Two sides to every coin...

This is an elementary principle, right? We show kids a coin, and they automatically flip it over to see the other side. They notice the difference, but realize it’s only one coin. An elementary concept, yet we adults often fail to recognize it. Frequently, we see one side of a situation and think we are seeing the whole. A coin is easy to hold, see, and manipulate physically. Circumstances and experiences? Not so much. But...there are different sides, different perspectives, and different outcomes.

Living by faith usually means acting without seeing the whole ‘coin.’ God calls us to trust Him even before revealing Side 2. He sometimes gives us glimpses; He certainly gives us promises. But He doesn’t often let us see the whole thing ahead of time. Many times, Side 1 is completely unappealing, frustrating, or just plain hard. Spiritual maturity means realizing “there’s more to this…” and trusting that Side 1 is not the whole thing.

Here are some great examples from the Bible:
Joseph— Side 1: He was sold into slavery by those who should have loved and protected him.
Side 2: That act became the means by which he got to Egypt and later saved the nation and his family.
Did Joseph have any idea about the future when he was being hauled off in chains? Well, maybe. Remember those dreams he had? I think God gave him a glimpse of Side 2 so that he could walk forth in faith and not despair. When his brothers came to Egypt, he was able to recognize the connection and he discovered the whole situation was from God.
Joseph told them, “Do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.” (Genesis 45:5) The whole ‘coin’ was from God. Even though Side 1 was ugly, it was part of the coin.

If you want Side 2, Side 1 comes with it.
Peter & John— Side 1: They were poor...too poor to have a few real coins for a crippled beggar.
Side 2: They offered what they did have (power through Jesus of Nazareth)...and the formerly lame man got something better than a few coins. (Acts 3:1-10)
Now do you think Peter and John were excited to be so poor? Do you think they were walking around thinking, “I’m glad we have no money so we can offer something better than money!” Umm. No! Yes? Through their time with Christ, God cultivated in them the ability to trust beyond the view of Side 1, to expect there’s an exciting Side 2 they’d get to see at some point. There’s actually a lot more to this story— a lot more 2-sided ‘coins.’ I encourage you to read it and let God grow your faith as He did the disciples (Acts 3:1-4:31).

Jesus endured the cross because of ‘the joy set before Him.’ (Hebrews 12:2) He knew there was a Side 2, and that it was worth enduring Side 1. What promises do we have to hold onto when all we can see is Side 1? If you can’t think of any, there are hundreds throughout the Bible. Some are sprinkled throughout the newsletter too.

Also throughout this newsletter are references to the ‘two sides.’ The concept is more than just taking the bad with the good. It’s about trusting God that there is a Side 2... that there is more to the story...that the whole situation is from Him... and that Side 2 is worth enduring whatever Side 1 is.

This concept is over-simplified, but hopefully that simplicity will help you start ‘flipping’ over the situations in your life. Start looking for the Side 2 of those circumstances in which you’ve been concentrating on Side 1 too long. There are two sides to every coin!

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28

In this world you will have trouble but take heart! I have overcome the world! John 16:33b
Sharing Christ by Serving Others

Reynoldsburg UMC
This church has been serving in Haiti for several years, and we were excited to have them serve through SIF! The four person team built four houses across the valley from Montreal.

Side 1: We were disappointed only a few signed up for the team.
Side 2: The area they worked in was awkward for construction, and there were only a few tents to replace there.
A small team turned out to be just what we needed!

My God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

From the Team Leader: The first thing that stood out for me was the degree of organization. Everything from front-end coordinating, necessary paperwork, Q & A, through final construction (transportation, materials, equipment, logistics, etc.) were seamless and without issue. The local labor is also a well-oiled team. They work well together, are great at instructing novices, and the quality of their work is admirable. Mostly, I found the relationships rewarding. I was amazed at the kindness of everyone at the job-site: missionaries, laborers, and home recipients. I can’t wait to get back to see the friends that were made on last year’s trip. It was a real blessing to be even a small part of such a wonderful mission effort.

Elizabeth Wise

From a Team Member: I have made several other trips to Haiti but never have I felt as at home as I did with SIF. Greg and Cathie are wonderful hosts and the communities we visited embraced us as if we were family. Having the opportunity to touch lives in such a personal and intimate way was a great blessing to our entire team. SIF is changing lives in real time and being a part of that is truly a gift from God. Thank you Greg and Cathie!

CoJocton Nazarene Church
We could hear the sound of the Holy Spirit’s wind rustling through this congregation long before the trip. Time and time again, we received donations from this small, ruralish church— a little here, a little there— to build homes in Haiti. How true is the Haitian proverb: Piti piti zwazo fe nich li...Little by little, the bird builds its nest. In this case it was 26 “nests!” That’s God!! That’s the ‘wind of the Spirit.’ One girl in their congregation had been saving money to buy a trampoline. She gave her savings toward providing a safe, dry home instead. Friends, that is Christ showing up and changing hearts, priorities, and desires! Hallelujah!

This team of 12 was the first visiting group to serve in Village of Grace. They set the tone there for future interactions with teams. Working alongside the Haitian construction crew (who had been building there since July), they quickly communicated a sense of respect and collaboration rather than superiority. Together, the community, Haitian construction crew and the team built 11 houses that week! Praise the Lord!

Creative Team Tip: Each team member wrote their name on several wristbands, then gave them to friends and family to wear as prayer reminders during the trip!

Oct. 24-31, 2015
-Two Sides to the Small Team-

The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.
Matthew 13:33
NewLife Community Church

Cheryl co-led this team of 17 from her home church. They helped Estimè’s construction crew build 11 more homes in Village of Grace. This team worked well together, and worked hard! Most had never experienced a 3rd-world culture and gained a new appreciation for many of their every-day blessings, including restrooms! They celebrated Thanksgiving together with a deeper sense of gratitude. Cathie and the cooks (Linèt and Nina) worked hard to prepare a traditional American meal, which included two turkeys the team carried in!

Ohio Roofing Team (Part 2)

The 18th team of the year came to build the roof for Faith Academy’s chapel. Seven of the men who helped with the cafeteria side roof (April 6-13, 2015) were joined by 8 others to busily cover the chapel.

Surely this is our God; we trusted in Him and He saved us.
This is the Lord, we trusted in Him; let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.
Isaiah 25:9
**Sharing Christ by Serving Others**

**Sharonville UMC**

Sharonville faithfully sends a team every year. Last year, the team began replacing the tents in Montreal. They got to finish replacing them there this year! They built the final 4 homes.

Notice the mountainous terrain in Montreal.

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**A YEAR IN MONTREAL**

**70 Tents Replaced!**

**January 12, 2015 to January 14, 2016**

We completed our first Tarp to Tin project in January, helping transform the hillside community of Montreal. We pray the spiritual seeds we planted throughout the time there will grow and change the community even more.

**12 teams served in Montreal**

- 127 team members from 27 churches
- 8 states (FL, GA, IN, KY, MI, NY, OH, PA)

Every house was prayed over and dedicated to God.

- The Gospel was shared & Bibles distributed.
- Five teams did VBS activities with the kids.
- Community Leadership was fostered.
- One water well was attempted. No water was found.
- Five men from the area are now employed as our construction crew.

**$84,000 of materials used**

- $37,375 contributed by work teams (45%)
- $46,625 contributed by others (55%)

There are still some tents in Montreal that we chose not to replace. Some are rented out (believe it or not), and we do not want to build for a landlord's profit. Others belong to people who have moved in since we started, likely hoping to get a house themselves. We honored our original agreement with the land owner and community leaders, and so we did not replace those.

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**Two Sides to Three Trips**

**SIDE 1:** Team members Barb, Jane & Judy were in Haiti during the earthquake (2010). They witnessed the fear, loss & powerful devastation.

**SIDE 2:** They relate to the Haitians’ suffering and understand more fully their dramatic life changes which resulted from the earthquake. They rejoiced deeply with the families, both when starting (2015) and finishing (2016) the construction in Montreal.

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We've been praying for additional help in Haiti, and Kris and Kendra have been answers to that prayer! They traveled to Haiti with two of their daughters (Mariya-11 and Kaitlynn-4) on February 9th for a 2 1/2 month period of service. Their daughter Emilee (11) remained stateside with her mother for this period.

Kris works with the teams, overseeing the work project if Greg needs to be elsewhere, run errands, or rest. He’s getting more confident at driving there and has picked up a lot of Creole. Kendra oversees the kids and the household. She’s been asking God to define her role with the ministry, and part of His answer has been to pray. We Americans tend to minimize the importance of prayer, preferring tasks with measurable success. That role of prayer is far more important than any of us realize!

When they’re able to, Kendra and the girls join the teams. They were especially helpful with the mobile medical team. Mariya helped write the name labels for the patients and Kaitlynn made sure the team stayed hydrated…and easily made friends with some of the kids. Haitians are always fascinated by foreign children!

The Kemps return to the US on April 25th, with hopes of serving on a more long-term basis. Please join us in praying for specific direction about the timing and extent of their service with us. To learn more about them and see more pictures, visit their blog: www.spiritedjourney.com.
The Haitian crew began building houses in this tent city on July 13, 2015. They built all the houses in the 2nd and 3rd pictures below (the first 68). Teams helped build 22 more homes before the picture at the end of 2015. Since January 1st, 8 more teams have worked in Village of Grace. There are less than 20 tents left to replace there!

You have given more than $168,000 to help the people who live there. Thank you, and Praise the Lord!!!

Check it Out:
Google Earth Coordinates:
Latitude:18°33'17.33"N
Longitude:72°15'35.24"W

June 30th before we began
September 1st
October 16th
December 31st

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up. James 4:6b,10
Fire... On Feb. 13th, there was a fire at the guesthouse. We had to cancel the team that was scheduled to arrive later that day. That was a hard call for us to make, but was the right decision based on all the cleanup work. We are glad the team was able to reschedule, and we look forward to them coming in May. (There is more about the fire on page 7.)

Midway Church of the Brethren

Feb. 20-27

This team came only 7 days after the fire. Our house was not ready for guests, but we were able to lodge them at a guesthouse nearby. They came with hearts to serve, and a desire to make an impact! Their main project was to replace the tarp church in VofG (see page 8). They were amazed at how much the community members wanted to help! When the church was finished, the community held a spontaneous worship service. The team could clearly see their excitement about the church and their love for the Lord.

Some team members spent time helping with the post-fire cleanup at the guesthouse. The team also built 3 houses. Bensons noted this team was particularly encouraging to them, as they came in the middle of the very tiring fire cleanup. As Aaron and Hur held up Moses’ hands to ensure victory (Exodus 17), this team buoyed up Greg & Cathie, encouraging them in a time of exhaustion.

The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:28b-31

Community Bible Church

March 3-10

Even as this team of 20 flew in, Bensons were finalizing details at the house, preparing to host their first team post-fire. Cathie had sent a list of items to replace, so we were thankful for a large team to carry everything in! They brought in pillows, mattress pads, curtains, lamps and shades… and 12 wall-mounted fans to replace those that had melted from the fire’s heat… and 80 pounds of screws… and of course the normal food supplies! We are grateful for their willingness to be our pack-mules!

During the week, the team built 12 houses in Village of Grace. They also built and stained 20 pews for the new church. The benches were still slightly sticky when they attended church there on Sunday. This team witnessed the salvation of 3 people on Saturday and saw one of the new believers changed through Christ during the Sunday service. A team member reflected:

One thing we experienced today that we probably wouldn’t in the US was a result of a woman accepting Christ. In Haiti, voodoo has a strong hold on the people. They deal with demons and spirits in a way that we don’t. When someone accepts Christ, He can’t fill them with His Spirit if there is an evil spirit in them. So today, we witnessed church leaders casting out demons in Jesus’ name so that this new believer could be free! The congregation sang and prayed through the whole process and at the end, the woman was raising her arms, praising God. She was a new person in Christ! (Erin Richter)

Hallelujah! Read more of this new believer’s story in “A Tale of Two Fires” on page 7. We pray the entire experience was life-changing for each team member.
A Tale of Two Fires...

Just after the board’s approval to build the church, on Feb. 13th, the guard awoke Greg & Cathie because of a fire in the living room! Thankfully the Bensons and their two guests got out safely and put out the fire. The scary event led to increased safety measures and a lot of cleanup! Everything (even everything inside of everything) was covered with smoke and greasy soot. For nearly 3 weeks, the Bensons, Kemps, construction crew, house staff and team members worked to soak, scrub, sand, and paint. Tiring work for sure, but the house is back in order now. That was Fire 1 . . . .

Twenty-two days later, God ‘flipped the coin’ over to reveal the 2nd side, and Fire 2 happened. Keep reading– this is good! On March 5th, a woman from Village of Grace asked to follow Jesus. The next day, after being delivered in church (in the new church building) from demonic presence, she gathered all of her voodoo paraphernalia and had a bonfire! She had some friends burn their fetishes too. That is BIG!!! That was good, holy fire! This is the kind of heart change we’ve been asking for—irrevocable submission to the Lord! Hallelujah!!

Were the 2 fires related? Only the Lord truly knows, but it seems like God allowed Fire 1 because He knew Fire 2 was on the other side of it. Did satan, who came to destroy, even know that we were on Side 2? We praise our all-knowing God, and seek to trust Him beyond Side 1!

Side 1: We can hide nothing! ‘All is laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.’ (Heb. 4:13)

Side 2: Because He sees us fully, He can also clean and purify us fully, making us holy. ‘Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.’ (Psalm 19:12) ‘Wash me and I will be whiter than snow.’ (Psalm 51:7)

East Randolph UMC Mobile Medical Team

March 12-19

We are always excited for mobile medical teams. There is such need for basic care in Haiti, and this small team of 7 (along with the overseeing Haitian doctor) saw nearly 800 patients! They set up the clinic in Faith Academy’s chapel/cafeteria, which had plenty of space to designate areas for each step in the process: waiting, intake, examination, and med distribution. We are grateful for this team’s willingness to meet some of the medical needs in that area!

Sunbury UMC

March 19-26

Each team member comes with different backgrounds and expectations. Each team member leaves with different experiences and applications. We’re privileged to hear stories of how God speaks through seemingly random situations to heal past wounds, answer heart cries, and propel individuals forward in faith. This team was no different. They encountered God through the construction in Village of Grace and participating in the showing of the Jesus film there, through time with the community kids, through conversations with the missionaries, and through time together in the evening. We serve a loving God who knows and reaches out to each person on earth!

Two Sides to God’s Intimate Knowledge

Side 1: We can hide nothing! ‘All is laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.’ (Heb. 4:13)

Side 2: Because He sees us fully, He can also clean and purify us fully, making us holy. ‘Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.’ (Psalm 19:12) ‘Wash me and I will be whiter than snow.’ (Psalm 51:7)
**The Village of Grace Church**

Locals made fun of Pastor Wesley for holding church services in such a shabby place. He faithfully led the congregation there anyway, knowing that God is just as present in an unadorned tent as in the most beautiful temple. Still, Greg & Cathie felt strongly led to respond to the desire for a better building. Long before the decision to build was made, God had already prompted skilled workers from Midway Church of the Brethren (Central PA) to sign up for a team. They helped build the new church in only 4 days!

On March 24th, we showed the Jesus Film in the church. More than 300 people heard a clear explanation of Jesus’ gift of salvation, through both the movie and the message Pastor Bruno preached afterward. (Bruno is on our construction crew, so he’s well known there.) Bruno asked who they would call on in the time of trouble. Not Mr. Greg, or Fanfan, or Pastor Wesley. You must call on God who is the only One who can meet your needs. While he spoke, Pastor Wesley walked through the crowd, asking individuals if they were ready to believe in Jesus. That night, 7 did!

Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things!

Matthew 25:23

We speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel.

We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts.

1 Thessalonians 2:4

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**A special thank you to those who donated in someone else’s name…**

- **In Memory of Greg Arther**
  - Cletus & Betty Hoffman
  - Irene Krall
  - Scott & Cynthia Limburg

- **In Memory of Don Bahr**
  - Ida Mae Benson

- **In Honor of Merlin & Linda Briner**
  - Richard & Roxanne Funk

- **In Honor and Memory of George Cook**
  - Phil & Barbara Ehlebracht
  - Dick & Lois McLaughry
  - Todd & Kristine Nowicki

- **In Memory of Helen Moon**
  - James & Mary Newman

- **In Honor of the Valley Forge UMC Haiti Team**
  - Robert & Linda Gular

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**If you would like to receive newsletters from Bensons or Kemps, please let us know!**
## Updates from Greg & Cathie Benson

### Greg's Knee Replacement:
We are happy to report that Greg's new knee is doing well! He had a positive checkup in December, and it has caused no problems. After all the initial pain and therapy, it is such a blessing to have a working knee!

### Greg's Chemotherapy:
In the last full newsletter, we outlined Greg’s chemo treatment schedule, which required travel back and forth to Ohio between teams. During his 3rd chemo session, Greg’s heart stopped unexplainably and the medical staff had to revive him. The oncologist was shaken, as he’d never had anything like that happen before! Unwilling for the possibility of it happening again, he cancelled the remaining chemo treatments (thankfully before airline tickets were purchased). Greg’s bloodwork in December revealed great news! He’s in remission for the CLL!

The first two rounds of chemo were awful in their side effects, but effective on the cancer. Still, at that point, the oncologist wanted to finish the prescribed rounds. Cathie says Greg’s bizarre reaction during the third round was God’s way of getting the doctor to say, “No more!” All the way around, we praise the Lord for His healing. Even through medication, it is He who heals.

### Two Sides to the Heart-stopping Chemo Treatment-

- **SIDE 1:** It was a scary and inconvenient situation to go through!
- **SIDE 2:** It relieved Greg of additional treatments, their side effects & the burden of extra travel. God was given more credit for the healing. Bensons had different interactions with the medical staff. (Greg didn’t even have extra bills as a result, since he’d already met his deductible!)

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## Faith Academy Highlights

The school continues to grow and change! Fanfan is planning to add 7th grade in the fall (plus 8th and 9th grades in the following years). What a blessing for the community! Also, the government required a name change, and the school is now officially called ‘Institution Mixte la Foi de Lafferonney’ (IMFL as seen on the new sign.) Translation: The Faith Mixed Institution of Lafferonney (the area). Well, that’s a big mouthful, and we’re still referring to it as ‘Faith Academy’ in our personal conversation. Any formal paperwork will include the new name though.

Fanfan also anticipates adding restrooms, with flush toilets, to both floors of the school. The school currently has two cement outhouse-type stalls.

### Faith Academy’s 10 Year Anniversary!
**2006-2016**

For those interested in joining Fanfan at the Celebration on September 23rd, we’re hosting a Mission Awareness team (25 people max). Besides attending the official ceremony, the group will visit various SIF projects and become more aware of the scope and direction of this ministry.

The team dates are:

- **Wednesday Sept. 21**
- **Tuesday, Sept. 27th**

Contact Cheryl at the Home Office for more details or to sign up!

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**Cast all your cares on Him because He cares for you. 1Peter 5:7**

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## Benson’s Upcoming Furlough

Greg & Cathie are excited to share the joys and struggles of ministering in Jesus’ name. They are hoping to schedule some community events, inviting people from area churches. To coordinate a speaking engagement or community event, please contact Cheryl.

**Furlough: June 18-August 2**

Available Sundays:
- June 26
- July 3
- July 24

As you can see, there aren’t many Sundays available. We’d love to schedule some mid-week and evening get-togethers though too!
Praises & Prayer Requests

♦ We praise God for His protection during the guesthouse fire.
♦ We had to cancel a team last-minute because of the fire. We praise God for their understanding and that they were able to reschedule for May.
♦ We praise God for the many new believers in Village of Grace, including the 7 who accepted Christ after the Jesus film. Please pray for them to be rooted deeply in Christ. Pray for Pastor Wesley and the other Christians as they help them grow.
♦ In Acts, when the sorcerers burnt their scrolls as an act of repentance, ‘the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.’ (Acts 19:20) Pray the young woman’s act of obedience and devotion through ‘Fire 2’ fuels a similar response!
♦ We praise God for directing the Kemps to serve with us. They have been a tremendous blessing! Pray He would clear the way for future service with us.
♦ Pray for discernment about where to serve once construction in Village of Grace is complete. The large tent city nearby is being evicted by the government, and others may be too. This is further evidence of God’s favor and provision in securing government approval for the work in VofG. We need Him to clear the way for whatever He wants us to do next.
♦ Pray for yourself and others associated with SIF, that God would grow each one’s faith to trust Him more and more.
♦ Praise the Lord for His masterful and strategic plans, for His eternal love through which they’re made, and for His grace by which He sustains us each day! What a mighty God we serve!

Upcoming Teams

Please pray for these teams as they prepare to serve, as they go, & as they apply new concepts once home.

May 14-21: Faith UMC Elkhart, IN VBS and Construction Team
June 10-17: Heartland Church Lexington, OH Construction & VBS Team

I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart.
And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid. John 14:27

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