



SPACE STATION - ALPHA

LAUNCH

#341

Preparing Adult Leaders

First, prayerfully review the Space Station – Alpha purposes, on page 1 of series resource #340. Commit your heart and soul to them. The addendum includes deeper reading and two stories to share with your students. The Salvation plan on the back cover is a crucial heart-felt tool to know.

Launch – Ready Room

“It's not rocket science!” ...as the saying goes.

To plant a garden with prospects of a good harvest, you must know (1) the condition of the soil, and (2) the requirements of what you are planting; whether it's rice, radishes, rhubarb, or red mouth-watering apples. To be sure, there will also be many needed periods for gentleness and patience... no rocket science, here, right?

The Teacher, above all others - Jesus Christ, used the gardening principles (in Matthew 13, also Mark, and Luke) to emphasize requirements in education, that produces maturity. [Note: We make this connection to holy scripture, early-on, knowing God- the Holy Spirit does His best work in hearts and minds, where scripture is the foundation; even in rocket science.]

LAUNCH is the crucial 'front-porch' to the whole Space Station – Alpha training (“gardening”) series, that predominately focuses on youth, and they are nurtured toward missionaries; either in backyards or jungle villages.

This LAUNCH 'front porch' is crucial because it prepares the gardener (adult leaders: you and I) to understand the soil (the world of today's youth) and the seed (the youth who God has placed in our harvest field of souls).

[Note: We're rock solid in making the clear distinction between the MESSAGE of God's love and Lordship (that will never need 'modernized'), and the God-directed METHODS we use to plant His truths in our youth.]

You'll find the Holy Spirit will help you nurture these young minds, if you continually instill in them, they are to teach others. A great description of God The Holy Spirit is in Ephesians 3:20 *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,*

The Apostle Paul made this a firm style of ministry in 2nd Timothy 2:2 *And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

THE SOIL of Our Missionary Garden

The 'soil' we adults were raised in, often contained much labor in farming, sweat, and watching things grow with simple things like God's provisions of sun and rain. These labors were 'encouraged' by loving parents, that still followed the simple Bible principles of not being a time-waster, lazy, and the "don't work – don't eat" directive in 2nd Thessalonians 3:10.

But today's world is infested with ungodly government regulations that 'protect' (actually, corrupt) our youth. Inside the home, parents planted their children in front of the digital babysitter TV. Our children soon learned there were no challenges nor goals needed or expected, beyond 'kids, don't be disruptive'.

This has been the norm, for enough generations now, that parents no longer have the backbone and the skills for parenting

in the ways that honor God. Along with that, parents don't understand today's world the youth have to survive in. The crushing blow, however, is that parents today are so self-satisfying, they don't even want to learn anything about today's world. This neglect is simple laziness on the part of we adult 'gardeners'.

The 'me-first' attitudes of today's gardeners (parents) give no thought to the fact that their children of today, will be making the decisions for the parents, tomorrow.

The laziness of today's parents and church leaders are content to throw the themes and lessons used in generations long ago, at the youth 'training' of today. Our children are smart enough to see through this lazy-mindedness of their leaders (adults). Today's themes of youth education continually follow, cowboys, stagecoaches, dinosaurs, and whales; fossils of teaching, so long ago.

Technology Twisters

It's not rocket science, but I still don't understand the logic. The themes of the 'faith-based' training materials is at the opposite end of the spectrum of technology that displays digital images on a wall-sized projection screen, with the latest in audio equipment, the church 'couldn't live without'. Meanwhile, most of the youth are crouched down in their seats with their smartphones, texting each other, questions like, “How dumb do the adults think we are.” “They call us weirdos and they made us this way. Youth today, can't spell 'hypocrisy' but they see and experience it every time they enter the church doors.

The bottom line, here, is the spiritual laziness of the gardeners (adults) have harvested what they planted, unlike what God had chosen.

Rocket Science – it is not!

Instead of your garden having rows of beans and corn, visualize it as a junk computer 'box' with boys or girls removing parts with screwdrivers and seeing the order and unity of all the mysterious ingredients. The actual name and purpose of the parts, big and small, are unimportant. Just stay focused on those eager exploring minds are depending on your gardening skills, tears, and love for them, as unto God.

As you draw your 'seedlings' into a unit, we'll soon take a look at some of the many 'technology' principles, and guarantees too. in scripture.

Silver Hair Super Power and Guarantees

I've spent just over half a century as a born-again, saved-by-His-blood, Christian – serving youth ministries. That's why it thrills my soul, when youth call me 'Gramps'. I've long-since learned the power that comes with silver hair and listening ears.

Think of your garden as you sit between the rows of tomatoes with the vines talking to you, as you loosen the dirt crust around them. Yes, it sounds silly, but the metaphor is strong. Youth are commanded and told how to act and what to think, from the time they wore 3-cornered pants. It seems to never end, no matter if they are in school, at the supper table, or Sunday School class.

The super power we grandparent-types possess, is the ability to listen... really deep-down listen. Youth can sense when we're listening with our ears, or when we deep-down listen with our hearts. Heart-listening often grows tears, and Heaven-bound prayers for maturity (in silver-haired hearts).

Guarantees, I Love 'Em!

I love guarantees, that are connected to the things I think, have, and do. One of the gardening guarantees, very close to my

heart, has a special ingredient (call it 'hoeing', if you like) is repeated twice. The ingredient is 'tears'... remember the heart-listening? Listen to the inspired words:

“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” Psalm 126:5,6.

As we begin looking at the seed (boys and girls) we're given another guarantee, describing our gardening manual (Bible). *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine [rules], for reproof [testing], for correction [discipline], for instruction [training] in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect [complete], thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* 2nd Timothy 3:16,17. [my additions are in brackets]. God's Word guarantees of itself, it is perfect for nurturing youth and those who 'garden' them.

THE SEED of Our Missionary Garden

Did you notice the first 'ALL' of the guarantee above? That tells me that even the OLD testament is perfect for learning about the youth, God has called us to reach.

Just recently, God showed me a big, big reason I should be especially attentive. Heart-listen to the words of loneliness, pain, and despair, recorded in the book of Job (Job, rhymes with 'robe') 19:7-10:

“Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment. He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths. He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head. He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree.”

Now slowly reread the verses above, imagining you are one of

today's teenagers, speaking the words. Maybe, even read it once more. The reason is, these are the very same thoughts shared by suffering Job and most teens today.

Bible scholars believe the book of Job was possibly the earliest portion of the Old Testament, yet it helps we adult gardeners step into the minds of our precious youth, knowing scripture prepares us for today's 'all-good-work'.

Adults openly criticize youth as being aliens from another world – whether green hair or tongue and nose jewelry. The youth, especially girls, have a dire need for communication from anyone who will listen to them. This spawns the social networking communities of Twitter, Facebook, Global Plus, and the secretive (some say evil) Myspace. These are the 'shorthand' on-the-go email successors. Mix in with that the attachments of pornographic images, phishing, and the 'cyber-bullies' that can span oceans and continents.

You can easily see the beginnings of the adult shunning in the pews of many churches. The youth are corralled in one corner of the sanctuary, with almost no chaperoning, and the silver haired members looking at them with disdain mumbling, “hey.. kids never acted like that, in my day.” (A strongly false statement.)

Volcanoes in Sneakers

God has wired we humans to come to Him, as our loving merciful parent – first, last, and always. Another powerful guarantee is found in the simple promise of Matthew 6:33, “*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*” Isn't scripture wonderful? There's that 'ALL' again.

But at the same time Satan and his helpers are anxiously waiting in the shadows, to lie to us, in the same way he deceived Eve, in the garden of Eden.

The human mind and heart can only tolerate inner mental pain and fear for a short time before it erupts like a volcano, spewing anger, hatred, dangerous actions, and strange appearances.

Possibly the other end of the spectrum of youth temperament are the 'cutters'. Razor blades or pop can pull tabs are used to 'self-injure' a youth with ongoing inner stress and fears. Cuts produce a pain that masks the never-ending inner pain. Youth often wear long sleeves in warm weather, to hide the scars... that sometimes become infected.

Launch – Operations

- It's never too late to evangelize the hearts and souls of youth... no matter how addicted they are, to hand-held communication and competition. They now see the empty promises, and dead ends of technology.
- Because the mind best remembers images than sentences or speech, keep an open Bible near your actions, and even your computer; call it your Keyboard Bible. Continually plant in their eyes and mind that scripture is as timely today as it was when inspired/written.

Some bed-rock definitions for all Christians:

- Sin is doing and thinking things that we know God doesn't like.
- Love is the heartfelt sacrifice for the good of another.
- More than Conquerors (in Him) This links the faithful Christian with the promise of ruling with Christ in the future. An easy-to-see explanation would be a champion step above the Olympics' GOLD step. To be more than a champion, would be to RULE (to be an Olympic judge) in future events. This is born out in Revelation 20:6 ...

but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. This almost makes the song I love so well, 'Victory in Jesus' to tell just half of what God has in store for us.

- 'The Why of Sin' is heart of the question asked in every generation, on every continent. Since God hates sin, why did he put it in man's world? The answer is not as complicated as some may think. Sin is part of what I call the GRACE PACKAGE. God put sin in mankind's world ALONG WITH, mercy, love, sacrifice, forgiveness, ... that just starts the list.

A large part of God's attributes go far beyond the all knowing/present/powerful attributes He shows us in His Genesis creation. Left with just this, we'd see ourselves as robots in service to His every spoken command. But in Eternity Future He wants us to know all about Him, that we can more fully praise and worship Him. So He put the Grace PACKAGE in our world, and sent His only Son, Jesus Christ to personify it, into our hearts.

Just Good Enough to Get By

Our young people have lost the drive within themselves, to do their best. Their value of their goals (if they have any) are so low, they see no reason to strive; to work; toward that goal or even establish any (stepping, intermediate) goals. Their only goals are getting to the next level of their video games. The sad thing is, that in video games there is no accountability or responsibility. There is nothing that builds character and preparation for leadership in a future family or the business sector.

Now this need is easy to spot and criticize in the lives of our youth and young adults. BUT!... BUT! We, the adults of today's generation is learning and doing exactly what we are

teaching them by our example; our manner of living. Our consistent desire to have youth (that act like youth) sent to the basement classes or out of our sphere of distractions. Let us adults do our own thing.

This is even true in Facebook games. I was surprised the other day to see how many adults waste the technology just to play games. They seem to have no goals and no character reinforcement toward the up and coming generations and those hurting, hungry adults.

It seems hypocritical to me, to keep posting pictures of our children and grandchildren, with much adoration. And then neglect their spiritual enforcement with such powerful communication skills. = =

Additional Reading:

- Power Quad Workshop (The Balanced Life) #205 presents the 'teen years' of Jesus' life, in an organized, fashion based on 2nd Timothy 2.
- Teen Bridge #212 guides the adult leader across the bridge of confusion and prejudice attached to today's youth.
- The Puzzle that Breathes (Orbit of Order) #232 presents non-technical ways to use computing to help bring daily order to the student, and honor to technology's maker, Jesus Christ.

Refer to the enclosed catalog for many more resources to search and share with your fellow Launch Team leaders. Most of them are in both reading and/or booklet form, at ReachingYouth.net

Reaching Deeper - Addendum

(from the opening of The Teen Bridge Booklet #212)

==We silver-top seniors are the best equipped and likely the only

ones to step-up-to-the-plate of service for our Savior. Many of Satan's lies force us to unhappily sit on the bench and assume we're too old or out of style to pick up a bat or glove. The emptiness of our daily routine is filled with extra naps that robs us of quality night time rest. Gold is precious and never gets old, it never rusts, and oddly enough, is vital in keeping computer stuff working, whether hand held phones or satellites deep in space.

We see a few glimpses of Godly principles and promises and how they become far more precious than yellow gold metal.

Name your most valued or funniest hand-me-down you've RECEIVED. Give reasons.

Check out two powerful 'hand-me-down' verses: 2Timothy 2:2 and Psalm 71:18.

Discuss why they are different, but both needed. How do they apply to you?

Learning or Living

Never in the existence of Planet Earth, have we had more data, on-line libraries of sounds, sights, search tools, and studies. The access to all of it is 24/7 and almost free and too often distracting, wasteful, and increasingly just plain evil. It's all packaged with so much flair and fashion, we easily become addicted to it, even before our little ones begin kindergarten. It's no wonder most of our silver-top generation are fearful of it. Take a moment to discuss the fruitless efforts of technology to police itself. On a scale of 10, do you think technology will ever provide our young families with responsible God-honoring on-line resources?

This makes our silver-top senior generation the only reliable compassionate source for handing down life principles – both physical and spiritual. At home can you think of some Bible

characters that did a good job, or bad job of passing on those life principles?

The Big Lie

Satan keeps whispering in our ear that we have no business trying to mentor (teach, often one-to-one) teens unless we have become a walking Bible encyclopedia of all Bible questions a person would ever think of asking us. If you are a Born-Again Bible Believing Christian, you already have knowledge of most all the basics needed to begin mentoring most every teenager. But far more valuable, is your EXPERIENCE in LIVING out those truths in your own life. That can't be gleaned from computers. (end of excerpt). [~] [~]

#1 – Launch!

The rocket's long shadow slowly crept across the Space Ray Pathfinder's Operations Bay. A first time visitor would call the OB (Operations Bay) just a vacant storeroom with very little furniture for the 8 preteen boys and 2 girls. Space Ray was the nickname of silver-haired Ray Timmons – himself a retired missile guidance systems technician and computer programmer. He'd be quick to tell you he much preferred 'Gramps' – especially by the club members.

The rocket was a full sized mighty Titan II Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, no longer in its beneath-ground launch silo, but now a monument in front of Mathers Rocket and Space Museum. Each time Ray's eyes traced the rocket's sleek lines from engines to its nosecone, pointing to the heavens, he sensed great pride in his long-ago efforts to align its guidance system to remain on the planned trajectory.

But it was nothing like the joy and thankfulness to God, he had for being allowed to spend his 'golden years' of retirement guiding the lives of these youth – some people would call them 'throw-away' youth. Gramps firmly believed in the large orange-lettered poster Nancy had painted for him that proclaimed, “GOD DON'T MAKE NO JUNK!”

Another poster displays a cutout picture of the Bible and then the words, “EQUALS GOD'S SPACE MANUAL”. You had to smile and imagine all the work Pete and Charley put into their crude replica of the International Space Station hanging from the ceiling. It was a collection of sticks, Styrofoam cups, clay, and pasteboard backing from writing tablets – for solar panels.

Pointing up at the ceiling space station was a radio telescope for communications, sitting on the box in the corner.

Because Jimmy didn't have any NASA funding or government grants, he built it starting with a dented salad bowl he found in Hanson's trash can. Only critical people would notice the coat hanger framework that held it all together.

No one knew for sure how Launch got his nickname. He was absolutely the laziest, sleepingest cat you ever laid eyes on. It might have been the time Benny stepped on his tail. Even without a countdown, Launch was half way to the space station – the ceiling one, in a flash. That launch didn't need a drop of rocket fuel.

The most valued object in the OB was the 1 meter (true scientists use metric.) rocket that just got its detailed painting last week. Thanks to Bishop's leftover white house paint, she was a monument to the efforts of the clubbers. Bonnie did most of the lettering, but Gramps made sure every clubber had a hand in painting the little Cross not far from the section that housed the inertial guidance systems... that is, if the rocket wasn't actually constructed from paper towel tubes.

Every Saturday afternoon club meeting started the same. Gramps would lead everyone in prayer, asking God to guide each clubber to open his/her heart a little farther and fuel up on His promises, and purpose for them. A healthy dose of praise was always included. After the amen, Gramps would ask one of the clubbers to state the club's purpose. The response was always the same, “To learn how to always honor God in everything I do and think, and to see that 'all good works' certainly includes missions and rocketry.” Often they'd point to the wall poster that displayed the words from 2 Timothy 3:16 and 17. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

Since this was cleanup day, all the clubbers swept and dusted as best as they could. Launch headed out the door and to a safe place for cats, under the trash dumpster. When cleanup

was finished, Gramps taught a neat lesson from the Bible, on how to continue trusting in God, even though He doesn't give you what you need, right on the spot. It was something about DO WAIT – DON'T WORRY – GOD GUIDES.

#2 – Rocket Wheels

A ROCKET WITH WHEELS AND HANDLE BARS!” It was the repeated phrase from several of the preteen clubbers, as they pointed at the wall poster Space Ray “Gramps” had posted earlier in the week. The bold lettering simply stated, “BICYCLE ROCKETRY”.

Jake, the quietest of the clubbers, sat motionless, staring at a blank portion of the wall. It was as though his thinking was in another galaxy; a land where people lived without fear, without empty tummies that moan to be filled, without grownups that constantly argue, and evil people who do ugly unGodly things to each other. Jake had no idea what kind of rocket that Gramps was about to tell them about – with wheels or whatever, but the quiet preteen wished it could take him to that other galaxy, to a planet called HUG.

Not many people knew this, but almost every Saturday, before the other clubbers arrived, Jake entered the OB (Space Ray Pathfinders Operations Bay) and made sure no one was watching him. He'd silently walk to his favorite wall poster and softly slowly move his hand across its words. Somehow he wanted the truths of the words to take root in his heart – a heart that needed promise, purpose, and a big dose of lasting peace. The words on the poster stated, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27).

Gramps carried the bicycle wheel in one hand beside him as he walked the fairly short path to the old store room near the

Mathers Rocket and Space Museum and the tall proud Titan II ICBM. The fervent prayer on his lips was begging God to give him the words, the heart to look past the faults of the preteens he was about to spend this Saturday and all the other club times with. The times he'd do rocket repair work with the precision of a surgeon, was nothing like his desire to do his best – with God's guiding hand.

Gramps entered the OB and placed the bike wheel on the table at the front of the benches the clubbers sat on. Like a space shuttle locking onto the International Space Station, Gramps eyes met the eyes of each clubber, with something that some might call a visual hug, of some sort. It was certainly more than one of Star Trek Spock's mind meld.

The club time was opened with prayer, as always, and then the club's purpose was stated. The silver-haired Pathfinders leader announced, "I need two volunteers." 'Course everyone shot to their feet, waving a hand, to be chosen. Two were invited forward and asked to hold the bike wheel, by its axle, between them.

The lesson began, "Clubbers. What would happen if Nancy was to let go of her side of the axle?" The responses were all correct. The wheel would fall on Benny's foot or next to him. Gramps told Nancy and Benny to hold onto each end of the axle and keep their fingers and clothing away from the spokes. Space Ray began spinning the wheel pretty fast and then told Nancy to carefully, slowly let go of her end of the axle.

To everyone's amazement, the spinning wheel stayed right in place, only being held by Benny's side of the axle. Before the wheel slowed its spinning very much, Nancy was told to take hold of her end again. The experiment was repeated.

"Guys. This bike wheel demonstration shows us how a gyroscope works. A spinning wheel wants to keep right on spinning right where it is. Because of this, a gyro is the main part of a rocket's guidance system. No rocket could leave the earth without one, and stay on its flight path very long."

“ Each of you clubbers and me too, are like rockets... we need to have a path to follow and something to keep us moving straight and true to that path. I have a question. The rocket has a gyro to keep it on its path. What do you and I have to keep us going straight and true, and on the path we should be on?” Everyone wanted to answer, but it was Bobby that picked up a picture of a Bible and laid it on the table next to Gramps.

Jake decided in his heart, that he'd take a gyro and the Bible to travel to his planet HUG. ☒

End of resource #341