the week past or anticipated in the week ahead. Like an ever shifting weather map, trends and patterns emerge that Angel (the teacher) and I (the nurse) use during discussion. For example, Christian Nunn will always respond to a fishing analogy, you can hear Ethan Byrom’s mental gears grind when asked about a paradox, and Kera Gardner isn’t afraid to ask a question

It’s been almost a year, but the group has started to really know and trust each other, which is good because a good answer is an act of faith; it is honest, a bit gutsy, and fearless.



Day Four of Creation, Michael Dudash, 2014

The first four chapters of Genesis are deep waters and the teens have been waiting for Chapter 3, the fall of mankind. We’ve discussed both creation stories in Chapters 1 and 2, why there are differences in style, order, and emphasis. We’ve pondered the question of free will vs. God’s omnipotence and omniscience. We’ve talked about God’s plan for us and His creation. We’ve discovered what is actually in the text and what is tradition...and a bit about how to guide conjecture when we want to think about what isn’t said.

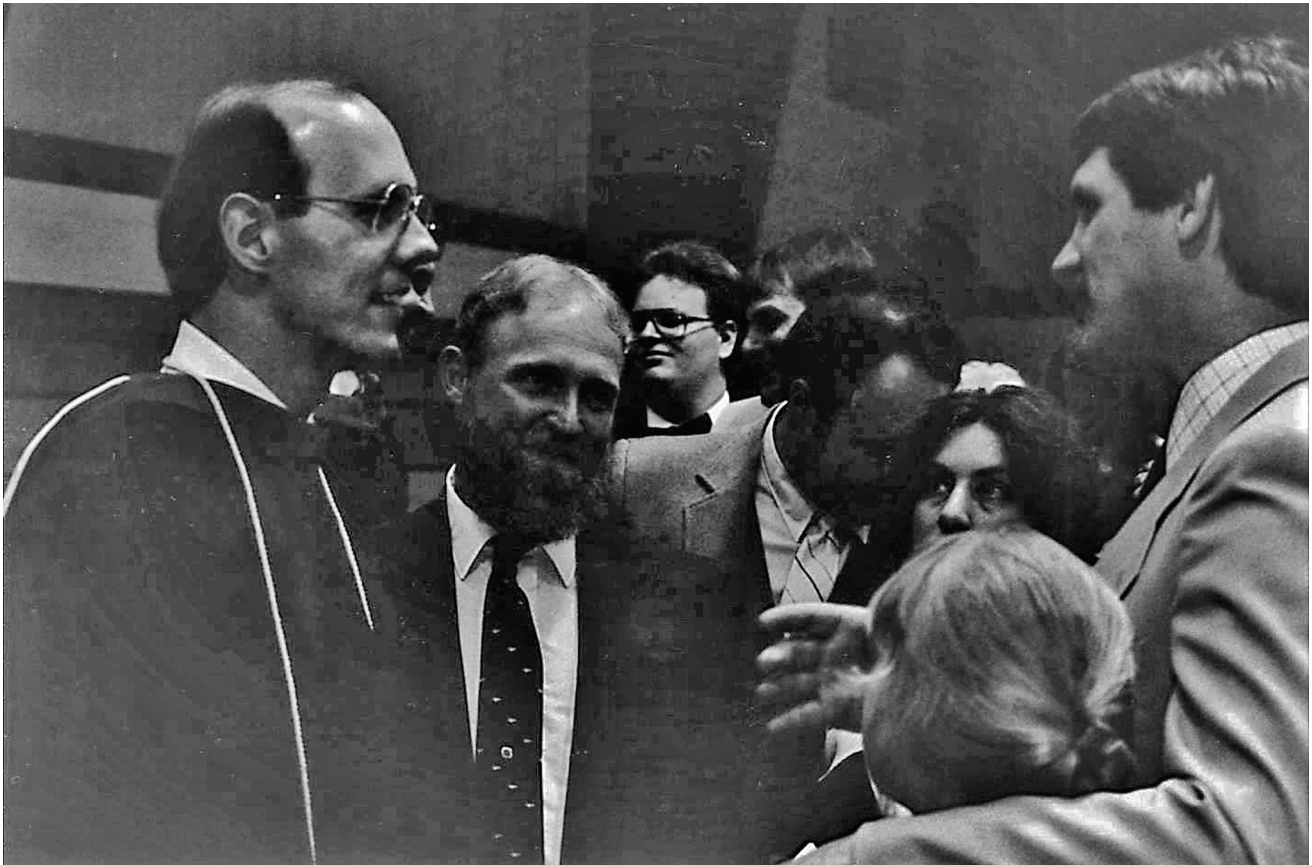


Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Wenzel Peter, 1820s

This week’s discussion should be a fun one. Some of the students have already written out questions that have been buzzing in their heads for a month. The anticipation is palpable.

Although Angel and I will be listening, pushing buttons, and nudging them forward, I have a wonderful feeling that they’ll do most of the talking this week.

**Fred Linger, after his graduation from Mount Vernon Bible College,
speaks with Pastor Tim Barber**



Fred Linger (left) speaking with Tim Barber and daughter Heidi (right) after graduation.

May 28, 2018

FREDERICK S. LINGER

Thirty years ago this evening I graduated from Mount Vernon Bible College. With the future uncertain and weighing prospective positions within the Foursquare Church, Pastor Tim Barber (on right) from Grace Fellowship of Mansfield, Ohio (not Foursquare, but whom we had met recently via Kenyon campus ministers) surprised us by attending the commencement where I addressed the gymnasium crowd as the outgoing student body president.

In the few weeks to follow, it became evident he had won our hearts to stay put working at Kenyon College, while joining him in service to Grace Fellowship. Four years later he helped us move into our first owned home a few blocks from his home. He would unexpectedly complete his life's journey six years after that. In the time since, we have raised a daughter there, hosted countless Kenyon retreats, and served with innumerable brothers and sisters in Christ, throughout all the joy and pain which unfolds in life together. For my part in the 30 years since I stood in front of Tim here, thank you, Grace Fellowship, a people for God.

Steve McKee returns from Costa Rica

STEVE McKEE

Although I am retired from my job at Gorman Naure Center and from teaching classes at Otterbein University, I still help with the Costa Rica field study class. Recently we took 21 Otterbein students to Costa Rica for 13 days as the culmination of their semester-long class on tropical biodiversity. Our focus in the class is to experience various aspects of life in Costa Rica: the culture, food, agriculture, the different eco-regions, sustainability and, of course, the plants and animals. Many of the students are biology and/or zoo science majors, so they had a keen interest in any form of life.

In our travels, we visited the capital (San Jose), Irazu Volcano, a farm devoted to sustainable agriculture, an exciting farmer's market, an animal conservation center, an agricultural co-op of several families, a pineapple plantation, the world-famous Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, a forest canopy tour, a recycling center, and a tribe of indigenous peoples. The native Indians picked up the students in their dugout canoes and took them an hour upriver to their village for three days of experiencing a simpler life!

A highlight for me was getting to know some college-age students. We all enjoyed the many birds (134 species recorded!), the howler monkeys, the sloths, and the night hikes. Attached are some photos from the trip.



Blue-crowned Motmot



Howler monkey



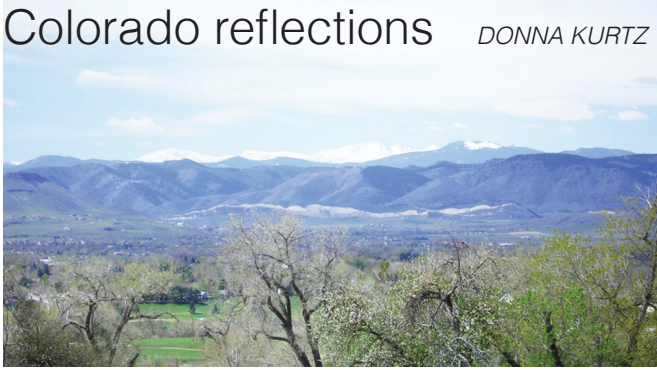
Three-toed sloth

JUNE 2018

- 2** Paintball in Mt. Gilead. \$15, includes lunch. Contact Jon Vega. (Grades 6 to 12)
- 3** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on Ps. 104 Pentecost. Communion. 🍷🍷
- 10** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on Ps. 8. Trinity Sunday.
- 17** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on Ps. 31.
- 24** Elder Robert Key preaching on Ps. 80 Communion. 🍷🍷
- 24-29** Youth For Christ renting the building.

Tentative Coming Events: July 28: Women of Grace Progressive Picnic, Sept. 9: Community Celebration, Sept. 29: Harvest Party.

Colorado reflections DONNA KURTZ



It's a long drive (especially through K..a..n..s..a..s), but we decided to retrace half of our honeymoon trip when we had driven out to Mt. Ranier in Washington State 57 years ago. (The Truman and Eisenhower Libraries were well-worth seeing enroute.) I had a piano judging job in Denver and there were numerous relatives in the area that we hadn't seen for twenty years. Off we went to an Airbnb in CO.

One of our favorite times was a Sunday morning service at Wellspring Church in Englewood, CO. This is an Anglican church in the Diocese of Rwanda, the African country which has become so well known for the forgiveness extended after the genocide. Numerous American churches in the Episcopal denomination have affiliated with the Rwandan Anglican Church.

This church service ended with a Rwandan benediction which we loved. (We actually found this later online!) Here it is:

Leader: All our problems

ALL: WE SEND TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST!
(*emphatically pointing each time to the cross*)

Leader: All our disappointments

ALL: WE SEND TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST!

Leader: All the devil's works

ALL: WE SEND TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST!

Leader: All our hopes

ALL: We SET ON THE RISEN CHRIST!
(*emphatically pointing upward to Jesus*)

The next Sunday we were in CO. Springs and went to our granddaughter's church, New Life Downtown. They used the same benediction. It would be wonderful to use it here!



Sing!

INTERVIEW BY STEVE GUTHRIE

Ed's Note: Forty million people sing "In Christ Alone," which was written by Keith & Kristyn Getty who call for filling our entire lives with the songs of the Lord.

With so many difficult issues facing the church today, why give special attention to congregational singing?



Keith and Kristyn Getty

As evangelicals, we take the Bible as our authority. And when we look at the Bible, we find that actually, the second most common command is to sing. It wouldn't come up that often if it weren't extremely important to God. Yet when Kristyn and I started studying this, we realized we couldn't find good books on singing for ordinary people.

In 2013, we did a series of leadership lunches where we would ask the participants, "What's the first question you ask about music in church?" And we got a whole range of answers, from production in musical style to personality to presentation. But not one person asked, "How did the congregation sing?" And so we find ourselves in a peculiar culture where what is primary—singing—has become secondary, and what is secondary—all of these other concerns—have become primary.

Why do you devote so much space to the idea of families singing together? If you look at the Puritans, they really understood the importance of family worship. My wife always describes congregational worship as a Sunday feast that we prepare during the week. Families that sing in family devotions or have music playing around the house, tend to sing well on Sunday. The Puritans used to meet on Wednesdays to begin preparing for Sunday worship. Our culture may not be structured for that level of commitment but we have the technology to fill our homes with songs. (*Christianity Today*, 9/17, p. 80, re: book *Sing! How Worship Transforms Our Life, Family, Church.*)

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