

Transforming Discipleship

FALL SEPTEMBER 2009

Learnings From The Place Called Orange

Earlier this summer I attended the Orange Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The speakers focused on **"Family"** and how both churches and homes need to implement family ministry. Family ministry is not new but churches all over are trying to understand how to make a shift from isolated programs in the church to helping families take the role of being primary disciplers in the home. **Ivy Beckwith**, a children's ministry author, boldly writes:

"The church's ministry to children is broken ... it's broken when church leaders and senior pastors see children's ministry primarily as a marketing tool ... Something's broken when we trivialize God to our children ... it's broken when we depend on our programs and our curriculum to introduce our children to God—not our families and communities ... And perhaps most importantly, it's broken when the church tells parents that its programs can spiritually nurture their children better than they can."

Besides hearing passionate speakers raise the bar for how we need to have a greater urgency to shift

our programming there are a few more learnings I would like to share with you:

Nothing will happen without a greater integrated approach and strategic plan! *Think Orange*, a book written by leading family ministry strategist Reggie Joiner says that **"It's the effectiveness of your strategy, not the scope of your mission that ultimately determines your success."** Often we have ideas and even a mission but no plan, target, or coordination. I talk with many churches and leaders that think they need to be doing more but just don't know the next steps therefore things breakdown. I am encouraging all those I connect with to gather their staff, a few interested volunteers and come up with **an integrated approach**. Don't feel like you have to dump all of your programming or add all new elements. Start somewhere and take 6 weeks of your mid-week ministry designing it for *families and kids* not just kids. Brainstorm what will work for your church and what you can change today!

Imperfect families are still the best tools in helping share their **children's spiritual growth!** I admit

there have been several times in my lofty-church-leader-brain that I have thought **"oh we in the church are really the better place for these kids to learn—look at how messed up that family is."** I was convicted at the conference that while there are some places churches and other mentors need to step into kids' lives we need to be empowering parent's to lead, guide and shape their own kids' spiritual lives. We need to teach that there is no such thing as perfect parents! Each parent is uniquely gifted and needs to be challenged that *they are* what their child needs.

Find some places for children and parents to experience God together! In my church environment we often talk about creating worship services that seekers would feel comfortable in. You have services designed for adults that kids get put in. What about creating a few special family worship services (*Rethink group* calls these **"Family Experiences"**) where adults are put into an environment created especially for both kids and parents. Adults and children alike are engaged with music and drama, challenged by a teaching then followed by family small groups having a chance to dialogue over a set theme.

Synod of the Heartland
Director of Discipleship



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"I hope you continue to tackle ideas and strategies this Fall on how you can partner church and the home!"
~Blessings Pam~



The Discipleship Experience

Are you yearning for something more? Are you weary of the latest gimmick or the next best thing? Are you serious about both faithfulness and fruitfulness? Are you longing for a holistic gospel lived out in authentic community? Is it possible to live out a gospel that holds together an evangelical heartbeat, spiritual depth, a missional impulse, and a social response? Then **you won't want to miss The Discipleship Experience!**

What it is? The Discipleship Experience is a 3, 5, or 7 day combination of experiences including:

- spiritual practices
- hands-on ministry
- deep thinking
- cultural engagement
- community
- experiential, education & relational learning
- cultural engagement
- and personal renewal

designed to help you not only rethink biblical discipleship after the pattern and mission of Jesus but also to help you evaluate your current

ministry and implement a simple, biblical discipleship model in your church.

Our Hope: to infuse the local church with a passion for holistic discipleship after the way of Jesus that is relational, incarnational, missional, transformational, educational and foundational. Spring 2010, Synod of the Heartland will attend Church of the Savior in Washington, DC. Future regional experiences and more Washington, DC trips will be planned by Director of Discipleship Pam Kimpson. Contact Pam for more details!



Upcoming Discipleship Conferences and Seminars

September 11, 2009

Minneapolis, MN: Orange Tour Day Seminar

This is a brainstorm and training day from the leaders at Rethink Ministry and the Orange Conference. More info can be found at www.orangetour.org

September 30 - October 2, 2009

Loveland, CO: LifeServe Volunteer Ministry Conference

Learn how to help your church identify, equip, and release people into their gift-based ministries through skill-building workshops led by national experts on church leadership. Find more information at lifeserve.group.com

October 24, 2009

Sioux Falls, SD: Group Life Conference (Satellite via Willow Creek)

How do you bring your small group to a point of transformation? *This Changes Everything* is a one-day training event designed to move you in that direction. It offers practical next steps for fostering spiritual growth in your small groups. Live at Good News Reformed Church.

November 12 - 13, 2009

Holland, MI: Re-Imagine Small Group Ministry

Greg Ogden author of *Discipleship Essentials*, *Leadership Essentials* and *Transforming Discipleship* will be leading this at Christ Memorial Church. Register at journey.westernsem.edu

February 26-March 1, 2010

Chicago, IL: Simply Youth Ministry Conference

This is a great place for anyone who works with jr high or high school students. Whether you're a full-time paid youth minister or a volunteer who leads a small group, this conference will equip and encourage you. Find out more at conference.youthministry.com

How2 Children's Ministry Conference

You'll dream...plan...and head home with a master blueprint that conquers your calendar, nails down dates, plugs in people, and plots a steady course to keep your ministry on track and growing. Check out when these day seminars will be near you at www.how2conference.com

Youth Specialties Conference

Conventions held in Los Angeles, Cincinnati, and Atlanta for youthworkers (anyone who works with middle school or high school students).

Each convention offers general sessions featuring inspiring speakers, unforgettable worship, comedy, and drama. For dates and speakers check out www.nywc.com

Discipleship Workshops

Pam Kimpson can come and lead a workshop at your church! Go to www.heartlandsynod.org under Discipleship to Workshops for more information.

NEW Feature Resources

CRAZY LOVE by Francis Chan



It's crazy, if you think about it. The God of the universe—the creator of nitrogen and pine needles, galaxies and E-minor—loves us with a radical, unconditional, self-sacrificing love. And what is our typical response? We go to church, sing songs, and try not to cuss. **Whether you've verbalized it yet or not ... we all know something's wrong.**

Does something deep inside your heart long to break free from the status quo? Are you hungry for an authentic faith that addresses the problems of our world with tangible, even radical, solutions? God is calling you to a passionate love relationship with Himself. **Because the answer to religion complacency isn't working harder at a list of do's and don'ts—it's falling in love with God.** And once you encounter His love, as Francis describes it you will never be the same.

Because when you're wildly in love with someone, it changes everything.

THINK ORANGE: IMAGINE WHEN CHURCH AND FAMILY COLLIDE by Reggie Joiner

Families and churches are each working hard to build faith in kids, but imagine the potential results when the two environments synchronize, maximizing their individual efforts. What can the church do to empower the family? How can the family emphasize the work of the church? They can Think Orange. Former family ministry director Reggie Joiner looks at what would happen if churches and families decided they could no longer do business as usual, but instead combined their efforts and began to work off the same page for the sake of the kids. Think Orange shows church leaders how to make radical changes. With a transparent, authentic approach that gives every family and church hope for being more effective in their common mission, Think Orange rethinks the approach to children's, youth, and family ministry.

