

## TONY STIFF

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## MY STORY

I grew up inside Scientology, living from communal apartment to communal apartment until the age of 12. My mother was the fourth highest counselor in the world for Scientology and would counsel their movie star clientele like Tom Cruise and John Travolta. I was saved at a Young Life camp that some neighborhood friends had invited me to attend. I joined that PCUSA church and attended there for a year and a half until joining a large 3,000 member Charismatic church that most of my friends attended. None of us were Charismatic and neither was the youth ministry for the most part. In high school I was disciplined by the founding member of Under Oath, a mainstream scream metal band; and created an aggressive pro-am skate team as a way to reach out to non-Christian teens (two of our members eventually went pro).

After high school I served as a volunteer trainer for a national youth convention (called "Acquire the Fire"). I served in 26 major cities over the span of a year, training 50-300 volunteers every week for audiences of 3,000-60,000. After my Teen Mania Ministries experience I decided to pursue pastoral studies for my undergrad degree at Clearwater Christian College so that I could train as a pastor in my local church in Clearwater, FL. Though the school was fundamentalist in its orientation it had a mix of students who were for the most part Evangelical and not classical fundamentalists. As with much of my Christian life I am deepened by practicing "generous catholicity."

After college I desired to attend a seminary that would help prepare me for a lifetime of thoughtful engagement with my post-Christian surroundings and would give me the historical and biblical-theological foundations necessary to grow in a self-critical and appreciative way toward all traditions inside global Christianity. My understanding of the church and her mission while being deepened in reformational leanings was also broadened by the international community I experienced at Westminster. I completed an MDiv with an emphasis in Urban Missions and Church Planting. I also took several CCEF counseling courses. It was during this time that I attended New Life Dresher interning for four years in every ministry area. New Life Dresher was founded by Ron Lutz who pastored with Jack Miller before he passed away. The session and membership of the church throughout its years has seen the likes of Bruce Waltke, Tremper Longman, Winston Smith, David Powlison, Tim Keller, Anthony Bradley, Harvie Conn, and many more. It was during seminary that my wife and I met at my home church in Clearwater, FL. She lived in Miami working as a liaison for an international home decor company. We had a wonderful adventure dating in NYC, Miami, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C. until she relocated to Philadelphia to begin her theological studies at Westminster while working full-time as a Human Resource officer for Campbell Soup Company. In Georgia she worked as an Human Resource Generalist for TRW.

After seminary I was called to East Lanier Community Church to be their Director of Mercy Ministries which I lead in the creation of, as well as their Small Groups Director, and Youth Pastor. East Lanier is a Perimeter church plant outside of Atlanta that I served until recently being let go due to the economy causing a necessary staffing reduction. My wife and I had our first child in September 08, 2008 - Cali Kyrrie Stiff. We are the owners of a three year old Chesapeake Bay Retriever named Kona after the Hawaiian coastline famous for coffee beans. I have a passion for and experience in discipleship, small group ministry, mercy ministry, young adult and youth. We are drawn to Post-modern, Post-Christian people, especially an ethnically diverse crowd figuring out life in a "flat world." I also have giftings in interior design and graphic arts that were used during my time with East Lanier.

## EXPERIENCE

### DIRECTOR OF MERCY MINISTRIES, COMMUNITY GROUPS, AND FAMILY MINISTRIES; FLOWERY BRANCH, GA — 2007-2008

I created East Lanier's Mercy Ministries and within a year's time saw it grow to as much as half the church serving in one of our three annual church-wide events. This ministry when I left was pacing to have 10-15% of our body serving in ongoing community development areas around us on a monthly basis. I also directed and developed the Community Group Ministries of East Lanier. The number of our groups grew by 25% in a year's time, and every group leader had an apprentice in place to continue growing as well as the necessary pastoral oversight and tools. Lastly, I directed the youth departments of East Lanier leading that ministry in a missional shift to moving offsite and getting more involved in mercy ministry, racial reconciliation between our suburban White teens and Latino gang teens in the city above us. I created a postmodern conversational style approach to deepen their faith in the midst of doubt

hosted in local cafes called “Doubt Nights,” as well as transgenerational times where parents would host youth in their homes and share their faith journeys with the students.

#### **PRESIDENT OF STUDENT MISSIONS FELLOWSHIP; PHILADELPHIA, PA — 2006-2007**

During my seminary years as a student leader I created a national conference on the Emerging Church that brought in Scot McKnight, John Franke, Mike Horton, Walter Henegar, and many other speakers. It was the largest conference at Westminster Seminary in the past six years. I also lead quarterly meetings on urban church planting, the use of social-scientific tools for community assessments, and other topics with guest experts.

#### **VOLUNTEER & PASTORAL INTERN IN ASSOCIATE, YOUNG ADULT, YOUTH, AND SMALL GROUPS AREAS; PHILADELPHIA, PA — 2003-2007**

I interned & volunteered under every pastoral staff member of New Life Dresher. Helping youth, young adult, and adult ministry - particularly the community group ministries where we had 40 different groups meeting on a monthly basis. Under the college & career component I created a ministry module called “Life Without Walls” that helped merge three existing communities (upcoming college students, grad students, career professionals).

#### **PASTORAL INTERN IN ASSOCIATE, YOUNG ADULT, & YOUTH AREAS; CLEARWATER, FL — 1999-2003**

At Grace Christian Fellowship I served with youth and college and career helping teach and facilitate all our events. I co-lead the youth mercy outreach programs during this period as well. I also helped teach the adult mid-week discipleship classes.

#### **PASTORAL INTERN IN YOUTH AND EVANGELISM AREAS; COUNTRYSIDE, FL — 1998-1999**

With Countryside Christian Center I served as a pastoral intern in a 700+ member youth ministry at Countryside Christian Center helping to create our mercy ministry outreaches and developing a youth leadership discipling ministry called “Re:Generation” which trained up our student leaders to do evangelism and mercy ministries.

#### **MISSIONARY TO NORTH AMERICA; USA, CANADA, MEXICO — 1997-1998**

With Teen Mania Ministries I served as the coordinator of volunteer training and security for a youth conference that had anywhere from 3,000-60,000 teens in attendance in 26 different major cities throughout North America. I would train anywhere from 50 to 350 volunteers weekly. I also helped train thousands of teens to do missionary work all over the world during the winter and summer months of that year.

### **EDUCATION**

Clearwater Christian College, Clearwater, FL — BA Pastoral Studies, 2003; Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA - MDiv in Urban Missions & Church Planting 2007

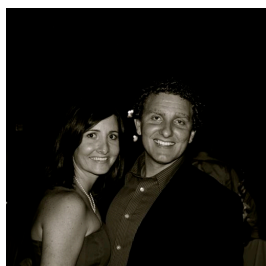
### **PUBLICATION**

Book Review - “Evangelism: Preaching Grace and Doing Justice by Harvie Conn” in ACT 3 Review

### **REFERENCES & MY WIFE’S STORY AND PASSION FOR MINISTRY**

**Senior Pastoral Referrals** - Ron Lutz, Senior Pastor at New Life Dresher 215.641.1100 [rlutz@newlifedresher.org](mailto:rlutz@newlifedresher.org); Alan Foster, Senior Pastor at East Lanier Community Church 770.945.7800 [afoster@eastlanier.org](mailto:afoster@eastlanier.org). **Associate Pastoral Referrals** - Heath Watson, Associate Pastor at Grace Christian Fellowship 727.418.6767 [heathwat@yahoo.com](mailto:heathwat@yahoo.com); Mike Hollenbach, Associate Pastor at New Life Dresher 215.641.1100 [mhollenbach@newlifedresher.org](mailto:mhollenbach@newlifedresher.org). **Youth Pastor Referral** - Matt Brinkely former Director of Perimeter Youth Ministries (1,000+ student ministry), 770.401.6450 [matt@pactministry.org](mailto:matt@pactministry.org). **Friends in Ministry Referrals** - Matt Armstrong, Church Planting Apprentice at All Souls Fellowship Church recently featured in the new Barna study on Post-Christian culture called “UnChristian”, 404.606.0845 [matt@allsoulfellowship.org](mailto:matt@allsoulfellowship.org)

**My Wife’s Story & Passion for Ministry** - Spurgeon is famous for saying, “our wives counsel is second only to the Holy Spirits.” My wife (Jessica Leigh Stiff) is a graduate of University of Miami where she completed a BA in business management. She was the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ at University of Miami. She also did a one year stint with Campus Crusade in Bosnia reaching out to Muslim college students in the post-war period. She has completed several counseling and biblical theology courses at Westminster Seminary. She has worked as a liaison for an international home decor company as well as an HR officer for Campbell Soup Company and later she was an HRG for another Fortune 500 company based outside Atlanta - TRV. She has a heart for ministry to women and for the professional business world, not to mention she’s a better wife than I ever deserved and a beautiful mother.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EAST LANIER COMMUNITY CHURCH



“Tony is uniquely gifted and equipped to preach and teach the Gospel. He has a special heart for Mercy ministry and demonstrates the ability to start and rally others to mercy efforts in the local community. He has effectively led small group ministry in which community/fellowship, worship, teaching, and care giving take place. His passion for Christ, cultural connection, and creative communication will be used by God for the advancement of His kingdom.”

CHRIS BOZEMAN, RULING ELDER AT EAST LANIER COMMUNITY CHURCH

“Tony has a heart for the poor, and a desire to interact with the postmodern urban community. he has done an excellent job of drawing together and pastoring a group of young couples in his Community Group, and has organized several events for our church to be involved in reaching out to the needs of the community around us. he would fit very well in an urban setting, particularly in a ministry that involves the use of the Arts in impacting the world around it.”

DAVID WHITE, RULING ELDER AT EAST LANIER COMMUNITY CHURCH



“I had the pleasure of working under and alongside Tony as he led our community group, mercy ministry team, and middle and high school youth groups. I saw very clearly his servant's heart as he cared for and led us in those various areas of ministry. I enjoyed the times we shared growing in the Lord during our community group. It was fun to watch Tony interact with, and disciple the kids in the youth group. Also, great advances were made in the mercy aspect of our churches ministry; internally and within the community.”

JONATHAN POOLE, MEMBER AND ONE OF MY LEADERS AT EAST LANIER COMMUNITY CHURCH

“We had recently moved to Alanta and had become part of East Lanier Community Church. Our twin daughters were in a new location and feeling quite disconnected. However, they really resonated with Tony and began to look forward to youth group at church. They especially appreciated doubt night, where kids could ask questions about their faith openly and honestly, and get them answered. They also liked meet the parents night, where different parents would come in and share their testimony. Tony's heart for mercy ministry was also very apparent to me. I'd recommend strongly considering Tony for any pastoral vacancy”

CHRIS ACCARDY, MEMBER AT EAST LANIER COMMUNITY CHURCH



## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM NEW LIFE DRESHER CHURCH



"It was a real joy to have Tony Stiff do an internship with us when he was finishing his work at Westminster Seminary. Tony brought a great deal of energy and creativity to his work with us. He has a good grasp of current issues, is very well read, and has a heart for mercy and outreach ministry. He is able to think outside the box and is willing to take risks. His ministry with young adults among us demonstrated that he has the gifts of a gatherer. His love for the Lord and the gospel of Christ is the foundation of his ministry."

**RON LUTZ, CO-FOUNDING AND SENIOR PASTOR AT NEW LIFE DRESHER**

"Anthony Stiff was a member of New Life Dresher (PCA), of which I am an associate pastor, throughout the years he attended Westminster Theological Seminary. Besides observing his life and conduct as an active and involved member, I also had the opportunity to serve as Anthony's internship advisor and mentor. During that time, Anthony consistently displayed Godly character and spiritual wisdom in both his personal life and in formal ministry. He is a man of great integrity and wisdom. I have seen him handle himself with maturity and compassion as he ministered in both formal and informal settings. Anthony served our church faithfully as a volunteer youth leader, college age leader, and as an adult education teacher. He always leads with Kingdom vision! Anthony is steadfast in his faith, and it is foundational to all that he undertakes. He has clearly made his marriage a priority, seeking to be used by God in his wife's life, as well as faithfully supporting and being involved in her ministry involvements. I believe Anthony's gentle nature coupled with his passionate love for the Kingdom of God are a great ministry combination. Anthony is passionate about faithfully understanding Scripture, passing that understanding on, and then seeing, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that understanding change and transform lives. He is astute in his theology and has learned that the best theology results in the greatest relevance and power to see someone transformed into the image of Christ. I would enthusiastically recommend Anthony to serve in pastoral ministry believing he would be a tremendous asset in most ministry settings. I myself have considered partnering with him in church planting!"



**MIKE HOLLENBACH, ASSOCIATE PASTOR AT NEW LIFE DRESHER**



"Tony developed a small group called "Life Without Walls" comprising of Young Adults and some college students. He developed good contacts with people and thrived in planning and publicity. Anthony has good organizational skills combined with a passion for mission and living theologically. The Lord used and blessed his ministry among our Body at New Life Presbyterian Church."

**JERRY FOURROUX, ASSOCIATE PASTOR AT NEW LIFE DRESHER**

"I have known Anthony for about four years and was able to partake in his Bible study "Life Without Walls" during that time. I was blessed by his leadership during this time. He was very good at getting to know the people in the group and engaging us by pointing out Biblical truths from scripture and engaging with us on how that needs to effect our lives. I have appreciated Tony's care as a friend, his honesty, and his willingness to challenge me. I would definitely recommend him for a pastoral job."

**KEVIN KRASINSKI, MEMBER AT NEW LIFE DRESHER THAT I SERVED**

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GRACE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



Grace Christian  
FELLOWSHIP



I have known Anthony Stiff since he was a high school/college student at the church I formerly ministered at. Not only was Anthony a faithful participant at all of the church activities at that time, he also took a special interest in my high school age son, and really placed him under his wing. I will always appreciate the love and concern Anthony had for my son. But then a few years later we were privileged to have Anthony intern with us at the church that I started - Grace Christian Fellowship. Anthony was already an active part of our church, but during his internship he led/taught our young adults, ushered, served communion, taught during our Wednesday adult Bible study, and even preached on Sunday morning (quite powerfully, I might add!). Anthony is a faithful, loyal, dedicated, doctrinally solid, sensitive, generous, humorous, conscientious, selfless servant of the Lord, (as well as a wonderful husband and father) and he will be a GREAT blessing to any church or ministry that decides to hire him."

RANDY EVANS, FOUNDING AND SENIOR PASTOR AT GRACE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

"Anthony served at our church in one way or another for over four years and Grace Christian Fellowship was tremendously blessed by his faithful service. Though Tony fulfilled his Clearwater Christian College and Westminster Theological Seminary internship requirements with us, I know that he would have been doing all he did whether the internship was in place or not! Tony served along side of me in our student ministry helping us with our weekly set up, occasionally teaching and offering much help in the overall ministerial direction, and he was also involved with some individual discipleship. On Sunday mornings, he served as one of our head ushers, overseeing communion, offering, seating, etc... Tony has taught at our mid-week adult Bible study as well as a special series on hermeneutics. In addition, he often helped me with our young adult ministry and taught our young adult Bible study a number of times. Tony was exemplary in all he did at our church and a tremendous asset to our church leadership. Knowing his willingness to serve, I am sure he did much more than we were even aware."

HEATH WATSON, ASSOCIATE PASTOR AT GRACE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



"Tony has done so much for me personally over the last twelve years that I've known him that it would take 20 emails to explain his impact upon my life. Since I'm sure you don't want to read twenty emails allow me to summarize my friendship with Tony Stiff. Tony and I have known each other for twelve years. Throughout those years Tony has constantly been a person that I could turn to for advice. The encouragement that I've received, through the advice given and looking at how passionately he seeks Christ, has without a doubt made a better Christian. Hebrews 10:24 says that we should "spur each other toward good deeds." Well that is what Tony does. He spurs. God has challenged and changed Tony over the years and through him God has changed the lives of many. Tony is a godly man who puts Christ above all and I'm glad to have him as a friend.

JUELL PORTER, MEMBER AT GRACE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP