

Developing A Missional Team Part 3

January 23, 2005

Part 3: Developing A Team That "Must!"

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to catch people." Mark 1.17

Church leaders invest too much time answering this question: how do we keep new followers from falling away from the church? Church leaders should instead ask: how do we develop people who MUST? Having a sense of "must-ness" is not about social conformity [i.e. reinforcing acceptable patterns of going to worship services, giving money to the church, attending a small group, etc]. "Must-ness" comes from an internal motivation inspired by a Jesus like understanding of God's activity in the world. In order to clear the way for this internal motivation, we must overcome two obstacles.

The first obstacle church leaders must overcome is a misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the gospel. Modern evangelism has too often been reduced to a "me-centered" trade between God and men. Believe in Jesus and you get heaven in return. God gets what he wants and you get what you want. It's a "win-win" as they say. In contrast, Jesus calls men to give their lives to something greater than themselves. This is the good news. We are not required to live greedy, self-centered lives, but can give ourselves to something meaningful and beautiful. Following Jesus means we can invest in others. His call to these first disciples offered no benefit only wonderful responsibility. Following him means fishing for men, giving one's life to making the world a better place for everyone.

The second obstacle to overcome is a misunderstanding of the relationship between community and cause. For many today the cause is to get everyone together, to be in community. In contrast, Jesus does NOT begin by calling the individuals of his team to each other. NOT. Community, a sense of belonging and connection, is a universal hunger of the heart. But Jesus calls team members first of all to his mission: "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." The disciples are called to focus on others. It is this cause that creates the "must-ness" of Jesus' team, not the community of the team that creates the "must-ness" of the cause. As we say at Mosaic, cause creates community. Unlike many modern approaches, Jesus doesn't make being in community the mission. Neither does he promise amazing benefits to the disciples if they follow him. He envisions a better future and MUST give his life to this mission. He calls his followers of both the first and twenty-first centuries to give their lives with him to something greater than themselves. When any person hears Jesus' call and recognizes the intrinsic beauty of what Jesus is doing, he will run with red-hot passion and join swords with anyone and everyone who hears as he does.

Your co-conspirator in Christ,

Alex McManus

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Los Angeles, Ca