

Mission statement

A blog post by Glenn Balzer, former DOOR director

I have a friend, Anton Flores, who leads a ministry called “Alterna” in LaGrange, Georgia. He has done much to influence my understanding of Scripture and the call of God. His take on Exodus 3:7-8 is fascinating.

Then the Lord said, “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey ...”

In this passage we gain insight into how God approaches ministry. I cannot help but think that a mission statement tied to God’s approach to doing ministry might be a good starting point. In this passage God lets Moses know four things:

1. God has observed the misery of his people who are in Egypt.
2. God has heard their cry on account of their taskmasters.
3. God knows their sufferings.
4. Because of all of this, God will come down to “deliver them from the Egyptians, and bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey.”

Is it possible that this passage provides a model for engaging in ministry? Before ministry can happen we must see the need—kind of obvious. Many of us trip up after seeing; it is almost instinctual to jump

from seeing to fixing. It usually goes something like this: We go on a mission trip, see the hungry children, and immediately start a hunger relief program. It is interesting to think that this is not how God works.

After seeing the need, it is important, if not critical, to hear the stories. Listening comes before doing. As we listen and share stories, the possibility of knowing each other emerges. It isn't until we know each other that a space for doing is created.

Questions

- Can you imagine how this type of approach changes almost everything about service, mission, and the statements we develop?
- What do you think of this approach to service: see the need, hear the stories, “know” each other, and then do?
- How would this change your perspective of your assignment?
- How does this help you understand the heart of God?