

Dr. Keith Pisani

Born and raised in Akron, Ohio, I received Jesus Christ as my personal Savior as a six year old in Children's Church in a Baptist church in Akron. I was baptized by immersion two years later. I am thankful for godly parents who instructed me in the ways of the Lord and took me to church every time the doors were open. Since my salvation, I've been privileged to lead many others to Christ.

God began moving me toward the ministry soon after I was saved. I admired our pastor. Outside of my father, our pastor Dr. David E. Luttrell, was the most admired man in my life. Dr. Luttrell was a "pastor's pastor." Every service, the front row was reserved for visiting pastors who came to learn from his ministry. Most of the time, the front row was filled (as was the rest of the church to its 360 seat capacity). Almost half of our youth group entered some form of full and/or short-term Christian ministries (pastoral, missions, Bible College staff, etc.).

My parents were positive toward all forms of "full-time" Christian service. They themselves were active in the church in a variety of ministries (elected office, Sunday School Superintendent, teaching (all ages), service as teen group directors, activities, counseling, VBS, children's work, etc.). Outside the church, Dad and Mom hosted Bible studies in our home. Dad led many of his football players to Christ in our basement during casual "game-film" sessions followed by talks over potato chips and other refreshments (many of those athletes still write my mother). Later, Dad led what was officially proclaimed 'the world's largest' *Fellowship of Christian Athletes* huddle group. He did this as a football coach at Cuyahoga Falls Public High School north of Akron, Ohio. His weekly, Thursday morning 7 AM Bible studies averaged 200+ athletes. He hosted Christian sports banquets attended by an average of 1200+ (from the surrounding community). We attended 3 national coaches clinics and other national camps where Dad introduced me to Christian athletes and coaches (such as Dean Smith, Tom Landry, Hayden Fry, professional baseball players and many others from that era). Fourteen of Dad's former athletes are now in full-time Christian service. Seeing the dedication of my parents in action for Christ did more to motivate me toward the ministry than anything else in my life.

While in High School, I was heavily involved in athletics. I was the point guard on an undefeated public school basketball team which was rated #1 to #4 in the state (Akron Manchester). The National Amateur Baseball Federation named me to a summer-ball All-America team as a center fielder (NABF, at the national championship tournament in Detroit, MI). My senior year, I had a successful, invitation-only try-out with the Pittsburgh Pirates professional baseball team. Signing was a definite possibility (I was told if I said yes, I would sign). I thought I could play baseball and be an evangelist. But, God had other plans. I hurt my knee (severely). The next year, I attended a local Christian liberal arts college. The team verse was Matthew 6:33, "But, seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you." In late August, between my Freshman and Sophomore years of college, with that verse in mind, I transferred to Baptist Bible College of Pennsylvania. I dedicated every ounce of my being to "full-time" Christian service. By January of my first year, at the age of 19, I was preaching at the Island Plains Extension of the Hallstead Baptist Church. This was 45 minutes north of BBC. We began with 14 people. My first sermon was based on 1 Corinthians 15:10, "By the grace of God, I am what I am." Within a year, attendance was a standing-room-only 73! I was preaching every Sunday (except summers when I traveled on BBC gospel teams - the first Defender 5 and the Collegians" Brass Quintet, as the speaker). Others from school came to Island Plains with me, including the one who would be my wife. Through this experience, God confirmed in my heart, I was called to be a pastor. Seminary followed, as did additional ministries in Wisconsin, New Jersey, New York, Florida, and Georgia.

My call into full-time Christian ministry is a life-time commitment. I can think of nothing else I'd rather do. Nothing else is attractive. My philosophy is 'whatever, wherever, and whenever as God leads' (Phil.2:13). This is God's will for my life. Like my parents before me, I am 100%, totally committed to my ministry for Jesus Christ.

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Galatians 2:20 "Not I, But Christ!"