

THE GLOBE

Spring 2008

News for the Passport World



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A Revival Meeting

by Colleen Burroughs



If you say the word “revival,” at least where I live, it conjures up images of tent meetings, sweaty-yelling pastors, packed pews and guilt-ridden sobs of repentance. Even if you have never been to a revival it’s a word my faith community has become a bit suspicious of over the years.

That being said, I have just come from a revival. It wasn’t billed that way. It was just a meeting that happened to turn into a revival. There was no tent, no sweaty pastors (I wasn’t that close). There were packed seats: sixteen thousand of them in an Atlanta arena. Thirty distinct groups had gathered to talk about history and reconciliation.

There was a list of things we would never agree on completely as a group. Things like women’s

roles, Biblical authority, sexual orientation, worship styles. But there was one thing that we all shared in common. We were all followers of Jesus. We also agreed that following Jesus meant loving the poor and swimming upstream against injustice both local and global. I sang with abandon. I wept, not just because the speakers were great. I hear a lot of great speakers. I listened for hours (long ones!) but never cared to notice how overtime the service was. **I sat amongst faces that looked nothing like mine and found myself standing up spontaneously beside them in agreement.**

It wasn’t just me. Without exception, if you ask anyone who went to this gathering of Christians they will tell you it

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Introducing... *Our Directors!*

by Marnie Fisher-Ingram

We wanted to take the opportunity to allow you to meet our talented PASSPORTkids!, PASSways and PASSPORT YCM team Directors! Combined together they have 16 years of summer experience with us. As impressive as that is, it speaks highly of the talent each of these individuals bring to the plate for the coming summer. To give you a jump-start, here is a taste of who they are:

Ann Elizabeth McInvale PASSPORTkids! Director

Working her fourth summer with us is Ann Elizabeth, originally from Orlando, Florida, and a recent graduate of Samford University. She has spent the past year living and working in Birmingham as a Kindergarten Teacher. Ann Elizabeth says that the kids are what continue to bring her back to camp each summer. We know that you will love your experience with Ann Elizabeth this summer, as she is a valued leader for us. Ann Elizabeth's favorite book is *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee and she loves Skittles and Diet Coke.



Josh Bailes PASSPORT Director Mercer Team

Josh might be a familiar face to many of you as he has spent 7 summers with us! Josh has spent the past 3 years living and working in Louisville, Kentucky as a youth minister. When asked what he was looking forward to for the summer Josh said, "meeting and getting to know all the wonderful adults who invest so much time in the future." Josh's favorite movies are *Cars*, *Glory* and *Letters from Iwo Jima*. Josh loves dark chocolate and Fresca.



Lauren Colwell
PASSPORT Director
Dillard University
& Gordon College

This will be Lauren's fourth summer working for Passport. Currently a student at McAfee School of Theology, Lauren says she is excited "about being a part of a team of people dedicated to helping youth see and experience the world in a new way." A lover of Twizzlers and Milk, Lauren's favorite movie is Christmas Vacation.



Kent Billingsley
PASSways Director
Wingate University

Serving his third summer with Passport is Kent, a Senior Finance and Management major at the University of Kentucky, who is planning on graduating in December. Kent plans on working in the new field of microfinancing and loans to developing countries, which goes hand in hand with the youth theme of Countdown. Kent hopes the youth will realize this summer that "we are standing at the door of the greatest opportunity to change the world with our voices by uniting as one." Kent loves to read Microfinance books and enjoys Snickers, Sour Skittles, and Sprite.



Marnie Fisher-Ingram is Coordinator for both the Youth Camping with a Mission teams and Episcopal Mission Exchange.

What your kids are buying this summer?

There will be the usual t-shirts, hats and water bottles of course, but what will really change the world is the money campers will spend on the world.

PASSPORTkids! will be empowering welcoming hugs, English as a second language classes and open doors to international newcomers through their gifts. They will be creating welcome bags and special surprises for children whose families are new to America.



Teenagers that come to camp this summer will be turning on lights in dark classrooms in Liberia at Ricks Institute. A power system of solar panels will be put in place over the roof of the library. It will channel the power of the



sun down through the ceiling and transform itself into the energy of young minds learning how to lead a nation back from civil war.

Water bottles and t-shirts cost a few bucks. It gives campers something to remember their week of camp and helps us offset the cost of programming. But the offerings your students generously come to camp ready to give make a lasting impact on the world in the name of Christ.



Our Face on Facebook

by *Jessi Fowler Bailes*



Have you ever heard the phrase, “Oh my gosh! Did you see what Johnny wrote on Suzie’s wall?” or “I’ll tag you in these pics!” or something similar and been rendered totally clueless? You are not alone! For those of you who are still unfamiliar with or scared to encounter what seems like just another Internet monster to tackle, let me give you a little background about this online community. Facebook is a social networking web site. Wikipedia (an online dictionary) defines this as, “a place for groups of people who share interests and activities or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others.” Launched in February of 2004, Facebook was originally created just for students at Harvard University to network with other Harvard students. Facebook then expanded to all colleges and then eventually opened up to everyone who is age 13 and above with the prerequisite being an email address.

So when Passport asks the question, “Where are the youth these days?” and, “How do we connect with them?” the overwhelming response is Facebook. I know that the Internet seems scary and rightfully so. This virtual realm should be approached with caution. However, how can we know what we should

fear if we know nothing about it? This is why it is so important to be involved in this new wave of social networking. It’s time for those of us who just close our eyes and wish it away to take a peak and realize the inevitable... it’s not going away! By learning how this “monster” works, you can know how to connect with your youth in a new way, find a common language, and help them proceed with caution in practical ways such as knowing how to use their privacy settings.

Passport wants to meet youth where they are. We want to be connected with them and give them a venue to be connected with us. Therefore, Passport joined Facebook! Passport is represented in several ways on Facebook. There are Passport “Groups,” “Fan Pages,” and even a “Causes” page that promotes and supports Passport’s water project, Watering Malawi.

Our hope is that youth will find a “place” or maybe a resource where they can come and be themselves. They will find friends their age who journeyed through the camp experience with them and who are perhaps struggling with the same doubts and questions about faith and God in everyday life. We also like to build excitement and anticipation about the summer!

Global



Decorate your profile page & add some Passport Flair!

We have done this by posting videos of staffers who give their own “shout out” to the Passport Facebook community. Facebook is also a place where we will announce fun things like the Dance and Rec Party themes!

This too can be a place for YOU to see what Passport is up to! We want you to be involved and to use us as a resource. If you already have a profile then make sure you search for the Passport Group and the Passport Fan Page and join in the fun of this online community! You should also befriend

the “Passport Camps” profile. If you don’t already have one, bite the bullet and get yourself a Facebook profile page! The website is www.facebook.com. If you need help ask one of your youth. If you are still stumped, you can always call the Passport Office, ask for me (the Facebook Queen), and I will talk you through the process! Totally overwhelmed?? That is ok! We will walk through this together.

Jessi Bailes is one of Passport’s Interns. Be sure to look for Jessi this Summer! She is the Mission Project Coordinator at Mercer.

was a rare and amazing spiritual experience. God is always among us, but most of the time we are too busy sitting in our comfort zone to experience that reality.

Passport has tried over fifteen years to hire teams and administrators that reflect the diverse picture of the family of God. If you’ve tried it, it’s hard. People are different. Historical decisions have driven wedges of distrust and distance between populations that might otherwise have had successful community. But attending this meeting and celebrating the beauty of all God’s children, the textures of diversity, the richness of traditions, the giftedness that is no respecter of persons... I am renewed and thankful.

So here is my testimony. I am re-committed to love and follow Jesus and to share that love with a hurting world. I am also convicted to continue to walk toward reconciliation with my brothers and sisters in Christ, so that we can together more closely resemble the family of God.

Colleen Burroughs, Vice-President of Passport, Inc. recently attended the New Baptist Covenant Celebration 2008.

Keeping in Touch

by *Mark McClintock*

Most of the administrators in the Passport national office have served in local churches around the country. We love children and youth! We are passionate about providing strong, memorable, and Christ-centered opportunities for students to learn, grow, and serve. At the same time, we recognize that it is the church and parish leaders who are nurturing this growth over many weeks, months, and years. The difference Passport can make depends on a healthy partnership with youth and children's ministers, who have their fingers on the pulse of young people's needs today.

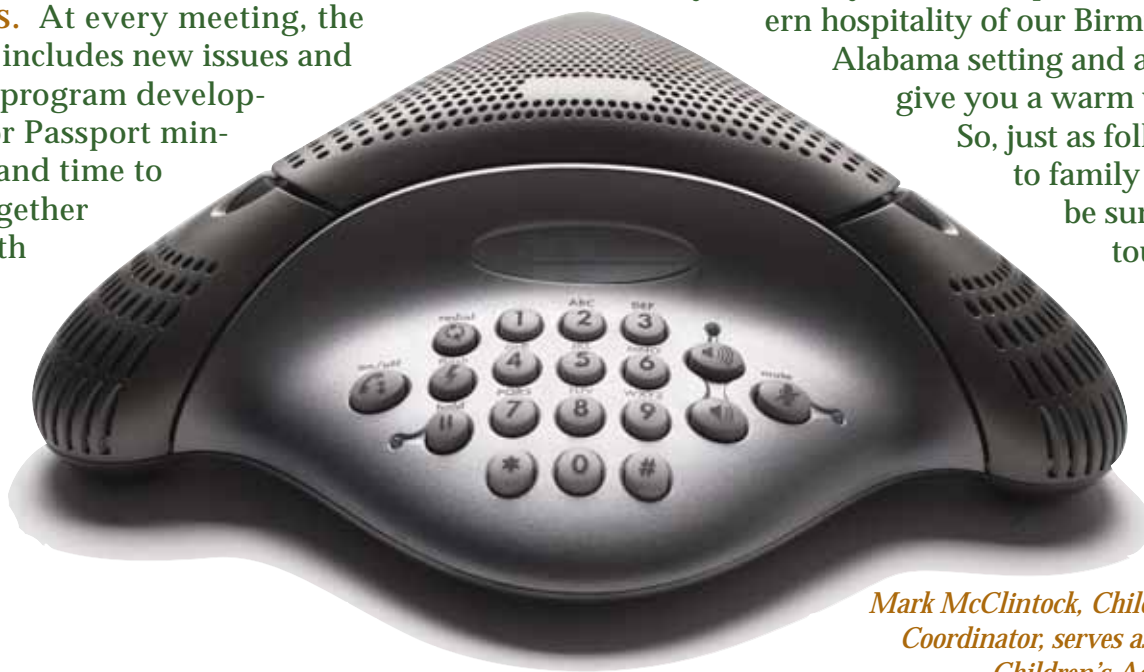
From the beginning, Passport has relied on these leaders' input through evaluations, conversations at regional and national events, and other forms of feedback. This year, we're going a step further in our effort to "keep in touch" with what's really happening in churches by creating two Advisory Councils—one for Children and one for Youth. **Each council meets by teleconference three times a year—Winter, Spring, and Fall—as well as corresponds by e-mail and Facebook groups.** At every meeting, the agenda includes new issues and trends, program development for Passport ministries, and time to pray together for youth

and children, as well as for the world and the work of Christ around the globe. Topics for lengthier discussion show up on our Facebook bulletin boards. Our hope is that these Advisory Councils will help us equip churches and church leaders to do their ongoing work, as well as keep Passport on the cutting edge of student ministry.

The ministers who have been invited to serve on these councils represent a variety of regions, denominations, and church demographics. Required to have participated in Passport camps for at least two consecutive summers, they agree to a two-year term of service. Each year, we will rotate new members onto the council. These folks want to share your input with us as well, so watch for them to be introduced this summer when you're at camp. They'll be eager to hear about your experience and ideas.

The Youth and Children's Advisory Councils together form one more channel for us to hear from you and provide for your needs. Of course, Passport always enjoys seeing and hearing from you directly. We like to practice the Southern hospitality of our Birmingham, Alabama setting and are eager to give you a warm welcome.

So, just as folks here say to family and friends, be sure to "keep in touch, y'all!"



Mark McClintock, Children's Programs Coordinator, serves as the chair of the Children's Advisory Council.

and i danced...

by Allan Burton



Now, since I work with youth, you might not think that to be a great feat. I mean, youth like to have fun, and dancing, especially in this day and age, can be a big part of

it. But for a 37 year old who considers himself overweight and pretty self-conscious, dancing is a pretty big step – just picture Kevin James' (from *The King of Queens*) character in the movie *Hitch*. Yeah, that's me. I know, I know, as a youth worker, I find myself weekly counseling someone with the words, "Be yourself! Don't worry about what others think. It's what you think about yourself that counts." And then, just as often, I find myself coming up with millions of reasons why I should forget practicing what I preach and just go stand on the sidelines.

And yet, in Liberia, *I danced!*

Don't be discouraged, though. This is not some crazy story about an over the hill youth leader with some link to an even crazier YouTube video. Stick with me a little further and you will see that my dancing has a lot less to do with me and a lot more to do with the people I met in Liberia – their uninhibited can-do spirit, their belief in themselves, and their love of a God who sustains them.

When the PASSPORT *Liberia* Team arrived in Monrovia, Liberia after 2 days of travel, the 6 of us realized that none of the luggage – personal or camp supplies – had made the journey with us. Having planned out every aspect of the trip for months and identified and gathered the specific supplies to match the plan, it was extremely disappointing that here we stood, on the brink of a potentially wonderful camp experience, with nothing to show for all the work that had been done. And as we stood for 2 hours in the Monrovia airport, filling out individual paperwork for each of the 16 pieces of our lost luggage, the last thing I wanted to do was dance. However, the air of excitement on the campus of the Ricks Institute, created first of all by the 10 Liberian staffers who had been anxiously awaiting our arrival and secondly by

the anticipation of a community who longed for a camp experience that promised hope for youth, lifted our spirits and gave us new life.

It was with that new life that camp began the very next day in celebration. And since we were just one short day away from New Year's Eve, we combined Passport's camp experience with Liberia's tradition of Watch Night celebration and had the best New Year's Eve party imaginable. *And we danced* – around a campfire – into the night – with joyous song and uplifted spirit.

What I quickly noticed about the people we met was how comfortable they were with themselves – and therefore with others around them. It was not uncommon to see individuals walking around campus holding hands – both male and female alike – as a sign of friendship. And this confidence carried over into worship where voice and movement and rhythm combined to create an offering to God like none I had experienced. And I became more confident. *And I danced!*

You know, I couldn't help but change. I couldn't help but move – my body and my soul and my expectations of what worship should look like and be. *I danced. And you should too!*



Allan Burton, Youth Programs Coordinator, dancing at *Passport Liberia*.



An excerpt from the personal journal
of David Burroughs

I asked (the principle of the Ricks Institute, Olu Q. Menjay) what was Ricks' greatest need. He paused, deciding between a student gym and solar power so that the main admin and classroom building can have electricity. He said, "We need the power. It will give the students pride that they go to a school that has lights in the rooms, and computers that work."

I had a rare opportunity to say, "OK, Olu, let's do it. Passport campers would like to purchase that for you." He was truly overwhelmed. He has been very pleased to have us here working on the ropes course that will help him capacity build down the road. He hasn't asked for anything and I enjoyed his response very much. It is not my money, and we don't have much to give away, but in this context it will make a real difference in a generation of Liberian students - the 15-year-old third graders, 21-year-old seventh graders and everyone in between.

The day ended with a cooling hard rain - I stood in it for twenty minutes - just cooling off and soaking it all in.

Mark 11:23-24 says, "Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done

for you. So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

Reading back over my journal from our September set up trip for PASSPORTLiberia, I am struck by several things - the biggest being my gratitude for being able to partner with Olu and the Ricks Institute. But I offer you two thoughts for your personal meditation:

First, Olu had announced to his teachers that same week that he was going to provide electricity to the main classroom building of Ricks - not having any idea where he was going to get the money. His faith was evident. And God had the answer for him two days later - in the form of an offering this summer from PASSPORT campers. He was very surprised and we were both humbled by the experience.

Second, until this year, I have not spent money on a mission offering project before it was even raised - and it is a practice I don't want to get into. But I have been on a journey of faith that God will provide - and that as we tell the compelling story of the Ricks Institute, our campers will participate in turning on the lights for the students of Ricks.

Where does God need to help you turn on the lights, move mountains, or build bridges? I am learning anew a living faith that risks something big for something good.

David Burroughs is Co-founder and President of Passport, Inc.

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