



Missional Musings

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"Missional [means] related to or connected to God's mission or purpose.."

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him...."

Getting Started

By Bryan Riley

I just flashed back to the Sound of Music where Maria begins to teach the children how to sing. She asks herself where to start. She begins a song she never finishes, but she muses about how we must "start at the very beginning, a very good place to start." Well, it seems to me that a great place to start is "In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1. From the very beginning God is the focus.

Why *Missional Musings*? Because my goal is to be missional and to encourage others to be the same. "Missional" is a term that can be defined simply as "related to or connected to God's mission or purpose." Given that "[m]any are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails," *Proverbs 19:21*, we want

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Active Listening

By Bryan Riley

One day recently I realized I needed to be out the door with the boys to get to an appointment, so I was trying to herd them out the door. I stood in their bedroom and Keaton just happened to be the one I could see, about 25 feet from me, at the end of the hall. I called to him because I wanted to get him dressed. Now, understand, he didn't know why I was calling to him. I could have had a handful of chips or M & M's; I could have wanted to surprise him with a new book or toy; I could have simply wanted to tell him something. Whatever the reason, whenever I call to him to come I always have a good reason. But, what is most interesting and what made me think about myself and my relationship with God was what I saw and heard in response to my call.

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God Gives So That You Can Too

By Tara Riley

Do you ever feel like you are stuck in your daily routine? Do you feel like the only thing you can do is make it through each day with your kids and if you actually took time to pray over your meals that was a bonus? Are your thoughts perpetually stuck on your laundry, your sick child, what to cook for dinner, whether one of your kids has only eaten crackers all day long, who your husband is eating lunch with today, what is he eating while you eat the crusts from your kids lunch and have no time for anything else, why didn't he pick up his phone, and your lot in life in general? Will you forever more be cleaning up spills, bottoms, throw-up and tears?

For the longest time I was very frustrated with my life, but I never could put my finger on what the source of my frustration was. I all too often just settled for believing that the source was my disobedient kids or my other disobedient grown-up kid/husband, but as God began showing me a little more of his vision for me, I realized that I was wrong about what the source of the problem was.

I found myself saying to my kids "give to others, share your toys, be kind to people, reach out to new people," etc. I desperately wanted them to do this and so I preached and preached. My frustration increased when I saw them obeying inconsistently at best. I first blamed my husband because "he wasn't modeling it." But God began opening my eyes to the fact that I wasn't modeling these characteristics either- even though I deeply believed in them. I was horrified when I realized one of the biggest hypocrites I knew was me.

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our hearts' plans and desires to line up with God's purpose. It truly is all about God, even from the Beginning. Thus, Missional Musings will be our frail attempt at grasping for the mind and purpose of God, through the grace He bestows on us because of our faith in His Son, Jesus Christ, and communicating what we have learned as we walk by faith in the promises of His Word.

Join with us as we leave behind our professions, but not our gifts, to follow Him on a journey that asks daily "What is your purpose for me? How can I serve You? Here am I, Lord, use me."

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord. not for men." Colossians 3:23.

"For the longest time I was frustrated with my life, but I never could put my finger on what the source of my frustration was."



Spotlight On A Missions Base

By Bryan Riley

The King's Lodge, in Nuneaton, England, is a YWAM Base (Youth With A Mission) located about 20 miles to the east of Birmingham, England.

Here's an excerpt from their website at www.thekingslodge.com:

Our mercy ministry seeks to demonstrate the love of God to the poor and needy in practical ways. We have been involved in slum ministries, leper colonies, an AIDS hospice, poverty alleviation, street children, orphanages.....

In the last two years there have been more than 260 staff and students from six out of the seven continents, living and working together here at The King's Lodge. We have reached out to at least 38 countries, working alongside local Christians. YWAM works in 135 nations round the world and has hundreds of ways you can respond to this challenge, from short-term (2-6 weeks) to a full year.



Standing on the Edge of Eternity

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Keaton said, "I'm coming." Meanwhile, his way of "coming" was to spin, around and around, and, yes, sure enough, he was inching toward me. He literally was making progress that was measurable in inches, rather than footsteps, as he spun around and around, looking more and more like he was losing control as he was becoming drunk on the intoxication of spinning. I asked him to "come here" again. And, he answered with "I'm coming," but continued his wild course.

God then gently spoke to me that I was like Keaton with Him...often. He has this amazing plan and adventure for me and is calling to me. Instead of simply hearing and coming to Him as requested, I go about my "coming" in my own way - in a way that seems right and fun to me. I sometimes might not have a clue why He wants me to come to a certain place, but it never fails that His plan for me is a good one.

Nevertheless, I still cling to my stubborn ways. I humbly thought of God looking down at me as though I were a five year old, twirling around and around, so la di da, as He patiently (because He is more loving than I) waited for me to respond to the blessing He had for me. And I sighed.

He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you." Exodus 15:26

Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" Mark 9:7

"God then gently spoke to me that I was like that with Him...often. He has this amazing plan and adventure for me and is calling to me."

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God, through His Holy Spirit, had to gently correct a few things in my life. First, I had to stop blaming everyone and everything else for my lot in life. Second, I had to humble myself and stop thinking I was doing the best that I could. Third, I had to change my focus from all my problems and the problem people in my life to fixing my eyes on Jesus. Then, as God helped me begin to do those things, and I say begin because we don't ever finish and we fight these battles every day, I was able to

see more and more things that God had done for me and that made me realize how much I wanted to love Him. As an expression of my love for Him I want to serve others. Why? Because as I began to shift my focus from me to Him and study about giving I didn't really have to go any further than John 3:16. We all know "For God so loved the world He gave." We don't need to go any further. He designed me to be like Him - to bear His image.

Every Christian is a Missionary

By Bryan & Tara Riley

When I was a young boy missionaries were funny looking guys in bad polyester suits who never talked to me. They showed slide shows of grainy pictures on an overhead projector and I thought that missions meant living in a hut and spending years trying to learn some clicking sounds that people in the jungle called language. They claimed to have a wife but you never saw them. It didn't seem like anything I could ever do.

Jesus, however, told us, His disciples, to go and make disciples in all the earth. It is a part of following Jesus. Given my picture of what a missionary was, I struggled greatly with this.

As Tara writes above, God gives us gifts to give to others. This is the key to living a missional life. Every Christian can invest of his or her gifts and talents into missions. It doesn't just mean

writing a check or going and living in a hut. It also doesn't just mean people who preach or who can use a hammer can serve. Instead, God can use all giftings to support missions all over the world.

This newsletter will endeavor to spotlight ways that anyone can participate, whether by going long term and full-time, going short term during vacation weeks, facilitating the going of others by providing services or finances for them, or by praying for missionaries and praying that God will show us new and exciting ways that we can participate.

One exciting way a family supported us was by putting together a garage sale. They told us it was the first time their kids got excited about selling "their stuff." If you have kids, you have heard, "but it's MINE." Because supporting us with their efforts gave them a mission, a purpose, they not only enjoyed it, but they didn't just sell junk. When we join in God's mission with our gifts, we live abundantly. John 10:10.



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