



Week of Bounty

Sowing seeds to change your city.
A book excerpt by **Willie Crew**.

Most strategies that have significant impact are down-to-earth and very simple. The Week of Bounty is just that; a dynamic yet simple strategy.

- 1) Look with purpose around you
- 2) Find all kinds of things that you don't use or hardly ever use
- 3) Make a deliberate decision to give to the needy
- 4) Take the goods to church during a chosen Week of Bounty
- 5) Distribute the goods to those in need in the shortest time possible.

Your church can get involved in the upcoming Week of Bounty from 24 – 31 May 2009. For more information visit www.weekofbounty.org or call World Mission Centre on 021 343 1165.

IT ALL STARTED IN 2000. SHOULD WE OR should we not have a “Jesus March”? When the question was posed to the pastors of the city of Tshwane/Pretoria, most of them clearly indicated that they did not want just another event, but rather a course of action that would change the city.

Following a four-hour discussion, the Jesus March was accepted as the start of a “process” that would seek to bring

transformation to the city. (The march did take place, with over 20 000 people attending.)

DARING TO DREAM

The pastors of the city were invited to a banquet to discuss how we could initiate a process of transformation in the city.

The banquet was held in an historic venue, “Die Ou Raadsaal,” where many of the laws of the Apartheid South

Africa had been made. The theme of the evening was “Dare to dream a dream for our city.”

This meeting was one of many meetings between church leaders of the city that eventually led to the formation of Transforming Tshwane, a collaborative effort to mobilise and engage many churches in meaningful transformational actions.

Our dream for the city was so BIG that

ARE YOU READY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

we realised we needed to “sow a lot of seed” if we were to reap the anticipated harvest.

I went to the meeting anticipating that this may be the moment to release the strategy of the Week of Bounty and suggested that the World Mission Centre would initiate and facilitate the strategy to give momentum to the fledgling transformation process. After the presentation it was unanimously accepted. We decided to declare the Week of Pentecost as the Week of Bounty.

THE JOY OF GIVING

For the Week of Bounty, participating church pastors would ask their members to go through their homes and businesses to gather any personal goods that they did not use, or could do without and bring them to their local church during the week of Pentecost.

Just think about it – in our garages, houses, and places of work there are so many unused goods. For instance, building material, foodstuffs, an extra table or chair, clothing, bicycles, books, even Bibles; far too much to list here.

I am sure you will agree that we have many possessions that we do not use or simply can do without. The value of these goods would total millions of dollars (ZAR Rand).

The Week of Bounty in Tshwane/Pretoria was amazing as 310 churches

across denominational and racial lines participated. Hundreds of tons of goods were gathered and distributed to the needy. As a result a joyful spirit of sacrificial giving broke out across the city.

Pastor Victor Mokgotlhoa from Soshanguve came to my office on Monday of the Week of Bounty and said, “Willie, I can’t believe what’s happening in my church! This morning people were standing in a long line waiting to bring their goods as “seed” to change the city!” He was weeping as he recalled, “One of the couples from Soshanguve (a poor part of the city) came to me and said, ‘Pastor, we want to see our city changed, and so, here is our bedroom suite. We are prepared to sleep on the floor; this is our seed to change this city.’”

Another man said, ‘Pastor, I will use public transport. Here is my car; this is my seed to change the city.’ (It was his only car!)”

UNITY IN THE BODY

So much came in from the members of the participating churches that we had to take what could not be distributed within the Week of Bounty to five warehouses in the city, from where it would be distributed to those in need.

In one warehouse, 1300 square meters in size (11,700 sq feet) about one hundred volunteers from the Lewende Woord Church worked for six

weeks packing, sorting and inviting pastors from the poorer areas of the city to come and select what they needed.

In those six weeks the volunteers were able to move about two-thirds of the goods out of the warehouse to various needy churches and agencies, leaving about one third still to be distributed.

There was so much left that we eventually had no option but to invite pastors from four of the surrounding areas of the city to divide what remained.

Forty-six volunteers accompanied the pastors from the suburbs of Soshanguve, Mamelodi, Eersterus and Atteridgeville and spent a day dividing the items into four piles. The next day we had seven and ten-ton trucks, along with the disaster relief vehicles of the municipality of Tshwane/Pretoria, to move the goods to the four areas.

Eersterus, the smallest one of the four areas, took the least amount of goods. The ministerial fellowships that had seldom worked together now co-operated, displaying all the goods on shelves in an empty shop loaned to them.

They then invited the members of the community to each select a set of clothing. A very strict system was put in place so that people couldn’t come in twice to select clothing. Within a two-week period they gave clothing to 3 500 people. 