



This is the final week of our *RockStar: Making HIM Famous* series. We wind up the series with *One Hit Wonder*, a discussion about staying focused on our mission. Throughout this series, we have been centering our discussions on the Journey Church “invest and invite” strategy. This week, we become focused with Jesus’ focus on his mission and challenged to carry that mission on today.

- Name a “one hit wonder” song/group that impacted you in your childhood. Why does that song/group stick out in your head/what impact did it have on you?
  
- Why do you think some musicians manage to “hit it big” with one or two songs, but are never able to make a career out of it?
  
- *READ Matthew 9:9-13.* The religious people in Jesus’ day had labeled certain people as “sinners,” and considered them so bad that people shouldn’t even associate with them.
  - What does this passage teach us was Jesus’ primary mission?
  
  - Who would you say are the “tax collectors and sinners” of 2008 Auburn, Alabama?
  
  - Luke’s account of this story concludes with: “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). What are you doing to *intentionally* “seek and save” the “sinners” of Auburn?
  
  - What distractions in your life are keeping you from staying focused on the mission to reach out to the outcasts in our society?
  
- *READ Matthew 28:18-20.* This passage is known as The Great Commission, Jesus challenges us to continue His mission.
  - Where do you see the Journey Church “Know-Grow-Go” process in this passage?
  
  - Mark’s account of this passage (*Mark 16:15-16*) says to “proclaim the gospel.” What is “the gospel” (which means “good news”)? How would you describe it to someone far from God?
  
  - How can your Growth Group and/or Journey Church help you rise to the challenge of carrying on Jesus’ mission this week?



Growth Group Leaders:

I don't tell you enough how much I appreciate your hard work in leading the Growth Groups here at Journey Church! Several new folks are starting to get involved in our groups, which has been extremely exciting. As your group grows, be sure to identify an apprentice soon, so we can have more leaders ready to launch groups in the fall.

This is the final week of the "RockStar" series. We only have a couple more series to go before the end of the school year. Our groups will not be continuing through the summer like we did last year, but we will encourage you and help you to facilitate a few events to keep your groups "doing life together" as the summer progresses. I will give you more information about the summer as the time gets closer.

As we begin this week's discussion, I have again included the article by Andy Stanley and Ed Young. This article will continue to help you lead your group's discussion as we center around the invest and invite strategy.

You may also want to check out Vince Antonucci's blogs about being "grace wholesalers":  
<http://forefrontchurch.wordpress.com/2008/03/30/grace-wholesalers-pt-1/>

God bless, and have a great week!  
Andrew

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This is the final week of our *RockStar: Making HIM Famous* series. We wind up the series with *One Hit Wonder*, a discussion about staying focused on our mission. Throughout this series, we have been centering our discussions on the Journey Church "invest and invite" strategy. This week, we become focused with Jesus' focus on his mission and challenged to carry that mission on today.

As usual the first two questions are ice-breakers to build on the "RockStar" theme. Don't spend too much time on them. HOWEVER, I suggest you are aware of the notes so that you can use them to focus your discussion on our primary topic.

- **Name a "one hit wonder" song/group that impacted you in your childhood. Why does that song/group stick out in your head/what impact did it have on you?**

Most songs that make it big strike a chord with the listening audience. "One hit wonder" songs often speak to culture at just the right moment. Because of this, their influence often lasts a lot longer than the artist.

- **Why do you think some musicians manage to "hit it big" with one or two songs, but are never able to make a career out of it?**

Since "one hit wonder" songs are often songs that come from an artists' heart and strike a chord with the culture, if the artist does not stay focused on where that heart message came from, if they get distracted by the fame, if they get overwhelmed with the celebrity culture and substance abuse, if they forget who they really are, they will be in danger of losing their influence in culture and the become an anomaly, a one-hit-wonder.

As we move in to our primary discussion, we aim to find that being a one-hit-wonder isn't always a bad thing. As Christ-followers, we need to stay focused on our mission and remember who God has made us, so that we can maintain influence in the culture and change the world around us.

- *READ Matthew 9:9-13.* The religious people in Jesus' day had labeled certain people as "sinners," and considered them so bad that people shouldn't even associate with them.

- **What does this passage teach us was Jesus' primary mission?**

Jesus' mission was to look for people who are "spiritually sick," or to extend mercy to "sinners." Everything he did was focused on helping these people find restoration into a relationship with God. He spent a lot of time talking to religious leaders, but even this time was intended to call them to join him on the mission to reach those far from God. His time spent with the disciples was to train them to carry on the mission when he was gone (as we will see later in the Great Commission discussion.)

- **Who would you say are the "tax collectors and sinners" of 2008 Auburn, Alabama?**

I'm going to allow you and your group total freedom with this question. This is an opportunity to understand the hearts of your group members. If God has placed a certain type of person on the hearts of your folks, use this discussion as an opportunity to raise the bar in reaching out to that group of people. If your group has a hard time coming up with anything, you may want to drop the rest of the discussion and come up with some real challenges to help your group members identify hurting people in our city. **Just seeing the needy people around us is the first major step in changing this city with a passion for Jesus Christ.**

- Luke's account of this story concludes with: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). **What are you doing to intentionally "seek and save" the "sinners" of Auburn?**

Just being able to identify needy groups in your city is a sign that God is already quickening your heart to make a difference in their lives. Whatever groups your GG members identify, challenge them to see their awareness of those people as a call from God to reach out to them. Challenge them to take practical steps to extend God's mercy and grace into their lives.

- **What distractions in your life are keeping you from staying focused on the mission to reach out to the outcasts in our society?**

This is a challenge question to help your folks get out of their bubble. For me personally, 50+ hours in another city make it hard to focus on needs here. Additionally, I haven't been very good at intentionally taking advantage of opportunities to get to know people when I am here in town. Emily and I have been taking strides over the past several months to be more intentional. We're starting to see some results. Some people we have talked to are starting to get involved in churches. What are you personally doing? Use those steps to encourage your group.

- *READ Matthew 28:18-20.* This passage is known as The Great Commission, Jesus challenges us to continue His mission.
  - **Where do you see the Journey Church "Know-Grow-Go" process in this passage?**

**GO** into all the world, **make disciples (know)**, **Teach (grow)** them . . .

- Mark's account of this passage (*Mark 16:15-16*) says to "proclaim the gospel." **What is "the gospel"** (which means "good news")? **How would you describe it to someone far from God?**

This may be one of the hardest questions we have ever had in a Growth Groups discussion. If your folks have a hard time really describing the Gospel clearly, encourage them to talk about what attracted them to Christ in the first place. I personally believe that our personal story is far more effective in reaching people for Jesus than any eloquent presentation of specific truths. A simple way I've often used to describe the Gospel is as easy as A-B-C: **Admit/Acknowledge** that you have broken God's commands (sinned) and are separated from Him. **Believe** that Jesus Christ is God's son, came to earth to live a perfect life, died to pay the penalty for what we've done wrong, and rose again to deliver to us eternal life, and **Confess** publically that Jesus Christ has become the Boss (Lord) of your life.

- **How can your Growth Group and/or Journey Church help you rise to the challenge of carrying on Jesus' mission this week?**

This question is simply an opportunity for you to take away any excuses your folks may have for not being an influence in the lives of people around them. Make it a serious challenge. If they acknowledge they are not making an influence, ask them how we can help change that. If they give suggestions, let us know and we'll see what we can do.

## **Can We Do That: by Andy Stanley and Ed Young**

Section One Reaching Out

Invest and Invite - Andy Stanley

We partner with our regular attenders to reach the unchurched.

At North Point Community Church, our evangelism strategy is summed up in two words: invest and invite. From the very beginning, we've told our people that our desire is to partner with them in the process of evangelism. As I am fond of saying, "We will do what you are afraid or unequipped to do: raise the issues. You do what we cannot do: invite your friends." As a result of this partnership, we see a high percentage of our people participating in personal evangelism. Over 90 percent of the adults we baptize came to NPCC at the invitation of a friend.

### Fear and Ignorance

Let's face it, fear and ignorance are the two primary obstacles to personal evangelism. When I was growing up, leaders addressed these problems through training and motivation. In the 1970s and '80s, several excellent evangelism-training programs were developed to help believers overcome their fear and ignorance. Pastors preached compelling messages about reaching the lost and the need for all of us to personally embrace the Great Commission.

For some -- primarily those with the gift of evangelism -- it took. But most of us simply had to face the fact that we were cowards. We just could not bring ourselves to whip out a tract and present the gospel to our neighbors and friends. We accepted the fact that our Christian experience would include a measure of guilt regarding our lack of concern for the lost. Investing in Lives

North Point's invest-and-invite strategy has made it safe for hundreds of seasoned but scared believers to get back into the game. Instead of training our people in the art of personal evangelism, we instruct them to invest in the lives of unbelievers with the express purpose of inviting them to an event where they will be exposed to the gospel in a clear, creative, and compelling manner. Is there a need for training? Yes. But our strategy is not dependent upon training. It is dependent upon purposeful relationships.

Believers are responsible for leveraging their relational influence for the sake of the kingdom of God. That's the part they can do that we -- the church -- can't. I have gone so far as to tell our folks that if they are not willing to leverage their influence for the kingdom, they are attending the wrong church. I don't want to raise money and build buildings so we can seat more note-takers. Our mission is to lead people into a growing relationship with Christ. We operate off the premise that all regular attenders have embraced that mission as their own.

They are not responsible for knowing the answers to every question their unbelieving friends may throw their way. But they are responsible for exposing them to an environment where they will be presented with the gospel. Anybody can do that, assuming there is a church close by that is designed with the unchurched in mind.

### Extending an Invitation

What we have discovered (and we certainly aren't the first) is that far more personal evangelism takes place if believers feel the freedom to invite their unbelieving friends to church. It is easier to invite people to an event than it is to confront them about their personal belief system. It is easier to include them in on something you are excited about than it is to convince them that their entire worldview is incorrect.

While we do not do "seeker services," we do design our weekend services with the "investee" in mind. We assume that every Sunday morning hundreds of our people are going to show up with that friend, neighbor, or family member with whom they have been cultivating a relationship. Often people will introduce me to their guest and, without saying it directly, let me know that this is their investee. What they are really saying is, "I finally got 'em here. Don't blow it for me!" The Eye of the Beholder

Our goal for our unchurched guests is to create a comfortable environment where they are confronted with the intensely practical nature of the Scripture. I want them to leave thinking, "I didn't know that was in there. That was actually helpful."

Evangelism is a process. Establishing the relevance of the Bible is often a necessary precursor to convincing people of its divine source. Our church is inundated with people who have not yet put their faith in Christ for salvation but whose lives are slowly being transformed by the application of God's Word.

Exposing unbelievers to the relevance of Scripture is something the church can do a better job of than the individual believer. This is why partnership evangelism is so effective. Back to You

At the end of our worship services, we place the responsibility of evangelism squarely on the shoulders of our people. I do this as conspicuously as possible. I say things like, "If you have any questions about what you have heard this morning, ask the person who invited

you. They will do a far better job explaining it than I did." Or, "The person who invited you this morning would love to discuss this with you over lunch."

On several occasions members have come up to me before a service and asked me to make one of those statements. They were looking for an opportunity -- an opening -- to take the conversation with their investee to a new level. They understood what it meant to partner with the church in evangelism. Less Is More

One other advantage of our invest-and-invite strategy is that it is an easy plan to communicate. It is not seven steps or five steps; it is two words. Everybody in our church knows what I am talking about when I refer to our invest-and-invite strategy. And everybody knows whether or not they are on board with us.

In our elders meetings, we keep up with and pray for each other's investees. The same is true in our staff meetings. Leaders (including staff) know that on the Sunday their investee shows up, they are released from their normal ministry duties. Their responsibility on that Sunday is to navigate their friend through a morning at NPCC and then go have lunch.

Every church needs an evangelism strategy that the members understand and embrace. Our invest-and-invite strategy is easy to communicate and easy to apply. More importantly, it reflects one of the first instances of evangelism in the New Testament. When Andrew discovered Jesus' true identity, the Bible says he went and found his brother Peter, and "he brought him to Jesus" (John 1:42).

The church is the body of Christ. Bringing the unchurched in among the body is the next best thing to bringing them to the person of Jesus.

Ed's Take:

Like Andy, I believe the role of evangelism is a non-negotiable in the local church. Every church should have as part of its purpose a statement about evangelism. One of our stated purposes at Fellowship Church is "to reach out and share the good news of Jesus Christ." Unfortunately, churches often fall victim to the naval-gazing principle; when left on their own, they turn inward and become a holy huddle with an "us four and no more" mentality.

One of the primary responsibilities of the senior pastor and staff is to keep the church focused on evangelism. Many churches teach the importance of reaching out but fail miserably in modeling evangelism to the church. I recognize that it is difficult for church staff to witness and invite people to come to church because we spend most of our time around church people. When I started Fellowship, I decided early on that I would spend a good deal of my time around people who were not Christians. Wherever I go -- the health club, restaurants, the theater, sporting events, etc. -- I constantly invite people I meet to attend Fellowship Church. I tell them about how Christ can change their lives.

We hold our staff accountable for the contacts they have with unchurched people. Often in staff meetings, I will go around the room and ask staff members to report on who they are spending time with. If staff members are not talking to people who are hell-bound, then something's out of balance in their schedule and priorities.

A Tag-Team Event

Not only do I encourage our staff to share the good news of Christ, I regularly challenge the congregation to invite their friends, family, and coworkers to Fellowship. I promise our regular attendees that if they will invite someone to Fellowship, we will make sure that the moment their friend or family member pulls into the parking lot, he or she will feel comfortable and welcome. More importantly, we will make sure that all visitors hear that God created them, Christ died for them, and He is the only way to eternity in heaven.

I tell our congregation that evangelism is a tag-team event. It takes both the staff and the congregation to work together to get people to visit our church.

A healthy church should have a mixture of three groups of people attending: those who have not stepped over the line of faith, those who have just made a faith reception, and those who are mature in their faith. If everyone is a mature believer, you are not doing the Great Commission. Conversely, if the church is full of baby believers, you are not discipling.

I've also discovered that the best way to market the church is through word-of-mouth advertising. Our surveys indicate that 98 percent of the people who attend FC showed up for the first time because someone invited them. If you have a church that is creative, relevant, and exciting to attend, people will invite their friends -- that's a given. If your church is boring and irrelevant, you can have evangelism classes 24/7 and it won't matter. People will not invite others to a boring church.