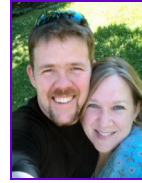


FEEDING THE FLOCK

Meet the Minister



Noel & Julie Walker

Missional Shift #4: “It’s Not A Program”

This week I was in Dallas for a conference (long story) and on Sunday I got to hear Ike Graul tell the story of PUMP (Portland Urban Ministry Project). The PUMP church of Christ was planted in 2000 after a two year research phase by eight volunteers. They wanted to plant a church that would serve the poorest kids in Portland and grow a church from there. The idea was to love and share the gospel with a generation of kids in downtown Portland Oregon so that ten years later they would be a church of young adults serving the children of downtown Portland.

In 2008, this struggling church plant of 40 people participated in the PMC (Partnership for Missional Church). It is the same program that we will be participating in this year. In Mark Love's opinion, PMC saved this church's life. During the cluster events, the people in the other churches participating in the PMC cluster would say to Ike, “You guys don't need to learn about this 'missional' stuff. You're already doing it!” Ike however, will tell you that they learned most of what they know from making mistakes first. They are stumbling along and despite themselves, they making a difference in the lives of kids in Portland. Their intentions were good but deep down in their heart there was something wrong with what they thought they were doing.

On Sunday night at the conference, Ike said, “We came to Portland as 'Benevolent Imperialists': we were going to fix these kids. We had the gospel and we were going to tag them with it. Then they were going to be fixed.” The phrase 'Benevolent Imperialist' convicted the whole group, we all felt the weight of it. To be an imperialist means to conquer or take over. To recognize yourself as a 'Benevolent Imperialist' is to see that you are mistakenly taking the people you serve as objects of your goodness rather than real people to enter into relationship with.

It took them eight years to understand that they couldn't help the people of urban Portland until they became citizens of urban Portland. They weren't just serving the poor but were willing to become poor for the sake of Jesus. On a related note, Scot McKnight wrote on his blog this week, “Missional takes place at the local and in the concrete; it's not an idea; missional is an act of love to the neighbor we confront. One can't set up a “missional program” because being missional means responding to the question: How can I help you ... right now? Missional isn't an alternative to evangelism but a kingdom environment *for* evangelism. Missional seeks to participate in what God is doing in this world. We don't become missional; we are missional because God is missional and the church is missional.”

At our Annual General Meeting I will talk more about our participation in this program and what it will mean for our church family. Hopefully, it will draw us into a more intentional engagement in what God is doing in our community.

ncw

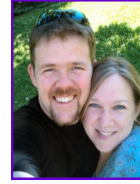
PUMP church: <http://www.pumpchurch.org>

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<http://www.patheos.com/community/jesuscreed/2011/02/04/everyday-mission-everyday-people/>

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