

Melissa's Story | by Emily Frandsen, 2008 ACMNP Staff Member, Glacier National Park

Melissa is the girl that everyone wants to know. She's beautiful, well spoken, outdoorsy, professional, and is always up for a good time. I was fortunate enough to become her friend last summer when I served with ACMNP at Lake McDonald in Glacier National Park. Melissa and I developed a great group of girlfriends, and we spent most of our free time together. Melissa knew I was a part of ACMNP from the beginning; she worked at the concierge desk, and that was one of the top spots for publicizing our services. She was happy to let the guests know of the Sunday services but made it very clear to me that she had absolutely no interest in attending.



Although I didn't understand her aversion to our services, I knew that she didn't want to discuss it either. So when Sundays came around, I did my thing and she did hers. As the summer went on we continued to spend time together; but any time the subject of faith came up, she said she didn't agree with Christianity and would promptly end the conversation. Although I felt discouraged by Melissa's comments, I pressed on with my call to be a Christian presence at Lake McDonald.

The summer ended but my friendship with Melissa did not. She and I stayed in touch, periodically updating each other over the phone. Christmas came along and Melissa called. Neither of us was with family for the holiday, and I expressed to Melissa my concern that she would be very lonely. Her response shocked me! She said that she celebrated Christmas with a family from her church. What?! The girl who wanted nothing to do with Christianity during summer was now attending church?

Our conversations and updates continued, and I was later able to visit her in Montana. The two of us went out to breakfast one morning, and I asked her to share the details of

her holiday with the church family. Melissa knew exactly what I was getting at and, with a smirk, explained herself. Melissa grew up in the church and stopped going when she was in high school. She didn't give it a second thought until she met me. She explained that witnessing my commitment to my faith this summer reminded her of her devotion to Christ as a child. Melissa was rediscovering the importance of her faith and of Christian community in her life.



I realized that morning that Melissa's comments during our summer together at Lake McDonald were signs of God working within her. I didn't have to defend my faith in words or by argument; I didn't have to ask her pointed questions about her aversion to Christianity; and I didn't have to base our friendship on guiding her back to her faith. God was on top of it. God renewed Melissa's faith, simply through my presence in her life.