



*Serving,
Connecting,
and Equipping
Communities to
Touch Lives for Christ*

“To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

~ Ephesians 4:12-13

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Thanks to everyone who supports this ministry through their financial gifts and prayers so we can continue to "Touch lives for Christ."

Random Thoughts

by Jerry Kieft

This was found in Jerry's prayer journal...

How did this all happen? Believe me, we have had some amazing laughter about it all. Along with some tears. No one saw this coming and yet simply responding to Him each day has brought us into a place we could not have conceived or conspired to get to.

Nothing I am doing today I set out purposely to accomplish. My plans for my life were very different than how things have turned out. FUNNY HOW THAT IS!

Perhaps being fruitful isn't a matter of starting a program or following a 5 year plan and achieving it. Perhaps it is a matter of simply being able to respond to the people and situations around us with His love in our hearts and His voice in our ear.

For most of my life I have drawn too direct a line between what I think God wants and what I must do to get it. It seems Jesus warned us about that - if you try to save your life you'll lose it. If you try to be first you'll end up lost.

He only asked us to love, one day at a time, whoever is before us in whatever circumstance we meet them. Everything else He wants to do will flow from that simple reality.

We have filled the world with ministries people have started to accomplish some great things for God. They set up a ministry, beg for money to fund it, and they try to find a way to connect with these people. Start a program, fund it, then try and try to get people to take advantage of it.

What if we just started loving the

people God puts before us each day? Can you imagine what would spill out of that in terms of opportunity, ministry and even growing fellowship.

I feel we have it backwards. Jesus didn't ask me to start ministries. He didn't ask me to do great things. He simply asked us to love others the same way we are loved by Him and that will be enough for the whole world to know that we belong to Him and that they can too.

I am being convinced today that everything God wants to do in the world will flow from us learning to live in His love and listening to Him as we walk through life. This allows the opportunities in our lives to grow organically rather than through the artificial means of organizing, promoting, and manipulating others. That may be why He told us His new command would simply be to love like we've been loved.

“To many people walk around with meaningless life. They seem half asleep, even when they are busy doing things they think are important, this is because they chase the wrong things. The way you get meaning in your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you and devote yourself to something that gives you purpose and meaning.” — from Tuesday with Morrie - by Mitch Alborn

Love wins.
Love always wins.



National Director's Meeting

What is all this talk about Georgia? Something happened in Georgia from March 31 through April 3, and the people involved are still talking about it. The National Directors Meeting for ATLAS was taking place during those days, with ATLAS Directors and ATLAS Group Board members gathered from Pennsylvania to Michigan to Wisconsin and the three state corner of Iowa, Minnesota, and South Dakota, and all the way to California. There were many good comments about the relationship building that took place between all 21 attendees, but Jerry Kieft was not there because he had such a bad case of the flu that he couldn't even pack his bags to go.

The story of when Joseph was visited in Egypt by his brothers during the famine, and Joseph took them into his house and killed the fatted calf and fed them and treated them as royalty - that is the same treatment that was offered to us brothers and sisters by Mike and Joyce Daniel. Most of the guests stayed with Mike and Joyce, and they had two neighbors who opened up their homes for a few of us. The food, fellowship, and beautiful home and surroundings were included in many of the discussions on the plane ride home.

The National Directors Meetings are meant to offer fun, food, and fellowship, but they also include some type of learning and challenge for each person. We were offered insights with financial assistance by Shelley Appel from New Focus, because many times the

people that use ATLAS have a need for financial restructuring. The group was challenged by Bob Lupton, who decided to live in the low income areas of Atlanta, where he made an attempt to make a difference in his neighborhood. He talked about helping people without robbing them of their dignity, and he also asked us if the focus of ATLAS was betterment or development? (are we giving them fish or are we teaching them how to fish?) The only negative comments from this awesome event were:

- (1) not enough personal "God Time", and
- (2) not enough discussion time after the talks.

We promise to work on those very important pieces of the event.



Offices Host Annual Banquets

Each year many of the ATLAS offices host a celebration dinner. These dinners are a way of saying "Thank You" to their many supporters, but also a way of inviting new people to hear of the many ways ATLAS helps people and the surrounding community.

Each office brings their own twist to the evening, but they all have a time of testimony. Mentors share about the blessing it is to be used by God to help another individual and Mentorees share what God has done in their life with the help of their Mentor and the ATLAS Staff.

We are blessed to have a few pictures from some of the local dinners.



ATLAS Orange City had their Celebration Dinner on March 13 at Immanuel Christian Ref. Church in Orange City

ATLAS of Lyon County hosted their banquet on Saturday, April 12 in Rock Rapids



ATLAS of Sioux Center hosted their Celebrate ATLAS dinner on April 15 at New Life Ref Church in Sioux Center

ATLAS for Life gathered for their Celebration Dinner on Thursday, April 17 at the Pipestone Golf Course Country Club

