**Ours vs Theirs – Kyu Ho Lee**

Every healthy, growing family passes through certain stages. There is a loving union between a man and a woman. If God so determines to bless them with children, they are called to sacrificially bring those children to maturity. With grace and love, maturing sons and daughters develop a growing identity that extends beyond their parents. They go off and meet someone else. And start the cycle all over again.

I am a father to three children. I am living through some of these stages. And I hope to experience still others. If at some point in the future, God allows for my children to have families of their own, it is critical that I understand that those families are **their** families. Of course they will always be, in part, **ours** - mine and my wife’s. Yet, it is important that I recognize the need for the next generation to accept the call on their lives to be fathers and mothers to a generation to come.

For those of us tasked to serve the next generation of servant leaders, we must learn to view ministry from a **theirs** perspective. Just as a father who has become a grandfather must understand that the job of raising the next generation is now primarily that of his grown children, we too must see that the 20s men and women we serve have been called into leadership in **their** own worlds - amongst their people.

This perspective is expressed in Jesus’ extraordinary claim recorded in John 14:12. “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”

Jesus expects that his disciples (his children) will not only do the works he does, but exceed them. Not because he remains and provides ever-present leadership, but because he vacates space for an emerging generation. “... because I go to the Father” is a key part of this verse. And yet, he does not leave them completely. Instead, he takes a supportive role that resources the next generation for the great undertaking set before them.

Jesus carries out this generational mandate as a single, childless man, proving that the physical is a model for something even greater. “... more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband …” For what can be more generational than to hope that your children exceed your reach?

Traditional ministry models are built around a leader - think: A campus director of a collegiate ministry or a pastor of a local church. As the work is blessed and grows, the pervasive model of ministry responds to the needs of those gathered to the leader. Without intent, energy and resources are often pulled inward. Leadership is centralized. Before long, the work of the ministry is **ours** - leading **our** bible studies, organizing **our** events.

What if instead, in the Nav20s, we viewed the young men and women gathered to us as emerging leaders in the world to which God has sent them? They are being or have already been sent to a people, a family, a neighborhood in which they will need to share Christ and raise up disciples of Christ. What if from the onset, **their** world was the primary setting of our work?

Our work then would be about **their** role in **their** context. We would emphasize **their** presence in **their** communities, amongst **their** people. We would organize ourselves around supporting them, building them up and equipping them for the important work to which God is calling them. A strong commitment to a ***theirs*** perspective would rightly identify critical competencies as well as determine proper success markers. It would refine our role as servants to these laborers and bring clarity to our job description.

One day, I hope to see my children holding children of their own. If God grants me this joy, how absurd it would be for me to tell them to bring them all under my roof! I plan to see my family grow as **their** families grow. And with a ***theirs*** perspective, discover my role as one who provides resources to support them in their great work of raising up a new generation.