



Ministry Ventures Background and History

Ministry Calling

Nonprofit 501(c)(3) ministries are vital to worldwide evangelism and discipleship, providing powerful extension of the work done by the local church. Traditional churches often rely on independent ministries to provide practical, contemporary, and personalized responses to the rapidly changing needs of our culture, allowing the church to maintain focus on its core competencies. The effectiveness of entrepreneurial ministries is an important component of the work of the kingdom.

With this in mind, Mike Kendrick and Boyd Bailey initiated a partnership in 1999 to increase the probability of success in start-up ministries and increase the number of ministries, while engaging Christian businessmen to support these organizations. Mike and his partner, Eric Swartz of Swartz Investments, had experience in the venture capital business. Mike and Eric wanted to support ministries in applying principles similar to those they used in the business arena.

At that time, Boyd Bailey was working with Crown Financial Ministries after having been on the staff of a large church. These three men shared a passion for leadership development, organizational effectiveness, stewardship, and involving businessmen in ministry. Mike, Eric, and Boyd combined their business and ministry experience to come up with a creative concept: an incubator for new ministries called Ministry Ventures. Since that beginning, Ministry Ventures has evolved, becoming a training and virtual coaching organization focused on ministry best practices.

A comment from Boyd on calling:

“My passion and giftedness is encouragement. Everyday leaders are drained from the rigors of management, fundraising, board development, engaging prayer, and the weight of responsibility in executing their God-given vision and mission. Our staff and coaches are committed to serve these leaders through a proven process of personal and professional development.

“Equipping, encouraging, coaching, and accountability all contribute to building the ministry’s leadership and organizational capacity. The ministry can then move into a financial ministry model that is predictable and sustainable. We know we have succeeded when ministry leaders discover God’s game plan, document it, and then systematically implement their ministry plans. Success is staying faithful to His high calling!”

History

The scriptural basis for Ministry Ventures is found in Paul's exhortations to Timothy, "*Train up faithful men...*" and "*Stir up the gift of God within you...*" This idea was formalized through MV's incorporation as a 501(c)(3) and the piloting of its first ministry, Lighthouse Family Retreat. Fran LaMattina was contracted as part-time COO, and Gwen Blythe was hired as the first administrative assistant/office manager. Three new ministries were soon added to the incubator, and Lighthouse became the first graduate in 2001.

By 2002, Boyd Bailey had become the full-time CEO of Ministry Ventures, three new ministries had graduated, and the ministry was growing. Community office space was acquired to accommodate the ministry leaders, executive director, board of directors meetings, and administrative support. By 2004, Ministry Ventures had six alumni and six new ministries residing in its offices. Additional staff and contract coaches were added. A ministry selection committee made up of investors was formed to select incoming ministries. By 2006, twelve alumni had graduated, and nine new ministries were in the program. A staff of seven was formed to support them. With the Ministry Ventures' "incubation model, over \$15 million was raised by the portfolio of 16 ministries, and over 35,000 people were impacted for Christ.

In 2007 the engagement was streamlined from two years to 12 to 18 months, virtual coaching replaced in-person coaching, several specialized professional coaches replaced the single coach model, and an introductory seminar was introduced to familiarize the ministry participants with the rigors of the process.

At this juncture, scalability is a large part of our own expansion strategy. An equipping model that includes seminars, certification, and roundtables (that have just started in metro-Atlanta) has replaced the incubation model so we can increase the number of ministries that can be supported nationwide.

Ministry Ventures is becoming recognized as an organization with a value proposition of relationship, stewardship, and leadership that is being embraced by major donors, ministries, foundations, and churches as it provides a needed resource to the kingdom. As of the end of 4th quarter 2009, 32 ministries are in the certification process, and 11 ministries have finished the coaching hours and are in the process of applying for certification.