

# Reaching “PIPSY” People

BY CHRIS GALANOS

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This article is a collection of stories excerpted from the book, *From Megachurch to Multiplication*. It is excerpted and adapted by Lorena Wood. The PIPSY acronym stands for P—poor, I—internationals, P—prisoners, S—sick, and Y to make it an adjective.

## Working Through the Schools

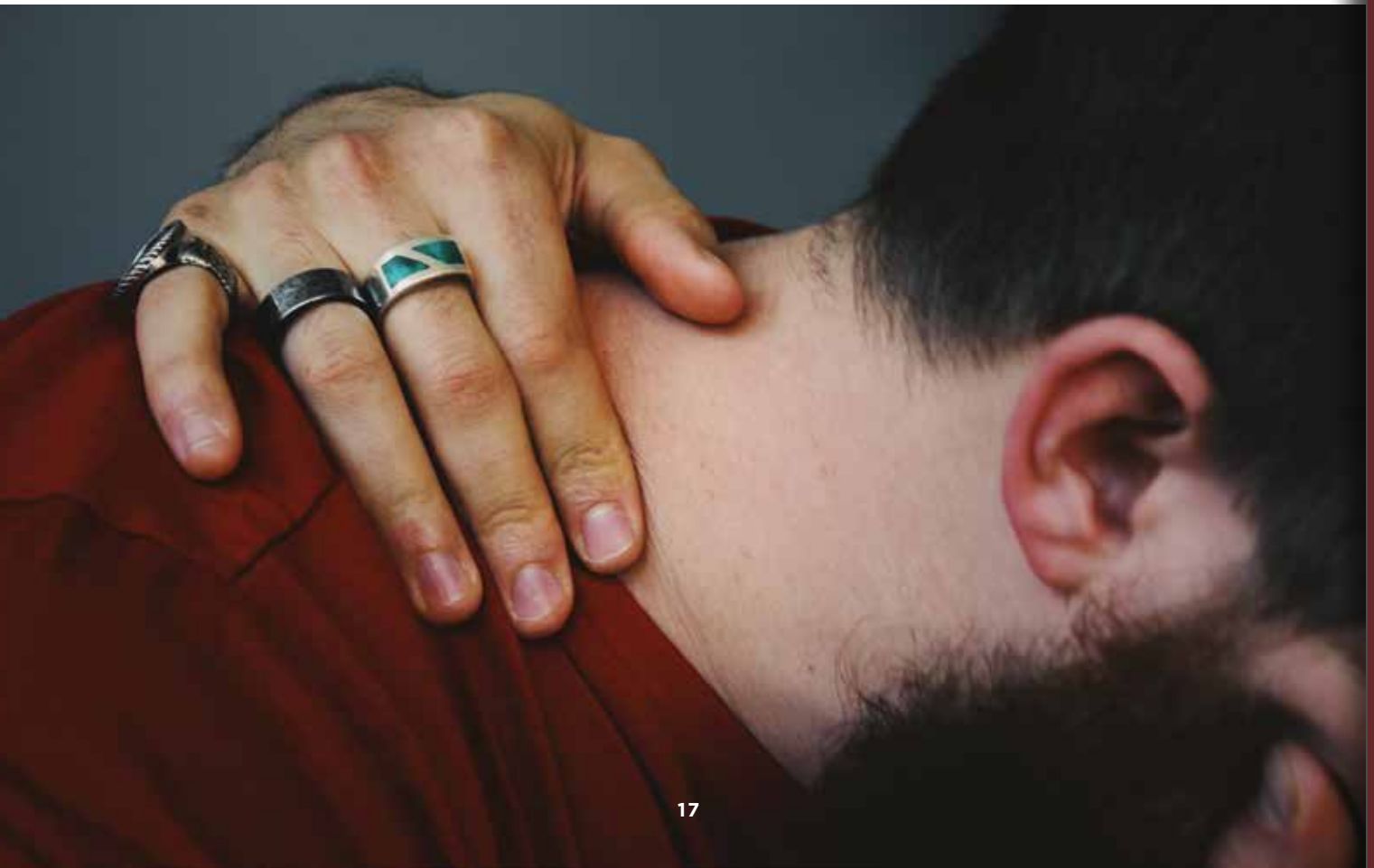
A teacher we knew in a school connected us with the social worker on-site who works with each of the families. I told her we were looking for families in the neighborhood whom we could serve. She was excited about our desire to help and said she had many children at the school whose families were deeply in need. She asked me, “How many families do you want?” She was willing to give us as many as we wanted to serve. I could hardly believe it.

I told her we’d like to start with five. Then I told her that we’d like to meet each family in their home, listen to their story, and see how we could help. All five families she contacted were eager for us to come and see them. They were PIPSY, after all.

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We visited each family in their home, listened to their stories, asked them what their needs were and then we prayed for them. Our team would get together and brainstorm how we could best serve them and then we’d start meeting needs.

As we met each family’s needs, we tried to gauge their spiritual interest. We knew their greatest need was a





relationship with Jesus, and we tried to be discerning as to who was open to that.

For those who were spiritually interested, we would offer to train them to lead a Discovery Group with their family and friends.

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Once we finished with the first five families, we asked for more and she eagerly gave us more. We never pressured anyone to do a Discovery Group. We were there to simply serve people, meet their needs and see who was interested.

### **Knocking on Doors—In the Worst Neighborhood**

Another way we've gained access successfully into some of these PIPSY neighborhoods is by knocking on doors offering to pray for people. The schools were closed for the summer, so we needed a new point of entry.

My team would be the first to tell you that when I shared this idea with them they didn't love it.

I told them I thought we should start with a certain apartment complex. It had the reputation of being one of the worst in the area. In fact, several people told me that it was where they used to buy drugs before they started following Jesus. They said, "You can get any drug in town in that place." I thought it seemed like the perfect place to start!

After we prayed together, before beginning to knock on doors, something happened that affirmed immediately we were supposed to be there. Carol pulled up. I recognized Carol immediately. She had stopped me at a gas station about a year ago and told me she had seen me on TV and asked me to pray for her. I prayed for her right there and didn't figure I'd ever see her again.

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She rolled down her window, and I walked up to the car and said hello to her. Surprised, I asked her, "Do you live here?" She had lived there for more than 10 years. I told her what we were doing there. She started telling us more about it and was able to point out the notoriously dangerous apartments. She said, "Do you guys see that apartment over there?" We said, "The third one from the left?" She replied, "Yes. That's a drug house. People come in and out all the time buying drugs."

We thanked her for the information, and my friend and I decided to knock on that door first. We were nervous, but DMM training taught us that the hardest and scariest places often yield the greatest results. We wanted to go to the hardest place in the apartment complex first. When we knocked on the door, Billy answered.

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Billy had just gotten out of prison. He was in his sixties. We told him we were praying in the area and wanted to know if we could pray for him in any way. He stepped outside and told us that we could pray for him to get back on his feet again. We prayed for him and then continued to chat with him. We learned that the apartment actually belonged to Billy's son, Joe. He was staying with Joe until he could get on disability and get his own place. My friend and I exchanged glances when we realized it was the son, not the dad, who was the gatekeeper in that apartment complex and possibly the chief drug dealer. We told him that we usually go out praying for people on Thursdays and that we'd come and see him again the next week.

Every Thursday morning, upon our arrival, Billy would see my car through his window and come outside to ask us to pray for him. We almost never had a chance to make it to his door. He'd chat with us for a bit, and when we'd ask him if there was anything we could do for him, he'd never ask for anything but prayer.

Each time we met with Billy, we tried to ask him more about his son, Joe. He'd tell us that his son was on the wrong path and that he wanted us to pray for him to get back on the right path. I asked him once if we could go and pray for his son, and he said that his son didn't believe in God and probably wouldn't be open to that.

One day when we visited the complex, Billy didn't come right out, so we knocked on his door. Joe answered. He said his dad was in the shower and that he'd send him out when he was finished. Since this was the first time I had met Joe, I asked if we could pray for him. He turned us down but assured us that he'd send his dad out shortly.

« Once this relationship had continued for some time, we asked Billy, "What would you think about us training you to lead a Discovery Group in your home?" »

Billy came out and had us pray for him. I continued to ask more about his son. I knew that we looked out of place in that apartment complex, so I asked him one day, "Is Joe okay with us being here on Thursdays?"

Since I knew Joe was probably the gatekeeper, much like a tribal village chief, I wanted to know what he thought about our presence. Billy told us that his son was cool with us being there, so I asked him to reassure Joe that we're not the police and that we're just there to be a blessing to the apartment complex.

We honestly believed that if someone gave us trouble Joe would come to our defense. Why? Because we made sure his dad was taken care of. Thanks to that relationship, it seemed we had Joe's blessing to be there.

Once this relationship had continued for some time, we asked Billy, "What would you think about us training you to lead a Discovery Group in your home? We can help you, Joe, his wife and everyone else who comes



through your door to learn to discover more about God by reading, obeying and sharing his Word.” Billy seemed interested in doing that but told us he didn’t think Joe would feel the same way.

Also, Billy couldn’t read very well.

We told him, “How about this? We’re going to get you a speaker that will play the Bible, and then we’ll come on Thursdays and sit outside your apartment, listen to a passage with you, and teach you how to listen to God and obey him. How does that sound?” He said that sounded great.

« A week later we started the Discovery Group with Billy, and each week the group has grown. »

Then I said, “Maybe you can invite some others from this same apartment complex to join us, and we can all listen to God’s Word and obey it together.” Billy agreed and mentioned some people he wanted to have come.

A week later we started the Discovery Group with Billy, and each week the group has grown. First it was just Billy. Then Billy and his neighbor Terry came. Then his other neighbor Tony came. Then his two other neighbors, Bob and Linda, came. Then others. In the first few weeks we taught the group the seven-question DBS process so they could eventually lead it on their own without our assistance. It is very exciting to watch the group begin to obey God together and share his Word with others. We regularly cast vision to this Discovery Group that God wants to use them to reach their entire apartment complex.

« And it all resulted from knocking on the most dangerous door in that complex. »

Even though Joe isn’t receptive yet, we still have a sense that he may be a Saul who is going to have a Paul-like conversion and that he will be instrumental in seeing that apartment complex follow Jesus, especially as he witnesses firsthand the radical transformation in his father’s life.

Carol connected us to Billy. And Billy connected us to his oikos to begin a Discovery Group. And it all resulted from knocking on the most dangerous door in that complex.

## Henry Spreads DMM in Prison

In 2014, we launched our first Freedom Campus in the Lubbock County Detention Center.

After our 10 year anniversary, instead of just trying to draw men to a worship service on the weekend we started casting vision to them and training them to be disciple-makers. We’d suggest to them that they “go out among the lost” and start Discovery Groups. Perhaps those groups would become churches, and perhaps people in those churches would catch a vision to go back to some of their rough neighborhoods upon their release to make disciples and start churches there too.

Henry caught the vision to be a disciple-maker and go through our DMM training. Henry and the others in his training were challenged to go back to their pods and begin implementing the training. Soon after, Henry and one of the other inmates started a DG in pod 4D. This was done without assistance from us. We trained them and served as their coach but let them do the “work of the ministry” (Eph. 4:12).

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One Sunday morning in the worship gathering, Henry stood and shared about how the DG was growing and their prayer times as a group were very powerful. He said there was only one problem. They couldn’t seem to keep their group meeting time under four hours!

Henry’s group meets every single day in that pod, and lives are being transformed. They’re so hungry and they just can’t get enough of hearing and obeying God’s Word and praying with one another.

In fact, Stan said one key hindrance to growth in movements is if the church gets the idea that they are only “supposed” to meet once a week.

## Push Week

The eLife staff decided to devote a whole week to prayer, fasting, going out among the lost looking for Persons of Peace, and seeing Discovery Groups started. We called it a DMM Push Week. In those four days alone, our four teams were able to have 424 spiritual conversations, extend 121 DG invitations, and start 29 new groups. We were so encouraged we also decided to schedule even more DMM Push Weeks in the future.

### Kasey's Answered Prayer (Push Week)

We prayed together for two hours on Sunday night and then for another four hours on Monday before going out. We also fasted together as a staff all day Monday, prayed together for another hour each day and then had a testimony time on Friday from 1 to 2 p.m. to tell stories of what God did.

« He said there was only one problem. They couldn't seem to keep their group meeting time under four hours! »

In addition to prayer and fasting, on Tuesday through Friday we went out among the lost for at least two hours each day. Every team went to a different area of town where we had already been working in previous weeks and mapped out a plan to blitz the area over the four days.

My team went back to Billy's neighborhood.

I was teamed up with Phil, the finance director on staff at eLife. We went to the first apartment complex assigned to us and began to engage people in spiritual conversations.

In one of the apartment complexes we visited, we met a woman named Kasey. We had knocked on her door and when she answered, I introduced Phil and myself and then asked our usual question.

« She asked for a sign from God and He sent us to her front door the very next morning to offer to pray for her. »

Kasey seemed excited we were there and then said to us, "You're never going to believe this." That got our attention. She said that she was talking to her mom just the day before about how she felt that they needed to "grow closer to God." She said she went to her room later that afternoon and said a prayer. She told us that she prayed, "*God, if you're real, and if you care about my family, would you send me a sign that you're real and that you care?*" After telling us about her prayer, she pointed at us and said, "You are that sign."

I was speechless. She had literally been waiting for us. She asked for a sign from God and He sent us to her front door the very next morning to offer to pray for her. She was eager for prayer. Then when we asked her about bringing her friends and family together for a DG, she started telling us who all she'd bring. We saw an oikos opening right before our eyes. We planned to start the DG the following week.

When we left Kasey's apartment that day, I praised God for her responsiveness, but I felt a strong conviction from the Holy Spirit along the lines of Matthew 9:37-38: "Then He [Jesus] said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'"



« People all over the world just like Kasey are the *plentiful harvest* Jesus talks about in these verses. They are ready to be harvested. They are spiritually open. »

People all over the world just like Kasey are the plentiful harvest Jesus talks about in these verses. They are ready to be harvested. They are spiritually open. They would be excited to receive the gospel if someone presented it to them. They're *waiting* for workers to come and tell them.

### Andrew and Kristin

Kristin and her husband, Andrew, are some of eLife's most effective disciple-makers. They went through the first round of DMM training in the spring of 2017 and we commissioned them and sent them out as church planters at our 10 year anniversary. As of this book's publication, they and their church have started several first-generation Discovery Groups, and they've even seen one second-generation Discovery Group started—and all of this in just six months or so.

In a recent coaching meeting I talked to Andrew and Kristin about going out among the lost and looking for Persons of Peace. What they told me blew me away. They said they've been going to Walmart twice a week to pray for people.

They do their personal shopping at other times, and the two weekly trips they mentioned are times they go with the sole intent to pray with people and try to find Persons of Peace. I was surprised to hear that they go to Walmart a few extra times each week just to talk to people. I asked them how long they typically stay there praying for people. They told me they stay about two to three hours each time.

I almost fell out of my chair. Andrew and Kristin are ordinary people with full-time jobs. I asked Andrew and Kristin how many people they can pray for in a two to three-hour period. They said they typically pray for 45 people before they leave and that they've taught their daughter to pray for people too. With her help, it is easier to get to the 45.

I started laughing out loud! I was thinking, *Who do they think they are, disciple-makers of Jesus or something?* They said they just greet people at random and let them know that they are out praying for people. Next, they ask if they can pray for the person in some way.

They said that almost everyone responds positively and wants prayer. They told me that having gone through the DMM training, one thing they now ask people after they pray for them is, "Would you be interested in getting your family and friends together to discover more from the Bible about God and His plan for your life?"

« Andrew and Kristin are ordinary people who are fired up about Jesus, motivated by the Holy Spirit and trying to obey everything they read in God's Word. »

I then asked how most people had responded to this question. Andrew said they have only started asking that question recently, but many say they'd love to. Then they exchange phone numbers.

I asked Andrew and Kristin what inspired them to start going to Walmart? They said that Phase One training was really instrumental in getting them out among the lost and that DMM training helped them see their time among the lost as an opportunity to find Persons of Peace and start Discovery Groups.

Andrew also said that he and Kristin try to take people with them as often as they can so they can train their friends to do this as well. Andrew said he'll say to his friend, "Here, watch me do it, then you can do it next." He said his friends are usually pretty nervous, but after they see him do it a few times, they're usually open to trying it.

Andrew and Kristin are ordinary people who are fired up about Jesus, motivated by the Holy Spirit and trying to obey everything they read in God's Word. 