



Dear Family and Friends of the EXSEL ministry,

Greetings from the snowy, lovely mountains of White Sulphur Springs!

Thank you for your continued prayers and interest in the well-being of the EXSEL interns as they faithfully fulfill these final 10 weeks of internship. “The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, a clean conscience, and a sincere faith.” (1 Timothy 1:5). Here at White Sulphur Springs this goal of love has been challenged many times through the very three things for which EXSEL stands: experiencing, serving, and leading. God’s Word reminds us that keeping a pure heart, clean conscience, and sincere faith are necessary for personal growth and maturity in Christ.

God’s Word tells us in Hebrews 12:11 that, “For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” Knowing that the Lord loves us and is the author and finisher of our faith, gives courage and strength to finish well even when disappointment, discouragement, and even failures seems to loom large. The learning model for intern development is largely synonymous with personal development and requires individual readiness, developmental experiences, and time. Please pray with us that each precious one will leave this place, when the time comes, a better person than they were upon arrival.



Having completed the study “Experiencing God” by Henry Blackaby last semester, the group is currently studying “The Truth Project” with teacher Del Tackett, who, incidentally, is coming to speak at WSS this summer! Recently, we took the gang to see a documentary by Del Tackett called “Is Genesis History?”. The Lord arranged these opportunities because at the time we planned on this particular study, we had no idea that this movie would be coming to theaters or that he was scheduled to be a speaker here at WSS! We are thankful that Mr. David Spode has volunteered to lead studies in two Lee Stroebel books, *The Case for Christ*, which was just completed recently, and now *The Case for a Creator*. Interestingly, in early April, a new movie,

“The Case for Christ” will be shown in theaters across America. Again, this was not our planning but God’s kind and sovereign intervention and timing! Hopefully, ministry commitments will still allow time for us to take the interns to see it.



We are pleased to announce that “Springs Maple Syrup” has been successfully produced through the efforts of the EXSEL interns who have learned a few things about team work, initiative, power tools, hard work, success, and setbacks. Though they did not produce a bountiful harvest due to some preventable as well as unpreventable situations (such as unpredictable weather), the quality of the product itself is something to be proud of and thankful for! The infrastructure for this entrepreneurial endeavor has been set for years to come, and, hopefully, by God’s grace will yield much more with future classes of EXSEL interns. This is an example of God’s gracious gifts and God’s servants making ready to receive and make full use of His provision for the benefit of others.



Many spiritual lessons are to be learned as we “tap into” the flow of God’s Word, recognize that His provision flows downwards to the low places just as the syrup lines require gravity to collect properly. His grace and mercy flow downwards to the low place of a humble heart. “For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.’” (Isaiah 57:15). “But this is the one to whom I will look; he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.” (Isaiah 66:2). Waiting is a big part of this process, sometimes even an all-

night vigil in the shack for the maple sugar water to evaporate to the correct consistency while tending the blazing fire. “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire– may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:6-7). “...each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.” (1 Cor. 3:13). “...the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.” (James 1:3). “The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and the Lord tests hearts.” (Prov. 17:3). We can see how the Lord is working among us, and we pray that these lessons will continue into their future.

As the interns continue journaling gratitude daily, serving selflessly in various tasks, now taking turns leading their peers in our morning devotions and hosting after-dinner enrichment opportunities, we are much encouraged by their enthusiasm and sometimes patient forbearing with one another. We love and appreciate each of these young people for all their strengths and their struggles. Each one is hand-crafted by the Lord and we count it a joy to be on this journey with them.

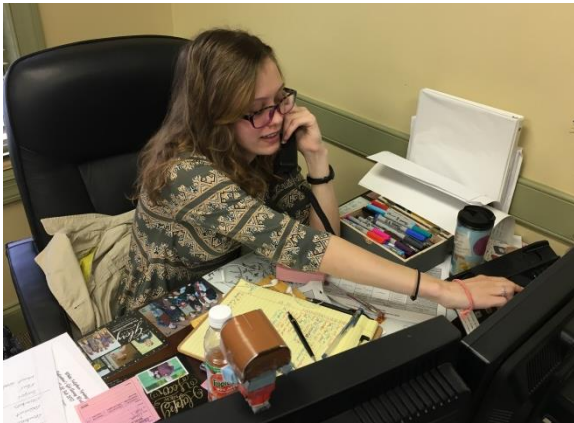


Thank you, parents, for the many years you have poured into the upbringing of your sons and daughters. By God’s grace, you will see the good fruit of your labors. We pray so!

“...so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” Romans 12:5 (ESV)

In Christ’s Love,

Jim & Claudia Marrs





Rachel, Emily, Emma, Eric, Sarah, Andy
Isa, AnnaBeth, Andrew, Lucy