

Ideas for your Community from Liberty Savaed (Book Beyond Shattered Strongholds)

How often do we look at a large dark problem and that is all we see? We stop moving and don't even try to get past it. We see only the darkness of the problem. Black Butte prevented me from seeing the glorious, snow-covered Mt. Shasta, but I wanted to see it and so I kept moving towards it on the freeway. Suddenly there it was. When we have a vision of the answers we don't get discouraged by the black mountain of problem that we see with our natural eyes. Vision about seeing what God wants us to see instead of what the world sees. Your vision will help you get past the things that your soul might think of to prevent you from influencing your part of the world. Keep a picture in your heart of being covered with big thick clusters of grapes or peaches or bananas - whatever makes you think of being a fruit bearer. Then start with just one small step. Here is a suggested list of things you can do as an individual to begin to bear fruit.

- Pray and ask God to direct you
- Make phone calls for senior organizations
- make phone calls to latch key kids
- find a need in your area and fill it
- find your area's hurt and do something to help it heal

Think about what you ~~are~~ need that would make your life better if someone would do it for you.

There is a gift in each one of us that is to be manifested for the good. Don't look for programs to implement, look for the outlet for an expression of your gift. Look for the needs or talk to people in your area and ask them what their needs are.

Get out in your community and walk around - don't have preconceived notions about what people need while thinking you are the answer.

Don't forget they already have a Savior waiting to meet them.

You're just his messenger.

Learn to be a good listener. Whenever you are visit neighbors who live alone. Go out in the neighborhood and offer donuts and coffee on Saturday morning and ask the neighbors how they are doing. Offer to pray with ~~distressed~~ distressed people in the park or at a mall. Go out every week to a certain block from 10 to 12 in the morning, knock on their doors and tell them you were just in the neighborhood picking up trash and then ask them if there is anything you could do for them.

Create an expectation that you'll be back and then go back. What can a church do to impact a distressed neighborhood. I am blessed with two friends in Cherry Hill, NJ. Pastor Kyle and Danielle Horner of river of life Worship Center. I spoke at their church in November of 2004 and instantly felt abounding to these two dynamic pioneers. This church has an out reach program to a distressed part of a nearby city that is mind-boggling. Just prior to finalizing this chapter I interviewed both of them and their associate Pastor James ~~who~~ who is head of River of life Worship centers New Dream Center in this city. The out reach leaders carefully researched the history of this city, trying to find out why a certain section was so distressed and what had caused it to be that way. They learned that people who could afford to all suburbs after World War II. The poorest people were left behind. whenever there is a concentration of great poverty, violence flourishes. Where violence flourishes hope fades and give up. My first question to them was "How did you start the outreach?" They went out to find where the people of this area had an itch. No use scratching where there is no itch Pastor Kyle said. To find the itch, they ~~began~~ began walking around the area and meeting the people long before they were ready to start the thrust of the outreach. They knocked on doors and asked what they could do for people. They picked up trash on the street and handed out donuts and coffee to the drug dealers on the corners. They said nothing about anybody getting saved, they ~~wouldn't~~ weren't packing witnessing tracts; they didn't carry any bibles. River of life Worship Center is based upon the ~~the~~ premise that trust comes out of relationship - without relationship, unity of vision and purpose is hard to achieve, ~~achieve~~ achieve objectives. People won't care how much you know until they know you care. Once the people of the neighborhood learned to trust Pastor Kyle and James (a former drug user eight years earlier) the people began to tell these men what they needed - help with dealing with a school, disposable diapers for a new baby,

a job etc. The drug people in the area began to respect these men because they realized they were not in conflict with them, but instead were trying to pick up the neighborhood and help their own families. Pastor Kyle says ~~here~~ there are a lot of problems in distressed neighborhoods, and the people are living the way they are because they have no hope. You can speak of Jesus love and the hope he gives, but if the people you are talking to don't have any food to eat or any ~~shoes~~ shoes to wear, love and hope are abstract concepts to them. Pastor Kyle and James found out that there were a lot of reasons the people were living in poverty and pushing drugs. One dealer had found a good job, but was fired when the business owners found out he had a prison record. He said he had to feed his family, and drug pushing was the only thing he could do to guarantee that his family would eat. So these two pastors begin to visit business people to tell them that they would get the people in church and teach them to be trustworthy - then ~~they~~ they could trust them enough to hire them. Pastor Kyle urged the businesses in the area to try to employ the people they wouldn't normally hire. He reminded people that Jesus preached everyday, but it wasn't until after he fed the people that they flocked around him and wanted to make him king. When he raised Lazarus from the dead, people were finally ready to believe in him because they saw a tangible expression of his love and power.

Pastor Kyle and Danielle stress that example and the truth and preaching of the word are both necessary. The truth is powerful but a tangible example of the truth brings transformation. Telling people that they have value and their father in heaven ~~so~~ wants them to know they are loved so good. showing them that you value them and God loves them by painting their houses and repairing their windows makes a connection with them. The people won't care much about abstract explanations and teaching until they see the principle in action. Then you will have their ~~full~~ attention. The church has put the cart before the horse, these pastors say. when a church sends out witnessing teams, they keep offering answers to questions that nobody is asking. The key to generating the questions ~~first~~ first is to show them that someone cares about them with the hidden motives. Pastor Kyle says that it was effective to just walk around neighborhoods and meet people. No preaching, no tracts, no tiny new testaments. Just a cup of coffee and a concerned question about their lives. After a few Saturdays of this people will start ~~the~~

asking the questions and then it's time to begin giving the answers. Both Pastors Kyle and Danielle taught their people about not fearing those who were different from them that God had created them all the same way. Pastor Kyle and ~~Danielle~~ Danielle have succeeded to their people right from the beginning that working with their Adopt-a-block program required to commitment - in fact, they asked for a year's commitment from everyone who joined the teams. They taught their team that people of value they were going to minister to just needed to see love and hope in action. They needed visible caring for them to care ~~about~~ about what the team was doing. The night that River of life worship center was going to kick off its new city church at the Dream Center, there was a crisis in the city. Crisis does not have to be your enemy; it can be ~~a~~ divine opportunity to express love and influence the people in the Crisis says Pastor Kyle. A large truck ~~had~~ hit and broke a major ~~sewer~~ sewer line and raw sewage began spilling into the area's drinking water supply. The Adopt-a-Block team was supposed to start their city church the very night the water crisis burst onto the scene, but instead they did a radical thing. They postponed their opening night and the ministry team went out and got bottles of water to take to the people in the neighborhood. That night the team decide to be the church instead of trying to open the church. The pastors spoke of a teenage girl (eighteen years old) named Boots who had been studying sign language - but she felt she had no gifts to offer anyone. When she went to help with the Adopt-a-block ministry team for the first time, the first door she knocked on was opened by a deaf man. She had been afraid that she couldn't sign well enough to help anybody and God put her right in the face of a man who needed to know what these people were doing in the neighborhood. The pastors asked her to start a ~~sign~~ signing service at the church, but she was still afraid that she didn't know how to sign ~~so~~ well enough to do that. Pastor Kyle told her that the deaf people who now wanted to come to their church would get more out of the service if she signed what she knew than they would without anyone trying to share their gift. Recently, as the team was walking around the block inviting people to come visit the new city church, a drug addict wanted to know who they were. He wanted to know if they were a cult. They said no, they were from the Dream Center in the area. He immediately recognized that name and said "you're the people who fixed up that house on Donavan Street in 24 hours, aren't you? They immediately had his trust because he knew about their tangible expression of love to the people in the run down

house on Donovan street. Their ministry team did a 24-hour Miracle Makeover (their name) on this house fixing broken boards, painting the house, putting on new doors, patching the roof and many other expression of caring. They modeled a tangible way to express love to the people of the area. So they could then tell them that Christ does miracle makeovers on broken, helpless people too. Pastor Danielle felt that it was ~~everything~~ very important that people understand the heart behind the vision. Those pastors spent both time and effort to give the people of the area time to trust them, always showing them complete respect for their worth and the value. Pastor Kyle said they knew they had to go into the vision believing the people were incredibly valuable to God. Both Pastors Kyle and Danielle said it was urgent to always speak the language of just "us" never them and ~~as~~ us never. Cherry Hill and down the wall of fear, breaking down ignorance about each other.

Pastor Kyle and Danielle off this list of points to remember whenever undertaking reaching out to any neighborhood:

- The Kingdom of God is not about you; it is about others. If you see yourself as an important volunteer who is doing a good charitable thing, you will fail
- Compassion is not a philosophy, not a subject to teach; it is an action. Without compassion, everything else is a program
- You must see the value of those around you. There is great value to God beneath the addictions, the dirt and the alcohol
- No church is the church it needs to be until its people see other people as those who just need to get on track with God
- God is a wise investor. He doesn't invest into people unless he sees their potential
- Keep looking up at the hand that is sewing you into the world.

- you are not the sower, you are the seed. Just be a good seed and grow until you bear fruit
- Bind yourself to God's concept of the situation around your church or ~~your~~ neighborhood. Loose preconceived ideas you have about those areas.
- Our self image and sense of worth are warped by ~~our~~ our own self - lawyers of protection and need that we have from all the traumatic things we have gone through.
We need a good God image
 - We are the moon; He is the sun. We have no light of our own; we just reflect his light

for those of you who would like a better understanding of reaching out to your own neighborhoods. Pastor Kyle and Danielle Horner have graciously agreed to provide whatever information they can to help you get started.

River of Life Dream Center

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www.ROLDC.org (click on DreamCenter)