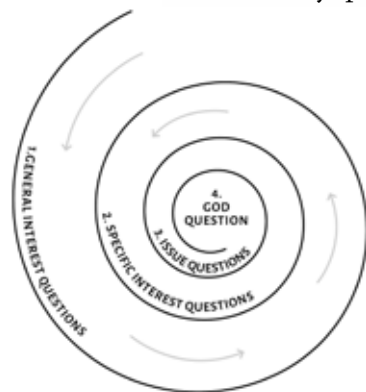


Dear Links Player,

**I probably don't need to tell you that I enjoy spending time with people on the golf course.** That should be a pretty obvious characteristic of someone involved with a golf ministry. Still, it invites an important question: How much of what we do is golf and how much is ministry?

Golf is certainly a valuable door-opener for us. At the end of August, I spent three beautiful days with a small group of players in Colorado. It was a fundraiser and retreat but also a time for these golfers to find out more about the work they were supporting. In fact, they were able to see it in action, as it were, as we ate together, prayed, and talked together, just as we played golf together. We hung out in one of life's comfortable corners and talked about family and faith and what counts for the really long haul, right into eternity.

Toward the end of September, I won't be playing but I'll be on site at one of the biggest events we're involved in all year. It's the Orange County Charity Classic, developed by region director Dereck Wong in Southern California. This is a more like a typical golf fundraiser, with scrambles foursomes and tee prizes and a silent auction. Last year, the event raised more than \$100,000 for the Orange County Rescue Mission and Links Players. But what happens on that day is that a lot of people are introduced to what we do at golf courses in the area—namely, planting and sustaining Fellowships where people play the game.



**But golf is only the beginning.** It is important for our staff and all our friends who call themselves Links Players to remember that we aren't only about starting conversations; we're about changing them. Becky Pippert, a longstanding voice in relationship evangelism, offers a diagram of concentric circles.

When we are focused on ministry as we should be—especially when what we want to do is get a person talking about what really matters and share with them the work of Christ in bearing our sins for our salvation—we'll take the time to really get to know people. It's not a magic formula and some people will start out better at it than others, but we can all learn to ask compelling questions, listen well, offer care, and be sure that God's love through his Son is expressed.

This is our mission. It's the mission you support when you give to Links Players and it can be the mission you engage in where you play golf. We hope you do!

*Jeff Hopper*  
Jeff Hopper, COO

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