

Keith McFarland Interview Part 1

Dr. Rick: [00:00:00] All right. Welcome again to the Think Orphan Podcast. I'm Rick Morton, along with Phil Darke. Phil, how's it going today in California?

Phil: [00:00:11] It's going pretty well. Although, you know, it's interesting with all the things we have going on. A couple of things over the last few days. We got COVID right, obviously going on for a while. We have all kinds of other things, school starting, kids, distance learning in our home, all kinds of other things.

And then we find out in South Lake Tahoe, the plague came up and someone had the plague the other day from some insect. And then we have, wake up this morning and go out to my car and there's a layer of ash on the car because there's fires, you know, popping up all around. So it's just a crazy, crazy time as we already knew.

And you know, on top of it, I was reminded as I listened to, to, the episode with DJ Jordan, a couple of times ago there that we left people hanging on whether I got, I, you know, I had COVID or not

Dr. Rick: [00:01:00] Yeah, we sure did.

Phil: [00:01:01] After that episode a couple of times ago. And so I just want to say, I apologize for switching the order a little bit on our episodes and when we recorded them.

And I will say happily though that I was COVID negative. And I was, I was pretty darn sure I had COVID as with 99% of our country who hasn't had COVID yet. I think we're pretty sure we had it at some point this year, but, when I got the antibody test and it said negative as well. So, I'm not out of the woods. But, anyway, it's been a, it's been just a crazy, crazy time.

As I know, you've been having a crazy few weeks since we last quarter as well. And, just how are you doing?

Dr. Rick: [00:01:41] Man. I'm good. I'm good. You know, we're, we're launching, two seniors into, into their last year of high school and two seniors in three different schools. And it's, there's a lot of complexity and that's in, COVID just adding to that.

It's nuts. you know, we're, we're like over here toward the East, we're trying to act like the West Coast. And so we're having earthquakes over this way and all kinds of, you know, all kinds of craziness here. And so life, you know, life just continues to go on. And, you know, I think today, you know, even as we're, even as we're getting into the show that, man, they're like, we're having a moment of craziness on the show here today because I can't believe that that our guest, who we have today with us, that we are over 150 episodes into this podcast, and this is the first time we've had him on. And so that's just crazy to me that, that somebody that's as, as close to you and somebody that's as big a part of, of, of your life and your story is, like we're just getting a chance to talk to him for the first time.

And so, in the midst of life being topsy turvy and all that, we're getting some, we're going to do something really, really cool today. So why don't you, why don't you tell us about, about our guest?

Phil: [00:02:55] Yeah, today we have one of my, he's become a brother to me after we were able to co write and co-edit In Pursuit of Orphan Excellence a few years ago. Keith McFarland, who has been the reason he hasn't been on the show is because he's, he and his family have been living over in Uganda for really the last 15 years.

And he comes home on furlough here and there, but really crazy, and he's also one of the most humble then you'll ever meet. He doesn't like to share about himself and, and quite frankly, part of the reason I haven't had them on either is, as you know Rick, I'm not a self promoter. I don't like, we're just putting it out there and saying, Oh, look at me.

And, and I feel that I don't want people to ever think that the reason, and we did this was to sell stuff or do this, or do that. Never has been, never will be. And, and, but

I've always knew a

Dr. Rick: [00:03:41] This is fun man. Like this is awesome. And it's really like, I'm really excited about today. I have to get to the two to get to the two of you guys together on the show and, you know, to be able to do this.

And so I'm, I'm thankful Keith in a place where internet is good and reliable and we can, you know, we can have this conversation and, and I'm thankful that, that we're able to get you guys together and we're able to talk about some, you know, some really important things in,

Phil: [00:04:06] Absolutely. So without any more, and I do want to say on a side note, we haven't had Tony on the show either, which is, you know, something that,

Dr. Rick: [00:04:14] let's do it.

Phil: [00:04:17] Let's have like the series of, of our coauthors of just, you know, boom, back to back to back. And actually it could just be back to back, but, that's OK. We haven't written as much as Peter Greer, but, anyway, He'd have a whole podcast of just his co authors.

Dr. Rick: [00:04:32] Just his coauthors.

Right.

Phil: [00:04:33] Anyway,

folks. So here is Keith McFarland and we're not going to keep talking, you know, as you guys know Rick and I could talk a lot longer about all this.

I could talk all day about the greatness of Keith McFarland as a man and who he is and who he is all about, but really we for we get into, I just want you guys to know he's. He says, I said the real deal, a guy who's been living, with his family, loving on the people of Uganda in ways that, just training them up in the ways of the gospel.

He has, he's the Director of the Institute for Gospel Transformation at New Hope Uganda. He also holds other positions there as anybody doing ministry knows you do a whole lot more than your title. He loves as well as anyone that I know. And he has six kids. He's raised at them all over there in Uganda. And I do also want to say, and I'm gonna talk a little bit of this about with him.

I don't want to forget his son is 17 year old son to give you an idea. His oldest has just started a publishing company called, Publishing Peace. It's got a blog. They're going be starting a podcast. It just blows my mind. Like he has a bigger staff than I have, and he's 17 years old. And, I just love that, that, that to me is a mark of, of a man who is his father and that's who we get to talk to today.

So without any more, we're going to bring in Keith McFarland.

Keith brother. So great to have you, man. Welcome to the think orphan podcast.

Keith: [00:05:57] Thanks, Phil. I'm glad to finally be on here. Thanks for bringing me in.

Phil: [00:06:02] Yes, yes. And one of the things I love about this kind of new format we have is you have no idea how I introduced you,

so you have to wait

until the episode airs to, to hear it, to hear it.

So I think your wife will agree with it. You may, you may struggle with it. You may struggle with it. I'm just, I'm not gonna lie. So, Keith, you know, I introduced you a little bit. I introduced you a little bit, but can you just share us, share with our audience? Cause, cause really. People who have read the book, read a little bit about you in the end if they finished it, if they read all the way through chapter 13. They heard a little bit about your story, but most people haven't read that most people don't know your story.

Don't know who you are. can you, can you just share a little bit about how God captured you with the love for orphaned and vulnerable children. How you began working in Uganda and just, just really what, how you got to be where you are today?

Keith: [00:06:55] Yeah. You know, God took me from West Virginia, so I grew up in West Virginia.

I went to Chicago to Moody Bible Institute. And really from 1995 to 1999, it was like a world explosion for this kind of country boy, country, city boy, suddenly downtown Chicago, the government housing projects, just a few blocks from the school at that time. And so for four years, I was very immersed in inner city ministry to very broken, very wounded hurting kids. And that was just life changing for me. by my senior year, it was like my eyes went from being open like this, to like this. As I began to learn about street kids, AIDS, orphans, war, torn children, it blew me away. In fact, funnily enough, you know this, like I remember being on spring break and watching something in Rwanda and they were talking about the genocide in Rwanda and all the, the loss, the death, the situation with the children and man, it was like, I was like, what genocide?

Like what, you know, what is this? It was like brand new for me. So I, five years later had no idea all that had taken place. And it, it just, man, it was like a, a knife into me and, and just crying out God where, you know, where are you with, in this big reality? You know, and then all this, and so, and I remember just walking around school kind of just down a lot.

And my wife was just my friend at that time, and she was like, what's wrong with you, Keith? I'm like, the state of the world's children. Who is this guy? but, but it was God just breaking me, opening my eyes up and then just, you know, making it really clear that, that I. I'm redeeming this brokenness and I've entered into this brokenness.

And I still enter into this brokenness through my people, through my church. And, you know, and when you go and I'm like, Whoa, me.

Yeah,

come on. So, that started me on a journey. When I graduated, I went and lived with the Zambian family and worked with street kids for three months and then moved around East Africa, just checking out what was going on with children and different ministries and churches and missionaries or whoever I could connect with.

And in that time, God just really confirmed his, his call on, on me. And that direction went back to Chicago and got married, God reaffirmed that calling through the local church that I was attending. And in 2002, we hadn't even been married a year. And we found ourselves in Rwanda and Uganda working with kids and attending at that time, what was called the New Hope Institute of Childcare and Family. Man,

and that was mind blowing for us in a, in a ministry context to children that was very different than anything I'd ever seen. And it was just coming right into New Hope's, the very heart of it bringing the fatherhood of God to the fatherless. And that captured our hearts. And so we went back to the States and raised support and we've been there since 2004.

Phil: [00:10:15] Can you share a little bit more about the Institute, what it is, and you know, if people out there might be interested in being a part of it potentially, can you share what it is, how people might get involved, how they can get in touch with you? if they are interested to hear more about it. Now, obviously they can read, read about it in the book, but, but, just a snippet of what it is and, and how people might be able to contact you if they want more info on it.

Keith: [00:10:38] Sure. You know, what drew us to the Institute initially was just wanting to be mentored by people on the field who were living out the gospel in ministry to be able to learn from their successes, their mistakes. And we had a really hard time finding anyone who was offering that kind of mentorship or discipleship,

and when we learned about New Hope Uganda and the Institute, it was like, wow. Okay. That's exactly what we want. Cause it is it's a, at that time it was a 20 week course. We've tried to shorten it down to 18 weeks right now. But it is it's intensive discipleship oriented where you are it's multifaceted. So. You have to almost imagine you're sitting in a room with

Ugandans from four or five, 10 different tribes, different nations, different African nations, different Western nations, not a big class.

Usually between 15. Yeah. 20 I'm enough that, that. You know, it's, it's intimate. You're able to, to know each other and be known and you start just breaking apart culture and, and the impact that our cultures have played on us forming the way that we look at God and look at each other, read the Bible, live our lives.

And it's very shocking to have your own cultural worldview revealed in the light of another. You know, my wife had taken missions classes. I had done missions and trainings on, on culture, but there's something about being exposed in the life of another culture. And then just having a biblical worldview just being rebuilt into us, challenging on every level for us as for me as a man, my wife, as a woman.

So manhood, womanhood, marriage, family, things that I didn't get in Bible college, deeply saturated in the word of God. Foundations for God's heart for the fatherless and, and, orphan care grounded in the gospel. One of the things that we loved was delving into the heart of an orphan. One of my favorite teachings that I got to sit under and then seeing how that leads us to the gospel and the fatherhood of God. So, you know, it's, it's intense. There's a lot of different pieces to it, but you're also working hands on with New Hope and, you know, in different areas of the ministry, whether it's the clinic or the family groups or the schools. Whatever's appropriate for that context.

So, you know, the web, so you can go on newhopeuganda.org, and just look for Institute for Gospel Transformation and any inquiries on there will make their way to me.

Phil: [00:13:09] And I gotta tell you, I wish we had an ability to do like a virtual tour or something, of, and just be a fly on the wall for some of those conversations. I've, I've wanted to, you know, just be a part of it a bit more. I've met some of the people who have been in, in the, in the Institute and just seeing a little snippet of it when I was visiting.

But, I just, I'm blown away, hearing more and more about what you're doing with that. So I just encourage people to check it out. If it, if that at all, piqued your interest, find out more about it because it really is amazing. And it is, it's kind of like, I compare it to, when you're learning a language, you go on Rosetta stone, you try to learn a language and you can kind of learn a language.

Well, you're never going to learn a language until you go in and actually go into a country and immerse yourself into that. And I think this is like a jumping off into it. Just the deep end of cultural immersion. To learn about people and get to know people at deep, deep levels where the questions, the hard questions are asked.

So I definitely have have, I just really love what you're doing. I've always just been so encouraged by, by what you're doing there. So, Yeah, go ahead.

Keith: [00:14:21] Just, just, you know, you think about, well, you know, really would go through that course? I mean, it's whether you're training in missions, we've had people that

are going to different Muslim countries, African nations, Asian, wherever we've had Indians go through.

We've had pastors from America go through and then come back and almost take a sabbatical. Come, go through and then come back into ministry. And really from any educational level, from a Master's of Divinity level to a fourth grade village, Ugandan education is an impacting, experience for all of those levels.

And the quality of teaching is amazing and you're learning from Ugandans and you're learning from a wide spectrum of people, which I think is really special.

Phil: [00:15:07] Yeah. And I, that said another thing I meant, I'm glad you, I'm glad you touched on. It's not just a bunch of, it's not a bunch of Americans going over to Uganda to teach a bunch of people from all over the world.

It's it's people that are teaching you and training you from Uganda. As you said, there's, there's people from several different countries at New Hope, right? That are working there and training and are a part of that. So, yeah. Okay. So, you know, we could talk about that all day. I do want you real quick though.

Can you, as you're, I want to make sure as you're answering the other questions to just share a little bit about, you know, What New Hope is so people can understand that better. I do. I know that a lot of that's in the book, so I do want to invite people to the extent we, obviously, we all, we can never cover all these different things in an interview.

So if you're, if you really want to find out more about New Hope Uganda and its model and how it's transforming lives, I was there. I definitely encourage you to pick up that book because as anyone as Rick. You know, reminded himself of this last week. If you pick up the book and you skim through it, of which parts of the book, Phil Darke wrote, who's on the cover, and which parts of the book Keith McFarland wrote, Keith has a lot more. And he's like, here, I don't even have my arm and I'm like here. Right. So if you're on the video, you saw my hands that were really close together when I did my part and you couldn't see my hands cause they were so far apart with Ray or with Ricks with Rick, Rick didn't write any of it actually.

You know, we, if we had 16 authors, it probably would have been Rick, but. Funny story. I'd never even met Rick until, till after the book was published and I never looked,

Dr. Rick: [00:16:40] Oh, you wrote

Phil: [00:16:40] a book, then Rick said, Oh, okay. You're part of the book writer fraternity. I can come over and talk to you now. So that's kinda how it worked, when we did that.

But, I still remember meeting Rick at, Chicago, CAFO. Yeah. So anyway, that's not what this interview is about. This area is about you, Keith. So we're gonna come back to you. But that is, I do want to kind of transition to the collaboration that did happen with, with In Pursuit. And in all seriousness, it was a book that was always, you know, not always. Once we went to a collaborative approach, I knew there was going to have to be somebody else that really

walked alongside who, you know, who took on a co-editing role, who took on a big part of writing and helping with the content editing. Cause I knew that it just couldn't be Phil Darke's musings and Phil Darke's editing, and a lot of people just assume we were old buds, but we didn't even meet until was it 2013 or 12? I can't remember if it was 12, 2012. And, the September of 12, when I did the, started researching for this book and somebody connected me with you, a good friend of mine from college said, Hey, you got to check out New Hope Uganda.

So I went on and looked so I did some dudes name. Reached out to him on the other end of that email was Keith. And he's like, yeah, come stay with me. I have a guest house, you know, I forget what you call it, but you know, right outside my house and my wife cuts hair, your haircut while you're here

Keith: [00:18:01] too. No problem.

Phil: [00:18:03] And the banda and I took him up on both things. And so I stayed there for three days and we became brothers, like we said, so what I want to hear from you, cause I have a couple of things that I'll talk about, you know, afterwards with Rick, but, how did that process, you know, writing a book with 15 authors.

You, as I said, you wrote a good chunk of it. You co-edited with me. Can you share your perspective kinda on the good, bad and ugly of the collaborative writing process. And, do you believe the collaboration is worth the struggle and the hard work that it takes to make it happen?

Keith: [00:18:34] Hmm, come on. Right?

Absolutely has to be. And I think when you talk about the good, I mean, the good was the fact that collaboration happened. And, and the book was put out there, you know, without of course people reading the book, aren't going to know how, how hard it is to actually find collaboration in the orphan care world.

And I was pretty surprised. I mean, even just in my little experience in Uganda, You find most organizations, you know, I mean, everybody's their own expert. You've got your own study, your own experience, your own, you know, ways of doing things. And at the end of the day, most it's easy to want to be heard and very hard to hear and to listen and to want to listen and to learn. And collaboration really forces that, you know, it forces you to have to critically evaluate to think beyond your experience, to think beyond your exposure and to be able to learn from others. And there is, there's a, there's a give and take in that, in that type of dialogue. So for the book, luckily I don't ever feel like it was that, that, that difficult, you know, the people that God brought into the book very much had hearts to want to see the Kingdom of God going forth and, and, good orphan care, right. To see it done well. And I think most of us had tasted enough of bad orphan care to know that, man, this is a need, we've got to get this done. This has to be done right. So I think that that definitely provides, a good fuel for working through some of the challenges and, and, getting things together and getting it put out there.

So, yeah, I think working through those challenges, but we had a good team and Phil Darke he's pretty good with people, you know, and, and hitting it on point. So you made it easy,

Phil: [00:20:23] Easy. I don't know about easy. There I can, I can close my eyes and remember some. Some moments that were, I would not define it easy. So you, you skipped the, two parts of that question at three. It was a three part question. You, you covered the good, what were some of the hard parts? What were some of the things that, that were struggles that, that, you know, when people are going through collaboration, there will be struggles. There will be road bumps, you know, speed bumps, whatever hurdles, whatever you want to call them. What were some of the ones that, that, you felt and, you know, we felt together, but I, you know, like hear from your perspective.

Keith: [00:20:57] Well, you're going to have challenges where you're coming from a perspective of, of study or academia.

You're going to have challenges where you're just coming from experience and without really study or, or, or digging deeper, you know, going broad. There's going to be limitations on those realities. And I think, you know, anywhere that a fear of man fear of how am I going to be perceived, you know, what's driving sort of how I'm coming at

some of these things. those are, those are challenges, right? Is, is the gospel really the center of what we're doing and how we're doing things. is, is, is what I'm bringing, more of a Western context. Does this translate internationally? Does it translate in an African context? Does this translate over here?

And just, you know, weeding through some of those challenges, difficulties, and, and trying to get it to where it's able to touch the roots. I think it's cause it's easy to, to stay up here theoretically, without really digging down, you know, how do we bring this down to the people who are actually caring for orphans?

You know, is this actually tangible? What we're calling people to? what does this look like without forsaking excellence? Right. how do we practically do it? So to me, those were the challenges that I walked through. Yeah,

Phil: [00:22:18] Absolutely. I remember some of the, we were in freezing cold West Virginia in December of 2013,

and we were editing it and I remember some conversations with people on that. Very thing that theory/practice gap that, you know, there were some, you know, minor worldview differences Not big ones, but just little ones, but when you're, when you're getting it into black and white, it's, it's tough. It's tough. Cause cause all our names are on these pages.

Right. And I mean, you remember the conversations when people were like, can you just say that we wrote that together and that it's not my chapter 'cause I feel like you've totally changed it. And I mean, there were, there were conversations like that and yeah. And, and it was, it was, it's hard because it is a balance, you know, but anyway, that's, that's the, the part of the, part of the fun.

Keith: [00:23:10] Yeah. But it's worth it, right?

Phil: [00:23:12] Absolutely, yeah.

Dr. Rick: [00:23:15] Keith, I wanna, I want to jump in. And first of all, you know, man, I, I really, one of the things that I was kind of eager to hear a little bit more about that hopefully we can, we can kind of get into is even the, even the name change of the Institute and the Institute for Gospel Transformation.

And, and I think it really kind of plays into to what you were just talking about that there's, that we do bring these different perspectives and bring different angles. But the thing that really unifies us in, in what we do is, is Christ. And it's, it's the, you know, it's the story of the gospel. And, and there is a, there's a, there's a unifying factor to why we do what we do, who we do what we do for, and, and those ends that, that caused us to stay in the us and cause us to, you know, to, to collaborate deeply. It also really informs like the things that we champion in the stuff that we're, you know that we're, that we're, we, we center our ministries on. And I know, you know, looking at chapter four in the book that you guys wrote is just seeing your passion, for the critical importance of family and how that, you know, how that comes from, you know, from a Christ centered worldview and realizing how important a mom and a dad are.

But, but also realizing that some of the things I've, you know, through the book and, and other things I've been able to see that you, you know, you talk about this idea, it's kind of something that you guys at New Hope have built your. you know, have, have built your ministry around is this idea of bringing the fatherhood of God to the fatherless and that, you know, kind of that, that premise.

So, I mean, if you would just kind of delve into a little bit of your thinking about the importance of family, and, and how the scriptures guide us to value family, but then also like how, how that idea then translates to how we, how do we really know and experience God. And, and, and, and the way that all of those forces kind of shape together.

Keith: [00:25:20] Boy, I wish we had three or four hours. Maybe a week, right? Cause you know, Rick, what you just brought, I mean, that's man, that's beautiful. Right? That's what we want to glory in, and bask in. And I think, no, because the reality is that orphan care is always birthed out of suffering. Right? It's like we talk about adoption.

Adoption is always birthed out of suffering, and just recognizing that. And so it's easy to look around at the reality of brokenness that is around us because there is brokenness. You know, there's no perfect place for orphans in a broken world where they aren't going to touch brokenness. Whether it's relatives or whether it's, being adopted into family or whether it's in an orphan care community or wherever you go.

I mean, that's a reality. And yet in the midst of that brokenness, God has spoken and, and it's not spoken in a, in a should I go left or should I go, right. You know, let's go left. It's spoken in that this is the way. This is, this is what I have designed. This is what I have given. Everything within us, longs for family.

I mean, even when you're dealing with broken, broken family, there's that ache, right? Because we were made to yearn for home. but not a permanent home here. We're not going to find a permanent home here. No matter what home you get put into, eventually death is going to find you, you know, we're all going to face fatherlessness.

We're all going to face that rending and the pain of, of living in this broken world. Because we were made for a permanent home. Where God is. Where we are with God. God is with his people. That's where home is. Right? And you can hear Jesus say, I will come and dwell with them and make our home with them. What an amazing statement. And so just as much as, as, as we were made for home, we get, we do, we get a taste of home in this world and it's a mirror. Right? And so in that it's like, Hey, these are aspects of what my eternal home is going to be like. Hmm. And you know what? There's really good news that my eternal home isn't gonna be like this, you know? And it's, it's, it's the same as we look into God's design for parents, because God has given father and mother just as he made Adam and Eve in his image and his likeness that this man and this woman imaging their creator. Unbelievable. And in that imaging of their creator, they are having children and family is created. This earthly family that's pointing to a greater heavenly reality. That is eternal, right. It's not going to end. That's where we're going. That there's something bigger than this. And so even as we look at, at, at, at, at this design of, of a man and a woman coming together, and then having children and having a home that is affected by sin and isn't permanent.

But in that, God powerfully reveals himself. And one of the things that I've I've loved has been studying through scripture and just watching how God unveils his character. And as you move through old Testament, a lot of us, you know, we, we just, resonate more with the King image of God in the old Testament.

Cause it is it's there. It's glorious. It's it's, it moves right through the storyline. But there's another really fascinating unveiling of God. And that's the God is father from the beginning. It's it's it's, he's not just, just, just, and the garden issuing orders and commands like the King. He is he, his father, you know, he's got, he, he's brought his children into the world and, and he's provided everything that they need and he's disciplining them and he's sending them out of the garden, you know?

Sorry. Oh, I better not preach.

Dr. Rick: [00:29:19] No it go, right. This is good.

This is good.

Keith: [00:29:23] But as we move through the storyline, you see this, this unveiling of God's fatherhood. And there it is over and over. But the thing, one of things that I love is the unveiling of God's fatherhood through his passion for the fatherless.

And it is just this unique theme. Unlike, to me, it's it's unlike any other theme that the father, the widow, and then the sojourner gets tucked right in there. And, and when David comes along with Psalm 68, it says a father to the fatherless is God in his Holy dwelling. He's not pulling that out of thin air.

He's pulling that right out of the Pentateuch, right out of his meditations on the law. He has seen the God has revealed himself as father to the fatherless. That comes through his meditation on the law and his delighting in God.

And he sees. And that God is father to the fatherless. And then, then he goes on to say, God settles the lonely and family. And that's what he does. He's constantly using family to, to draw in the fatherless and for the fatherless to know that God is their father. Right? And that's life changing. And that, that leads us right into the gospel as we get to celebrate the doctrine of justification that we are forgiven, right? We are set free from the curse of punishment of sin, and then we are adopted into his family. So, so the image of this really being reflected through redeemed men and women reflecting Christ and reflecting the father, God, drawing children into relationship with Christ where they get to know their father.

Right? So God, the father still being imaged through earthly fathers. And there's the mothers. There's something unique about fatherhood. And, you know, you, you always feel the crushing weight of Ephesians 6, right. Fathers train up your children and, or, but it's mothers too. It's not as mothers are put aside.

But, but there's something about God revealing his fatherhood through fathers and where you don't see fathers, where are you going to see God's fatherhood? Hmm. I love the passage in Ephesians. I think it's Ephesians 4. And Paul says, for this reason I bow my knees before the father, from whom every family in heaven on earth is named. And the Greek, you know, the original name it's fatherhood.

So for this reason, I bow my knees before the father. From whom every fatherhood on heaven and earth is named. So I think that God's design really from the beginning and right through redemption is that, that, that, fatherhood has revealed most powerfully through earthly fathers, their imaging him and through mothers who are also imaging Christ and, and revealing God.

And, and then drawing, hearts into that place. So is that,

Dr. Rick: [00:32:17] That is so good. And like, I had no idea that we were gonna, you know, transition from an interview to just having a church. Like that was, that was I, you know, I think, in the, you know, the very, like the very homespun way that I've communicated that over the years is this idea that, that in, in us stepping into ministry and the fatherless in, you know, in Jesus' name we're we have this opportunity to sort of put a taste on the lips of the world, kind of the sample of the Kingdom of God, right? Like we point to God's fatherhood and to, and to the, you know, to the redeeming and the restoration and the completion that, you know, that, that Christ achieves in his work and on man, like that was, that was so good. I, if you're, you know, if you're listening to us, go back and listen to that entire answer again, conserve that, chew own that. because, because that is, that is a beautiful articulation of why we do what we do. And so, Keith, thanks for, for that. I,

Phil: [00:33:26] also, it's also real quick, Rick, it's also a good sampling of why I, Loved that Keith was a part of the book and I, it's also the reason why our conversations typically go for an hour, hour and a half

every time we get on the phone, because we tend to go pretty deep, pretty quick and it's just awesome. And I learned so much from this man, so that's why I was so excited to yeah. I know, I know it doesn't seem like it since it's episode 152 and we're finally getting them on it, but I have been really excited to get this man on this show.

Dr. Rick: [00:34:00] I was just sitting here thinking, as you were answering going, man, we're going to make good on that three or four hours at some point. And, and really, and really dwell over. We have to do that. Well, you know, Keith, I think any of us have ever written anything and put it out there for other people, there, there is there's the counterbalance of, you stepped away from that experience and, and, you know, some days past some years past whatever, and you, you kind of look back at some of the things that you've written and go, I wish I had said X or I wish I could change Y. Like there's, there's always that whenever you put it into a fixed time and a fixed place, you'd love to be able to qualify some of that.

I'm curious, man, just knowing how thoughtful you are, what, what would be some things that you, you might point to from, from, *In Pursuit* that, that you would say today, man, if I had a chance to do this today, knowing what I know now and knowing where I am with the Lord now I would, I would change this or I would do this today?

Keith: [00:35:05] I know that early on one of the first things Phil and I talked about was wishing that we had put something in there more for the gatekeepers, you know, those who are in contact with the neediest of the needy children, those who are sort of the ones bringing in and dealing with fathers, children on the ground.

I think that would have been really, really helpful for sure. as I sort of thought about it since then, and looking back really your question, I think though I would have loved to have done a little bit more, coming out of chapter four, the family chapter. I think it was so much that it really is the crux right.

Of, of where the book is going to go and what the heart is that we're trying to bring. We're trying to say, we want to see. That family, that fathers and mothers, that God's designed in this, you know, that isn't just an optional thing. It's not just good to have fathers. I want to say, man, it's a must, like at least we have to strive for that.

Right. And there's a reason, And we want to see that grounded biblically. So I think, I would have loved to have done more, I think, on the foundational pieces, some, a little bit more in the, even the, the scriptural side, of some of the foundations for orphan ministry, that just walked through scripture.

Yeah. You know, that those can get big, but, but if I were to pick one, okay. So if you nail me down and say, well, what's the one, one thing. it would be this, and I don't even think, I haven't even said this to Phil. I honestly, I would, I would want a chapter on the central calling in place of the local church and, You know, I've worked with, I've worked, I've worked with organizations and NGO, all across the board from, from 1995 up to current.

So, I mean, I guess that's 25 years. Of working with at risk children and lots of different contexts. And the one common thing that I have found that's really missing is yeah, pretty consistently, you know, it is a passion for the centrality of the church. And, you know, and, and it's good that new hope Ugandas exist.

Right? It's good. That just start naming good organizations that are trying to do it right. That's wonderful. but those organizations aren't going to be here, you know, in 20 years, 50 years, a hundred years. The church will be here and we have to be passionate for Christ's design he's given. The local church to be his primary means of caring for the fatherless.

And so, you know, it can flow lot of that in part, you know, that, that, that New Hope Ugandas, or other organizations like our heart and passion as an organization. It has to be to, to, to strengthen the, the local church and wherever that is. Right. And to not exist outside of that, like we desperately need.

Need the church. And of course that's a big answer, right? I could spend a lot of time on that, but yeah, no

man, but that is so solid. And I, and I think, you know, I'm going to give away a trade secret here. Okay. Because one of this is one of those things in Lifeline that we say internally to each other a lot is we remind our team all the time that we want to be a bridesmaid to the bride of Christ. This idea that you know, that we in,

in the para church, it means just what it means. We're to come alongside where to support, but at the end of the day, Christ died for the church. Right. And, and, and I, I love the, the awareness and I'm telling you, I don't think that's another chapter. I think that's a book. I think there is, there is so much both theologically and practically, just to unpack about, about the ways that we have.

Yeah, we've been, you know, really, probably incredibly shortsighted, particularly in the, in the 20th and 21st century about accomplishing the function of, of things that we, that we know even biblically that should be done, but not, but not honoring the, like the way that God has called us to do it, which is through.

Which is through his church and it's through it's through that one thing that we have the promise in the scriptures that's that's going to endure. And then I, Oh, that's so good. Like I think so I'm telling you right now. That's your next book.

Phil: [00:39:28] So you're writing it with Rick. You're going to write that.

Look with Rick. It will be called orphanology and the Church.,

Dr. Rick: [00:39:36] right? Right.

Phil: [00:39:37] In pursuit of orphanology in the church.

Keith: [00:39:41] If we're going to make it feel more excellence ecclesiological or phonology. Yeah,

Phil: [00:39:47] way too big. That's too way too big of words.

Dr. Rick: [00:39:49] Let's just go ahead and vote. Let's just do the global centered orphanology in the church, right?

Like if it's gospel centered, it's got fly these days.

Phil: [00:39:58] So real quick Keith, bringing it back, bringing it back, which, you know, we gotta do.

So what, there's one thing that we, we have had people not criticize necessarily, but ask questions about what we actually meant. With you, you talked about it with the fatherhood in the, you know, the fathers and mothers and when there's no father there's something missing.

And some people misinterpret that to say, well, single moms, what they can't, they can't raise kids. Like is, are they not good enough? What's what's going on there. Right. And people, as you, as we all know, people will misinterpret what we say and what we write, especially cause we see it with social media all the time.

People put in black and white different things and yeah, 20,000 or 20 million. Yeah. 20 however many billion people we have, we have that many different interpretations. But I just want to give you a chance to, I know you we've talked about it and I know you've talked about it on some different things, but, but what would you say to somebody who said, well, I'm a single mom and what are you saying to me that my kids don't have a chance?

What, what's going on here?

Thanks again, Keith, for sharing your great wisdom with us in Part One of our interview with you folks, I know you're going to want to come back for Part Two next episode because Keith not only will answer the question that we left off with, but he will also share a lot more wisdom about different parts of the book, different lessons he's learned over the last decade or so of work with New Hope Uganda.

And also, as always, he will also be sharing his recommendations and, just books he's learned from, and people he's learned from over his time working with orphaned and vulnerable children. So, as always folks, we hope and pray that you will take everything you've learned today. Everything that you're reading and you're watching and you're listening to, and you'll use it to help you to understand how you can love orphaned and vulnerable children better and better each and every day.

Thanks a lot. Have a great week.