

Living missionally, building relationships

July 19, 2010

That seems particularly true here in Fort Collins, Colo. Within this past year, Fort Collins has become a great mission field where five couples have to come to start three church plants. The Longs Peak Baptist Association is aggressively seeking to reach this culture that sees no need for Christianity or a church.

These church planters are teaching my team and me how to live missionally. We are missionaries in everything we do. We go on bike rides, to parks and to coffee shops, looking for people who are enjoying life in the same way. Because when life is lived correctly—or rather missionally—relationships are unavoidable.

As we establish each relationship, we find out who our new friends are, and they hear about who we are. We do not invite them to church. We befriend them. We care about who the individual is and—we hope—exchange phone numbers to get together another time. After a while, this individual may learn to trust a Christian. If that much is accomplished, sowing has been done.

We were told all this when we arrived on the mission field, and being a missionary seemed easy enough. However, after three weeks of just hanging out, the team had no relationships to show for our time invested. I grew frustrated with our assignment and with our leaders, claiming that it is just not in my natural personality to meet new people and to do so would be for me to be fake. But God waited until this point to introduce us to Brian.

On one drizzly day, we went to an empty park, simply because we did not

know what else to do. We shot a basketball for half an hour before a guy drove up and walked to another court. More out of frustration than out of a desire to make a friend, I called out, “Hey, you want to shoot with us?”

He came and played for a while. We engaged in small talk, and then we exchanged numbers. Since then, we have been together regularly. He is kind of shy and keeps to himself, but he is growing more comfortable with us. I still only know a little about his past, but he is searching for a new type of friend, and we are there for him. I don’t know how far I will get with this slow process of sowing gospel seed, but I have to trust in God, knowing that this friendship is God-ordained and for a purpose.

Jarred Taylor, a student at Stephen F. Austin State University, is serving with Go Now Missions in Fort Collins, Colo.