



A week and a half ago, as I was driving down an old trunk road, just south of Grand Prairie, amidst the beauty of the fall colors a Thanksgiving memory came to mind. It brought back memories of a time (when I was in grade 11) when dad and I drove about 50 km from Grand Cache so I could go hunting. Dad didn't hunt so he decided to hike around while as I went into the valley to scout around. About 4 hours later when I came back up out of the valley, dad was no where to be found. I started to look for him, first through my binoculars and then finally I fired my gun in the air so he would know I was back, yet no dad. When he didn't return I decide to go down into valley and try and find him. For the next 6 hours I went up and down every part of that valley. Finally, near the end of the day I found his track heading into some muskeg and found fresh grizzly tracks following him. I searched until I got lost myself. I didn't get out of the valley until almost dusk. The temperature dropped below zero, still no dad. Because he had taken the keys to the car with him I hiked the 50 km back to Grand Cache. I told my mom that dad was lost, and called the RCMP. As you can imagine as a 16 boy who thought I may have cost my dad his life, I didn't sleep very much. The next day, along with some friends, the Wildlife officer and the RCMP, we headed out to look for dad. On the way the RCMP officer turned to me and said, "you need to know that the chance of finding your dad alive is very, very slim. A month ago we found a man in that same valley dead; he had panicked and died of fear and exposure". Upon arriving, we went and broke up into teams and headed down into the valley with walkie talkies in hand as our search began. We searched all morning and found nothing. Around 11:00 am we received a call on the Radio. My dad had been found, and he was at the nearest Fire Tower station. I can't even describe to you what it was like to see him again. When we asked what happened, he told us that by the end of the day, due to his heart condition he was walking about 20 yards and then stopping for 5 minutes trying to catch his breath due to chest pain. Then one time as he stopped to catch his breath, from somewhere behind him, someone said, "are you lost?" Here is the God stuff! The man who spoke to dad was probably the only outfitter in 50 square miles. He had seen dad acting erratically as he walked along the cut line, so the outfitter had hidden until dad had walked past him and only then had spoken up. Seeing dad's condition, the outfitter took my dad back to his camp, fed him fresh elk steak and gave him a \$400 sleeping bag to sleep in! The next morning the outfitter dropped him off at the nearest fire tower. All the time I had thought dad was dying in the valley, he was actually safe and snug in an expensive down filled bag, no danger at all. The reason this story came to mind, was that last week I met one of the guides who had worked with this outfitter during this time. I was reminded again of the gifts and the blessings the many experiences of care we have and continue to have at the hand of our gracious heavenly Father. Because this is the Thanksgiving weekend can I remind you to remind yourself of what is true in our lives. God has been so good to us. I know that everyone of us has things on our plates which keep us awake at night or things we are wrestling with, however, don't forget the good things, the God moments, the loves in your life, the green pastures, the memories of blessings you have received over time (like with dad's rescue) and the blessings that are yours today. I say this because like the Prodigal son's older brother, 'Sometimes those closest to the Father's blessing can become the least thankful'. We can get so used to the blessings God places in our hands that we take them for granted and fail to

let them warm our hearts and encourage us with how good and close our God is. Remember that God is so good; He is so good to us.

When I think of some of the blessings in my life, I need to say that one of those blessings is being a part of this church, of calling so many of you my friends, and being able to see God's hand so active in so many of your lives and in so many of the ministries we do together. I am so thankful for the people God has brought to this place and for the many passions you bring to this place. That is why, as we have been looking at Brentview's DNA over these last few weeks (those characteristics which we want to be known for and from which we want our ministry to flow). It has been fun to affirm again that these are the things which make our heart and ministry beat together. We began by remembering that our Mission statement, our reason for existing is to know Jesus and touch our world. But in order for that to happen in our lives and the lives of those who enter our doors, there are four Core Values that we need to share:

- 1) That we need to be a people who are Experiencing God! Stop for a moment and rehearse times when you have experienced God in your life and times when in the midst of some of the tough times God has been present. In those times when you have felt him near, we need to thank God that he desires to personally meet us and let us have experiences with him. Also, know that this needs to be the ongoing experience of our lives.
- 2) We want to see lives being transformed! At some time go to the Brentview website and click the Hub icon and listen to the stories of lives changed. It will move your heart and help you to see that God is at work in this place in so many of our lives.
- 3) Connecting in Community! Two weeks ago I listed the many talents, jobs, religious backgrounds, countries and languages that are part of our congregation. It was evident that God has shopped the world so He could place us together. Specific people could walk with us as friends, what a gift. Our job is to look for ways to connect with individuals and smaller groups within this larger community at Brentview so that we can be cared for. The many lessons and gifts we as individuals have can be used to help others experience the comfort with which God has comforted us as we have walked through similar situations as II Cor. 1 says 'be used to help others experience the comfort with which God has comforted us as we have walked through similar situations'. The lessons we have learned can be a benefit and blessing to others. This brings us to our final core value
- 4) Our call as a church and as individuals is to make a difference! God has allowed us to experience Him. He has begun the process of changing our lives in amazing ways. He has been placing around us the kind of friends who will be our 2:00 am friends, who will ask us the hard questions like, 'how is it with your soul?' This is not only for our care but that together we may make eternal differences in our world.

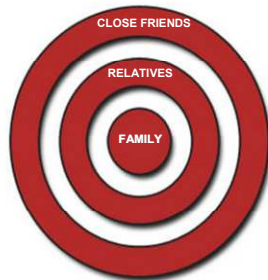
When I make mention of making a difference in our world it seems like such an impossible task. The world is so huge and the issues so complex that it seems impossible for a few people to make an impact on our world. Well, let me just drop the name Mark Zuckerberg the inventor of Face book. In 2003, this computer geek at

Harvard decided that it would be fun to hack into the Harvard student databank and download the pictures of all the students. This would allow him to make a list from which people could rate who "looked the hottest" and who didn't. Of course, he got in trouble for that but an idea began to grow in his mind and he decided to compile a list of people who could share their notes for an arts history course he was taking. Within two weeks, half of the Harvard students were sharing their notes. They began sharing more than that as they began to talk together. As of July 2010 there are over 500 million users of Face book! The Face book nation could be one of the 'largest countries in our world'. One person with an idea can make a huge difference.

I. **Making a Difference in Your World**

You say I am not a brilliant Harvard grad, so what can I do? Maybe, this will help with the perspective. A little boy, who lived by the sea shore, would go every day to the shore to pick up star fish and put them back in the Ocean. Then one day they had a Hurricane which washed thousands of star fish up on the beach. So the little boy went out and started picking them up one at a time and putting them back in the Ocean. A man who was watching him running back and forth said, "Why do you pick the star fish up? There are so many of them you can't make a difference". The little boy picked up one star fish and looked at the man and said, "To this one I can make a difference, then he picked up another one and said to this one I can make a difference". As individuals who are connected to the God of the universe we can make a difference, one person at a time. The question is who are those individuals who we are to care for? Do you remember the story that is found in Mark 5? It is this great story of this man who lived in a graveyard who was full of evil spirits. One day as Jesus walked by, this man rushed Jesus and said in vs 7: *He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!"* Is it not interesting how even when others weren't sure about who Jesus was, the evil spirits had no question? Mark 5:8-13 *Jesus replied, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!" Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. Two thousand demon filled pigs did a swine dive over the cliff! Look at the change that happened in the one man. Mark 5:15, *When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.* (I have seen that kind of change happen to people who have been freed of evil spirits, they look, dress and act completely differently). Now look at vs.18 *As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him.* This man wanted to join Jesus' entourage, to stay close to the person who had saved him (he could have been a great 'show and tell' for Jesus TV program). Instead the man is...vs 19, 20 *Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis (this is the ten cities) how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.* Jesus says, 'while it would be wonderful to have you traveling with me, let me tell you where you can do the greatest work for the Kingdom. Go home to those who know all about you and live your*

new life in front of them. When they ask how this change happened tell them about me'. And he did what was asked of him. In verse 20 it states that the 10 cities in this area (Decapolis) where moved toward God as they saw what Jesus had done in the life of someone they knew all about. And don't forget the Thanksgiving twist, he told others his story because he was so thankful for what Jesus had taken out of his life and he was thankful for what Jesus had put into his life. Do you remember the one line testimonies that you wrote down a few weeks ago of what God had changed in your life? Know that you have a story to tell that comes out of your thankfulness for what he has done in your life that is worth telling. Why did Jesus send him out in this way? It is because he understood the power of what I would call Your Circle of Influence? Those who know you well enough to be able to see the changes which Jesus caused in your life and so see evidence that Jesus is a part of your life.



My feeling is that our circle of influence is greatest with those who know us the best. So if you look at this circle, your greatest influence (1st circle) would be your family, second your relatives, third circle is your close friends and you could go the fourth as neighbors or those you do business with and then your acquaintances and finally people you bump into.

This should also be the circle of who you are praying for as well. Your heart can never stop yearning for your family members to encounter Jesus and that your life needs to be such that you show them evidence that it is worth their while to follow the Jesus who is transforming your life.

How should you share your faith? Look for ways to care for them with your actions and when applicable with your words. Some time look up the pattern used by Philip with the Ethiopian Foreign minister in Acts 8.

- 1) He wasn't pushy – he just cared for him
- 2) He asked questions about what he wanted to know, not pushing his agenda to share the 45 Spiritual Laws with him
- 3) He asked permission to share a little of what Jesus had done in his life
- 4) He left the results to God.

You have my permission (if you live your life in a Godly way) to ONLY share your faith:

- a) in response as someone asks you a questions about why you live like you do or believe like you do
- b) in response to those times when God nudges you to share with someone. If you do those two things you may be surprised how many star fish find life by your hands.

So part of our passion when it comes to making a difference is to see people (within the circle of our influence) have life changing encounters with Jesus and finding faith. Keep coming back to faith and growing in faith.

II. Making a difference in The World

The second call on our hearts when it comes to making a difference goes beyond our individual worlds to THE world. It is a global call. This has been part of the heart of Brentview over the years. Brentview has seen itself as being placed on the corner of Charleswood Drive and the World. That part of our call is to make a difference in the lives of people across the globe. Let me just give you a Biblical framework for how this should happen.

Luke 10:1-18 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house."When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.' But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town."Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths."He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

Jesus is sending out 72 of his followers for some practical experience. Look at what we are to be doing as we go out. Bringing peace! Last year when our Team went to Ireland they arrived around a time of political unrest (Orange Parade) as they saw sides forming they attempted to bring the gentle peace of Jesus with them. Enter their culture! Some of our missionaries can tell you of wonderful dishes they have eaten with a smile, thankful word and a prayer that God will help them keep the fried goat brain down. Meeting needs, praying for healing of the sick, fixing computers, helping meet medical needs in India, housing needs in Mexico, electrical needs in Brazil, educational needs in Cameroon or justice needs in the Gaza strip. Preach the good news because of what Jesus has done in our lives. It is out of thankful hearts that we travel to tell others the good news and care simply out of love for others. Now look at the result in verse 17 & 18. Jesus himself said that as He heard the stories of what had happened and as they came back from their first short term mission trip He had an image come into His mind (which came from God's perspective) of "satan falling like lightning from heaven" (in other words – their actions in people's lives lead to satan losing a hold over people and places). The actions of the disciples were having cosmic ramifications. To put it in a

practical way, when the Mustard Seed staff helps a homeless person who has struggled with addictions to find a job, satan falls from heaven (he loses power over their lives). When Barry Uptigrove (as part of the team going to Haiti) fixes a roof and a computer or Robin Uptigrove or Mariah Wilson hold and play with kids at the orphanage at Hats, something eternal is happening. When we sent \$17,000 (each) to Mexico Foundations for his Ministry and Hats in Haiti or Chain of Love so they can build places where people can have a second chance at life, satan falls from heaven. When the 8 folks went to Ireland for project 32, Ryan Sardachuk went Belize, Travis Kundert went to the Sudan, or Nadine Kundert went to Madagascar, satan fell from heaven (seeds were planted in people's lives and satan lost ground). Or, and I love this, when some of our men walked a mile in pink shoes to raise money for Breast cancer research (see pictures) they also were working at pushing back some of satan's physical invasion through sickness in our world. Well done, you are making eternal difference in THE World. This is the call of the church, this is the call on this church and it not only excites me to be a part of it but I believe we are being called to step it up, push him back and try to make an even greater impact on our world. So please pray for big dreams, new ideas for what we are called to be involved here in Calgary and around our world.

Can I encourage you to go to Brentview's Website, click Under Global Discipleship and then look at our...

1. Strategic Partners: We support 12 full-time missionaries (and their Mission Groups) as we add to their number more of Indigenous missionaries from India we want to team with. Do you feel a pull to team with one of these folk (Barnabus groups) or become one of our missionaries.

2. Strategic Partnerships: You will see places in town as the Jesus loves you society, Pregnancy counseling center, Mustard Seed, Inn from the Cold. Maybe you can be of help at these places or God will lead you to different ministries which you can be a part of.

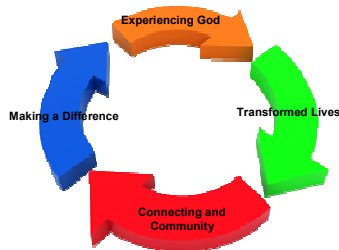
3. Strategic Plans: Ask are you the kind of person whose way of caring for others (Love Language) is by action? For example, I had a person come up to me the other day who is a carpenter and wants to get a group of men together who can go around once a month and fix things in senior members homes. Another wants to do the same thing for single moms by helping to fix their cars. Another wants to go and fix missionaries houses. Or are you the kind of person who is more verbal? You love to act in our Family Matters ministry, teach Bible at the Russian Bible School or dream about an acting team that would go to some of our Orphanages. Or do you love to give? I have a person that sneaks me an envelope every so often and says give some of this to someone in need, another person loves to go and care for young mom's and families at Jesus Loves you Society and another loves to travel every year to Chain of Love and just love the kids. Grab a copy of our Mission Passport and pray over it and start writing in places, people, projects that you are dreaming about so you can make a difference in our world.

John Fisher wrote the following, 'He was ill at ease and out of his element. At one time in his life, this would have been tame, but that was before he met Christ and everything changed. He had been a rising rock star in his native country in Eastern Europe, but a trip to America had brought him in touch with Christians and Christian music and the idea of singing for something much bigger than himself took hold, launching him and his group into national recognition as one of the premier Christian rock bands in the country.'

But the lure of his homeland made him long to return and test his newfound faith in the marketplace. Christian music is a separate market only in America. In Europe and Eastern Europe there music is Popular music. And he knew a strong album could re-establish his presence in that country's pop market, giving him an opportunity to influence young people from the vantage point of his music. So he had gone to one of the best producers in the business in London, England, and during the recording process the producer had taken him to a punk club where one of his bands was playing, and that's when his struggle began. The environment troubled him. "Should I stay or should I go," was the question on his mind when God spoke to him in an audible voice. Now if I didn't know the man, I would wonder about his claim about hearing God speak. He told me this story personally and had no reason to make it up or embellish it. And it's also what he heard God say to him that convinced me it was true. For as he was deliberating whether he should stay or go, he heard a message from God, "its okay, you can leave if you want to, but I'm staying."

This is one of the more powerful pictures I have in my memory bank of what a Christian worldview is and is not. It is not a retreat from the world. It is not fostering a righteousness that sets itself over and above everyone else. It is not living in isolation, but entering into the risk of relationship and compassion. And that sums up our call as individuals to make a difference in YOUR personal world and in THE world.

One final thing as we have been looking at our Core Values have you noticed how one leads into another?



On this beautiful weekend where we are thankful for so much, can I remind you that part of our response to God's goodness in our lives is to be involved personally and as part of this community of faith and in Making a Difference in our World.

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