

When I first came to Lost Valley, the very first day, I went out to pray and look over the grounds. I only got as far as the RV Park and an overwhelming feeling came over me, "What have I done, what have I signed up for," I began to ask the Lord. As I continued to pray, the Lord led me to the hill on the northeast corner of the property. As I continued to pray and search the Lord for his purpose in this season I was about to enter, the Lord told me to look up and so I did. I saw in that moment the angels of heaven, like an army, lined up shoulder-to-shoulder from one corner of the property to the other standing guard over the camp grounds. It was indescribable. At the same time I heard the Lord say to me "Everything you see I have given you... I have called you here. Take care of what I have given you." I asked the Lord, "How do I do that?" He then spoke into my spirit, "Tony, do you love me?" I said, "Yes, Lord, I love you." He then said, "Do you trust me?" and I said "Yes, Lord, I trust you." He then said, "Tony, do you believe I am calling you?" and I said "Yes!" Then I felt the Lord say to me "Then do what I tell you and through you I will fulfill thy call."

The Vision for Lost Valley

The vision of camp that I feel the Lord has shown me is four-fold.

1. ***Spiritual***
2. ***Relational***
3. ***Physical***
4. ***Missional***

Spiritual

Beyond merely keeping the physical operations of the camp going, I believe that the Lord intends for camp to be a place of spiritual encounter.

Over the last few decades, we have seen a decline in the number of churches that have Sunday night services, Sunday School, and even Wednesday night services. Evangelistic campaigns, at times, seem to be a thing of the past. Many believers no longer receive the opportunity to truly tarry in the presence of the Lord on a regular basis. The number of places where Christians linger at the altar is dwindling. But camp is still a place of lingering. It is still a place where we are called to the altar and have time to truly tarry in the presence of the Lord.

It is this tarrying at the altar that allows people to give their hearts to Jesus. It is this tarrying at the altar where believers are baptized in the Holy Spirit. It is this tarrying at the altar that opens a space for God to call forth our future pastors, missionaries, and

evangelists. It is in this tarrying at the altar that allows for miracles and encounters with God. These encounters create the spiritual standing stones which remind believers to cling to God even when things get hard.

It is important for us to remember that our food, our projects, our activities, all of these things are not the point of camp. The point of this camp is to help bring people to the spirit of Jesus. So we need to remember that the things the Lord is doing in the guests and staff are more important than our schedule and policies. We need to remember to pray that when people come down that driveway, they feel the presence of the Lord. Our job is more about protecting the place where God moves, stewarding the Holy ground where God can move than it is about cooking, or cleaning, or fixing things.

The vision is for Lost Valley to be a safe place, spiritually and physically, that people can and will encounter God. Lost Valley should be a place where no one leaves unchanged. Lost Valley is and will always be a place of Encounter.

Relational

In a similar way but unique way, I believe that God very specifically intends Lost Valley to be a place that allows for healing of relationships. In fact, this is highlighted in our mission statement where we declare ourselves as a place “where individuals can break out of their daily routines, walls can be broken down, and lives can be changed.” There are many kinds of walls but the most enduring are often those of relational hurt.

Above all God desires for us to be in relationship with him and camp is certainly a place for people to meet with and renew their relationship with God. However, we are also called as Christians to love one another. In part how we invest into each other and strive to be people who build each other up. According to the Word of God we are to be children of the light. We should treat each other with love, gentleness, kindness, etc. To be forgiving and honoring each other. When we do this, I believe the spirit of camp allows in a unique way for the restoration of families, fellowship between like-minded men and women, and connection with our fellow Christian brothers and sisters. Over the years, many of us allow hurts to build up in our hearts and allow our day-to-day life to distract us from what is truly important. The power of retreat is that it allows us to get out of our day-to-day mindset and renew our commitment to the things of God including the power of fellowship and family.

In the past, selfishness and deception have dampened the relational power of Camp and of our Network. I have heard stories of misleading fundraising techniques; both real and perceived mismanagement of funds; hurt from those who feel as though their contributions have not been appreciated; hurt from those who feel their interests have not

been advocated for; and the bitterness of staff, volunteers, and donors who have felt that their efforts and their passion were taken advantage of.

Over my years here, I have watched and been blessed to see God heal and restore relationships between people and camp, between camp and churches, between Lost Valley and our Network, and between the people of this Network and the Network office. Although we are not totally there yet, God is doing a wonderful work.

I believe that we need to continue to pray for God to heal and restore but we must also be willing to do everything we can to help ensure that Lost Valley is a place that promotes healing and restoration of relationships. Each of us, and the camp as a whole, need to be operating in self-reflection, honesty, and humility. We need to set aside our pride and defensiveness and remember that we are the conduit for relationships to grow in unity with God's plan and purpose. By being the hands and feet of Jesus and taking on a true servant's heart, we forge new relationships with those that are searching for Him and create space for healing in the lives of those who work, volunteer, and come as guests.

Physical

In the physical realm, I believe that Lost Valley has not been called to be only reactive to what is going on in our Network and the world around us. I believe that God intends for Lost Valley to become a proactive, fully self-supporting entity, and for us to set the curve when it comes to how we provide and care for our employees, our guests, and our facilities. Each of our departments should have set in place procedures and processes which allow us to do our work at the highest level.

Our mission statement is "To foster an off-site ministry environment, full with God and free from distractions: where individuals can break out of their daily routines, walls can be broken down, and lives can be changed." We are a place where people encounter God. Each department has its own role to play in fulfilling our mission and the mission of our Network. As part of the MMN the vision of lead, live, and launch is at the foundation of the Lost Valley vision to be a place that people encounter God. We will do apart to fulfill the vision of our Network be being a place where people LIVE healthy lives, LEAD thriving churches, and LAUNCH into their communities and world with the message of hope in Jesus. By being a place of encounter and serving each other and our guest I believe this will be accomplished.

Below, I have listed goals that I have for each department which I believe are integral to helping Lost Valley stand out as a true place of retreat both spiritually and physically.

Administrative Staff

- Maintaining regular and accurate communication with our Network office, CRN, clients, and guests and relaying necessary information to department heads
- Serving as the first line of defense to notice and help solve potential problems for all of our guests
- Creating and updating promotional materials with clear brand identity that helps get people connected to the mission and vision of camp
- Assisting other departments to do the administrative tasks necessary to their positions

Food Service

- Cooking scratch-made foods whenever possible
- Providing healthy, wholesome, and tasty options for everyone including those with special dietary needs
- Maintaining sanitation and food safety procedures of the highest quality
- Always serving our customers with a smile

Housekeeping

- Following all best practices with regard to cleaning and sanitation standards
- Always striving to create a distraction-free environment without visual mess or clutter and without unpleasant smells or textures
- To clean with efficiency such that our facilities are ready to be utilized as much as possible

Maintenance

- Keeping the grounds and all equipment safe for use
- Maintain all buildings such that there are no distractions such as burnt-out light bulbs, broken drywall, missing curtain rods, etc.
- Monitoring the condition of our facilities and equipment so that we can take care of everything with stewardship in mind. This includes keeping up with regular maintenance tasks.
- Helping to plan and carry out renovation and new building projects within our allotted budget and time frame

Activities

- Fostering an environment of fun and personal growth through challenging and exciting activities
- Maintaining the highest level of safety as set forward by the ACCT and our inspection agency
- Treating our participants and fellow staff with the utmost respect and care

Camp Director

- Helping to always maintain focus on our vision and mission
- Continually representing and advocating for Lost Valley and its needs to our network and ministry partners
- Hiring the most qualified, servant-minded staff who will represent the spirit of Lost Valley well and continue to build upon the spirit of our vision
- Equipping all department leaders to fulfill the goals set before them

Missional

Finally, I believe that the Lord has given Lost Valley a missional vision. This part of the vision calls us to “build up.” To be a place of learning, teaching, and building people up in their calling.

To build people up in whatever situation they are in, requires us to be a place of encouragement. We open the door for the spirit to move in our services and during worship but we hold it open, we create and allow an atmosphere that God works through, by being encouraging and continually praying for the Spirit of the Lord to dwell in this camp.

The vision is to create a Christian growth system and for leadership as well. Starting with babies coming with their families to Family Camp, moving through kids in Kids Camp and youth in Youth Camp; I believe there should be a path which leads student through the stages of spiritual growth. We should have events at this camp for students and adults of every age and level of maturity in their walk with the Lord. We need to be actively providing mentorship opportunities and ways for individuals to serve others. This will help people to mature in their calling no matter what it is. I believe that we can help prepare the saints for the work of the ministry.

A few years ago, we had a t-shirt made up that said, “What happens at Lost Valley stays at Lost Valley and the stays at was crossed out the words above said changes the world. I say that to say, I believe that what happens at camp doesn’t stay at camp. What happens at camp changes the world. There are statistics that a significant percentage of our pastors, missionaries, and evangelists have been called at camp. But camp’s impact goes far beyond the church leaders. I believe we are a place that creates Waymakers from every age group, walk of life, and profession. Because of our spiritual calling God can work here. We create and allow an atmosphere that God works through. The missional vision can be fulfilled because the atmosphere of the camp is bathed in prayer and in His presence.

Summary

I believe the Lord has shown me what to do but I need everyone’s help and cooperation to fulfill this vision. The hardest part of this is we all have our opinion and a vision for our departments and for the camp. I don’t know how to implement all that he has shown me but I do know that we can move forward, focusing on one thing at a time to bring ourselves more in line with the vision God has for this camp.