



# BUILDING MOVEMENTS: SEND: LIFETIME LABORERS

## FROM STINT PLAYBOOK: LIFETIME LABORERS TO LEAD THE HARVEST

In Matthew 9: 35, Jesus moved among the towns and villages, ministering among the needy crowds. He was moved with compassion for them because looking over the needy crowd, responds with this phrase they were like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus turned to his team of disciples and said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.” Jesus saw that the central issue was not better methods, greater strategies, nor new technology. To our Savior, the central issue was a shortage of laborers to reap the harvest.

**Prayer must be our focal point in addressing the issue of laborers for the harvest.**

Jesus goes on in the verse that follows to exhort his followers to “ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into the harvest.” As we seek to raise up laborers for our movements, the campus and the world, prayer needs to be our focal point. Yet, we need to also look at a variety of additional issues that play a role in adding laborers to the harvest.

In a discussion on leadership, John Maxwell made this simple statement, “We attract who we are.” The connection between who we are and our ability to draw the right kind of people along side us into helping launch movements is apparent.

Let’s look at five key characteristics of a messenger of the gospel who will attract other laborers to the harvest. Numerous other issues could be discussed, but we have chosen to look more closely at these five: The Word, the Holy Spirit, Fruitfulness, Relevance in ministry, and Vision.

### **The Role of “The Word” in Raising-up Laborers for the Harvest**

Our part in helping see the fulfillment of the Great Commission is enhanced by the development - or impeded by the lack - of character and conviction in

## THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL

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each laborer in the harvest. God's primary method of developing these attributes in the life of a believer is by His Holy Spirit working through the study of His word.

Seeing laborers join us in the harvest involves not only challenging them but also with attracting the kind of men and women who hear this challenge from us. People are not attracted to organizations; they are attracted to people. In asking people to commit their lives to the cause of Christ, they will do so if the cause and the co-workers are 'worthy'. People will die for a worthy cause, but not for a job.

Many of us can relate to Martha when Jesus came to the home of her and her sister, Mary's, home (Luke 10:38-42). Often it is not very easy to sacrifice personal time at the feet of Jesus because we are so involved in the busyness of life and ministry overseas. Martha was devoted to serving Jesus. Mary was devoted to Jesus.

In John 11, when Martha went out to meet the Lord after the death of her brother, no one came with her. When Mary left her house, everyone who was comforting her followed her. Perhaps this is just coincidental, but others will follow us if they see that our love for the Lord is real.

First and foremost, we must affirm that each of us holds the primary responsibility when it comes to our own personal spiritual growth, character, and discipline in their study of God's word. The organizational climate of our teams certainly can influence the environment for these choices. In our zeal to take personal responsibility for our own growth, we often can lose the accountability of others. We have a responsibility to our own growth to get alone with the Father much like Jesus modeled we also have a responsibility to one another that we are hearing from the Lord in His word and that their our characters are being shaped through this discipline. Just as a team is dependent on every member carrying out their role and responsibility in the job of ministry, we are dependent on every member carrying out the role and responsibility of feeding on God's word.

### **Discuss:**

What are some ways you can cultivate a heart like Mary's?

What would this produce in the lives of our students?

What things this year have either contributed to having quality time with Him or made it difficult?

How have you seen God has change you recently especially in the area of developing character and conviction?

What level of accountability do you need as a team to make time in the Word a priority this year?

### **Suggestions:**

Have your team and your disciples, study the same book of the Bible together and share



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what you are learning from God's word.

Schedule your times with the Lord first before scheduling 'ministry' activities.

### **The Role of "The Holy Spirit" in Raising-up Laborers for the Harvest**

Blake was a sophomore and a growing Christian but still on the fringes of our ministry. I wanted to challenge Blake to consider coming to the Fall Getaway and to starting a Bible study in his dorm. My trainer needed to observe me in sharing the Holy Spirit booklet so I thought I would kill two birds with one stone.

As I shared the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Blake realized that he had not fully surrendered to the Lord, and made a decision to do so. He joyfully asked Christ to take the position of as Lord of his life. I transitioned from the booklet to inviting him to the Getaway and challenging him to lead a group of freshman guys. I will never forget Blake's response. He said, "Since I have decided to fully follow the Lord, of course I need to come to this conference and start making disciples."

I instantly knew I needed to share the ministry of the Holy Spirit with all of the other guys in the same study with Blake. One by one I shared with Gregg, Martin, Paul and Robert. They all had similar responses as Blake. Robert even looks back now and realizes for him, this was when he first entered a personal relationship with Christ.

I saw incredible change in all of these guys' lives. They became fully involved with helping us reach their campus for Christ. They all started leading others within the year. They went to conferences, on summer projects, and STINTs. Now, seventeen years later, all five of these guys are in full-time ministry. They all had life-changing decisions that fall that took them on a path of being laborers for a lifetime.

Of course not every guy I shared this incredible secret with chose Christian work as a vocation. However, I began to see that truly understanding the ministry of the Holy Spirit and surrendering to Him was prerequisite to becoming a laborer for Christ on the campus and for the rest of our lives, whether or not it becomes our occupation. Sharing the ministry of the Holy Spirit became a leverage point of my ministry.

Before we challenge others to becoming laborers, we need to bring them back to examine who is really on the throne of their lives. Then challenging them to a conference or taking a step of faith in leading becomes more of helping them make an informed decision in light of the greater decision they had already made. God uses surrendered lives and only when one is surrendered can they fully know God's will.

*Discuss:*



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Read Romans 12:1, 2.

What things contribute to your crawling off the altar as a living sacrifice?

How is surrender our spiritual act of worship?

In what ways can you as a team help one another walk according to the Spirit and not be conformed to the pattern of this world?

How can you share these truths with your disciples?

### *Suggestions:*

Become a master at sharing the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Share this truth with your disciples again. Make it a point to share it with them before you challenge them to join you in the harvest.

Help your students learn to master communicating this message to others.

### **The Role of “Fruitfulness” in Raising up Laborers for the Harvest**

Luke 5 is one of my favorite chapters in the Bible. It is when Peter and his fishing companions fish all night and catch nothing. Something dramatic happens when Jesus gets in Peter’s boat and sends him back to the deep water. Peter and Jesus catch so many fish that the nets begin to break. Peter signals to his partners to join them in the catch and becomes acutely aware of his sinfulness. The most amazing thing is that all of these crazy fishermen left everything - their fish, their nets, their boats, their livelihood, their family - to follow Him for the sake of the call.

It is noteworthy that this scene comes after the one in Matthew 4 where Jesus challenges these same men to follow Him and become fishers of men. At that time they just leave their nets and their father. In this scene, they leave everything. One is a decision to follow Him; the other is a decision of ultimate surrender.

When one evaluates a decision of whether they want to seek a lifetime of work in the harvest, they are asking the soul-searching question, “Can I see myself doing this for the next 40 years?” For Peter and his friends, this was a no-brainer after seeing God work in such an amazing way.

What amazing things is God doing in your midst and in the lives of your students? Are they seeing God work in a way that causes them to humbly fall before Him and surrender all for the sake of the His call?

We should party like they do in heaven when we rejoice when someone comes to Christ! (Luke 15) But what about when we are laboring in a place where the responses are few and far between? Perhaps, we also should whoop it up when someone listens to the entire gospel, and or when a non-believing student starts reading the Bible. What a difference it would make if we even celebrate these small steps students are taking to enter His kingdom! It adds excitement, encouragement and momentum. It becomes something worth giving up our lives



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to do.

For our disciples, seeing God use them to help change a life is contagious. Go back and look again at Luke 5 and note again that Peter gets his friends involved in the harvest by asking them to come help him. We need to look for ways to involve them in the harvest so they can experience God using them for His glory.

***Discuss:***

Is our heart and passion to see lost students come to know Christ?

How are we helping each other as a team to maintain this passion?

Are we sharing the gospel boldly?

Are we modeling this to our disciples? Are we measuring and celebrating victories?

How can we help get more and more people involved with us in the harvest?

***Suggestions:***

Look for ways to celebrate, not only as a team, but with your disciples as well.

Take your disciples with you in reaching the lost. Let them experience God using them in His work.

### **The Role of “Relevance” in Raising-up Laborers for the Harvest**

When one team first moved to Estonia to open a new campus in the southern part of the country, they were enthusiastic. Highly motivated and armed with a powerful message, they began to canvas the university dormitories to share the gospel with students. The response surprised them. They literally had doors slammed shut in their faces. Maybe you have experienced a similar response. This team decided to regroup and began to rethink how to reach students with the gospel.

What they discovered was that the methods they were using were the same ones used by the Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses (neither of these groups are regarded any more favorably in Estonia than they are in the US). Though the message was radically different than these two cults, it was lost because of the method they were using.

Relevance in evangelism is important if we want to produce lifelong laborers for the harvest. Our goal should be that only our message offends, not our method or the messenger. If our methods of evangelism are not relevant to the times, our students will not duplicate them. If they do duplicate them, it will usually only be for a limited time. We need to share the gospel in a relevant way that causes students to say, “I can do this.” If we can model this, we will see students develop a life style of evangelism.

What does relevant evangelism look like? It is not the absence of suffering or feeling a bit awkward when we are sharing the gospel. It starts with being students of our students. How do they connect with one another? Can we adapt our methods so that they are similar to what



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non-Christians do? One of the goals the team in Estonia strived for was to put on evangelistic events that were relevant enough that a non-Christian would feel comfortable inviting a non-Christian friend to come. In order to do this they spent a lot of time talking with students and discovering their felt needs. They became students of their students, even involving seeking non-Christians in helping them plan evangelistic outreaches. Many times, it is through these discussions on felt needs that the reality of their real need of Christ will be surfaced.

Relevant evangelism also means constantly evaluating what we are doing, and trying new methods. Many will fail, and some will work. The tendency when we discover a successful method of evangelism is to idolize it. It becomes repeated year after year until the method is no longer relevant. We need to think, evaluate, adapt and contextualize the gospel and teach our disciples to do the same. We need to realize that the message is sacred; the method is not.

As we move towards relevance in evangelism, there are a few cautions. First, we need to remember that in our efforts to be relevant, we must not compromise the message of the gospel. We can not airbrush over sin, God's judgment, and salvation only through Christ as we share the gospel. We also need to remember the power of the gospel to change lives and share it boldly. In Acts 17, Paul shares the gospel in a way relevant to the Athenians but he does it in a very bold manner, telling them there was a day set when God will judge the world with justice by the resurrected Savior.

It is relevant, bold laborers who will change their campus, country, and the world. If we are relevant and bold, we will attract students who are also relevant and bold.

### *Discuss:*

How do non-Christian students on our campus connect with one another?

Can our students duplicate this for the purpose of presenting the gospel?

Will they duplicate this for a lifetime?

Are we teaching our students to think?

What are we doing that might need to be changed in how we approach ministry?

### *Suggestions:*

As a team, become students of the students on your campus and in your city.

Look for ways to help your disciples to think and do this as a team well.

## **The Role of Vision in Raising-up Laborers for the Harvest**

Vision and a clear sense of what God has called us to be a part of, are two of the more essential qualities that attract others to Christ and into a lifetime of launching movements everywhere. Conviction of heart and passion for what God is doing in a person's life, on their campus, in their country, and around the world provides an incredible magnet to draw others along side of us and into His work.



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In the Book of Nehemiah, the prophet first is broken by over the reality that things in Jerusalem are not the way they should be. Vision allows begins with a concern. After arriving in the city and inspecting the walls, Nehemiah calls the leaders together and says: “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.” These leaders join together to rebuild the wall in fifty-two days.

Following times of refreshment and restoration such as conferences, retreats, successful events, etc., it is easy to approach the ministry with zeal, clarity of purpose, clear direction and heart motivation . . . many of the things that would attract others to join with us. But often the path between envisioned and adrift, confident and timid, encouraged and disheartened, energized and weary is far too quickly traveled.

A STINT year that began with great hope and anticipation can waver in motivation and vision throughout the year. The result is not only detrimental to each of us personally and to the team, but also negatively impacts the decisions of those who are considering the possibility of joining with us. On the other hand, a motivated and envisioned team that clings to the hope and confidence of their calling, maintains a clear sense of direction, and a real conviction that God is at work in our midst is incredibly attractive. An envisioned and motivated team will have a huge impact in attracting others to join them in the harvest.

Two times in the Book of Nehemiah, Nehemiah and his team faced opposition that could have caused them to loose heart. In chapter 4 verse 14, Nehemiah rallies the troops, “Don’t be afraid of them [the Samaritan opposition]. Remember the Lord is great and awesome.” In chapter 6, he asked God to strengthen his hands. With a little tweaking of their plan, a re-energizing of the vision and a reminder of who was in charge, Nehemiah’s team finished the task in record time and takes took away the disgrace of Jerusalem.

### *Discuss:*

Andy Stanley wrote: “Visions are often born in the soul of a man or woman who is gripped by the tension of what is and what should be.”

What is gripping your soul?

What is God’s ultimate desire for your campus/city?

Who are some good vision-casters, and how can your team learn from them?

How can we cultivate in our students a vision of what God wants to do in their midst?

### *Suggestions:*

Take time to talk again about what you are trusting God for on your campus, in your city and the world.

Think through what you would want your campus to look like as a result of serving as a team to launch movements.



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Share your vision as a team frequently in team settings, with students . . . most anywhere and often.

### **Review**

- Pray for Laborers.
- Seek to be people in whom the Word of God is truly living and active.
- Make sure we are walking in the power of the Holy Spirit and communicating this message to students.
- Make sure Jesus is in our boat, and invite others to take part in what He is doing, celebrating the victories along the way
- Look for ways to be relevant in your evangelism, while remaining bold.
- Keep the vision before you and your students.