

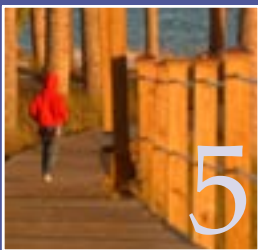
THE GLOBE

Summer 2005

News for the Passport World

d365

Passport launches a daily online devotional series
Melissa Browning
Editor, D365



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During Lent and Advent, Passport's online devotional sites, *Journey to the Cross* and *Following the Star*, saw more than 150,000 visitors come to read daily devotions. These sites had visitors from all over the U.S. and from 91 foreign countries. Visitors came from every major denomination and were both Protestant and Catholic. Even now, as the archives are still on the web, people come each day to find a quiet spot to pray and read scripture.

The overwhelming response to *Journey* and *Following* reminds us of the human longing for quiet, contemplative places that nourish our spirits. Our souls long to stretch, to reach up toward the God we love and be grounded in God's spirit. To find these stretching places, we need healthy, safe spots to struggle through our faith.

These places are particularly important for students who, in the midst of non-stop and changing lives, need a place to center and reconnect with faith. These places are needed not just during Lent and Advent, but 365 days a year.

This September, a dream Passport has been dreaming for a while will become a reality with the launch of d365.

This daily online devotional site will be geared toward students, seeking to provide deeper, holistic devotions, 365 days a year. The goal of d365 is to provide daily devotions with depth. Similar to *Journey* and

Following, students will be led through a contemplative process, which will include scriptures, prayers and a fresh devotional thought for each day. There will even be a place for students to submit their own prayers or poetry, which will be

incorporated into the devotions each month. Our dream is that d365 will be a safe place for students to own their faith through the practice of ancient spiritual disciplines re-imagined with modern, cutting-edge technology.

This site is made possible through a Lilly Grant to the Samuel Project. This grant will allow Passport to continue to reach out to students who have participated in PASSPORT camps and in *Echo*, a Samuel Project event this summer for students who feel called to vocational ministry.



Opening Your Arms to Special Needs

Is your congregation responding well to families representing unique ministry opportunities?

Mark McClintock

Imagine a racially integrated congregation with people of all ages and all socioeconomic backgrounds. Longtime members mingle with newcomers and joyfully greet every visitor. Both women and men are allowed and encouraged to exercise all the gifts God has given them in ministry. Sunday school classes engage in serious Bible study and heartfelt prayer, and worship is a sacred, meaningful time for everyone.



Cherri Stone with her daughter Emily

Into this sanctuary comes a family whose child has special needs. The child depends on a wheelchair for mobility and blurts out comments without heed to time or place. How will this open-minded church respond? Sadly, many churches who otherwise embrace individuality neglect (or worse, reject) persons whose mental or physical abilities are distinctly different. This article is the first of a two-part series suggesting ways your ministry can include children with physical, mental, and behavioral differences.

Special needs can range from neurological symptoms treatable by medication (such as Attention Deficit Disorder), to mobility limitations, to severely restricted mental and/or physical functions. Whatever the degree of need, extra energy and attention are required from the parents and siblings, whose own needs are often shortchanged. One family with a son who has autism and severe mental retardation searched for 12 years before finding a church that would accept them in Bible study, worship, and fellowships. “We’ve politely been told,” says parent Barbara Vinson, “that [a] particular congregation is not equipped to meet our son’s



needs.” Individuals even wrote the family anonymous letters asking them not to return. For any family—let alone one whose emotional, physical, and sometimes financial resources are already strained—such rejection is a terrible blow. The first response a parent needs to hear is, “Welcome to our congregation,” followed by, “Of course, we’ll include your children—each of them—in our ministries.”

The birth of a child with special needs also affords an opportunity for congregations to march where others fear to tread. The parents’ grief is apt to be overlooked. “Unlike a death,” one parent notes, “no one brought a casserole.” Church members can help provide meals, offer to baby-sit siblings, or show up and take care of a household chore while the parents

adapt to their new responsibilities. Waiting for the parent to ask for help or simply avoiding contact only leaves the family feeling overwhelmed and further adrift from the rest of the world.

Parents are fully aware of the frustrations that are an everyday part of attending to a child’s needs. They hear plenty of negative comments from teachers, relatives, and other caregivers. At times, a kind and encouraging word has the effect of lifting weight off weary shoulders.

Early in my ministry, I latched onto a single thoughtful act in a morning filled with impulsive and irritating behaviors by a second grade boy with ADD. When his dad arrived to retrieve him, I mentioned this positive incident. The stunned father replied, “That’s not the report we usually get. What did you do differently?”

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From that moment, the boy's parents and I were able to develop an effective strategy for building the child's self-esteem and nurturing his faith.

In Part 2 of the series, we'll consider some of the



components of such a strategy. Meanwhile, even if you do not currently have children with special needs in your ministry, you can be sure there are families seeking

a welcoming church in your area. Now is the time to prepare for them.



continued from page 1.

Dreams for stretching places are beautiful, spiritual dreams. As partners and participants in Passports ministries, we hope you will join us in helping this dream grow. To spread the word at your church, please email d365@passportcamps.org to request promotional materials. We'll see you online in September: www.d365.org

For a peek at an upcoming d365 devotional, see page 7 - for a devotion written by Nick Foster, the Director of the Samuel Project.

Faithful Partners

Fall Campaign Continues to be Successful

David Burroughs



This past fall, Passport embarked on a modest goal of raising \$150,000 from faithful churches who have attended Passport for at least six of the last twelve years. The money given by these churches will help in two directions. First, a reserve fund for Passport to use in tight financial times, and second, to purchase expensive camp equipment so as not to increase the camper registration fees.

To date, we have had 17 churches agree to become *Faithful Partners* with Passport and they have given and/or pledged over \$46,000 – almost one-third of our goal!

We are thrilled that with just a letter of request and a packet of information, 17 of our churches have joined on. Seventeen churches represents over 20% of those who faithfully attend Passport's camps. Now we look to the other 80% to come on board and do their share! If your church has come regularly for several years to Passport, you can expect a call in the coming weeks from either David Sherwood, honorary chair of the *Faithful Partners* Campaign, or myself, to see if we can assist you in bringing a packet of information to the right committee at your church.

Please prayerfully consider if your missions committee, endowment committee, or even your youth or children's ministry committee, might consider a gift to support the camps that have become part of your church's tradition.

I would be happy to send you a packet of detailed information about Passport and about our request. Simply call me at 800-769-0210 or email me at david@passportcamps.org.

Teenage Rites of Passage

The Art of Celebrating Noteworthy Moments

Allan Burton

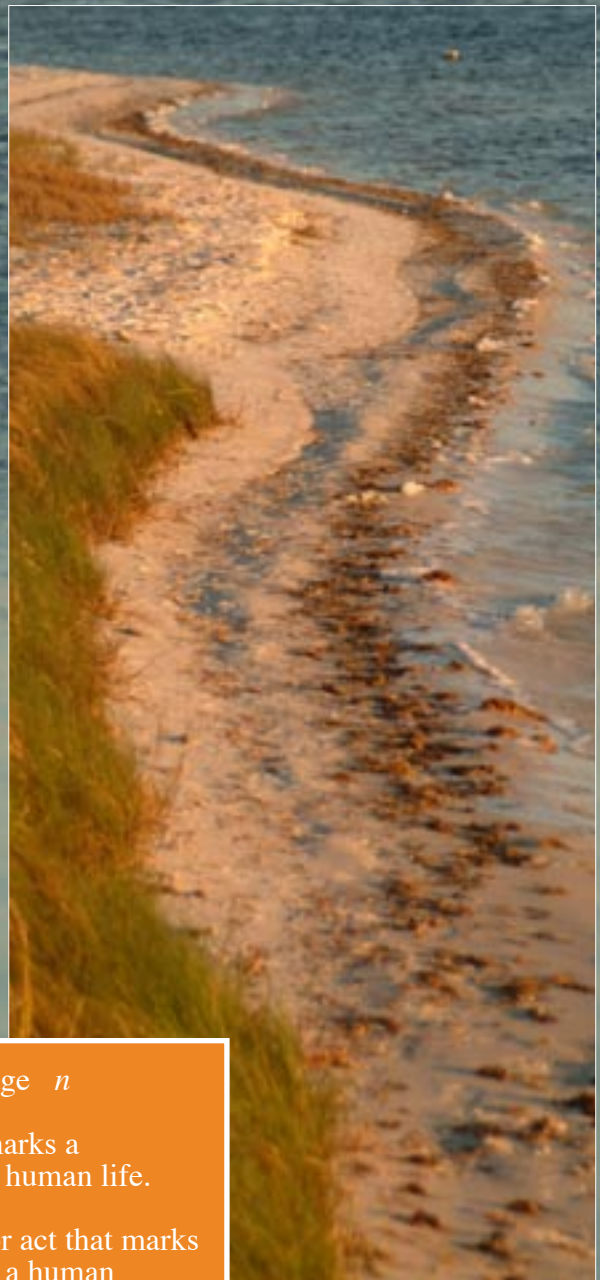
Camp Coordinator

We don't celebrate enough!

When discussions about youth occur in religious circles, often an air of negativity permeates the debate. Youth are seen as lost sheep, too mixed up in destructive things like drugs, alcohol, and sex – too rebellious toward the established authorities in their lives like school, parents, and church – or just simply too busy! As a developer of ministries for youth, I unfortunately find myself caught up in this negative line of thinking about adolescents today as well – mostly when I read about another violent act in a local school. The truth, however, is that youth have been struggling with the pressures and influences around them throughout history. The youth of today are just not that different from those of yesteryear. One might argue that the pressures and influences have changed, but to that I would respond with, “Yes – but the struggle is the same.”

Kelly Kilmer, in an article for SheKnows.com entitled, *Rites of Passage in Adolescence*,

states, “Every day, it seems, someone says teenagers are so different than they used to be. We hear about drug and alcohol use, violence, disrespect, and a myriad of other ills that are affecting our adolescents, including



Definition: rite of pas-sage *n*

1. An event or act that marks a significant transition in a human life.
2. A celebratory event or act that marks a significant transition in a human life which focuses the individual on personal accomplishment and future responsibilities.

low self-esteem, anger, depression, and family problems. But it seems that little is said about how to create a positive transition from adolescence to adulthood.” A positive transition can be encouraged when the parents and communities of adolescents practice the art of celebrating significant moments in their lives and help focus teens on the future responsibilities of those accomplishments.

After experiencing several bar/bat mitzvahs of his Jewish friends, David, a new teenager at my church, declared, “Just because I am Baptist is no reason that I can’t have a bar mitzvah!” David is right! And age 13 is not the only age or experience we should celebrate with our youth!

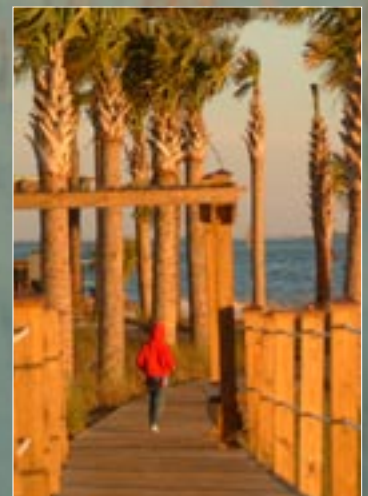
In an article on christianitytoday.com, *Rites of Passage, Finding and Celebrating Significant Life Moments*, Kathy Callahan-Howell writes the following: “Since my family has been graduating from high school and even college for generations, I told my children I’d like to celebrate something else. I’d like to recognize something beyond these accomplishments, like finding a job that really fits them, serving in a ministry that really needs them, selling an invention, or creating a new teaching method.”

Kathy has the right idea. We should get away from only hoisting graduation up on our

shoulders and parading it around like it is the only significant event worth celebrating from pre-school through college. We should instead discover what “makes our youth tick,” what brings them alive, what gives them energy, and then focus that energy into action and celebrate their stages of growth through that activity. Discovering how to do this in a positive way that encourages youth to be an active part of the journey (not kicking and screaming) may be the greatest hurdle.

One last thought....

One of the main issues with which youth struggle is self-esteem. I can’t help but think that if we taught them to slow down and reflect on their accomplishments and experiences a little more often, they might appreciate themselves and their abilities a little more.





Partnership Focus: Africa Exchange

David Burroughs

To understand Africa Exchange, you first you have to know the Harrells.

Sam and Melody Harrell are what I call “real missionaries.” You know the type – hard-core, long-term, stick-to-it folks, whose dedication and commitment both inspire and intimidate – it is unusual to find these people under the age of 45.

I have known Sam and Melody since my seminary days – they were my wife, Colleen’s, friends first. She grew up with them at boarding school while attending the Rift Valley Academy in Kijabe, Kenya. They were the first friends I adopted from Colleen’s past – but quickly, Sam and I found a lot in common and have been working, and sometimes playing together ever since!

Sam and Melody both grew up in East Africa – children of missionaries. After coming to the states for school, they returned to Kenya in several capacities, and currently serve as the directors of Africa Exchange and as field personnel for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship’s Global Missions effort. The Harrells have a deep compassion for the poor, the widows, and the orphans of Kenya that dictates their life’s work.



Africa Exchange is a non-profit organization in the USA and in Kenya. A reading of their mission statement will tell you that Africa Exchange is about:

Exchanging information, ideas and resources across cultures to promote mutual understanding and respect, resulting in works of Christian compassion among the poor and marginalized in sub-Saharan Africa.

This type of commitment can be seen in Africa Exchange’s intensely authentic ‘field trips’ that Sam and others pioneered over a decade ago. Now known as *Mission Immersion Experience*, these visits include homestays with Kenyans that give participants a unique perspective on life and living in East Africa. These interactions allow for an exchange that is honest, and life-changing for both the visitors and the Kenyans they encounter.

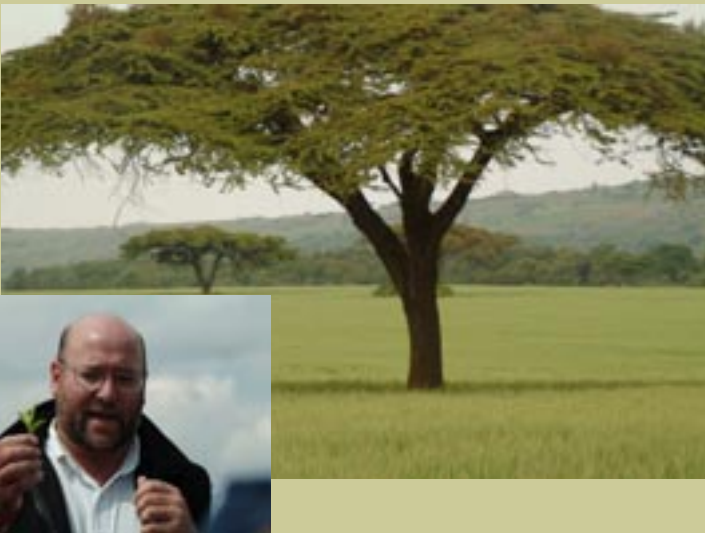
I am honored to serve on the Board of Directors for Africa Exchange and am thankful for

Passport’s commitment to assist and extend this work in coming years. Passport partners with Africa Exchange to produce PASSPORT Kenya – one of our international camping experiences. This August, we have 36 youth from the USA who will travel to Nairobi, Kenya for a week of camp with 30 Kenyan teenagers. It is definitely an exchange

as these groups quickly meld into one group of Christ followers, dealing swiftly with cross-cultural issues that would seem ominous to most adults.



To learn more about Africa Exchange and to support their work, visit www.africaexchange.org. If you are interested, you plan now to join us for PASSPORT Kenya. The dates will be early August 2007 and registration will open in November of 2006.



Passport partners with Africa Exchange through PassportKenya, a camp for Kenyan and U.S. students, and through sponsoring things like the construction of this nursery school in 2003. The Harrell's work in Kenya will be the *PASSPORTkids!* camp mission focus for 2006.



Practically Hopeful

Romans 4:13-21

Nick Foster

Abraham was “already as good as dead” when he had to come to some conclusion about the word he had gotten from the Lord concerning his legacy. God said his wife Sarah was going to have a baby boy.

He was a hundred years old for goodness’ sake! Most parents are ready for the empty nest by the time they are in their mid-forties. Abraham and Sarah were being confronted by a future that had them barely able to toddle from place to place themselves by the time their first-born would be taking his first steps.

But still, practically dead, Abraham chose – hoping against hope – to believe God and begin work on a nursery instead of a coffin. It didn’t make sense, of course; it was totally impractical – silly really. But that is the nature of a hope that responds to God’s leading.

Sometimes we have to decide whether we will be hopeful or not. In those times we might feel practically hopeless, almost at the end of our faith. But we do well to remind ourselves that the God who defeated death in Jesus holds a future for us that means new life. In even our most difficult times, that can help us to be practically – as good as – hopeful.

God, help me to have hope. I trust that you will care for me even when my faith is faint. When my belief is at its weakest point, help me to know that you have my future in your hands. Amen.



Why Use Mission Exchange?

We live in a world of Google hits and fast information. In an instant, we can find plenty of places that would love to have our students come and spend a week on mission. But there's something beautiful to finding a process that's tried and true. Mission Exchange offers more than a free service connecting your student group to a mission project site, it also offers the tools and the help to get your team there, and a partnership that makes your experience more meaningful.

Mission Exchange does this by connecting student groups with sites we've known and loved a long time, such as Touching Miami with Love, a ministry reaching out to families in the urban Overtown community of Miami, or Sowing Seeds of Hope, helping rural communities in Perry County, Alabama. By using mission sites who have constantly received

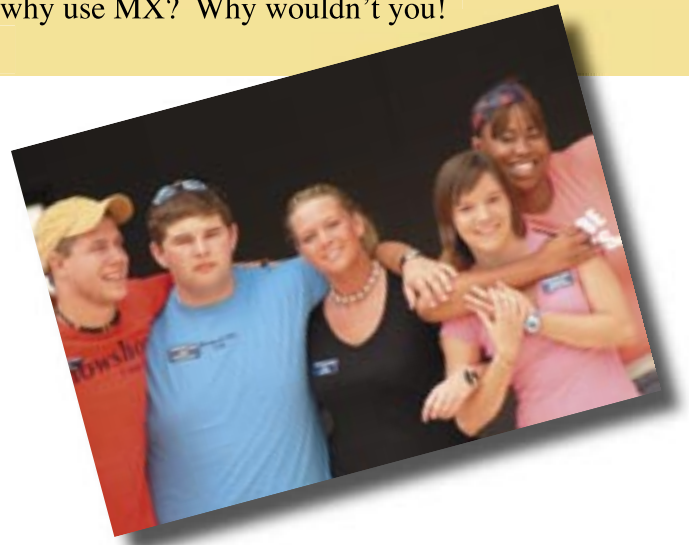
great evaluations from MX teams, we can send groups out with confidence, knowing they'll have a great experience.

In the same way, Mission Exchange provides a service to the ministries we partner with by finding great groups to fill their missions weeks, and by sending groups who come prepared. To help in their preparedness, Mission Exchange asks student groups to complete a four session Bible Study, dealing with issues such as cross-cultural communication, servanthood, and missions, before going on their trip. These studies are provided in the MX manual along with other great helps for planning, training and fundraising. The manual is provided free of charge and has three levels, which means a group can go with MX for three years before repeating the Bible Studies. MX also has plans underway to develop a website where groups can post pictures and updates from their trip while on the road.

So why use MX? Why wouldn't you!



Snap Shots from Camp! Passport Youth Team at Spalding University in Louisville, Kentucky



The GLOBE

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