

# Filled to the Brim

by Lynn Robertson



## 2015 NAPF/HOPE Conference

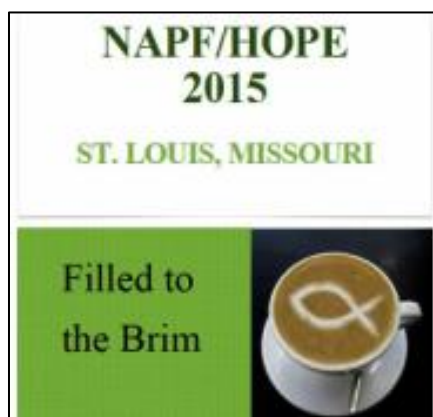
The National Association of Pilgrim Fellowship (NAPF) is a ministry of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC). It is for youth who are entering 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. NAPF allows teens to meet and bond with other Christians from throughout the country and to share their faith in a fun-filled atmosphere. Small groups are led by dedicated adult counselors, many of whom volunteer and use vacation time to attend.

HOPE stands for Heritage of Pilgrim Endeavor and offers young adults post high school through age 26 a great opportunity to

further grow in faith with peers in an environment similar to NAPF. While still including worship, speakers, small group time, and mission work, HOPE promotes closer connection with peers and deeper discussion about faith through peer-led small groups.

**Lynn Robertson** has attended faithfully for years and did so again this summer.

This TorchBearer Special Insert is her report on the meeting.



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## A Future and a Hope

Well, another year of the NAPF Conference has come and gone. I had the opportunity to attend once again, this time in St. Louis, Missouri. Our theme this year was Jeremiah 29:11. *“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good*

*and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”* Our speaker was **Tom Boehne** from Franklin, WI.

We had four sessions that Tom led. His first session was about “Who is Jesus?” The answer was: Jesus is fully God and

fully man. Tom went on to ask: “God, don’t you care? And “Where are you?” He believed that God would say that our answer is on a timeline. Our second session focused on Abram and Abraham.

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## A Future and a Hope (continued)

*“He has designed a plan for your life”*

Tom was saying that we can hear from God today like Abram and Abraham did back then. We were designed that way. The ending and focus question of the session was “What do we want to see?” The third session was based on Paul and his 13 letters. Paul mentions 90 people in those 13 letters. Tom went on to say we were made to be on the “individuals recognized” list rather than the “anonymous helpers” list. The anonymous helpers list is the people in the Bible, but we do not

know anything about them. Tom said we are made in the image of God. The statements that really focused on the theme for the weekend were made in this session:

**He has designed a plan for your life and it has to have:**

1. Faith through Christ
2. Strength and Presence in Jesus Christ

He ended this session by saying we were called and designed by Him. The

fourth and final session continued to focus on Paul. Tom asked why Paul started all of the epistles by saying Grace and Peace to you. Paul did this as a greeting because it was true. His final questions of the conference were “What is Grace?” and “What is Peace?”

Tom’s ending statements were that we have to have Grace first before we can have Peace. Grace and Peace are the most theological traits we can own.

## Build Your Kingdom Here

One of the songs we sang that really went along with the theme and work of the week was *Build Your Kingdom Here*. For those of you who do not know the song, here it is and really read the lyrics:

*Come set Your rule and reign  
In our hearts again  
Increase in us we pray  
Unveil why we’re made  
Come set our hearts ablaze with hope  
Like wildfire in our very souls  
Holy Spirit come invade us now  
We are Your church  
We need Your pow’r in us*

*We seek Your kingdom first  
We hunger and we thirst  
Refuse to waste our lives  
For You’re our joy and prize  
To see the captives’ hearts released  
The hurt the sick the poor at peace  
We lay down our lives for heaven’s cause  
We are Your church  
We pray revive this earth*

***Build Your kingdom here  
Let the darkness fear  
Show Your mighty hand  
Heal our streets and land  
Set Your church on fire  
Win this nation back  
Change the atmosphere  
Build Your kingdom here we pray***

*Unleash Your kingdom’s pow’r  
Reaching the near and far  
No force of hell can stop  
Your beauty changing hearts  
You made us for much more than this  
Awake the kingdom seed in us  
Fill us with the strength and love of Christ  
We are Your church  
We are the hope on earth*

### **Chorus**

Let’s win this nation back!

## The Dream Center

During the Conference we had three days of mission work. St. Louis is a city with 1,200 boarded up houses and they give out 88,000 meals a month. We went to the Dream Center right there in St. Louis. Joyce Meyer was the founder and inspiration of the Dream Center. Dave and Joyce were moved by God to bring the outreach efforts of the Los Angeles Dream Center to the hurting people in their own city of St. Louis. With the help of David and Shelly Meyer and a handful of committed volunteers, they planted the St. Louis Dream Center right in the heart of North St. Louis, an inner-city area that was known for high crime, drugs, and gang activity. We divided up into our small groups and there were many tasks to

accomplish. We rotated through different parts of the city and the Dream Center itself.

One group went to a lady's house named Joyce. She lived with her two grandsons. They did nothing to help her. She knew she was dying, but she wanted her house fixed up because she wanted to die peacefully in a beautiful home. At the Dream Center, this is a small group of residents known as Genesis Men's Home. Genesis Men's Home is a first hope responder to individuals, families and communities plagued by addictions. These men are not able to interact with women, not even us while we were there. There were also a few tasks right there on the premises: we pulled weeds, started to dig up

and mulch another garden, but did not have enough mulch to finish, stocked the food pantry shelves, and cooked meals for their lunch program. There were also off-site projects included.

One event we helped with was called Loads of Love where the residents come for free laundry. We went around a ten block radius to pick up trash; this is known as Adopt-A-Block. There is a summer feeding program for the children, where the kids come for lunch over the summer but we were told after the fact we could not interact with the children, so our NAPFers were not too happy about that. We went knocking door to door to let the children in the projects to let the children know about **Kidzjam**.

*“Genesis Men’s Home is a first hope responder to individuals, families and communities plagued by addictions.”*

## Kidzjam

KidzJam is a carnival on wheels! They bring all kinds of fun activities for kids when we roll into their neighborhood:

- Bounce Houses
- Basketball
- Double Dutch
- Carnival Games
- Face Painting
- And More!

While KidzJam is going on, they give out free hot dogs, a drink and potato chips. I had the opportunity to sit and talk with a couple at KidzJam, while eating lunch, to talk, get to know them and vice versa. When we could the NAPFers and Counselors were supposed to interact with as many

people as possible. This had basically been my first chance. At the end, I asked if there was anything that they needed prayers for. We prayed together, he said he needed a job and she wanted a different and better house but to still be near her family.

*“...said he needed a job and she wanted a different and better house but to still be near her family.”*

## There's More Than Meets the Arch

*"We had a tornado warning the last night of the Conference while heading home from the Arch."*

After all of that mission work we do take some time to relax and have some fun. We went the St. Louis Arch. We were able to go up into the Arch, well; I chickened out at the last minute! We were supposed to take a Riverboat Cruise, but the Mississippi was too flooded. We also went to the City Museum. At the front desk of the City Museum, one of the signs on the window, says, sorry no maps available, go get lost! Housed in the 600,000 square foot

former International Shoe Company, City Museum offers World Aquarium; MonstroCity, The World's Largest Jungle Gym; five-story and ten-story spiral slides in the Shoe Shafts; the Enchanted Caves; Everyday Circus, and the Cabin Inn. The seasonal Rooftop Garden features a working 1940s Ferris wheel; more giant slides; the skipping fountains; and a wonderful panoramic view of St. Louis from atop the giant dome.

After all of that was said and done, what was the highlight of the Conference you ask? We had a tornado warning the last night of the Conference while heading home from the Arch. I was in the car with **Lynn Merkel** and **Joanne Simpson** trying to get off the highway as soon as possible and get back to the University and take cover in the basement, which was the highlight! Only kidding, Jesus, Love you!!

