

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Passion Makes Ministry Happen

I've had a life-long interest in aviation, and finally got my pilot's license several years ago. I love everything about airplanes—especially World War II warbirds. There's nothing like the sight, sound, and smell of a Merlin engine crackling to life and spitting flames, or the roar of a big old bomber's radial engines pushing fat-bladed propellers! <insert manly sound here!>

Unfortunately, I'm not independently wealthy, so I can't fly those awesome old planes. But, I do fly them anyway—on my computer, online.

I've been playing a flight simulation game called "Warbirds" for years—I dogfight with and against real people, sometimes 200 of them or more, in real time. I have the full setup at my desk: stick, throttle, rudder pedals, and even a headset with a mic so I can talk with my squad-mates. We really get into the virtual battles we fight. Sometimes after flying Warbirds I have to take a break and let my heartrate slow back down and the sweat on my forehead dry!

Everyone in this game has a callsign. Because I'm a youth minister, my callsign is "Parson." That callsign has put me in a very strange place for a person who concentrates on ministry with teenagers.

Several years ago a real-life WWII fighter group—the 352nd, who flew blue-nosed P51 Mustangs against Germany—was planning a trip to Europe to visit their old airbases and pay their respects to the friends that they left over there. The


chaplain of the group—being over 80 years old and with some health issues—needed some assistance doing the memorials at each gravesite. A "virtual" 352nd pilot in my Warbirds game asked me if I really was a "parson." When I told him that I could marry 'em and bury 'em, he invited me to go to Europe with the 352nd to help the chaplain.

Ever since that trip, I've been involved with those old warriors and their families—hanging out with them, loving them, praying with them—all in the name of Jesus. I'm now their official Chaplain, a person they can turn to. And lately, there have been plenty of opportunities for ministry to those men and families. After all, those veterans are in their 90's, and we are losing them at a rapid pace.

Even though my vocation is youth ministry, God used a hobby and a passion of mine to put me in a mission field of His choosing, using who I am to represent Him. I imagine that He would like to do, or has done, something similar through you. All He's looking for are people who are not ashamed to be His representative.

I'm sure that we share another passion—using music and media to influence young lives for Jesus Christ. That's why I'm so thrilled to be involved in helping to create these resources for you. The music, Bible studies, re:Tunes, chordcharts, and articles in this issue of *Youth Leaders Only* will prove effective as you use them in your youth ministry.

Godspeed!


Ken McCoy
Editor