

"OUR MISSION"

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Intro: I was at the Arizona Youth Workers Conference this weekend in Phoenix. Brad Baker, the Youth Pastor of Phoenix First, was the premier speaker... During the Friday night service he talked about how he had an awesome time with God the night before conference. His wife was tired, and had gone to bed, and he went outside under the stars, listened to United Live on his I-pod, drank a cup of coffee, and just hung out with God. As he hung out with the Lord, God gave him new ministry ideas, and expanded his vision. It was an awesome testimony of what God does when we spend time with Him.

I don't know about you all, but I treasure the times I get to just "hang out" with God. When we went back to the hotel after conference Friday night, we stopped at a convenience store and grabbed some coffee, and then I went up to my room... just me and God. I decided that even though I was tired, I was going to spend some time and have coffee with God... and just enjoy His presence. At first I just sipped my coffee, and remained silent... then I began to lift up my prayer needs before Him. I prayed for my wife, for Mikey and Brian (who's mom just died), I prayed for more of God in more own life, and I prayed for the youth ministry.

His presence so strong in that junky little hotel room... it wasn't long until I was listening, and He was the one doing the talking.

God has given me a clear mission statement for this youth ministry. I have written one in the past... and it has good meaning, but it is too drawn out... even I can't remember it half the time!!! God has given me a new mission statement, and He's also helped

me to see the youth ministry, and the Church (as a whole) in a new light.

So without anymore introduction, let me begin to share with you, what the Lord has put upon my heart.

1. To CAPTURE student's hearts with the truth of Christ.

Proverbs 11:30 NIV

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and
he who wins souls is wise.

For those of you, like me, who grow up in the A.G., you've probably heard this verse a million times... and it always went something like this:

"There are people on their way to hell and they've got to be reached!!! That's why we're wise when we're winnin' souls... saving people for Jesus. (Besides that the only way we'll get a lot of jewels in our heavenly crowns!!!)" -Funny Preacher Voice

There is truth in that, but that isn't really what this verse means. Prov. 11:30 speaks of "winning souls"

That means winning over people's emotions and affection.

Essentially "winning souls" means creating and building friendships with people.

When we win them as our friend, it is likely that we will also win them for Christ. But if we come at evangelism w/ the perspective of reaching as many as we can, so we can put more notches on our belt, or another "jewel in our crown" we are **totally** missing the point!

People need the Lord Jesus, and people need LOVE.

When people find out that we love them and care about them, then they'll care what we say.

“People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care.” –Richard Crisco

Once we have captured the heart of a person by genuinely loving them - we can teach them the truth of God's Word which will lead them to salvation, and continue to transform them.

2. To EQUIP them through Discipleship and lasting friendships.

The natural flow of things goes from winning souls, to EQUIPPING them...

Since we've already begun to build a relationship with that person and teach them the truth of salvation... all we need to do is continue what we started.

“Life is all about relationships.” –Richard Crisco

Life is all about relationships and SO is the Kingdom of God.

To often this is where we drop the ball - on discipleship. We lead people to the Lord, and then we expect them to disciple themselves.

Matthew 28:19 NIV

Therefore **go and make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...

**Jesus has not called us to make CONVERTS.
He has called us to Make DISCIPLES.**

The problem is "making disciples" takes effort and time, and far too often that's why we fail at it.

We must be willing to invest ourselves, to pour ourselves into someone... to give our time to disciple a new believer and be an ongoing friend that they can count on.

Discipleship involves teaching and instructing people in the Word of God. Perhaps that scares you, because you don't feel qualified to teach others... but be chill out. Instructing others in the Word of God will flow naturally in a God centered relationship with someone. If you are pursuing God, and continuing yourself to study the Word of God, you will find that you can help others with the knowledge and wisdom you've gained in your own walk. And if you have that relationship with the person, it is natural for them to seek guidance from you.

Mentorship flows from relationship.

Let me end this point with another scripture...

Ephes. 4:11-12 NASB

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, [12] **for the equipping of the saints for the work of service**, to the building up of the body of Christ...

Some people think it's the Pastor's Job to win the lost and to disciple everyone, but that's NOT true. A pastor's, prophet's, or teacher's job is to EQUIP the saints to do the ministry. The pastor discipled a few believers, and each of them discipled a few

believers, and so on... and the entire body of Christ can be ministered to and the lost reached. It's not the pastors, or youth pastors job to do everything or to reach everybody. We are called only to serve and equip the saints to do it.

3. To EMPOWER them to impact their generation.

Acts 1:8 NIV

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Somewhere along the journey of discipleship, a believer has to have a God encounter when he/she is filled by the Holy Spirit of God. It's not something we can plan a time and date for, but it will happen in God's time as a believer is seeking ALL that God has for them.

Contrary to popular beliefs, **we will NEVER be an effective witness without the baptism of the Holy Spirit.** We may win some people to the Lord, but we'll never reach our full potential without the Gift of God - His Holy Spirit baptism.

For young disciples to be Empowered to reach people for God, **they must be encouraged** by the Body of Christ.

This is the point in the journey when we help new disciples to spread their wings and begin to be used by God in ministry (not necessarily behind a pulpit).

New disciples need to be given opportunities to grow in ministry as they remain in the safety of a mentoring relationship. As they grow, they will need less and less personal attention (just like

when a child grows) and they become more independent from you as they continue to remain always dependant upon God.

Don't be afraid to let go and let them soar for God. If you don't let them GO and DO what God's called them too, you'll frustrate them. But you should always be a willing mentor, because even a mature disciple who's doing awesome things for God will come back from time to time to seek Godly counsel.

Matthew 9:38 NIV

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. –Jesus

As we are praying for God to send workers, we should also be releasing people and encouraging them to fulfill God's call upon their lives.

As we send them they continue the process... they begin to **capture hearts with the truth of Christ.**