New Hope for a New Year: Leaning on Jesus for Lasting Change

Mercy Ministry

I. The Context for Our Mercy Ministry

1. There is a ____ chance of child born in bottom fifth of the economic ladder to the top fifth by adulthood
   - Out of 50 of the largest cities in the U.S., Charlotte ranks 50th in upward mobility
2. There is a shortage of approximately ____ affordable housing units in Mecklenburg County.
   - 1476 people experiencing homelessness last January
   - Average rent is $1468. That equates to a 96 hour work week for a minimum wage worker.
3. About ____ children in Mecklenburg County live in poverty.
   - That’s about 1 in 5 children
   - 4388 CMS students faced homelessness or housing instability 2014-15 school year
4. About ____ of students in Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools are reading at grade level by third grade.
5. There are ____ single parent households in Mecklenburg County.
   - 35% of households with children are single-parent households
   - 1/3 of all single moms in Mecklenburg County are living in poverty
6. From 2000 to 2013, the number of foreign-born people living in the Charlotte metropolitan area grew ____.

II. The Content of Our Mercy Ministry

Motivated by Christ’s Love for Us (1 John 4:7-12)

- What are some potentially unhealthy motives for Mercy Ministry?
- What end of the spectrum can unhealthy motives lead to?

Word and Deed Ministry in Harmony (1 John 3:16-18; James 2:14-17)

- Where on the Word/deed spectrum do you tend to sit? Why?
- Is it just as unbiblical to be on the Word only end as the deed only end? Why?

Meeting an Immediate Need (John 6:1-14)

- What did the disciples learn from watching Jesus’ interaction with the crowds?
- What might Jesus’ attitude toward feeding the crowd form our approach to mercy ministry?
- What might participation in mercy ministry contribute to our own relationship with Jesus?

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Meeting the Ultimate Need (John 6: 25-27, 35-40, 47-51, 53-56)

- How might Jesus actions the next day inform our approach to mercy ministry?
- Why do we need to be reminded of peoples’ ultimate need?

III. The Connections for Our Mercy Ministry (Individually or with Life Groups)

The Barnabas Center: A non-profit, non-denominational, Christ-centered counseling and training ministry.

- Counseling, training, referrals, and scholarships

Love, Inc.: A non-profit that works with churches in Charlotte to determine what volunteer services they can offer to people in need, especially those whom no other agencies are able to serve.

- Office volunteering or field work volunteering, a “catch all” for a variety of interests

Charlotte Rescue Mission/Dove’s Nest: Transforming lives in the name of Christ by serving people suffering with addiction, poverty, or hopelessness.

- Monthly worship service led by Uptown, meal service volunteering, Dove’s Nest

Brookstone Schools: A non-denominational Christian school incorporating a biblical worldview into quality education for under-resourced families in Charlotte.

- Lunch Buddy program, classroom volunteers, tutoring

Pregnancy Resource Center: A non-profit medical clinic providing medical services and support to those in the Charlotte Metro area whose lives have been affected by unplanned pregnancy.

- Schedule a visit, host a baby shower, provide a month of snacks for counseling rooms, provide supplies for mobile units

Project 658: A Christ-centered, holistic ministry providing services for at-risk families, moving them toward sustainability; with a key focus on the international and refugee communities.

- Feeding projects, clothing drives, childcare, after school enrichment, sports programs, ESL classes, culinary arts schools, sewing, church leadership and Bible studies, job training and resume workshops, maintenance projects, family partnerships

Practical Next Steps:

1. Pray for a heart that is sensitive to the needs of others.
2. Take stock of your gifts, skills, interests, etc.
3. Start with something small (immediate family, friend, neighbor).
4. Contact a deacon in if you know of particular needs at Uptown.
5. Consider becoming a Mercy Champion.
6. Coordinate a Mercy initiative with your Life Group.