



Are You Living for the Cause?

Pastor Eric T. Johns

Throughout the years, my life has been influenced by men and women of God. This was especially true during my teenage years and the early years of my ministry.

When I was growing up my pastor and his wife, Wayne and Sharon Dent, invested into my life. They took time to develop the gift that was inside of me. At Bible College, there were teachers and pastors who molded the way that I thought. I used to visit the home of Johnny and Pat Hunter every chance I could get. Pastor Johnny raised someone from the dead. I made him tell me the story again and again. He became a friend and a mentor to me.

I was locked up in jail with Keith Tucci for one-week. That is another story for another newsletter. Keith is an incredible pastor, mentor, and someone I have always looked up to. During that one-week he deposited things into my heart that have remained until this day.

When I got older, Bob and Katherine Hoover became like pastors to me. Bob, who was nearly eighty years old, would spend hours with me while we traveled across India together. He taught me many things about being in the ministry. He taught me how to hear God's voice. I learned incredible, life-changing things.

When Bob went to heaven, God brought Pastor John and Shirley Tasch into my life. They have been a constant source of encouragement and strength to both me and my wife, Michelle.

As I travel across the country I have discovered some things that worry me. I am worried about men of God I have met. There are three things I have noticed.

The first thing that bothers me is that pastors are comfortable. They have an average size church. They live in a nice home. They can play golf a couple of times a week and go on an enjoyable vacation every year. Because of this, they do not want to "rock the boat". They manage what they have, instead of advancing further for more of what God desires for their communities. Many of them will not even spend money on reaching the lost if it doesn't make a profit! I asked a pastor to go to India with me. He told me that it did not make financial sense for him. What about the souls of people?

This trickles down into their congregations. They have no interest in anything but going to church once a week. I was the guest speaker in a church and I preached a sermon about taking your city for

God. The people just stared at me as if to say, "We are not interested in that."

The second thing I have noticed is even more amazing to me. I have been shocked by the number of pastors who know they are not living in God's will! Not one or two pastors, but several have looked me in the eye and said, "I would be on the mission field, if it wasn't for my wife." Can you imagine? You know that you are supposed to be somewhere else, doing something else, but you remain in a different place anyway!

The reason they give to justify it is that they are in the ministry. After all, they are working for the Lord. They are preaching, running programs, and people are coming to their churches. Year after year of this makes them feel like they are "okay" to disobey God only because they see some kind of fruit from the ministry they are doing. Don't they know that God will bless His Word in spite of them? Don't they know that God loves people and will touch their lives even though they are living in disobedience?

I am worried about men of God I know, because what they are doing is affecting future men of God I know.

Do I sound too harsh? I don't think so. Let me tell you the third reason I am worried. It is worse than the other two reasons combined. I am worried about men of God I know, because what they are doing is affecting future men of God I know.

A large percentage of my time is spent training, mentoring, and discipling young men and women from the inner city. They come from abusive situations. They have grown up poor. They have been raped. They have become used to violence. Their lives are beyond what most of us could even imagine. One young man just asked if he could sleep at my house because the number of rats in his house is beginning to scare him!

What do I do with these young men and women? I teach them how to pray. I teach them how to give their testimonies. I teach them the Bible. I teach them how to live as a person of integrity. God has called them. I believe God is going to use many of them to do incredible things for His Kingdom. Why? Because they have come out of so much. The odds are against them. The devil has fought

them. Still they are going to overcome him and win more people for Christ than I ever could.

But what are we teaching them? What are they watching? Do they look at ministry as a job? Is it a career or a calling?

What is the real problem?

We often refer to the "calling of God" on our lives. Our calling is what God wants us to do for Him. We are told to look at what our gifts, talents, and abilities are. They reveal to us what we are "called" to do. But all of those things mean nothing unless they are connected to a cause. That is the problem. Many pastors I know are not living for a cause. They are doing a job. Yes, they are operating in their gifts. They even see results. But somehow, somewhere along the way, their calling became disconnected from the cause.

Jesus lived for a cause. His gifts and His calling were connected to a cause greater than anyone could imagine. He said in John 18:37, "For this cause I was born and for this cause I have come into the world." He lived for a purpose. His life was attached to the cause of His Father.

I am worried about today's men of God. But I am more worried about those who are just coming into the ministry. Will they just do a job? Will they be content to just preach on Sundays, hold a mid-week Bible study, and a once-a-month pot luck dinner? I hope not. I hope they will see beyond their calling and live for a cause.

The men and women of God who came into my life shaped me into the person that I am today. Now I am playing that role. Young men and women look to me for guidance and impartation. I wonder if I am doing a good job. I am showing them a life of sacrifice? Am I setting the example of a life dedicated to a cause other than my own desires? Am I a part of raising a generation that will make an impact on this world?

We must live our lives knowing that we have a mandate from God to prepare the next generation to live for the cause of Christ. Everything we do should be because of the cause to which we are called.

What will you do? Are you living for yourself or have you experienced the most incredible thing that can happen to a person who has found Jesus? Have you experienced what it means to live for a cause greater than yourself? We should be living life because of the cause of the Kingdom of God.

Canadian Church Making Christmas Special for Families in Need

Pastors Mark and Cheryl Robinson moved to Buffalo, New York from Texas. Thirteen years ago they founded Faith Word Fellowship International Church in Buffalo, New York. Recognizing the call of God upon their lives to impact people with God's Word, they extended their ministry to Canada. Two years ago they planted Faith Word Fellowship Canada in St. Catharines, Ontario.

For the past four years their American ministry has partnered with the Buffalo Dream Center's Boxes of Love program. Their church, which is located in the heart of the east side of Buffalo, has been able to reach hundreds of families every December through Boxes of Love. Boxes of Love provides food and toys to inner city families for Christmas. Many of these families would not be able to afford Christmas dinner or gifts. Boxes of Love makes it possible for thousands of families living in poverty to experience a happy Christmas.

This year Boxes of Love will help families in Canada for the first time! The members of Faith Word Fellowship Canada

have already registered families near the community centre where they meet. The church holds its services at the Russell Avenue Community Centre, 108 Russell Avenue, St. Catharines. The neighborhood that surrounds the community centre is experiencing tremendous need. The church stands ready to meet the needs of the people and shine their light in a dark place.

"We are duplicating an outreach that we have operated effectively in Buffalo," says Pastor Mark. "This December our outreach ministry desires to impact at least twenty-five families in St. Catharines by giving them a bag of groceries and Christmas gifts for every child."

Pastors Mark and Cheryl need the partnership of Canadians living in the St. Catharines area. Donations of non-perishable food items and new unwrapped gifts for children ages seventeen and under are needed to reach these families.

Dream Centre Ministries

is dedicated to join hands with Faith Word Fellowship Canada for this event.

If you desire to volunteer your time or donate items to the Boxes of Love outreach in Canada, please contact Faith Word Fellowship Canada at (905) 228-2362.

If you would like to visit the church, the Sunday service begins at 2:00 p.m.



Canadian Churches Give to Missions

Pastor Eric Johns, president of Dream Centre Ministries and pastor of the Buffalo Dream Center, had the opportunity to speak in eight churches in Ontario this past year. Some of the cities included Niagara Falls, Toronto, and Guelph.

"The Spirit of God has done incredible things in the hearts of people," says Pastor Eric. "Canadians believers desire to reach beyond themselves and make a difference in the world."

Pastor Eric's message challenges believers to meet the needs of their communities. He inspires people to look past their own problems and discover the joy of living for other people. If you desire to have Pastor Eric speak at your church contact the Buffalo Dream Center. All offerings go to missions. Pastor Eric's speaking engagements in Canada have supported the life-changing work taking place at the Center of Hope in Tirupati, India.

Canadians Welcomed Across the Border

Boxes of Love began twelve years ago when Pastor Eric Johns of the Buffalo Dream Center decided to give gifts to inner city children for Christmas. He lived for one week on Buffalo's streets with the homeless in an effort to draw attention to those in need and raise funds to provide toys for children.

Twelve years ago the Buffalo Dream Center helped a few families. However, Boxes of Love has grown into a network of churches, businesses, and individuals who unite to provide food to more than three thousand families. Approximately five thousand children receive a wrapped Christmas gift. It takes hundreds of volunteers, who work for

several weeks, to wrap gifts and pack bags of food.

Every year people come to Buffalo during the month of December for this exciting event. Teams come from various states and from Canada. Many Canadians who have crossed the border to help with Boxes of Love have commented on how it was like entering a completely different



for Boxes of Love

world. The families living in the inner city need your love and compassion! There is a mission field a short drive away – right across the border.

To volunteer for Boxes of Love or to be a part of a Christmas Eve dinner for the homeless, go to the Buffalo Dream Center's website at www.buffalodreamcenter.org. You can also call 716-854-1001 for more information.

Centre of Hope in Tirupati, India

Pastor Arul Arisu began working in the city of Tirupati more than a decade ago. The city is well known for being the home of India's largest Hindu temple.



Ramya is ten-years-old. Her father died from AIDS. In order to survive, her mother left her and moved away with another man.

Thousands of pilgrims visit the temple every day to worship the false gods. Pastor Arul was one of the first Christians to begin reaching out to the residents of Tirupati. He and two other pastors planted churches and labored for years until they saw their first converts. Today Tirupati has more than sixty churches!

Pastor Arul founded the Centre of Hope as a place to provide love and care to children whose parents died of the AIDS virus. Dream Centre Ministries supports the Centre of Hope.



Jeevitha's father died from AIDS. Her mother is also infected with the virus and is unable to care for her. Jeevitha is thirteen-years-old.

The Centre of Hope has a small staff. The children are fed, clothed, and receive an education. Most importantly

they are shown the love of Jesus Christ.

Some of the children living at the Centre of Hope have grown up and entered nursing school and will soon begin pursuing their careers. Five children have recently been added to the Centre of Hope. Their photos and stories are on this page.

Pastor Arul and the staff of the Centre of Hope care for the children on a daily basis. They desire to make Christmas a special time for the orphans and for the community surrounding the Centre of Hope.

Every year the Centre of Hope reaches out to families in need. Pastor Arul's ministry delivers boxes of food. The Centre

Mahesh is in the second grade. He is eight-years-old. His father died from AIDS and his mother is HIV positive and extremely sick.



of Hope also provides a new outfit to each child for Christmas. In India, this is a tradition amongst many of the Christians. Many children own

only one or two sets of clothing.

Dream Centre Ministries needs your partnership to make Christmas special for the orphans and for the community being reached by Pastor Arul.

Please consider giving to Dream Centre Ministries. Your gift will

provide new clothing for an orphan or food to a family in need. Thank you for taking this opportunity to show the love of Jesus Christ to the people of India.

Nagamani's father died from AIDS. Her mother also has the disease. She is seven-years-old and doing well in first grade.



Bahavanesh is five-years-old. His father died and his mother suffers from AIDS.

Knitters for Global Warmth Partners with Dream Centre Ministries to Reach Inner City Families

Knitters for Global Warmth does exactly what their name says they do. They knit. However, they knit with a purpose. Members of the group knit blankets, baby clothing, sweaters, mittens, and many other things for people in need.

The vision of Knitters for Global Warmth is to ship the knitted goods to developing countries. Throughout the years they have done this successfully. Missionaries in these countries have been able to distribute the goods to families living in poverty.

The group has been extremely successful. Several chapters have formed in cities and town such as Orillia, Huntsville, and Simcoe. Knitters for Global Warmth also

responds to specific requests such as baby outfits needed in certain countries. An article printed last year stated that the Orillia chapter alone had produced more than thirty thousand knitted items in six years!

They ladies involved knit at their homes and then gather together on a monthly basis. When they meet



they bring their hand-crafted items which are prepared to ship out around the world. Their time together once every month also

consists of a business meeting in which they have an opportunity to listen to a guest speaker. Linda Alexander, from Dream Centre Ministries, and Lindsie Rutherford, from the Buffalo Dream Center, recently had the privilege of speaking at their monthly meeting in Huntsville, Ontario.

Dream Centre Ministries has been the recipient of many beautiful knitted goods from Knitters for Global Warmth. These items have been distributed in the city of Buffalo, New York during the Buffalo Dream Center's Boxes of Love outreach. Many inner city children do not have proper clothing for the winter months. Some children have come to church at the Buffalo Dream Center without shoes! The winter hats, mittens, sweaters, and other things provided by Knitters for Global Warmth are making a difference in the lives of many people.

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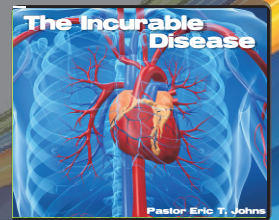
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