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SPEAKERS

RC: Ross Cochran

CD: Cynthia Dixon

0:00:00.0 CD: It's an honor and a privilege to be served and being allowed to serve God's people... I don't take it lightly, I would like to have fun. And it's not one of those things that it's hard for me to do is just second nature for me.

0:00:18.0 RC: Yeah, well, and even part of that is, so you are so empathetic in how your... In your ministry, and the first thing I wanna ask you about is, I think there is sometimes a gap that doesn't have to be there between those who are connected to children's ministry, whether they are serving in more of a director level like yourself, or whether they're leading a small group or anything in between, and just parents and their families. If you look at a Facebook thread about child discipleship, the first thing is, we need more leaders, the second thing is, Why are my parents returning my calls... Right, can you speak to how you have navigated that, those tensions, because I think you do, the culture that you've helped curate that you have followed God's leading and making at Oakleigh, everyone seems to be fully bought in on what their unique assignment is around child discipleship, like how has God made that clear to you?

0:01:20.4 CD: For us, or for me, I started out building a foundation of a structure, and so I always wanted... Every particular area in children's industry, children's Discipleship has some type of leader over where everyone feels connected to someone to the top, purposely by design, sometimes as directors get so, so busy and that we can't hit every phone call as we wanted to in every email, but they are connected to some staff member or some... A lead volunteer or which we call at Olivares IP. Can servant leaders not... Well, we don't say volunteers, we say You're a kingdom servant leader, and so where you automatically would get a phone call, you automatically get a connection, you automatically would get within a two-hour time frame from the time that you made the connection... Oh, so it's purposely by design, so everyone feels like they're important and that you've been seen and heard, and as well as... Communicating with the parents, communicate and communicate and communicating. And so everything we do in kids ministry, kids discipleship it, Almere, letting the parents know upfront, if we're changing the color were let the parents know if we're repainting, we lead the parent and then we're inviting them to the table to give their feedback. So we do focus groups, and we do all kinds of things, and we let them know so they feel like they're not just giving their kids to us is a child care, but they're part... Investing in their spiritual growth and development. And so it's not just staff and volunteers, it's the parents is everyone... So everyone has a part. My door's open, my email is open, I'm here at the conference and I'm on. I'm kicking parents back and the... I have a question like, my son can't get up for school today, and I don't know what to do, and I know you... If the conference, Hani just don't wanna buy, I'm automatically letting them know that You're just as important as this conference or you were more... Of course. And so I spell over on the side of the road, drive on the way, you're... So my personal opinion or

feedback how to get him out of bed... Nice. But to think about is I want them to always know that someone hears them, and so when I said, Are you listening? I want them to know that someone is hearing them talk, so when it's listening to them at all times, so everything is geared around listening and hearing, and so... You might not like some of the feedback we get. But it's important because sometimes it's good to have the feedback, so what we do is, like I said, we have those focus groups, we also... Each department I have is divided by a coordinate and a staff member, and then they have a group of Kinsale and then goes down the line, and so we have a confident care ministry, which in a time something happens where a death, sickness, hospital, whatever, within kids in ministry, those group of people will go and touch those people immediately, and so it's always a touch point at all times, and so I can talk on and on and on.

0:04:45.0 RC: But what I love about that is there's things in there that I just wanna make sure people are tracking... 'cause one of the things that I think is the easiest temptation to fall into is the hustle pace of our cultural moment as well as this ministry or in particular, and what I appreciate so much about that is you have created ways for people to feel seen and heard, like you said, that communicate the unhurried pace of child discipleship, people feel within a couple hours they're getting a touch point, it's not because that's a good system, it's because you've so clearly value whatever it is that they're saying. And you want them to feel seen and heard for the leadership that you have and creating those intentional touch points as they work their way sort of up a hierarchy, which I imagine is one of the least important things about your job, is that there's a level of buy-in. That easily gets created. One of the things that you said last time, I had the privilege of talking to you as you talked about how some people weren't gonna come back exactly, some people were gonna come back, and I think some people have a ton of anxiety around... I would almost say trying to be liked, and what I admire about your ministry is you've made the focus child discipleship that feels inviting, and I think also allows you to have the confidence and... Some people aren't gonna come back. Exactly. How do we speak to the leader who feels not maybe discouraged just because of that, but maybe also is listening and being like... I don't have all those resources, I can't do what Cindy is doing. My church is 12 people, like what you're talking about is reproducible no matter what your context is, but to start there, how do people begin to build that..

0:06:29.0 CD: Well, as you were saying, I did talk about how people are not coming back, and just to rehash a little bit about that, is that oftentimes as leaders, we get so thrown into the ones that left that we don't focus on the ones we have, and... So people leave from what various reasons, covid, a new season and life, and I like the ministry. I mean, that happens, you're gonna have those people just don't like what you do and feel like they can get it somewhere else, but... That's okay. Yeah, let's make it. Beat up on that. And I would like to tell you this all the time, 'cause you know Ross, I'm real talk. So it's a... Lets not get beautiful on that, I re-care, we love and we try to mentor and talk to those people back, but it's just not gonna happen sometimes, and that's okay, because I believe in one-man plan of one man, water guy gets the increase. And so maybe my season with that person or that group of people might have been a water and that was it. And so as a leader, you have to recognize that, Okay, what about the other people that's left, what about some new people coming in, and how do I gain those people and get their trust in what I have to offer for them? If you go to church ministry of five kids, you can still do the same thing, and so I look

at it as the common goal to this is that just simply letting people know you care. So if that is stopping to call, stop and to say, Hey, you know what, I'm gonna come by your kid's basketball game or a football game, or whatever practice... That's enough for someone to say, You know what, I think they really care. Let me see what's going on over there. And that's gonna be ministry. And I'm a director, I do all those things. Of course, I really do. And so I look at it as, when you get connected as a leader to the people that you're serving, your fight becomes a different kind of challenge to fight, in other words, everything I do in kids in children's ministry, it's about fighting for the family, fighting for the unit and fighting for that particular area, so if it takes me going to a leadership to the next level above me, I'm gonna do that and take that fight because I'm the advocate for kids ministry, and oftentimes kids ministry don't have that type of advocate, and you say Well, yeah, I'm just one and I have five kids and my pastor doesn't listen and it doesn't understand, but you don't stop the fight, you know, it was just 'cause he didn't listen at that moment, you keep liking it because that's how important... And I met it yesterday when I said that oftentimes, if they look at kids ministry is babysit, we have to come out terminer, not the babysitting service of the Church, we are a ministry of the typhoid on kids level for the church. And so when we start changing a language and everything we do, even if you're a leader of one or two, you need to change your language to the people I am, we're... The ministry were disciple kids, we need resources and things that they have to cite kids, I partner with other churches in your community are churches, they would give you the resources, if they can share resources, connect with other leaders around... Call us, call me. I don't have a problem with that because we're in the same belt on site, just because it's a larger scale does not mean I don't have the same problems and issues as a smaller church or smaller ministries, I have it on the Meccans my problems of your one as Mine's 20, and so it's the same issue, same problems. I go to bed at night and say, What's the next day's challenges are, Lord, help me get through those next day's challenges, if I missed the along way or helped me to regain it back the next day, I tell my team when they're out or when I'm out or go, make a decision. You don't have to call me, you've been given authority. And that's what a lot of times is Leaders don't wanna give up authority, and so I'm fine, because I have interested and empowered you to do what you do, I trust your judgment if it's wrong, but fix it later, it's not worth the stress. A moment of that. But I really talk, if you're a small or ministry and you says, Well, I can't leave, I can't go. Yes, you can. Yeah, the problem is, you want empowers, you might have three other people underneath you, and you said, so I don't think they can get the work done, it's not gonna be perfect in your eyes, maybe perfect in Guam, and so... It may be exactly what God wanted it that moment, but step away, leaders, oftentimes those leaders, we don't step away, and so that God will show you what kind of people you have for support, in other words, you may not ever see your true gifting or calling of people, until you step way to see how they are placed in the fire...

0:12:03.0 RC: Totally, and I think what you've done at Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship is you've created a way for everyone to use their gift things, when you're talking about the folks who are sort of like a mobile spiritual care team, when there's any sort of bigger event happening within the context of children's ministry, when you're talking about inviting people in, because you change the paint color of a wall, no matter what a parent or other person who's part of that church, there's a way for them to feel connected. There's a way for them to be excited about something that's happening in the child discipleship wing of your church.

0:12:37.8 CD: Exactly, and the thing about it is, people wanna feel valued. That's bottom line. And so if you're saying that we're the experts and we know it and we're doing these people gonna say, But you know, this is about my child, and so I had to tell someone and they understood it wasn't anything harsh, is that our program in timing on something in particular, and they said, it's from point A and this point B, and we need to tell the parents that they can pick up kids into the time, and I said, Well, at the end of the day, we can give them program Etim, but if your parents wanna pick up their children, we have to understand, we can hold... And it becomes kidnapping to the kids, at that point, I say that to say is that parents are less... Invite the parents through the program, if you don't want them, pick them... I pick up early, invite them into the program. And so they can see what's going on now. They understand why we do what we do. So the whole thing is to this is that leaders and children's administrate people, invite people to what you do, invite that parent, invite the non-parent, invite the past, the IT, whoever. So they can see because oftentimes, people tell me, I didn't know you guys were doing that. I didn't know that this was what's going on, you have to paint or brand your own picture, and if you allow other people to brand your picture of kids ministry, then they have a distorted view of what goes on, so you have to write your big words, write your own story wasn't... And so write your own story about, in other words, get out and communicate, this is what we do, and this is how we're in vipers, social media block broadcast, if you can't... You said, Well, I don't have all those tools, you can group text, you can get on any of these group texts in photos to your church members and say, This is what we're doing, get permission first for your kids, but do all those things and so you can paint your story, 'cause I think Ross at The ennerdale don't truly know what we do in kismet and have to get an the word out, and I think the more we get the word out on what's actually going on, the kids, the ministry, the more people are being into the buy-in of child, the ciphers IP right now. It's like, Okay, it's just... We don't want the kids crying and main service, and we don't want the kids running around, let's do them over there in the corner, and they don't truly understand what's going on in our kids intrude service down one main serves and make it all about kids. Wow, that's radical. You're passing not do main service for the adults, we do nothing for the kids, and just let it invite the people in to see that world, and that's a radical...

0:15:40.1 RC: Well, I laughed earlier when you had talked about we kidnap kids, but that is actually remembering a few various contexts where that kind of tension has come up, and what is really at the heart of that is not necessarily... You know, No, you can't come in right now. This is the programming, and it's... We have to hold the programming with an INR and fist because the programming is everything, and when you make your North Star discipleship, when you make the north star of this relationship that you have with parents, this community, as we would say, of love and caring adults surrounding these kids. It makes a tremendous difference. We've been calling this series that we're in the hallways and homes, and the basic idea of this series is that discipleship happens everywhere. One of the things that I think is because of your leadership, your heart, how God has used you to position your ministry, and it's absolutely nothing to do with the resources that you all have, is that you are incredibly intentional about how to disciple individual kids. I feel like you and your leaders, and I've had the police of getting to know a little bit, nobody takes anything granted, nobody assumes the background of a child or what the ride to church was like, Can you begin to unpack not only the value of not making those assumptions, but also why

that has to be as big of a priority for people as anything else that they're doing in the ministry, that each child of disciples of journey is different.

0:17:12.3 CD: Well, for me or for us, it is every child, I look at it and you say exactly the same where you really don't... I look at each child as... Each individual child. With each different individual. Circumstances, sure. And so oftentimes, we wanna do a collective hole more together, I said, This is what we're gonna do across the board, but if you start to get to know your kids... And I know this is for a smaller church, it's much easier than a larger church, but it can be done in a large terms... You have to invest the time to get to know them. Because when I get to know each individual child and can go to our chat and something that's different in individual and not a generic and can say something to that child about what I remember when you were having trouble in this class, how is it going today? Let that child know I'm important enough for them to remember that unique thing about me, 100%, once you plug that in, and that's how we do our conserve leaders, once you start learning that particular home and skill, then anything about teaching the gospel or about our faith, they're inclined to receive and Clinton received, because then this is that you care enough about me to know something about me personally. Yeah, so for me is that I look at it as a one-time shot every single time. And you say, Well, what is that? I may have one time to hit what I need to hit intentionally because I may never see that child again for whatever reason, and so every single child is... I don't look at it as it's... Everything is intentional. I don't look at this, Oh, okay, next week I'll get to that, or next week in my home in a little bit more... David or I'm a hole a little bit more on Sally. Now, every time I see them, it's a one-time shot for me, and that's because again, I would keep repeating the main, not get an opportunity for whatever reason to ever see them again, I don't want it to be where I missed the opportunity to share faith compassion and love and him, and I don't ever want them to feel like someone missed the boat or something, so I look at this, we don't know how God orchestrates time for us, we don't know how circumstances may cause them to move, our kids to move, or just life happens and we don't see them again. But don't you have to look at every single time that you see them, is that this is my moment to make the biggest impact that I possibly can... Perfect example, I have a Depew that's in college. Nope, pretty much my family is, I'm whole supporting and raising with his father and as her... As he's in college, I have no idea, to be totally honest, where he picked up the faith of cross... Oh, wow. And to be totally honest, and just transparent, I don't see in the rams of our family dynamics because his parents were... Or the divorce. Sure, I have no idea where he could have possibly picked it up, and because we wasn't as close as when he was younger, but we are now... Sure, he comes to me and says, Oh, these are my scriptures that I'm reading while I'm in college, and I'm watching the services on sentient, I'm going like, what happened and where did you get the fat... It took one person when he was on one person that it made that Lamar in his life, and he never forgot that it connected and stuff, and every chance he got, it was everything about the faith, and that's what grounded him through his difficulties for the car, and dies, I look at that as a model to myself into the team, is that just that one shot... They make it work for our kids. So I never want that to not be a focus, and so that's why even when our parents... I make the one shot with our parents as well, because I never know that parent may be a parent, I don't know, coming to church, but may not in true leaves. I have walked the walk on the land, so that may be an opportunity that just because they're going to adult church, don't mean they can't get Christ men, kids, churchmen. And so. Again, a lot of people think that, Oh, I'm an adult, I can only get it. No, you make a sip

Christ and walk your fasting in children's and ministry even coming in, and we want them to be a people of faith and serve and know the Lord, but just in case you don't, we still give Christ to a adulterated. Talk to you about our huddle... Yesudas and wines. We have a pre called the huddle in one can do this, and this is 30 minutes proud to each service men, 30 minutes prior to the service time that the kids come in, in other ways, the kids come in 30 minutes route and were another hour prior to that so we collectively as a get together, and it's our Ignatian area, all the chemo server leaders, which is our volunteers, all the staff, this is kids ministry, and we come together and we do a huddle, it's praise and was music for about two or three minutes, it's words, we give a worse of affirmation, so someone comes down and I pick a different person each time, and we minister back and forth to each other, we pray into communion every Sunday or at a blessing, and then we do another prayer and then we're out... We do that as a hold, so we can come together on one accord to be able to take care of the kids and how many people say we pray, and we do all that, and that's great, but our huddles mixed in different is that we collectively do our own service. Yeah, for 20 minutes prior to the kids service. So I CERT volunteers don't miss that on service, we do our all and then we minister to the kids, 'cause I think it's important to go have them be poured into so oftentimes volunteers, they miss and say, Oh, I miss the service and I'm dry, and I need to be being myself and I'm serving these kids and I don't have opportunity. Well, for us, we do a service prior to, so no one never feels like that they are missing now spiritually, but they have received and able to give up, you have to give out completely to be able to go through your holy well

0:24:33.2 RC: And people... Again, like you said to the beginning, anybody can do that, that doesn't require a worship band, and the latest technology to distribute communion in a time of the coronavirus... Right.

0:24:46.3 CD: You remember back in and we did from our living rooms, it's the same thing.

0:24:52.3 RC: It's about that being on mission and about coming together as a team, and I'd love that that connects back to the leaders discipleship, that it connects back to your own personal dealership as a director... And as we wrap things up, I think it's important for people to understand when we talk about how disciples have happened to everywhere, that is not restricted to kids. Discipleship with your relationship with Jesus also happens everywhere, and it is not... As much as we can use the expression, a come to Jesus moment. It is not something that happens in just one particular moment... Exactly. To wrap things up, the place I wanna leave is people who hopefully came to the child as subject form and become more familiar with your work and they've already registered for next year's form and all this kind of stuff, people who had become bought in... This is a community that we feel like, and God is growing that is outside the confines of a particular church, particular program, a particular area of the world... Yes, when folks feel like they are now sort of child advocates, that they are invested in this mission, I think sometimes it can be this... I think that... And I apologize in advance, that doesn't agree with her theology, that there's nothing that the enemy wants more than to cut off that new found passion at the knees, exactly. How do people begin to overcome that frustration of sort of the real world people who are at the farm right now, they're gonna hit... The real world was gonna hit the monsters, gonna hit them on Monday, but people who are listening to us right now, the real world has hit them even after they've heard all your passion, how do you... When the real

world hits, you get back up again to stay focused on your mission of child sells

0:26:37.5 CD: It, and... That's good, very good for me, and I'm gonna go back or since then for me, when the real world hits me, often times I stop, and this is just a real... I stop and I have to do a re-reflect back to a soul Carl moment for me. When the word hits me real hard, I have to stop and something that I enjoy are like, Great, is putting on the set of your phones and some music, and they don't have anything to do with any worship... It's the wildest music you and... Or dance, alas, I'm saying this, you have to reflect back to What is the thing that is your soul care in the world will hit you, and so I say, it's nothing wrong with that. If you have to go and in a massage or do something, I say, stop for that moment, take a big pause or press pause when the world is you take a press pass. There's nothing wrong with that. I need a prince balls. I need to go do something fun. Do something who do something crazy. Okay, now, because you have to release that, and in order to release that, then you have to do something that will help calm your Spear dam, and so that's for me, so I know there's gonna be people to run out and go... I got here so I'm excited. I'm ready to be an advocate, and I guarantee you when they go out there, they're gonna hit a brick wall. It happens every single time. Yeah, know that if you hit a brick wall, that means you going in the right direction, 'cause he does not want us to go do this because... This is right here, we're fighting for the soul of... Our children were fighting for the soul of our future ministry, and what better ways he's an A father, I mean, he bothers us, but if he stops us, then there's nothing after. So what we have to do is say, Oh, okay, take on the challenge, 'cause that's how I'm kind of doing it, so... Okay, let me to stop, let me decompress, let me get my step back together. Okay, I'm ready to go. And you're ready for a fight. Let's fight. Sometimes you have to do that. What is it? Independence Day, you wanna fight this... For me and for the... I encourage it and to continue to go with this fight, and I'm saying, get connected with somebody else in the fight, don't be out there on the island by your staff, call people, and I'm not on no top or love or anything like that, but find me email me, people, because we're all in the same fight collectively trying to move to the same goal, and that if we come together as one in Unity, 'cause you know the enemy does not like a unified front, and so the more we come together, I would scream with you I will pray with you and I'm Macrae with you. I would just not get up, we can do this. Then I believe you can get through this.