

H2O

CHURCH

UNDISPUTED:

CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF WORSHIP

By Kyle Winters

Fall has been so good here at H2O! God is continuing to move in our midst, and we are privileged to witness the lives of students being changed before our eyes.

We kicked off the school year with a sermon series on worship called "Undisputed", a title VERY familiar to all Ohio State students. (In case you did not know, the Buckeyes were the "Undisputed" national football champs last season.) However, the goal of this series wasn't to get students pumped up for another title run (they need little



encouragement to that end!), but rather to re-envision the church with what we are really created for: to live lives that worship, honor, and revere Jesus. In the midst of a culture that exalts education, performance, success, sports, relationships, the party scene, etc, our dream is that we would have a church family that loves the Lord above all else and is a beacon of light and hope to a rather spiritually bankrupt environment.

We also coupled the "Undisputed" series with the introduction this year's theme verse, which says "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians

2:2). We pray the verse would lay the groundwork for a year marked by growing in our love for Jesus and a deeper understanding of what it means to truly worship Him in every facet of our lives. Also, we are praying that we would see 1,000 people worshipping with us every Sunday morning. Our goal isn't really to see a number of seats being filled, but rather it is the dream that hundreds of college students and recent graduates would be growing in their devotion to the Lord: knowing nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and living lives that honor God in a culture that doesn't hold the Gospel in high regard.

Imagine the Gospel impact of a community of men and women who have the sort of love and devotion for God that their peers do for Ohio State football and academics entertainment and popularity. We really believe the landscape of our church will...

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(pg. 1 continued) ...change as God broadens our view of what worship is and looks like, in turn allowing us to be a greater light to OSU and the city of Columbus. So, while we endeavor to do a lot on campus and in the city to engage people with the Gospel, help young men and women grow in their faith, and live out the core values of our church, we invite you to join us in our hope and prayer that this year we would first and foremost resolve to know Jesus deeply and live lives of worship and devotion to the only one who is worthy of it!



THE WELL

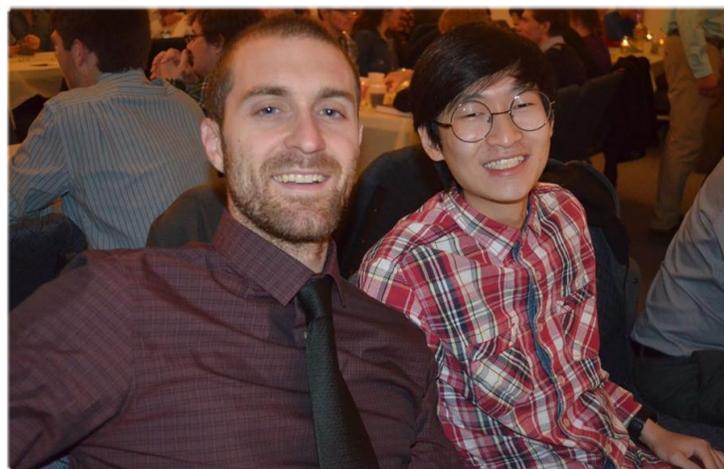
By Kevin Cody

Two things are true of every college student, regardless of their spiritual background, when they enter Ohio State: First, they need a deeper understanding of the Good News of Jesus Christ and to draw closer to Him. Second, they need a community to walk alongside them and encourage them in their spiritual lives.

That's where the Well comes into play! The Well is our "introduction to H2O," specifically designed for and consists of 7 weeks of getting to know Jesus, one another, and H2O. Well participants hear talks from each of the pastors of H2O on core topics of the Christian life: grace, worship, being sent on a mission, and more! We bond with one another in discussion groups that help us put these truths into practice. And we jump right into H2O as if we'd been there for years: every Well participant commits to being part of a small group, to serving, and to meeting with a mentor.

This is our third year of doing the Well, but this year, it's been better than ever! God has blessed with a growing team of leaders for the Well, who are passionate about seeing God grow college students into mature disciples of Jesus. This fall, Maggie King joined Kyle Riesenber and Kevin Cody as a co-leader of the Well, and the team benefited greatly not only from her clear thinking and organizational gifts, but also from her personal care and investment in the lives of the students.

By the time you're reading this, the Well will have wrapped up. But students' lives of following Jesus together with us at H2O are just getting started! We're praying for years ahead of Well participants walking with Jesus, reaching out to people around them, growing in their faith, serving, and more - and our prayer is that this won't just be at H2O, but will be in every church they're part of for the rest of their lives! And with that: Because there are always people who need to know what it means to be disciples of Jesus and to live out their faith in Christian community, it's time for us to start getting ready for the next semester of the Well!



INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Visit our website at www.oh2o.org, or email us at info@mail.h2osu.org for more information regarding H2O.

FALL RETREAT

By Abby Lewis

On the weekend of October 23-24, about 330 students from Ohio State (the most we've ever had at one retreat!) gathered at Camp Cotubic (with about 200 others from University of Cincinnati, Toledo, and Wright State combined) to get away from life's chaos and learn what it means to be a renegade for Christ. Here's a brief run-down of how the weekend went... On Friday night we worshipped together and heard a teaching about the enormity of how Jesus has rescued us in the midst of

our intense need and brokenness. On Saturday, we had time outside to spend with the Lord after Pastor Jon Shah challenged us to invest deeply in a Christ-centered community. After lunch we had time as teams to connect and be open about what God was doing in our hearts. Then, in the afternoon all of the teams competed in H2O Olympics and had a blast bonding over silly events and lack of athletic skills. At the end of the day, we had a final session of worship and a teaching about the urgency of sharing the gospel with those around us. It was an incredible weekend of fun, bonding, and spiritual growth.

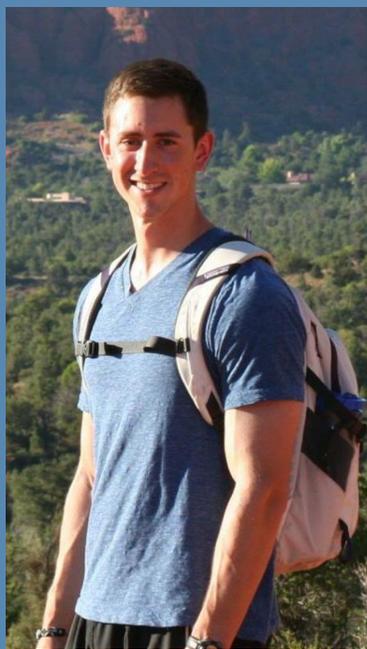


Jesus' power and grace were certainly evident throughout the entire retreat. Friendships were formed over the campfire as students got a glimpse of what a Christ-centered family could look like. Many people opened up during their team's sharing time, and one sophomore thanked her team for accepting and loving her through many tears, sharing that her freshman year was filled with loneliness and sadness. A few nonbelievers who took the step to come to the Retreat were able to hear the gospel explicitly during the teaching on Friday night, and since then have been wrestling with what it means to follow Jesus. Many students said that after Saturday night's teaching they felt convicted to start engaging their non-believing friends in spiritual conversations.

Our biggest prayer is always that the Fall Retreat won't just be another event we put on, but a catalyst for radical life transformation in students that continues long

after the weekend is over, and that's exactly what God has provided so far! Since the retreat, we've seen students take steps of faith to confess sin for the first time, jump into community, start spending time with God, and take ownership of their own spiritual growth. Please join us in praying that students would continue to fall more in love with Jesus and live out their call to be a renegade in this world after what was started at Fall Retreat 2015!

SLICE OF LIFE



ABOUT ME

Name: Brad Potacheck

Age: 22

H2O Team: Off-Campus King
Tuesday

Home State: Ohio

Occupation: Financial Advisor

Favorite Color: Olive Green

Favorite Book: Catch 22 by
Joseph Heller

I grew up in a Christian home with two loving parents who wanted nothing more than to see me succeed. I put my faith in Christ at a young age, and I attended church with my parents and sisters weekly. I was involved in youth group and helped lead a youth ministry for 1st-6th graders. I was seen as the "Christian boy" by my peers, and I surrounded myself surface-level friendships. My best friend identified as agnostic, and I began dating his sister who was a proclaiming atheist. I justified my relationship by saying "God wants me to bring her to know Him!" despite knowing that it wasn't the truth. I knowingly chose to go against my conviction.

Before long, I was addicted to my relationship, and my life became a game of trying to live to please this girl and others while putting on a Christian façade. Then, with two weeks left in my senior year, she broke up with me. Around the same time, my dad was hospitalized with medical issues that nearly took his life, and the pastor of my church admitted to having an affair with a woman other than his wife. This sent me into one of the darkest seasons of my life. I couldn't understand how a God who said he loved me would allow so much pain and confusion in my life and my family's, especially in the middle of what was supposed to be a time of celebration.

I came to Ohio State that fall with the intentions of leaving my past identity in the dust in order to focus on the things that were supposed to make me happy and college awesome – getting drunk, chasing girls, having fun, and trying to pack as many memories into four years as possible. And for the first two years, I did just that. I drank. I partied. I got good enough grades, and I impressed people through playing guitar. Ultimately, the impressions people held about me defined my worth. However, I met a beautiful girl named Sarah Barker who changed my life.

Sarah was a believer and on fire for Christ. By some miracle, she agreed to date me and also somehow managed to get me to go to H2O. I did not immediately connect with anything in the sermons as I retained my anger and bitterness toward God for what had happened in my past. However, after a year of attending H2O and feeling like I should maybe get involved, I joined a men's summer small group. It was in this small group that I first saw what loving God was supposed to look like.

None of the men were afraid of asking deep and meaningful questions to better know each other, afraid of sharing their sin struggles, or afraid of asking each other what God was doing in their lives. At first I was like, "What the heck is this place?? We're guys, we don't talk about this stuff!", but ultimately it was the first time I was exposed to God through relationships. From talking about sports to discussing real issues that men face, I finally felt like this is what I'd been missing my entire walk with Christ. It wasn't an overnight flip of the switch, but God used the community I formed with these men to gradually reconcile me back to Himself.

Following that summer, I felt a new passion in Christ. Jesus awoke something within me, and I felt like I was alive for the first time. As I began having deep conversations with Jesus, I understood that our relationship wasn't just for me to ask for things, or for Him to speak commands at me, but for me to know that God truly and deeply cares for and LOVES me.

Over the next year, I joined the worship band and experienced deep and meaningful friendships within the H2O community, and I graduated in the Spring of 2015 with no idea of what was next. I decided attending LT over the summer would be a good start, and I working as a financial advisor. Although, I loved my work, I couldn't shake the feeling that God was calling me to something else.

Since the end of LT, that call has become clearer and stronger, and I have decided to give up my current career to pursue a career in full-time ministry. My dream is to be the man that another guy who wanders into a small group sees and says "That guy's got something..." and to be the one to explain that it's not "something", it's Jesus. I want to help others come to know Christ and His redeeming power and to help them become a part of His kingdom. I am excited to step forward and obey God's call.

Ultimately, the parable of the Prodigal Son comes to mind when I reflect on my own story. No words can describe my joy as I acknowledge God's eagerness to accept and recognize me as His son despite my brokenness. However, Psalm 116: 7-9 comes pretty close:

"Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you. For you, Lord, have delivered me from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling, that I might walk before the Lord in the land of the living."