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2021 Fall Edition

September 2021

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This summer felt almost normal. I spoke at 5 camps in 3 provinces and, for the most part, things seemed pretty normal. There were no masks required at any camps and there really wasn't any talk about Covid other than an announcement at the beginning of a couple of weeks that they wanted us to leave behind any discussions about Covid or vaccines.

Because of some of the adolescent brain development research, I discovered a few years ago, I have been arguing that our Jr and Sr High students have been more harshly affected by the Covid response over the past months than any other demographic. It was clear to me that students *needed* camp this summer.



I noticed a few things that were a bit of a surprise to me. Four of the camps I spoke at this summer were Jr High camps. At the first one it seemed like the kids behaved less maturely than I would have expected. I just chalked it up to a younger group of campers and adjusted my talks. I sensed the same thing in the second and third camps as well. Because I was directing the 3rd camp, I knew the demographics of the camp. It was *not* unusually weighted

to younger kids. I have concluded that because Jr High students have been isolated from kids in older grades due to online learning and class cohorts, some of the maturity that normally develops as younger students engage with older students has not happened.

A second thing I noticed during the week at Camp Chamisall is that it seems campers are self-cohorting. At Chamisall, we don't require campers to sit with their cabin groups at meals. It's not unusual for campers to sit as cabins at the first meal on Sunday, but by Monday supper there would rarely be a whole cabin of campers sitting together. I was shocked to see kids sitting in cabin groups at meals almost the whole week, even when they were made aware they weren't required to and were even encouraged to sit with and get to know others. In speaking with other directors,

this was not unique to my week, they observed it too. This is not a big deal, but it does seem like a change in kids' behaviour.



The third thing I noticed is that kids were receptive and responsive. It was like they craved the camp experience and wanted to soak up every last bit. Kids engaged during my talks and were responsive. I spoke to 624 campers and I am aware of 68 first-time decisions and 118 rededications. Many campers commented that they felt like they had grown distant from God during the pandemic.

There are lots of great stories from the summer, but **Tanner's story is my favourite.** On Wednesday, I gave an invitation to campers to accept Jesus' forgiveness and allow him to be the leader of their lives in both the morning and evening chapels. As the campers were leaving Chapel that evening, Tanner came to me and in a hushed tone leaned in and spoke to me quite conspiratorially. "I prayed that prayer with you this morning and when I said 'Amen' it was like something left me, I felt different." We chatted for a while and then he headed to his cabin for the discussion time. Later that evening, I saw the director and I told him about my chat with Tanner. Seeking clarification, he asked "Tanner the atheist?" I responded "Not anymore!"

Covid may have affected some changes in students, but summer camps are still highly effective at helping students meet Jesus and grow their relationship with Him. Thank you for the part you played making it possible for me to share the Gospel with all those campers this summer and see God change the hearts and lives of the 68 who surrendered to Jesus.

**"Thank you
for the part
you played "**

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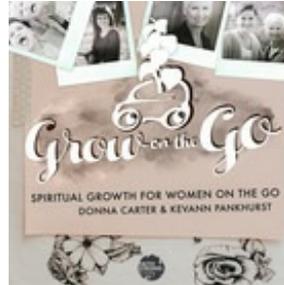


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and praise as a member of our prayer team.

Read about first-hand reports about events Randy and Donna participated in.

Tools to tune up your mindset



On a recent episode of Grow on the Go, Donna was joined by her eldest daughter Kendall. They discussed the

importance of maintaining a positive mindset. Kendall shared how she made the shift to being the one to set the mood in a room and shared 3 tools we can use to live a joyful life God intends for us.

Listen in to the episode right [here](#).

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