

PARMA AREA - MAY 2013



COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

Connection

Who is My Neighbor?

by Jeremy Kiner, Co-Director

In Luke 10, we find Jesus affirming a lawyer's assertion that, to inherit eternal life, you must love God with everything in your being and love your neighbor as yourself. Assumingly, the lawyer prides himself with knowing the Law well, but in his next breath asks Jesus, **"Who is my neighbor?"**

Let's think about that question for a second. Did this lawyer really not know who his neighbors were? Could he have been so smart, yet so ignorant? Or was this lawyer like many of us, just looking for a loophole, an excuse from being too specific with whom he should love and build relationship with?

In some ways, I can relate to this lawyer. I find it easy to pick out black and whites in the Bible, such as the Great Commandment, yet when I think about how these truths should actually relate to my life, I find myself willing to justify some gray. Similar to the lawyer, I think I've probably been comfortable holding to a more generalized view of the term "neighbor," where "neighbor" could mean anyone and, at the same time, no one. Like, the person across town. The lady you sit near at church. The cashier at the grocery store. The random stranger. You know, the metaphoric neighbor. The one you metaphorically love.

But what if the second part of the Great Commandment meant that we should love our actual neighbors?

Now, I am not generally a pusher of books. I am, however, a pusher of concepts and ideas - especially ones that really stir my spirit and shake up my thinking. Recently, I was turned onto the book, *The Art of Neighboring*, by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyan. Needless to say, this book has gotten my heart pumping and my wheels turning! I highly recommend it to all the pastors in the Parma area (In fact, I have a free copy for you! Just ask.). The book brings to the surface a concept that, while simple, is so biblical, so foundational, so powerful, so utterly genius that, I'm telling you, I believe it could radically transform our community.

In the book, the authors share a remarkable story of 20 local pastors who invite their mayor to join them in open dialogue about the city. In the meeting, the group asks the mayor, "How can the churches in the community best serve our city?" Their city, much like many other cities across America, faced very familiar challenges: At-risk kids, drug and alcohol abuse, elderly and child hunger, etc. After discussing these issues, the mayor finally offered this suggestion to the group of pastors, **"The majority of the issues that our community is facing would be eliminated or drastically reduced if we could just figure out a way to become a community of great neighbors."**

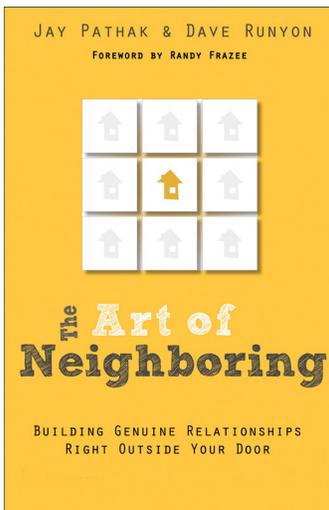
Wow. A community of great neighbors. That's it. Simple, yet profound. The Great Commandment. The genius of Scripture. A movement of neighboring might just be the antidote for our communities biggest issues. Not that we alone are capable of manifesting our own solutions, but because neighboring is at the core of God's plan, following that plan can change everything.

Positive change in a community should not require robust programs and complicated plans. I believe it can happen through the simplicity of just loving the people that live 30 feet from our front doors. That's a good place to start. So as spring unfolds, let's imagine the possibilities! What might happen in the Parma and surrounding area if this concept of "great neighboring" became a conscious initiative among our congregations? Just think about the value it could add to our city. The potential is powerful. Now let's get out and fire up those grills!

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HOMESCHOOL HELP

As we come to a close of our first school year offering Homework Help I cannot help but look back and praise God for His infinite wisdom and guidance. Before we started this endeavor we had prayed that God would allow us to meet the needs of this city in practical and effective ways. We quickly found out that homework help was among those needs and excitedly partnered with PHBC in order to make this happen. Each week they send a group of volunteers from their church to come and help us provide this free resource to the community. It was a match literally made in heaven as we had the facility and desire while they had the manpower with the same vision.

It is truly rewarding to sit across from these young students and help them through the tough problems on their homework. Not only have we been able to be the hands and feet of Christ in the child's life, we have been able to impact the parents that come and bring their children each week. This program will go on hold for the summer and resume in the Fall when school starts back up.



This shows what can be accomplished when we work together as the Body of Christ. What programs or ministries do you have in mind that you could use a different facility for? How can we help? Collaboration gets more done!

HEROES RACE CAR NIGHT

Friday, May 10 7:00-8:30 pm

@ Parmatown Mall

FREE father-kid night of fun & bonding!

Creative activities, car races, & prizes!

Geared for kids 12 & under



UPCOMING EVENTS

May 8, Wednesday - 8:30 - 10:30am

Ministerial Round Table @ Parma Area Family Collaborative, 11212 Snow Rd., Parma

May 10, Friday - 7:00 - 8:30pm

HEROES -FREE Father-Kid Night at Community Ambassadors, Parmatown Mall (Next to Payless Shoes)

May 23, Thursday - 8:15 - 10:00am

Parma Area Family Collaborative Meeting, Parma Christian Church, 7000 Ridge Rd. Parma, Ohio 44129

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