

Well Diggers vs. Temple Builders

“We are well diggers instead of temple builders” is a phrase I heard for the first time from Mel McGowan, president of Visioneering Studios. The first time I heard it, I needed to have it explained....but once it was, it really resonated with me.

The concept is fairly simple and yet profound. It is based on the [John 4](#) passage about the Samaritan woman at the well. Most of us that have been around “church” for any length of time, know this story. We know that Jesus goes to a well in the middle of the day and meets a woman with a sorted past and shares life with her by getting a drink of H₂O....physical water, and then offers and provides living water...a relationship with Jesus. I have heard dozens of sermon applications about this story and I am sure you have as well. **So how does it apply to church facility development?** This is where it really gets cool.

The concept is that we need to look for opportunities to develop “wells” on our campuses and within our communities and not just temples. The well is representative of several attributes that I believe the church, as a whole, has not done a great job in providing to our communities. **We have been notorious in building temples...you know, buildings that are used one or two days a week.** Places that people in our community believe you have to act, look and smell a certain way to enter. A place with too many “thou shalt not” rules, whether they are real or perceived.

A well on the other hand is a part of the community. It represents a place that was/is a vital part of that culture. People came there 7 days a week to get water...but also to see their neighbor, get caught up on what was going on in each others lives, share concerns and sometimes just hang. They would do life together. Not just on the weekend...but every day.

The well was “common place”. It was not a top-of-mind place that the community folk would think of when contemplating a place to “meet God.” And yet, that is exactly what happened. This common place become a destination were God meet a women in need of a savior...even though that is not what she was looking for that morning as she heading out to gather water. They shared conversation. Shared a drink of water. Talked about the past, the present and what the future could be. All of this happened in an environment that felt “common” to the women...just the normal place she went every day...but this was an intentional encounter by Jesus. He knew he was going to have this encounter. **He used the common place for the extraordinary.** Verse 4 of this passage tells us that Jesus “had to go through Samaria”. The fact is, from a physical perspective, there were other routes he could have taken to get to Galilee. But he was intentional about going to Samaria...to have this encounter...to change a life.

But the story of the well did not end there. In vs. 28 it says, ***“Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him.***” The story continued...and the well was a drawing point for other people to come and hear from Jesus. The women went and hold her neighbors that there was something cool happening at the well and that they needed to come check it out...and they did. Do you not get excited to see how one “common place” experience...over a glass of water...in a

non-temple setting, lead to life change for not only a woman, but for others in her community.

As you think about your church facilities and campus, think about what “wells” you are providing your community for these kinds of encounters and then be intentional to open yourself up to meet people to do life and start a conversation that could change the world.

Read more from Tim [here](#).