

Leadership Training - Light

By Kevin Cody

"You are the light of the world," Jesus told His disciples - and then He took them on a crazy adventure of following Him, becoming more like Him, and learning exactly what it would mean to be the light of the world.

This summer, 75 students, primarily from Ohio State but also from 4 other schools, spent 8 weeks as part of an intensive Leadership Training (aka "LT") program, right here in Columbus, Ohio!

We ate together. Many of us lived together (21 students lived in a rented fraternity house!). We learned to share the Gospel together. We read the Bible together, and even tried to memorize the Sermon on the Mount (Jesus' first major speech) together! We served together.

We challenged each other to live more like Jesus. We learned what it meant to be a community of grace, and what it meant to be a community sent out on a mission for Jesus.

One of the most important ways we're praying God will use LT is that each participant - students, but also the leadership - would be stretched in their character, their understanding of the Bible, and their ability to influence others for Jesus. So, numerous student participants who had never led any sort of spiritual community before were challenged to step up and lead, and over 20 of them led small groups or even larger communities for the first time. On top of that, staff stepped into new roles, ranging from coordinating a house full of college students, to teaching and leading an evangelism equipping program.

Jesus is the one who transforms lives, and the program itself is just a program - but the lives we saw changed through all of this are collectively the reason we do LT. Students confessed addictions, and repented. Some shared deep parts of their lives with others for the first time ever. And many shared their faith for the first time ever! Our prayer is that these students will go on to be the Light of the World, just like Jesus said, in their classes, their dorms, and eventually, their workplaces and families. That's what LT is all about! ■



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Germany - Sharing the Gospel

BY LISA SCOTT

I was privileged to travel with a team of 12 people to Germany this past May. We took 6 students from h2o with us. We first visited Berlin and spent several days at Humboldt-Universität engaging students in conversation. Two conversations stuck out to me the most while there. One was with a gal named Nora. She was agnostic. Unlike most students we talked with, she seemed to have thought through her beliefs. She said she understood why people would find hope in religion, but personally she had never encountered God and felt doubtful she ever would. She said she could not prove or disprove His existence. Another was Sophie. She had gone to an evangelistic school, but did not seem to have a real grasp of the Gospel and what it means to have a relationship with the Lord. However, she recently said she had started reading the Bible. We got to share the Gospel with her, and encouraged her to read the book of John. She said she would spend time thinking about all we shared, and I pray the Spirit has moved in her heart through the reading of His Word.



I loved all the history you could see through out the city of Berlin. You don't have to search for it, it's all around you as you walk through the city. It was important for us to see because the history is very harsh and sobering. It explains a lot about the current spiritual atmosphere in Berlin and Germany.

We also spent time with Rock Berlin, a church in the Great Commission Europe network. They are a church that has faced a lot of adversity and discouragement in the past few years. There are currently about 12 members, and they meet in the pastor's living room. We were thankful to be able to worship with them and blessed by a delicious German cookout they made for us after! I think we were all humbled in our interactions with them, at how accessible Christians are to us in the US. The members of the Rock expressed feeling very alone in their city. We were thankful to get to spend time with them, but sad it had to be for such a short time. (continued on page 3)

Russia - Orphans

BY MIKE MALONE

I love going to Russia because we get an opportunity to visit with orphans and widows and help them in their affliction just like James writes about in his epistle. Some of the orphans we interacted with were experiencing life outside of the orphanage for the first time. They are trying to figure out how to cook, clean, work a job or go to school. During this time they are vulnerable to getting involved in drugs, alcohol, and crime. We were able to come during this important time and share the gospel and the love of Christ!



This year we visited three different Orphan's Tree ministry centers located in major city centers outside of Moscow. At each center we were able to teach some life skills, share some Bible passages and share our faith through our testimonies. Through this we were able to build relationships and get in deeper conversations. Everyone on the team was able to build a strong relationship with one of the orphans. Dak and I were able to dive into the gospel more with Jenya. We talked about Jesus' desire to be his Lord and Savior through sharing verses from the book of Romans. Jenya had a lot of questions ranging from the sinfulness of man to what we believe about saints. When we left he was considering his decision to follow Christ, please pray for him! ■

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Summer Team - 1 Peter 2:9

BY KYLE RIESENBERG

As h2o has grown over the past seven years there have been more and more students that decide to stay on campus or in Columbus through the summer. Our hope is that over the summer students would continue to pursue Jesus in the context of a gospel centered community. To help facilitate that for the people that stay on campus we have our h2o Summer Team. During the school year h2o has 17 campus teams, or missional communities focused on reaching out to a specific area on campus by living out Act 2:42-47. Over the summer everybody that is still on campus from the 17 teams comes together to make one big Summer Team! We spent the summer engaging with our identity in Christ, seeking to find rest, joy, and peace in Him! The verse that we focused on all summer was 1 Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." Each week we engaged with the significance of this verse, and what it says about who we are in Jesus!



We had our annual Summer Team Retreat. It was a quick 28 hour getaway in early June. The focus of the retreat was two fold: First, we wanted the students to connect relationally with other people on the retreat since a lot of us didn't know each other. Also, we teamed up with hundreds of other college students with ForColumbus to serve the Columbus community. On Saturday, we partnered with Stowe Mission to reach out and engage the people living in the surrounding area. It was a great opportunity for us, as a Summer Team, to live out being on mission

Germany - Sharing the Gospel (continued from page 2)

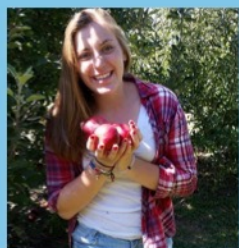
BY LISA SCOTT

We also visited Dresden for a couple of days and while we were there we met a student named Wiebka at a technical university. I really enjoyed our conversation. She was from a rural part of Germany, but had come to Dresden to study. She grew up in a church that was very conservative, and had attended a Baptist church in high school. It seemed like she had not made the decision to commit her life to the Lord, but was definitely more open to thinking about it than other students we met. She asked a lot of questions and we got to tell her about what h2o looks like. She mentioned a campus church she had heard of at her university and thought she might go check it out. I pray the Spirit worked through out our conversation to lead her to do so.

I'm so thankful for the students who came to Germany with me. They did a wonderful job of walking in faith during the whole trip, and really loving the people we got to interact with. I asked a few of them to share a reflection with you from what they experienced on the trip. Sarah Osborne, a recent graduate from Ohio State, shared, "The thing I found most surprising about Germany was the level of loneliness that seemed to exist in the colleges we visited. When we spoke to students, they talked about going out with acquaintances to hang out or going to practices, but none of them seemed to have deep or meaningful relationships with very many people. Please pray that God would knock down some of these walls!" Erika Rodriguez, a senior at Ohio State this year, reflected, "When I was in Germany I was encouraged to see how God is working there and humbled that I could be a witness to what He is already doing. My prayer for Germany is that God would bring those in darkness and those who are seeking Him into His marvelous light, and that ultimately through that, God's name could be known as glorified in Germany."

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ABOUT ME



Lauren

Name: Lauren Boyce

Age: 20

H2O Team: OC Lane
Monday

Home State: New
York

Major: Speech and
Hearing Science

Favorite Color: Mint

Favorite Book: Books
writing by Nicolas
Sparks

Slice of Life

Growing up my family attended the occasional church service on Christmas and Easter, but God was not discussed in our house and I never really gave him much thought. I went to more bar and bat-mitzvahs than I can count, and I didn't know of anyone my age who regularly attended church.

With no desire to go to church, it almost felt like a punishment. I knew that I had to go to Church on Christmas Eve to open my presents on Christmas, and the Easter bunny would not come until after we went to church. I did not pay much attention during the few services I went to, and definitely did not realize everything Jesus had done for me.

I struggled to live a two sided life: on one hand I was the over achieving straight A student that played varsity sports and was president of 3 clubs, and then I was also this girl who would sneak out at night, to drink and smoke with friends. I always compared myself to others and felt the need to try to be the best at everything- a feat that was simply impossible.

As I looked at colleges I had no clue who I was, what I was doing with my life and what my morals were. I visited Ohio State and simply fell in love. It just felt right, had everything I could imagine and I loved it. A google search had me convinced that speech and hearing would be a pretty cool major, and I knew I needed a fresh start away from my old friends, as scary and exciting as that was. At this point, I didn't believe in God, and I didn't know much about Jesus, but in my mind there was no way someone rose from the dead after 3 days, so I figured he must not exist either.

As I made new friends at school and started to try out new clubs, a friend invited me to a meeting on Thursday night after we met up for dinner, and I figured, sure, why not? To my surprise, there were a couple hundred other people there, and then next thing I knew there was a guy on stage talking about God. That night was the first time I actually listened to what someone had to say about Jesus, and it got me thinking. That year I showed up a few more times, partially because I was curious, but mostly because they went out to eat at Champs after, which was always a good time.

During this time of my life I lived next to a woman and man who went to h2o, I watched as they would talk more about the bible, but I wasn't really sure what they were talking about or how it would make a difference in my life. I was invited to attend h2o church service and small groups but I was in my own little world, and turned down the endless invitations to come.

Halfway through sophomore year that I finally accepted an invitation to go to small group, and it was cool, but we didn't hang out or go to champs after, so there was obviously no reason to go again. The next week I was invited me to small group again, and I didn't understand: hadn't I satisfied her enough by going last week? Why did I need to go again? By the grace of God I decided to go back and actually give it a chance. These girls were so open and welcoming.

They genuinely cared about each other and loved God. The way they spoke about the bible, it wasn't like another textbook from a class like I had first thought; it was something that they knew was true and felt in their hearts.

I started going to h2o and started to see all of the incredible things God was doing at Ohio State. He was transforming lives, getting people through hard times and giving them this joy that simply radiated out of them. Slowly but surely I began to regularly attend small group and church without an invitation, and last summer I accepted Christ as my savior.

Even after accepting Christ, I found myself leading another two sided life: one where I went out and partied and one where I was loving God. I would freely talk about him with some friends, yet I had not even told my other friends or family that I was even going to church on Sundays. It has taken me a while to allow Christ in many different parts of my life, but I am here today to say that I have fully accepted Christ into all aspects of my life.

This isn't to say that I don't still struggle with allowing Christ into some aspects of my life, but I am willingly allowing him to "drip syrup into all of the indented boxes on my waffle" And "let his sauce get all over my spaghetti," If you know either of the metaphors I am talking about.

After accepting Christ as my savior, I have experienced that joy that I first saw radiating out of people at H2O. I know that Jesus died for my sins, and I am not defined by decisions from the past. I know that my identity is in Christ and I am saved. ■