



Green Line- Boston

The ministry of **Brian Ellis**
September 20, 2007

More than a bike ride—Summer Project

As part of the Boston Summer Project that I led this summer, we took our students to Acadia National Park for a weekend. One group went mountain biking with two leaders Geoff and Tara. Everything was going well until the afternoon. That's when Carl got off his bike to walk it up a particularly large hill. Carl hadn't been on a bike for at least five years. I'm still not sure how he got placed in the mountain biking group. Geoff said it **looked like he was afraid to pedal**. You get the idea. The leaders of the pack stopped and waited about 20 minutes for him to catch up. When everyone was finally there, Tara asked, "So, what just happened?"

No answer.

Geoff: "There's clearly an elephant in the room that no one is talking about."

Still nothing. Everyone in the group was in performance mode—trying to look good.

Geoff: "What needs to change?"

Jim: "Well, I think our good can get better and our great can get greater still."

Geoff: **"But what about your crappy?"**

We've been using that line as a staff team for the rest of the project: "What about your crappy?" It helps us get behind the masks people wear. Since there's no isolated behavior, the group dynamics we noticed on the bike ride continued for the rest of the project. In response, we chose not to give Jim any leadership role because he was always performing—so much so that he never realized it. The bike ride crystallized for me things I had seen but ignored and allowed me to have a **"carefrontation"** meeting with him before the staff left the project and I got to ask him, "Is there anyone for whom you've taken off all the masks? For whom you don't perform?"

The answer: a **very quiet, sheepish, "No."**

Kim, one of our staff women, said, "You know, what I love about this trip is that "junk" comes up." Now, change in character takes a long time, so I'm not sure how much movement we'll see in Jim this fall, but I'm so

thankful for our experience in Maine that brought about the conversation.

I thank you so much for your continued support.
God Bless,



The biking group in Acadia National Park— as I'm sure you can guess, I'm second from the right.



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How to Pray

For the 16 students on the Boston Summer Project as they return to campus—that they would continue to lead by depending on Jesus Christ.