



JOINT TASK FORCE CIVIL SUPPORT

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New Eyes

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Martin Luther, Christian theologian and noted churchman, found great comfort in and inspiration from his children. On one occasion Luther came upon Anastasia, his four-year-old, talking non-stop about Christ, angels, and heaven. Whereupon the noted man of faith said, "My dear child, if only one could hold fast to this faith." Quickly she replied, "Why, Papa, don't you believe it?" Luther was shocked and later wrote, "Christ has made the children our teachers."

As a church minister, one of my favorite jobs in the summer is taking young people on summer camp adventures. This past month I accompanied a crew of our elementary kids to a church camp, immediately followed with taking a group of teenagers to a mission work camp. They are young, and they are curious, and give them the right context, young people ask the best questions.

After a long week of trying to help the elementary kids keep up with their stuff, as they are prone to lose everything at camp, I was wondering how I got myself into this. Then one evening, one of the youngsters popped out a simple, yet deep question about her faith. Suddenly, all were engaged in conversation about what we believe and application to day to day life. I thought to myself, shouldn't we all do the same?

The next week, I was with the teens, and they bring with them all the same emotions and drama and curiosities of life that we all had as teens. Conversations wrapped around relationships, right and wrong, purpose and plans in life, and what moments in life mean. Even a night going to see Batman continued the conversation about good and evil, and about compassion and justice. I had them each write down what the week meant to them. The thoughts were deep, they were personal, and most importantly I saw wonderful moments in which they were pressing to connect the dots between significance and day to day life. I thought to myself, shouldn't we all be doing the same?

The Christian Gospels record on several occasions a miraculous moment in which crowds were following Jesus as it came to meal time, and there was no food to feed the crowd. Jesus asked his adult followers for food, but there was none. Then "a lad" had five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus took those few things, blessed them, and fed thousands! The blessing originated from "the lad."

Children often remind us of the simpler lessons of life, yet many times, truly the more important lessons of life. What does it mean to be truthful, to be honest, to do good. If we place those lessons first, it has a way of directing and blessing the thousands of other facets of our life.

When I was in Chaplain Assistant school years ago, they taught us to enter our chapel every time with "new eyes." We were taught to always see the place of faith new again, so as to take it in fresh, looking for what matters most and what needs to be adjusted. It seems to me, through the eyes of kids, I've been reminded to do the same this summer, to enter my place of faith, wherever that may be, physically or spiritually, with new eyes.