

Testimony from Applecreek
March 20, 2009

Last May our neighborhood experienced a tragedy. Terry and Terri Starky's home burnt to the ground at 6am on a Sunday morning. Luckily no one was hurt in the fire as both of them were awake watching the morning news when the fire in the garage started. It was such a surreal moment standing there with my boys as we watched the fire department put the fire out. My heart was broken for them and as the boys and I prayed for their family we asked God how we might use this event for his kingdom.

Ironically, it just so happens that a few months earlier my wife's sister and her husband had moved out of a rental property that we have here at the mill to take a job in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Over the next week everyone in the community was bringing them groceries and helping out anyway they could while they stayed with family in the area. As a business we approached them and offered to let them stay in the farm house while the insurance company began to work out the details of restoring their home. They accepted our offer and were very thankful to have a place to stay so close to their home so that they could oversee the reconstruction.

Over the 9 months that the Starky's stayed in our farm house we had multiple opportunities to minister to them and witness to them about the goodness and greatness of God. Our relationship with them grew in so many ways through this experience. It was exciting to listen to them begin to process what had happened to them through God's story and give him glory in the midst of their grief and loss.

In the end as the finishing touches were being put on their new home the Starky's came down one evening to the mill and said they had a gift for us. As we opened it up we realized just how much God had used us to impact this couple. Inside the box was a decorative plate with a stand that said, "Blessed are those who fear the Lord". Then they both thanked us and told us how grateful they were for us helping them to keep things in the proper perspective.

In the last 30 years Terry and Terri have never darkened the doors of a church building, but in the past 12 months the Lord has used a fire in their home to show the light of Christ through our church that has no building. It also helped us to better clarify our ministry model: S.O.W. - serve, oikos, witness. Oikos is a greek word that means household of influence. And this how we SOW in our community through our business.

It was through this event that God showed us (a missional business) how he is fulfilling his Word and using his church to accomplish the glory in his story.

Jeremiah 16:19-21 [ESV]

O LORD, my strength and my stronghold,
my refuge in the day of trouble,
to you shall the nations come
from the ends of the earth and say:

"Our fathers have inherited nothing but lies,
worthless things in which there is no profit.
Can man make for himself gods?

Such are not gods!"

"Therefore, behold, I will make them know, *this once I will make them know my power and my might, and they shall know that my name is the LORD.*"

(emphasis mine)

So whether it is happening here in our little neighborhood in rural Apple Creek or overseas in the hearts of feeling artisans in Central Asia, our business is accomplishing its purpose. Morning Star Fiber exists to glorify God by pursuing a vision to the ends of the earth as a premier natural fiber business that brings hope to local communities through spiritual, economic, and social transformation. It's who we are. It's what we do.