

'I Am Second' Evangelistic Campaign Touches Globe

✘ A Texas Christian businessman has a simple plan for evangelizing his community: Lift Jesus up and let Him do the rest.

In December, Norm Miller, CEO of Interstate Batteries, launched I Am Second, a three-year Dallas-area ad campaign that features both prominent and lesser-known Christians proclaiming that Christ is first in their lives. Its companion Web site features video testimonies from Christians ranging from actor Stephen Baldwin to former Korn guitarist Brian "Head" Welch to virtually unknown Dallas-area residents telling of how God changed their lives after they battled eating disorders, divorce, addiction or abuse.

In its first two months, the campaign generated 280 million impressions from billboards, print ads and TV commercials reaching the Dallas-Forth Worth community. Since it launched in December, has logged 750,000 unique visitors from every state and 188 nations.

"The mandate was lift up Christ and He'll draw all men to himself, so all we've got to do is be concerned with the lifting," said Miller, who is investing \$1 million a year in the campaign, which he formed in partnership with Dallas-based mission organization e3 Partners. Today he was given the first Dream Builder of the Year award from Dream Builders men's ministry for his work founding I Am Second.

The site has drawn visitors from as far as China, and Welch's testimony has been posted on YouTube and subtitled in Russian and Italian. In recent months, ministry and Christian business leaders in Atlanta; New York City; Orlando, Fla.; Kansas City, Mo.; Nashville, Tenn.; and Tucson, Ariz., have expressed

interest in taking the campaign to their cities. Similar requests have come from as far as Ireland, New Zealand and India.

“My heart was my Jerusalem, and I thought that this was possible, these other cities,” Miller said. “But my thought was, *There’s plenty of people like me in these cities, and if God wants to do it, He’ll raise them up.* There’s not a lack of money. There may be a lack of giving the money, but there’s not a lack of people having the money.”

Miller said the idea for I Am Second came to him in early 2008 when he was approaching his 70th birthday and began contemplating his legacy. “I started thinking about Dallas-Fort Worth and their need for a real encounter with the truth of Christ,” Miller said. “I thought, *Does that really need to be done?* And I agreed that it did.”

Campaign organizers said I Am Second can help Christians share their faith with unsaved co-workers or neighbors.

“It says in Ephesians that the purpose of the church, of the evangelists, and the teachers, and the preachers is for the equipping of the body to do the work of the ministry,” said e3 Partners Vice President Nathan Sheets, who helped developed the I Am Second campaign. “And so we view this as a way to be able to strategically come in and help the church executive what’s the mandate of the church, to be the church. It’s been done so well, it emboldens Christians to want to be proud of it and to share it.”

Sheets said the campaign was meant to make Jesus famous and embolden people to live for Christ. But he believes it also can help change negative perceptions about Christianity.

“I want to get away form the religious conversation,” Sheets said. “We don’t live authentic, transparent Christian lives, and people feel like we’ve got it all figured out and we don’t ever do anything wrong, then we end up with people in media

who are popular in Christendom that are no different than anybody else. We wind up with Christian marriages with a higher divorce rate than secular society. That perceptually makes people go, 'This is all fake.' Versus just saying: 'I still struggle in my life ... but luckily Christ died for my sins and I'm forgiven and He can help change my heart and my life, so let's just do this thing together.'"

The I Am Second Web site includes links to small groups that meet in Dallas-area churches, businesses and homes. Miller said churches tell him the campaign's impact has been "tremendous."

"This is the part that takes faith," Miller said. "Normally ... I would want to know how many people you're going to have on the street, how many people you're going to talk to, how many people have come to Christ. I want to know the impact of the money, to be a good steward. But in this case Christ said, 'Look, lift Me up, and I'll draw all men to Myself.' And I got a freedom out of that."

"I'm totally shocked at what's happened outside of Dallas-Fort Worth," Miller added. "But I'm content with what's happened inside Dallas-Forth Worth because we're only six months into a 36-month plan. I really believe God's going to do a lot more as time goes on because most efforts aren't that long. It's almost a dripping faucet. I gotta see what that site is, after a year and a half of seeing [the ads]. What is that? You might forget it after 90 days, but if you see something and you don't know what it is and you wonder then a year later you see it again, eventually you're going to say, 'I'm going to find out what that is.' And that's what we're hoping. That's our prayer."