News and Events

The Significance of the Garden to me…  By Dean Evans

And God created….

When one slows down enough to really experience a garden, there is a lot to learn from the simple wisdom that it contains. A garden is, in a way, a reflection of the our own lives; birth, death, rebirth. As it is with plants, so it is with our soul. Unless a seed is planted and itself transformed, there would be no flower, no tree to enjoy. Likewise, unless we also die to ourselves and identify with the death of Christ, we cannot be freed of sharing in the Lord’s resurrection, and be born again so to speak.

Interesting how cultivation of soil and soul are so similar. Special friends of the camp, John and Helen Jeanneret had been giving their time, energy and finances to beautifying prayer island as a love gift to the camp. They shared their vision and in time the seed was planted in my heart to help in makeover of the island. With the encouragement of my most incredible supporter, my beautiful wife Rosalia, I am anxious to return to the island with shovel and spade in hand. I want to also give honorable mention of Phyllis and Sam Sehon, part of the camp family who have passed on their gloves so to speak, who together contributed so much to prayer island as well in the past.

In starting the “makeover” of prayer island, one of the things we had to do was clear out plants that though beautiful in their own right, were just not in the right place. We brought plants in from other areas of the camp that according to the vision of the landscaper, were just right for the island. He saw the island perfected and now it is just a matter of clearing, trimming, planting, nurturing and enjoying the fruits of our labor.

How much more is this like a reflection of what God has to do in our own lives. We also are a work in progress and he is pruning us to be fruitful and beautiful in this larger garden of humanity on earth.

My son, Christopher Dean Evans, took his own life on November 13, 2008. He was 23 years old. I am not sure anyone could ever explain what they go through after a tragedy like this, and no one ever really knows what to say to someone who lost a family member to suicide unless they have experienced it themselves. John and Helen could and I am so very thankful for them. Countless others have also touched myself, my wife, and my family, and loved us through the pain.

God has given me the desire to prepare a special place to where I can come and honor his life, grieve his death, and perhaps help others going through the same struggles of depression that he did.

I hope this explains the construction you may see going on. From day one, many have given of their time and sweat in to this dream. Some graced us with a donation towards the cost of the project and I am deeply touched by their generosity. I feel that by helping to plant this garden, I can better work through my grief. I also see it as a way to celebrate Christopher’s life and what God has done for him. I see Prayer Island as a special place where many others will experience the healing presence of the Lord for years to come.