

Outcomes

EMPOWERING MINISTRIES

SUMMER 2012

THE MAGAZINE OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE

Kingdom Partnerships

Tackling the Summit of Partnerships

Compassion International's
Scott Todd considers
the climb

ONE IN CHRIST

The heart of Jesus'
prayer for us

EMPOWERING COLLABORATION

Why technology
is essential
to partnerships

EQUIPPING LEADERS

An interview with
EQUIP's John Hull





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Outcomes

Summer 2012

Vol. 36, NO. 2

Kingdom Partnerships



12 TACKLING THE SUMMIT OF PARTNERSHIPS

Arduous Climb — Spectacular View!
By Scott Todd

BIBLICALLY SPEAKING

16 ONE IN CHRIST

By John G. Fix | The heart of Jesus' prayer for us

WHAT WORKS: OLIVE TECHNOLOGY

18 EMPOWERING COLLABORATION

Why technology is essential to partnerships
By Joseph Vijayam

24 LESSONS FROM CAPE TOWN

Seven principles for successful collaboration
By Doug Wicks

30 DOWN WITH TEAMWORK!

Creating a Christ-centered mastermind
By Doug Mazza

34 PROJECT 1.27

Building alliances to transform children's lives
By Rick Valore

34 THE CRITICAL SHIFT

Ministry collaboration is more vital than ever
By James Lewis

DEPARTMENTS

6 Talking Leadership

Equipping Leaders

Interview by Tami Heim | EQUIP's John Hull discusses building networks to transform lives worldwide.

8 First Person

Teamwork Required

By Matt Storer | Joining forces to rescue at-risk kids

10 NewNow&Next

Fighting Disease, Not Death

Interview by W. Scott Brown | Lorie and Mark Vincent on finding a way through lifelong struggle

39 Reflections

A Lifelong Journey

By Phill Butler | Looking back to see God's hand along the way

40 Empowering People

It's All About Relationships

By Sherry Surratt | Insights for building ministry engagement

42 Raising the Bar

Taking a Stand

By Lisa Thompson | The Faith Alliance against Slavery and Trafficking

44 Seeds of Greatness

Equipping the Worldwide Church

By Chris Wright | The vision of the Langham Partnership

46 Sources & Resources

Book Discussion

The Advantage

Patrick Lencioni on the priority of organizational health

54 Thought Leader

A Leader's List

By Wesley K. Willmer | 11 useful questions to assess your Christian leadership

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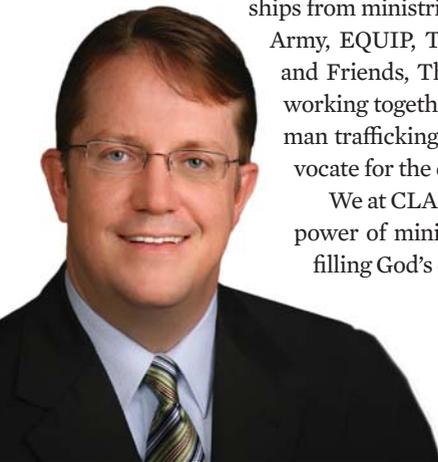
Better Together

IN OCTOBER 2012, I had the privilege of serving as managing editor of the commemorative newspaper for the Third Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization in Cape Town, South Africa. I will never forget the inspiring spirit of Christian unity and partnership that marked this gathering of 4,200 Christian leaders from 198 nations.

That same spirit of Christian unity and partnership is at the heart of Christian Leadership Alliance (CLA). We witnessed that powerfully at our recent national conference in Orlando, Fla., where leaders from diverse ministries nationwide came together to share insights, ideas and best practices. That spirit of partnership will be on display again at our upcoming Fall Academy in Denver (ChristianLeadershipAlliance.org/Academy). You see, here at CLA we believe deeply in collaboration.

This edition of *Outcomes* explores the biblical basis for kingdom partnership, and shares encouraging examples of how Christian unity strengthens our impact on a world desperate for Christ's love. You will see perspectives on kingdom partnerships from ministries including Compassion International, The Salvation Army, EQUIP, The Langham Partnership, MOPS International, Joni and Friends, The Navigators, VisionTrust, and more. We share how working together has helped to more effectively fight slavery and human trafficking, rescue orphans, build leaders, empower women, advocate for the disabled, and much more.

We at CLA feel privileged to be in a front-row seat, witnessing the power of ministry collaboration and partnership. As ministries fulfilling God's call, we truly are better together.



W. Scott Brown

EDITOR IN CHIEF

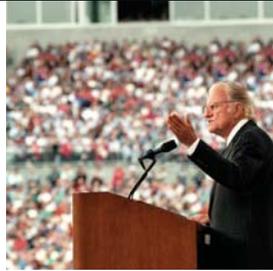
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The Blessed Alliance

Add women, change everything.

By Carolyn Custis James
ChristianLeadershipAlliance.org/blessedalliance



Principles of Effective Collaboration

Christian unity and the Billy Graham crusades.

By Sterling Huston
ChristianLeadershipAlliance.org/effectivecollaboration



Should Your Non-profit Partner?

Key questions to ask before deciding to collaborate.

By Outi Flynn
ChristianLeadershipAlliance.org/partner?



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8 CONTENT THEMES Resource Development • Financial Management • Executive Leadership • Board Governance • People Management and Care • Marketing and Communications • Internet and Technology • Legal and Tax

Outcomes

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The purpose of *Outcomes* is to fulfill Christian Leadership Alliance's mission to exhort, equip and empower Christian leaders to think biblically and lead effectively as faithful stewards in the service of Jesus Christ. *Outcomes* equips Christian leaders for excellence in governance, leadership, management and resource development.

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Equipping Leaders

EQUIP's John Hull discusses building networks to transform lives worldwide.

CLA PRESIDENT AND CEO Tami Heim recently interviewed John Hull, president and CEO of EQUIP, on this global initiative to train leaders and promote worldwide collaboration.

EQUIP is a nonprofit organization that develops effective international Christian leaders. Founded by Dr. John C. Maxwell in 1996, today, EQUIP is the world's largest and most comprehensive grassroots leadership/personal growth and development organization. Active in more than 160 nations, EQUIP is training millions of leaders with resources developed by leadership authority and EQUIP founder Maxwell. There is at least one EQUIP conference being conducted every day somewhere around the world.

Over the years, John Hull has been a successful pastor, run a capital funds consulting company and spoken to thousands annually in both the faith-based and corporate worlds. In addition, he is the voice of "Leadership Moment" (a daily radio commentary based on Maxwell's content) which can be heard on more than 1,500 stations and outlets. Hull holds degrees from the University of Georgia, Liberty University, and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

Maxwell said, "John Hull is a remarkably gifted man who is making a difference in countless lives worldwide. Most of all, I appreciate his heart for people. I've always been proud to have him represent me, so much so that if you want a picture of how I would personally lead, I'd tell you to look at him!"

What was the early vision for EQUIP; how did it get started?

EQUIP really began with two tensions in John Maxwell's life, probably beginning in 1980 up until the birth of EQUIP in 1996. The first tension was that John was writing books in the 1980s and early 1990s which were being printed and distributed worldwide. That resulted in an increasing number of requests for John to conduct leadership conferences around the globe.

The requests became so many in the early to mid-'90s that it became humanly impossible for him to pastor, pursue a busy conference schedule in North America, and do that kind of speaking around the world. That was the first tension.

The second tension is more personal, in that as a pastor, John traveled overseas to speak for evangelistic gatherings, for pastors' conferences, or leadership conferences. He would come away from those conferences grateful for the passion of those leaders and their desire to reach people with the Gospel. He admired their success. But he also came away frustrated that they were not being challenged to develop their leadership skills. These were leaders with great potential who lacked opportunity to develop their skills.

Out of those two tensions, EQUIP was born — an organization birthed out of demand, but also out of burden.

Not many ministries start globally. How did that happen?

In those early years, John led EQUIP in contextualizing this content for international audiences. The way to do that was simple — build on the fact that all the leadership principles being taught had an authentic biblical foundation. Our first curriculum was really *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, a biblical formation.

It was well-received because we understood that using the Bible as our basis made it cross-cultural, universal, and transferable. It's hard to argue with: There was a man named Moses, and here's how he led; there was a woman named Esther, and here's how she led; there was a king named David, and here's how he led; or a king named Saul, and here's how he did not lead well; or a man named Samson, and here's how he failed to lead well. The great thing is that with John Maxwell's biblical worldview, even in crossover material, you could always go back and find a biblical story, a biblical characteristic, a biblical example that would match what he was saying.

What about funding EQUIP?

We started with the idea that people buy into the leader before they'll buy into the vision. We already had a lot of people across the U.S. and Canada who bought into John Maxwell and had been blessed by his materials. They felt a tremendous loyalty and obligation to empower us to help international leaders the same way we had helped them.

Our funding model was designed to appeal to high-capacity donors. We've never focused on the \$25-a-month donor. Instead we focus on a smaller number of donors giving larger amounts of money. We believe that this work resonates with people leading organizations that have benefited from good leadership. They think, "I want international leaders to experience what's happened in my life."

This has helped us build a solid foundation. Also, our board from early on funded the mission. Historically our board covers all of our fundraising costs, plus all of our salaries and administrative costs, the overhead of running EQUIP, so that when someone gives a large or small gift to EQUIP, it goes directly to train leaders.

How does partnering fit into EQUIP's model?

In forming EQUIP, we believed that the most effective and efficient way to fulfill the Great Commission was to raise up, train, and resource Christian leaders who will work within churches, nonprofits, charitable organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

We believe in church planting. We're not a church-planting organization, but we believe that church planters ought to be good leaders. We don't do humanitarian work, but if humanitarian organizations, charitable organizations, relief organizations have good leadership in place, then everything is better. Resources go further. Morale is higher. Mission and vision are clearer.

We are not an evangelistic organization. But we believe that if we can train the leaders of evangelistic organizations worldwide, then we can make them better. Everything rises and falls on leadership.

We're in 164 countries as of yesterday. When we recently held our Global 2020 event, we were in 157 nations. We had a pageant of 157 national flags. Each flag represented a story of where the Christian leadership in that country was and where it is today. We want to get to all the nations of the world. There are 192 nations in the United Nations, so we're getting very close.

What transferable principles have you learned about partnering?

We have in-depth partnerships with Compassion International in Kenya, in Uganda, and in Haiti. EQUIP is a content provider, and we have a proven process. We believe that leaders are built daily, not just in one day. Then we have organizations around the world like Compassion, World Vision, and Campus Crusade for Christ, or a prominent local church. They have the network. They have constituencies. They have streams of influence within their nation, cultures, or language groups.

EQUIP is looking for a network, for distribution streams and audiences, and our partners are looking for leadership development process and materials. That's where the marriage comes together. We are a content provider and they are the network provider. That's the partnership.

Each partnership offers unique challenges. Sometimes we must compromise. For instance, in Haiti during the past year, they haven't needed process. They simply needed crisis leadership training. So we partner with Compassion to provide that as a standalone. Partnership empowers, but I think partnership also helps you be patient. Partnerships require good listening skills to learn what it is your partner needs.

Can you share about the journey of building EQUIP?

In 2003, we launched the Million Leaders Mandate. We were, at that time, in seven countries. We launched in Asia in January 2003, with multiple sites in Indonesia, Philippines, and India. Our approach is to go every six months for a three-year period with trainers and new curricula. We teach the curricula, then we resource those leaders so they can take that training back to their circles of influence. They can make multiple copies of the notebooks we provide. That has created tremendous multiplication.

Our content is now in 65 different languages and dialects. We launched in Africa in 2004. We launched in Europe and the Middle East in 2005. In the midst of that we came back to Asia, launching in China. And then in 2006 we launched in Europe, and in 2007, Latin America.

It was challenging, but God allowed us to do it. And we ended up training 1 million leaders over a period of about 4 1/2 years — 2 1/2 years ahead of our schedule. Through

that period of time, we had leaders multiplying themselves, going back to their circles of influence and making EQUIP even better in their own countries, cultures, and languages.

When we hit the financial crisis of 2008, we made an intentional decision to decentralize and to empower the international leaders, acting more as their coaches. The outcome was exponential growth.

In 2007, EQUIP was conducting leadership conferences around the world in 41 sites, twice a year, for 82 conferences a year. Fast forward to 2011, when we held 468 conferences in a total of 234 sites. And our budget was about 40 percent more in 2007 than it was in 2011!

Partnership empowers,
but I think partnership
also helps you be patient.

What significance does Global 2020 have for EQUIP?

In September 2010, I was in Warsaw, Poland. We had been asked to do a crisis leadership conference there. You'll recall that the Polish government lost its president Lech Kaczynski and other senior government leaders in a tragic plane crash. Some of the Christian businesspeople we know there asked us to come do a day on how to lead in crisis. We went, and afterwards those of us who were there reflected on it and discussed how great it would be if we could bring all of EQUIP's family together under one roof. Upon our return, I talked with John about it. He loved the idea, and as usual made it better. He encouraged us to hold five such gatherings, every other year, until the year 2020. He said he thought it would be just what we needed to give us the momentum for a decade of even greater things. So we started planning that in late 2010, and then our first Global 2020 gathering came together in February 2012.

By 2010, EQUIP had trained approximately 5 million leaders worldwide, but John had challenged us, asking, "So what? What are these leaders intentionally doing with this that will bring about the changes in their countries?" That helped narrow our focus onto transformation. What would happen if a nation's leaders were to tap into their major spheres of influence?

EQUIP is a training organization. We'll always train leaders. But we also wanted from the very beginning to inspire our leaders to bring transformation to their nations. A number of years ago Loren Cunningham of Youth With a Mission (YWAM) and Bill Bright (Campus Crusade) developed the concept of seven spheres of influence — the church, the family, education, government, media, the arts, and the business/financial worlds. At Global 2020, we asked leaders from 129 countries who were there to fill out forms regarding where they felt they had influence in these seven spheres.

We will always train, but we're now training with even clearer focus on what we can do to help encourage transformation, to help leaders create tangible change in their nations. And when we talk about transforming nations, it is the transformation of leaders that comes first. In any great movement, transformation begins in the heart of the leader before it is seen in the nation. ●



Teamwork Required

Joining forces to rescue at-risk kids.

RECENTLY, I TRAVELED TO INDIA to research and develop a special new partnership with a network of pastors who were visiting orphans in their distress (James 1:27). Nearly 3,000 children in this area are enslaved, forced to work and live in illegal rock quarries. By God's grace, 330 of these children were recently freed. Now the pastors are faced with the task of caring for the children.

One of the children, named Priscilla, told me that she arrived at the quarry when she was 11 and had lived there in a shelter made entirely from slate rock for the past seven years. A difficult road stretches out before her as she overcomes the tragic physical abuse she suffered there. And just as challenging, local pastors must figure out how to help heal the emotional and physical scars of children like Priscilla, balanced with their full-time work pastoring local churches.

While Priscilla's story may shock you, her experience is sadly all too common today on the global mission field. Numbering close to one billion, such children are neglected or abandoned, forced into slavery, or worse yet, sold to human predators. Ministering to these children requires the comprehensive knowledge to address a broad range of developmental and community issues. The solutions must be smart, sustainable and scalable. They must solve problems related to health and nutrition, education, spiritual mentorship, and micro-enterprise.

While this is the best example of how kingdom partnerships should function, it is not often realized.

The copious number of children, and the sheer complexity of ministering to the oppressed, demands that people form kingdom partnerships. These partnerships are both critical and difficult. If you ask a pastor to give you a biblical reason to work together, the pastor would most likely quote Paul in 1 Corinthians, where Paul used the human body as a metaphor for the body of Christ. "Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body — whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many." (1 Cor. 12:12-14)

While this is the best example of how kingdom partnerships should function, it is not often realized.

Taking Paul's metaphor further, it can be difficult for the eye to stay focused on the nail held by the left hand while the right hand swings down the hammer. Many times on the mission field, the eye looks for a better place to put the nail while the left hand reaches for a better nail and the right hand opts to use a screw gun. In the beginning, each partner works through challenges, agreeing on style, approach, and beliefs. But over time, the partnership becomes disjointed as each organization grows tired of agreeing and chooses to pursue its individual set of ideals.

In my experience, organizations that have abandoned kingdom partnering are typically choosing to build up their kingdom instead of God's. By contrast, great kingdom partnerships start by giving up control and power and then committing to seek first the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33). When this is the posture of each partnering organization, I have witnessed tremendous results.

I can't imagine tackling complex situations like Priscilla's on my own. Kingdom partnerships are critical to helping these children. It takes a kingdom partnership to ensure that, by God's grace, these children's physical, educational, and spiritual needs are met — equipping them to live the life that God planned for them. Local pastors provide spiritual mentoring. Caregivers feed and guide the children. Government teachers educate them. At the same time, a family at a church in the U.S. can sponsor the children to provide resources needed to operate the local program. International health professionals can provide medical care through short-term medical teams, and university students can provide sustainable solutions, like safe drinking water. Teamwork is required.

Over the last eight years, I've flown almost a million air miles to developing nations in an all-out effort to transform several thousand of the world's neediest children. There are millions more waiting for the love of Jesus. We must work together to use our collective talents and resources to maximize his kingdom results! ●

MATTHEW D. STORER became president of VisionTrust International, Inc. in April 2004 after a 14-year career in the technology industry, the last eight with Microsoft. VisionTrust International currently operates in 15 countries and helps more than 12,000 children around the world (VisionTrust.org). Storer also serves as Chairman of the Board for the Christian Alliance for Orphans, Chairman of the Board for Food for Orphans, and as a trustee for Housing Services Alliance.





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Fighting Disease, Not Death

Finding a way through lifelong struggle

IN 2011, Lorie Vincent and her husband, CLA board member Mark L. Vincent wrote *Fighting Disease, Not Death: Finding a way through lifelong struggle* (Design Group International), which shares their faith-inspiring journey through 12 years and 16 occurrences of a rare and aggressive form of cancer for Lorie. This book chronicles their approach to living and thriving during lifelong suffering. It is a story of faith, hope, reality, and courage. Outcomes Editor-in-Chief W. Scott Brown interviewed them on life lessons from their journey.

What was your goal in writing this faith-inspiring book?

Because this cancer battle has lasted so long, the medical community and many family members and friends persisted over several years before we were persuaded to write down our approach to dealing with long-term, debilitating, physical struggle. We were so deep into making each day work, holding our family together, and staying focused on excellence in our work that covered medical bills, that there wasn't any leftover space or energy for much else. We also resisted, not sure we had anything unique to say. Those pressing us to write, however, helped us understand that it was the interplay of our experience, our Christian faith and our approach to the struggle that was unique and should be put in writing for the benefit of others.

How has this journey impacted your view on life? On God? On leadership?

We are confident that the way God weaves the fabric of our individual lives into the tapestry of history is beyond our ability to completely understand in any given moment, but that we can get glimpses of its beauty. We think we are best

equipped to see and participate in a piece of this grand mystery when we have nothing left of ourselves to rely on, and sometimes it takes suffering to arrive at that place. We would not go back to a life without cancer if we couldn't take that insight with us. Coming to this place of participating with God affects everything about everything. It strips us of unholy ambition, makes so many priorities look shallow and silly, and teaches us to count each moment, every opportunity to participate in God's mission as leader or follower, and each human interaction as precious stitches in this masterpiece.

What would you say to leaders walking through similar journeys?

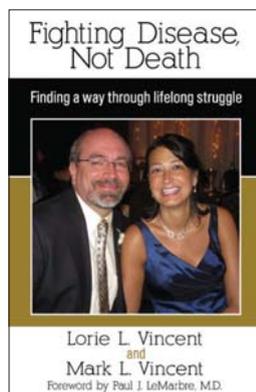
Don't panic. Breathe deeply. Count your blessings, because they are still there. Prepare for the long haul. Make sure you are at peace with family and friends, because they are the real wealth of one's life — far more than health insurance and savings accounts. Lay your concerns before God, but don't waste time being angry and asking why. A phrase we repeat often is that we all are given platforms on which to build a life of praise to God. This praise is often seen by the limiting factors we overcome, far more than the successes we are handed without effort.

To what do you attribute the faith, courage, and optimism you both exhibit?

We are fortunate to have parents and grandparents who overcame the struggles and sufferings of their lives, told us their stories, and challenged us to be such people. These flesh-and-blood examples helped us look past the lie that we have a right to have everything we want and should never have to suffer, and to keep bearing up under whatever happens. We are only doing what so many have done before us and are doing right now — in far worse scenarios than we have faced, and with far more devastating results.

Order a copy of this book at (designgroupinternationalstore.com/Store)

INTERVIEW WITH LORIE AND MARK VINCENT



Milestones

DIED CHUCK GOLSON Founder of Prison Fellowship, BreakPoint and the Chuck Colson Center for Christian Worldview, April 21. He was 80.

DIED MICHAEL O'REAR, president and CEO of Global Mapping International and Lausanne Movement technology advisor, Jan. 14 in Colorado Springs, Colo. He was 57.

DIED EVELYN C. CHRISTENSON, author and speaker who co-founded the National Prayer Committee, Nov. 1. She was 89.

APPOINTED RANDY VAUGHT, as president and CEO of Christian Aid Mission in February. Vaught, who founded and pastored the Capital Baptist Church of Frankfort, Ky., since 1980, has served on the board of directors of Christian Aid faithfully for more than 16 years.

HEADLINES:

CLA Names Ray Lyne, Jerry White CLA Consuls

At the 2012 CLA National Conference in Orlando, Fla., April 10-12, Ray Lyne and Jerry White were named lifetime CLA Consuls.

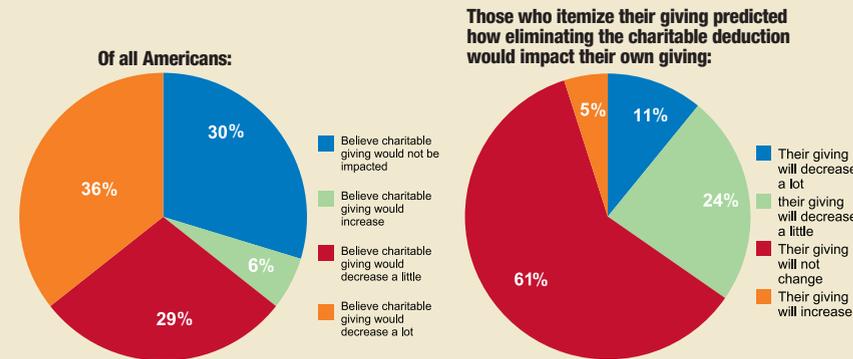
Being named Consul by the CLA president and CEO is CLA's highest honor. It recognizes distinguished and exemplary service to the field of Christian nonprofit leadership, including substantial assistance to the work of CLA. A CLA Consul represents the ideals of Christian nonprofit leadership in their own personal character and work.

Ray Lyne, president and chairman of Lifestyle Giving Inc. based in Irvine, Calif., has spent 45 years in the design of the organization's personal estate and giving plans. Lyne was a part of the Christian Stewardship Association (CSA) from its inception, including two terms of service on its board. He was a member of the CSA board that decided to join with the Christian Management Association to create CLA. Ray continues to teach for CLA. In fact, he helped to start the original CSA event that has today become the CLA Christian Nonprofit Leadership Academy offered each fall.

SCORECARD

THE FATE OF CHARITABLE DEDUCTION

In this election year, what to do about our budget deficit has become an even hotter topic. One item to keep an eye on is the possibility of eliminating deductions for charitable gifts. The possibility of itemization has long been considered a major draw for donors, so such a move would be of significant impact to nonprofits, churches, and other organizations that rely on charitable giving. Grey Matter Research surveyed a demographically representative sample of American adults about what they feel would happen if charitable gifts were no longer tax-deductible. The results demonstrated that while most people feel such a move would negatively impact overall giving, people also feel their own personal giving would not be affected.



For more information on this study, go to www.greymatterresearch.com/index_files/Deductions.htm

Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.

JOHN F. KENNEDY



The latest ministry news and trends

CLA Board Chairman John Reynolds said: “Ray Lyne, a teacher, a respected Christian leader, and a stalwart of CLA who has invested his life in building the resources that help ministries meet kingdom goals, truly epitomizes the spirit of this award. It is an honor for CLA to name him as a lifetime Consul.”

Dr. Jerry White is president emeritus and chairman emeritus of the U.S. board of directors of The Navigators. He has served on the CLA/Christian Management Association board of directors for more than 11 years, including six as board chairman. As chairman, White guided CLA with vision and spiritual wisdom through key transitions, including the alliance between CMA and CSA to create CLA, and later CLA’s alliance with Azusa Pacific University. White remains an active and involved member of the CLA board of directors today, as well as serving as chairman of CLA’s new advisory council.

Reynolds said: “It is an honor to recognize a Christian statesman and visionary leader such as Jerry White as a lifetime CLA Consul. We as an organization have been, and continue to be, blessed by his dedicated leadership and service.”

Look for interviews with Lyne and White in a future edition of Outcomes.

Survey Shows Giving, Budgets Up

The fourth annual State of the Plate survey, a collaborative research project sponsored by MAXIMUM Generosity; *Christianity Today*, the publisher of *Church Finance Today* and *Leadership Journal*; and ECFA, offers a snapshot of the fiscal trends that impacted churches and charitable organizations in 2011.

The report, which surveyed more than 1,360 congregations, revealed that 51 percent of churches saw giving increase in 2011, up from 43 percent in 2010 and 36 percent in 2009. Of the churches that saw giving increases, 50 percent attributed it to higher attendance and 42 percent said it was a result of financial/generosity teaching initiatives.

The increased giving also led to higher church budgets. Churches indicated they were allocating the extra funds toward staff pay raises (40.3 percent), missions (36.5 percent), church buildings (35.3 percent), and benevolence (31.1 percent).

“As giving has improved for many churches nationwide, this survey shows many have made budget decisions that directly care for people,” said Matt Branaugh, director of editorial for Christianity Today’s Church Management Team,

a survey sponsor. “Many churches increased their spending for missions and benevolence — two ways churches work to meet the needs of people locally and globally. And pay raises for staff and pastors were a move to care for their own, after many churches were forced to freeze or cut salaries during the recession.”

For more info, go to www.stateoftheplate.info/media2012.htm.

Prison Fellowship’s Chuck Colson Dies

Chuck Colson, respected evangelical leader and former Nixon aide, died in April, 2012. He was 80 years old. Colson will perhaps best be remembered for his work with Prison Fellowship, which he founded after giving his life to Christ during a 7-month prison term for his role in Watergate. He also served as an influential voice both within evangelicalism, between Catholics and Evangelicals, and to the broader culture. Colson wrote for *Outcomes* magazine, and CLA president/CEO Tami Heim said: “We certainly miss Chuck Colson. Prison Fellowship’s immense impact for the Kingdom of Christ is an ongoing testament to his visionary leadership.”



TACKLING the Summit of PARTNERS



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ARDUOUS CLIMB – SPECTACULAR VIEW!

By Scott Todd

HIPS

I LIVE IN COLORADO surrounded by 52 mountains that pierce the sky above 14,000 feet. We all love to look at those majestic peaks, but climbing them is serious business. Ministry partnerships are mountain peaks — beautiful to look at from a distance but arduous to climb. Full of dangers to the uninformed, and majestic and exhilarating when you reach the top.

Unfortunately, ministry leaders can be guilty of attempting to summit partnership peaks with good intentions, but without the climbing gear they need to succeed. Too often, partnerships start their climb ill-equipped and are forced to turn back, or worse, they suffer falls, injuries, and needless disappointment.

Despite the high cost and probability of failure, Christian churches and organizations are increasingly entering into ministry partnerships. Some pursue the added complexity of cross-cultural partnership, as thousands of churches send groups abroad to form relationships with local indigenous churches for mutually supported work.

These globe-spanning relationships begin with broad smiles and warm hugs. People genuinely call each other “brother” or “sister” and feel the amazing and mysterious truth of being one in Christ with people of other cultures. These very real and beautiful spiritual connections offer a critical foundation for partnership, but they are insufficient to guide mutually pursued work over the long run.

REALISM OVER PESSIMISM

At this point you might think I am anti-partnership, but don’t mistake my realism for pessimism. The truth is, I’m committed to thriving ministry partnerships. In fact, I’ve given my life to it. I serve as chairman of the board for the Accord Network (www.accordnetwork.org), which is a “catalyst for building collaboration and Christ-centered unity” among more than 70 Christian relief and development organizations. I co-edited a book, *Shared Strength*, on excellence in cross-cultural Christian partnership. I serve as chairman of the board for 58: (www.live58.org), a “global alliance of Christians, churches, and poverty-fighting organizations working together to end extreme poverty by living the true fast of Isaiah 58.” And in my work for Compassion International, I serve as senior vice president of international partner development.

It’s precisely because I have a passion for partnerships that I am passionate about seeing them implemented well. Partnership is serious business. I hurt when I see the mistrust, disappointment, conflict, and poor performance that result from failed partnerships. One who loves mountaineering doesn’t encourage everyone to climb Mount Everest. So consider this:

If your organization can accomplish a mission task on its own — then tackle it on your own.

Don’t enter into the hard, slow, and sometimes messy climb of partnership unless you must. But if your mission is bigger than your organization, then you don’t have an option. When God calls us into missions bigger than our own organizational selves, then we need to discover new ways of working together. If that’s where your church is, if that’s the future for your organization, then approach partnership with a commitment for excellence and these partnership requirements.

1. DEFINE YOUR RELATIONSHIP

Not all forms of working together are partnerships. When organizations are considering collaborative work, their first steps are to define the purpose of their partnership to help align expectations. At Compassion International, for instance, our partnership philosophy calls for clarity of purpose: “Partnership is different from mere community or fellowship. It is not simply having tea together. It is having tea in order to work together on something that you both care about and can’t do alone.” The emphasis here is not solely the relationship, but also the goals driving you to collaborate. (See the box on page 15.)

2. LISTEN STRATEGICALLY

Compassion International works with more than 5,500 church partners in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. To better understand how these churches felt about working with Compassion, we held workshops and focus groups around the globe. We asked them to draw pictures representing their experience. One African pastor drew a picture of Compassion as an elephant dancing with his church — a mouse.

When one partner is a \$590 million global organization and the other is a local church with sporadic electricity and a latrine, it creates true partnership challenges. The elephant certainly doesn’t want to stomp on his dance partner. And when there are 5,500 partners on the floor, dancing is a delicate business!

Listening strategically isn’t easy to do, especially when some of the responses are tough to hear. But you can teach an old elephant new tricks. Compassion developed a Partnership Accountability and Collaboration Tool (PACT). Within it, more than 5,500 churches evaluate Compassion. It’s a 360-degree assessment that came from asking, listening, and then responding. The PACT is now one of several strategies, tools, and practices that are built into Compassion’s partnership model designed to secure intentional, regular, and strategic listening.

3. MUTUAL COMMITMENT TO THE MISSION

Compassion President and CEO Dr. Wess Stafford often refers to three models of partnership, and how different each one feels. He cites the cowboy and the horse, the farmer and the cow, and two oxen plowing together. No one wants to be reined and controlled like a horse. Certainly no one wants to feel like they are being milked. And yet, parties in partnerships sometimes feel exactly that way. In contrast, two oxen bound by a structural yoke of alignment can pull side by side and produce greater results than either could produce alone.

When I was in high school, my brothers and I started a lawn-mowing business. We were insanely committed to quality. I remember my older brother picking up his mower and carrying it off a newly mowed lawn so he wouldn’t leave any extra lines. The three of us would compete in excellence and speed. In short, we were “all in.” We were

so successful that we formed a legal corporation as a partnership (with a few signatures from Dad). In our third year of mowing, we earned more than \$100,000 in revenue. That’s a lot of lawns!

A generation later, I watched three of my sons head into the neighborhood with their snow shovels after a big snowstorm. They returned with the money they earned shoveling driveways, but there was a fracture in their business. The two older brothers complained that the youngest didn’t shovel hard enough. Since the perception was that he didn’t pull his weight, they didn’t want to divide the money equally. The partnership suffered conflict and hurt.

For partnerships to work, each party must be “all in.” Each party must see the contribution of others not just as necessary, but critical for mission success. Partnerships only work when everyone has skin in the game. Partnerships falter when organizations talk like partners but don’t deliver money, people or time.

If your partner isn’t spending, sweating and delivering results for the mission then maybe you aren’t oxen in a yoke. Maybe you’re just being milked. The positive way out is to reassess the relationship for what it is rather than lamenting what it is not. You may need to conclude that you are allies but not interdependent partners. It may be time to move on.

4. COMPLEMENTARY AND MUTUALLY VALUED STRENGTHS

Forgive the lame exegesis, but “part-ner-ship” contains “parts.” The best way to be a good partner is to do what you do extremely well, and no more. When you know your strengths — and your limits — you allow your partner to exercise their area of expertise. But if you overreach, you actually devalue your partner and dilute your own effectiveness as well as the impact of the partnership.

When we launched the 58: initiative, we recognized that there are different categories of ministry that need to be done to end extreme poverty — clean water, justice, food security, child development, and so on. We carefully selected lead agencies for each category and tasked each with developing “principles of excellence” in their category. This created clear domains of responsibility, authority, and accountability.

The 58: Initiative has just launched, so we are in the early stages of proving our strategy of complementary strengths and leadership. But there is great assurance that honoring each other and allowing each partner to do what they do best will bring partnership health in our pursuit of eradicating the most extreme forms of poverty in this generation. (To learn more, visit www.live58.org).

5. PRODUCE — THEN CELEBRATE!

With all the discussion about what makes a partnership work, it’s important to remember that the end game is not the mechanics of partnership. The combined mission is the goal — and mission must deliver results. We can hang all the spiritual platitudes we want on the partnership, but if partners cannot point to outcomes in their mutually accomplished work, then the purpose of the partnership should rightly be questioned. Without results, motivation will die, but with defined goals and tangible outcomes, it’s time to celebrate! Celebrating success strengthens motivations and partnerships.



When God calls us into missions bigger than our own organizational selves, then we need to discover new ways of working together.

THE BROADEST VIEW — KINGDOM PARTNERSHIPS

The principles described above would be true for any collaborative work, Christian or otherwise. In fact, these principles parallel a highly recommended book, *Power of 2*, by Rodd Wagner and Gale Muller (Gallup Press, 2009). Yet there is something more for us, something of the kingdom. It is a way of partnership thinking that transcends our own needs and ushers us into caring for organizations and churches beyond our own.

In 1 Corinthians we are told, the body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body (1 Cor. 12:12). Paul says, “If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?” (1 Cor. 12:17).

Perhaps it’s my medical background, but I think the body is a fantastic insight into kingdom partnership. The kidney knows it’s a kidney. It does a great job of being a kidney while being incredibly grateful for the heart. Without the heart pumping away, the kidney dies. And frankly, without the whole body functioning together, its mission fails. So it is with organizations in Christ who are called to his mission of redemption and restoration. But are we truly aware of our dependency?

What would happen to Christ’s cause if our seminaries failed? What if Christ-centered poverty-fighting organizations disappeared? What if Bible publishers and other Christian content producers quit? Think through the myriad of inter-dependencies in the Christian world, and I believe we will rapidly conclude that we need each other. God designed it that way.

It wasn’t for ceremony that Jesus prayed for us that we would be one, “so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:23).

Above and beyond practical organizational partnerships, are you leveraging any of your strengths for the broader health of the body of Christ? Are you looking for gaps across the Christian

WHAT KIND OF COLLABORATIVE WORK ARE YOU ENGAGED IN?

- Network** – Common interest
- Alliance** – Shared goal
- Collaboration** – Working together
- Partnership** – Interdependent work
- Joint Venture** – Formally structured partnership
- Merger** – Legal combination of assets

Each term on this list describes increasing commitment and responsibility and carries the characteristics of previous terms.

landscape? Are there tithes of prayer or gifting of your experience to other organizations? Have you ever celebrated the success of another ministry or given a portion of your resources to a cause other than your own? Any of these mindsets reflect a kingdom partnership accompanied with a concrete act.

They are just the mindsets that Jesus would approve of as answers to his prayer. When it comes to partnerships, that just may be the summit Jesus had in mind. ●

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One in Christ

The heart of Jesus' prayer for us.

By John G. Fix



GOD IS PASSIONATE about unity and oneness. In the business and nonprofit world, there's a lot of talk about interdependence and synergy, which can be a valuable functional expression of oneness, but oneness is so much more.

Biblical oneness is not just a strategy God has devised to enhance our effectiveness in kingdom engagement (though it accomplishes that as nothing else). It is a key aspect of his essential nature. We see this in the way Jesus introduced the most important commandment: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God ..." (Mark 12:28-31).

Throughout Scripture, God has called us into oneness with himself and with each other in the body of Christ. Jesus was deeply conscious of his oneness with the Father: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing" (John 5:19); "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30); "... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

On the night before his death, Jesus told his disciples that the key to our fruitfulness is oneness with him: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Oneness is the heart of Jesus' prayer for his disciples and for us. He repeats it four times! "Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one" (John 17:11). "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one — I in them and you in me — so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:20-23). Oneness is the undeniable witness to Jesus' reality, deity, and truth, and to our identity with him.

Oneness is the heart of Jesus' prayer for his disciples and for us.

Today some false religions espouse unity or oneness that either promises we can become God or subsumes people into some mythical cosmic otherness. That is wholly different from Christian oneness and unity. Our oneness is defined by, and only

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comes through, Jesus Christ. Jesus lived in perfect oneness with the Father, called us into that oneness, and gave us the Holy Spirit to make us one.

The incarnation of Jesus is a clear statement that we are sinful to the core, in need of forgiveness from God, but that he also loves us to the extreme, because he came to secure forgiveness for us by his life, death, and resurrection. When we consciously live in that twofold gospel reality, it profoundly affects how we relate to others.

Oneness is not primarily about what we *do* together; that is its outgrowth. Failing to experience and express oneness is a fundamental denial of who Jesus is, and who he has called his followers to be.

At its core, oneness is about how we *are* with God and with each other in the body. It is about reflecting Jesus' character. How?

Humility and gentleness. Jesus both demonstrates and teaches us these (Matt. 11:28-30). Their opposites are pride and harshness, the twin assassins of oneness. If the Creator God became one with us (John 1:1-3, 14, 18; Phil. 2:5-9), how can we fail to embrace oneness with other believers who are different from us — racially, culturally, linguistically, socio-economically, generationally, educationally, or even theologically (not abandoning theological distinctions, but holding them with a spirit of grace). The Nicene Creed and the Apostle's Creed were, after all, created as statements of unity among true believers.

Love. It is the apologetic that demonstrates that we walk like Jesus (John 13:34-35). He loves us each as flawed, imperfect, quirky, and sometimes challenging, unloving people. Can we not do that, too? "And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity" (Col. 3:14).

Peace. In Ephesians, peace is another word used for oneness. The barriers between people who don't naturally live in unity have been broken down, so that in Jesus we should have peace with each other (Eph. 2:14). "Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. ... Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace" (Col. 3:11, 15).

Forgiveness. In our mutual sinfulness and brokenness, we have ample occasion to be hurt by others' words and actions — said, done, or omitted. Failing to forgive undermines oneness. Forgiveness is like a healing oil of oneness. Grasping the magnitude of Christ's forgiveness for us moves us to readily forgive the slights and pain inflicted on us by others'. (Matt. 18:21-22). If Jesus welcomes sinful, broken, stubborn, and undeserving people like me to be part of his body, so can I.

Biblical oneness is not just a strategy God has devised to enhance our effectiveness in kingdom engagement (though it accomplishes that as nothing else).

Obedience and submission. Jesus' oneness and intimacy with the Father were rooted in his obedience and submission: "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Matt. 26:39). So is ours (John 14:21, 23; Eph. 5:21).

Since Jesus is so passionate about unity and oneness, why do we not experience it more?

Our enemy and our flesh war against the Spirit at the point of oneness and unity, probably more than any other. For example, the essence of marriage is described as oneness, so the enemy attacks marriage. The body of Christ is to be characterized by this oneness, so he attacks unity in the body.

Or have we come to accept disunity and fragmentation in the body as normative? Every sin is a fracture of oneness — first with God, and then with each other. Bone fractures must be set, healed, and rehabilitated, but in the end they become stronger at the point of fracture. Do we have a spirit of repentance for not having oneness as the highest priority for our kingdom engagement? There may be people with whom we need to go through a similar healing process in order to restore oneness.

Oneness is never automatic. How often do we pray for oneness and unity as Jesus did, and does? No matter how gifted or capable or insightful we may be, this is not something we can create. It is a work of God alone. When we dream about our plans for the future, how many of them are rooted in expressing oneness? Many of the prayers we pray for ourselves and others could be reformulated as prayers for oneness with God and with other believers.

We are called to love everyone, even our enemies; but we are only called to be one with other followers of Jesus. Ironically, this unity and oneness is characterized by diversity — "one body ... many members" — not by sameness. God's oneness is profound. Nevertheless, he calls us to live it with him and with one another. Jesus means every grouping of believers to be a crucible for learning and living out oneness. And he wants us to be servants of his oneness wherever we are.

"May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." (Rom. 15:5-7 ESV)

"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!" (Ps. 133:1) ●

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Empowering Collaboration

Why technology is essential to partnerships. **by Joseph Vijayam**

Solomon understood collaboration! His wisdom, which was “...greater than the wisdom of all,” led him to partner with many to build the Temple and the Kingdom of Israel. In Ecclesiastes he writes, “And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him — a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Ecc. 4:12, ESV).
/// This powerful truth is an encouragement to those seeking to create kingdom partnerships. /// At Olive Technology, we’ve seen many collaborative efforts among ministries come and go. What element best enables the success of some partnerships? Consistently, we have seen those that employ and correctly apply technology be the most effective. For example, I am a member of the steering group for the Business as Mission Think Tank (bamthinktank.org). This group’s passion is for “Invigorating the business as mission movement for its vital involvement in God’s mission to the world.” The team consists of business and ministry people focused on defining how business can play a role in global missions.

In an early meeting, we were gathered on a phone conference — each of us calling from different parts of the world — to discuss how we would build this kingdom partnership. An important item on the agenda was the technology platform we would use for our collaboration. Having the right tool was so crucial to success that we approved the purchase of a premium service rather than using one of the free collaboration tools available. We have not regretted this vital decision as, even now, this tool is critical to the launching of our work as a steering group.

Another great example of choosing the right technology was the 2010 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Cape Town, South Africa. People representing the church from all over the world came together to plan and strategize in preparation for this important event.

The planning involved extensive and regular interaction across great distances. Those who contributed towards the Congress needed a tool which was always available, required little Internet bandwidth, was intuitive to use, and was dependable and highly secure.

As the Chairman of the IT Committee for the Congress, I worked closely with the Director of IT. We settled on Central Desktop (centraldesktop.com) as the best technology tool to fit our needs.

This online collaboration tool helped us in every aspect of planning for the Congress: budgeting, program scheduling, facilities management, arrival and departure of guests, presentations for the sessions, registration, hotel arrangements, and more.

Without an online collaboration tool, it would have been impossible to have a leadership team that was spread around the world. This technology tool helped facilitate our successful collaboration by making us feel as though we were all working in the same office.

It is from being involved with these kinds of large-scale collaborative efforts, as well as working with more than 100 organizations over the past 15 years, that we've developed the following insights into how to position technology to empower successful partnerships.

CREATE SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

What do you really want the technology to do for your partnership? When ministries seek to collaborate using technology tools, it's vital that simple, specific goals are established. You need to understand how technology can enable successful collaboration.

The International Conference on Computing and Mission (ICCM) (iccm.org) is an annual gathering of Christians with a common interest in computers and mission. ICCM came about as ministries were moving from mainframes to minicomputers to personal computers in the late '80s.



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CLIENTS include World Vision, David C. Cook, Saddleback Church, Campus Crusade for Christ, Trans World Radio, Biblica, Open Doors, MacLellan Foundation, Partners International, and Interserve Canada.

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There was a growing need for Christian organizations to have in-house techies capable of quickly creating applications needed to grow the ministries and serve their constituents. As a result, ministry IT departments were overwhelmed with demand.

They needed to:

- develop custom applications quickly
- keep costs down
- avoid being dependent on proprietary technology
- limit hiring additional staff

With objectives like these clearly in mind, ICCM was able to utilize the communication technologies of that era and key events to bring together a group of people sharing ideas and experiences and building and applying open-source tools for ministry efforts worldwide.

CLEARLY DEFINE THE PURPOSE YOUR TECHNOLOGY MUST SUPPORT

Closely allied with objectives is purpose. Purpose speaks to the reason for doing what you're doing. It answers the question, "What's the point?" of using a certain technology in your collaboration efforts.

In 2000, in India, as the use of technology was spreading within ministries, we wanted to serve Indian ministries in a special way. We decided to launch IndiaGateway.net (indiagateway.net) as a free website development/hosting service for Indian ministries, allowing them to set up websites at no cost.

Most of the ministries did not have an IT person who could help them. IndiaGateway became their solution to the dilemma of wanting to have online presence while lacking the knowledge or people who could help them achieve that goal.

Our *purpose* is to help Indian ministries take full advantage of the Web. We realized that we could accomplish this by providing a secure, stable, and economically feasible hosting and web-development service. That was our stated intention. And because we had a clear purpose for the partnership, it made it so much easier to employ the right technology to allow collaboration to flourish.

We organized technology conferences for current and prospective IndiaGateway member organizations. At one of our events, five theological seminary presidents were seated at a table; it was the first time they had ever been together in one place. The technology brought them together, but it was only the beginning of the partnership opportunities!

ESTABLISH A FACILITATOR FOR ONLINE COLLABORATION

Differences at all levels can be barriers to success. For collaborations using technology, from the beginning, it's important to establish a facilitator or moderator to help maintain smooth and consistent communication.

We believe that technology tools, when used intentionally, can play a vital role in empowering and facilitating these collaborations.

The importance of a moderator has been especially helpful in addressing cross-cultural issues as we developed the Business as Mission Think Tank. We have a moderator who is British yet lives in Thailand. She understands Western thinking as well as Eastern approaches, and can act as a translator of sorts among the various cultures.

The facilitator/moderator reminds everyone in the group to be sensitive to one another and helps keep the technology-based interactions flowing smoothly.

THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE CONTEXT

Context is foundational to a successful collaboration. It ties all of the other insights together and brings added focus to the task at hand.

(continued on page 22)



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Some contexts are broad. For example, with Lausanne, the common context was world evangelization. Many people and ministry efforts will fit under this large umbrella.

Some contexts are more specific. With ICCM, the context was supporting a very specific set of ministry specialists — ministry technologists.

The collaboration tools used by Lausanne and ICCM would be very different.

Lausanne required a tool that was easy to use across languages and by people who did not necessarily know technology well. On the other hand, the ICCM group could use a more complex technology solution.

Understanding the context allows you to pick a technology tool that will empower rather than overwhelm the members of the partnership.

WHY TECHNOLOGY EMPOWERS MINISTRY COLLABORATION

While we can easily point to successful collaborations among large and small secular businesses, collaborations among ministries can lead to head-butting. The sources for friction often lie in doctrinal differences, cultural disparities, leadership style variables, and perceived competition for donor dollars.

This is why technology is so essential for the success of ministry collaboration. It offers a neutral place for ministry partners to connect — a perfect stepping stone, providing a safe environment to build trust that can eventually facilitate a broader cooperation.

For example, mapping tools have become essential to ministries. Yet off-the-shelf software can be prohibitively expensive. But through Global Mapping International (GMI) (gmi.org), Christian ministries can get top-of-the-line software at a reasonable cost and utilize missions-related databases compiled by GMI and other mission researchers.

GMI was able to make this possible by engaging several smaller ministries and approaching the software vendor as a group. As a result of their need for mapping resources, ministries that may have never had a reason or desire to connect are interacting and learning from one another as they partner through use of this mapping technology.

THE POINT

This is the heart of partnership and collaboration among ministry organizations: Working together within a common context and on a common mission to accomplish powerful results for the kingdom of God.

We believe that technology tools, when used intentionally, can play a vital role in empowering and facilitating these collaborations. I hope that these lessons that our team at Olive Technology has learned will encourage you to use technology wisely as you design or participate in your next ministry collaboration. ●

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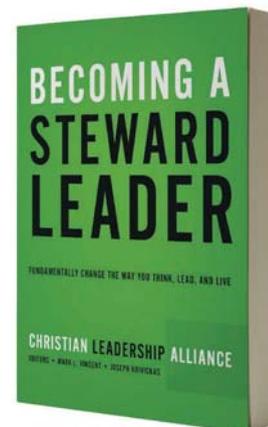
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Lessons from Cape Town

Seven Principles for Successful Collaboration By Doug Wicks

A AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER we have all enjoyed reading church-bulletin bloopers, like this well-known announcement: “A bean supper will be held Tuesday evening in the church hall. Special music will follow.” And sometimes the irony of the misphrasing hits pretty close to the truth: “The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict.”

It does seem to be a fact of life that wherever there are people, conflict will arise. No wonder one

of Jesus’ first teachings recorded in the gospels is “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matt. 5:9)

If the practice of peacemaking and loving our neighbors (Matt. 22:39) is so greatly valued by our Lord, then perhaps it can be argued that there is no higher calling for God’s children than that of serving as collaborators — peacemakers — for the cause of world evangelization. After all, our Lord’s last command to his disciples was to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19).



COLLABORATION IN ACTION

I witnessed a beautiful portrait of the power of collaboration in October 2010 during the Third Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization in Cape Town, South Africa, where I had the privilege of working behind the scenes with a group of dedicated communication volunteers.

The planning of that conference, which drew together 4,200 diverse church leaders from 198 nations, was fraught with a multitude of cross-cultural challenges. Where and how would one begin to plan a meaningful global convocation after nearly a generation had passed since the previous congress had convened in Manila in 1989?

The short answer to that question is that the successful outcome of Cape Town 2010 was achieved in large part through the wise application of seven collaborative principles that can also be applied in our own unique ministry settings to further the effectiveness of our organizations.

1. SHARED PURPOSE TRUMPS INDIVIDUAL INTERESTS

For the international church leaders who had been selected to plan the Third Lausanne Congress, the compelling message of the “Great Commission” inspired the shared vision that galvanized the collaborative effort. These church leaders may have come from different cultures

and faith traditions, but all of them were united in their desire to fulfill the Lord’s command to complete the evangelization of the world.

In his studies on workplace motivations, MIT professor Peter Senge found that a shared vision is “something that inspires people and gets them to pull together for cooperative action. People really get energized by what their group is trying to accomplish. They pull together to accomplish something worthwhile” (*The Fifth Discipline*, Doubleday, 2006 updated).

Focusing on the significant opportunities to be gained through collaborative efforts dwarfs small or petty differences of opinion.

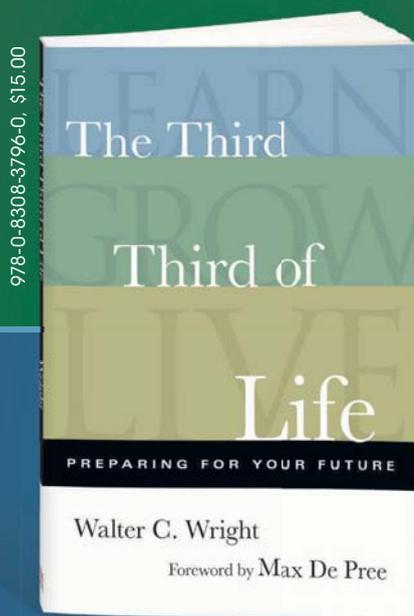
2. A CREDIBLE, PASSIONATE CHAMPION LEADS THE WAY

Though many individuals made significant contributions during the planning stage (over a period of four years), the Rev. Doug Birdsall clearly was the champion of this cross-cultural collaborative effort. Author Russell Linden says in his book *Leading Across Boundaries*, “The most effective champions ... have the passion, the drive, and the desire to do whatever it takes to make the project succeed.”

Birdsall’s involvement with Lausanne began in 1987 when he participated in the first Lausanne “Young Leaders Conference” in Singapore. Two



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—From the foreword by Max De Pree

years later, he served as the assistant to the director for Lausanne II in Manila. Birdsall was installed as the Lausanne Chairman in 2004 at the Forum on World Evangelization in Pattaya, Thailand. “Those early experiences with Lausanne,” says Birdsall, “served to broaden my horizons and deepen my understanding of the challenges and opportunities before the church. My deep commitment to the revitalization of the Lausanne movement springs from my sense of indebtedness to Lausanne for connecting me to a global network of men and women who share a passion for the vision of ‘the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world.’”

Birdsall is an excellent example of an effective collaborative champion who led his international team with integrity and verve. He said, “We have worked to engage evangelical leaders on all continents.”

3. THE RIGHT PEOPLE ARE INVITED TO SIT AT THE TABLE

With respect to the Third Lausanne Congress, this principle pertained to both the planning committee as well as to the 4,200 participants. To ensure that an appropriate mix and proportion of leaders attended the conference, a Participant Selection Team, consisting of church leaders from every continent, established the selection criteria which were used to invite men and women from a broad diversity of nationalities, ethnicities, ages, occupations, and denominational affiliations.

Lausanne planners took this selection process one step further: Rather than setting up 4,200 individual chairs in the large convention hall, congress organizers strategically arranged 700 tables, each of which seated six church representatives from different nations.

4. TRUST TAKES PLACE IN THE TRENCHES

In her book *Alliances, Coalitions and Partnerships* (New Society, 2004) Joan Roberts writes, “Trust is an essential foundation for all aspects of participation and partnership. Without trust, decisions won’t be made, work will not get done, and all the joy and fun of working together will be drained from the group.” And Stephen Covey, author of *The Speed of Trust*, has observed, “Low trust slows everything — every decision, every communication, and every relationship.”



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During the planning stages, Birdsall, and his leadership team, visited internationally with local church leaders and other Congress supporters. This “diplomacy in the trenches” enabled them to build trust and confidence. Furthermore, because several trips to Cape Town were a necessary part of the planning process, the team’s frequent appearances on African soil forged a solid bond of trust between Birdsall, a Western church leader, and the African church leaders.

5. A HIGHLY PARTICIPATORY FORMAL AGREEMENT FORGES STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

A major achievement of the original Lausanne Congress was the writing of *The Lausanne Covenant* in 1974. Through the oversight given by the late Dr. John Stott of England, The Lausanne Covenant has helped define evangelical theology and practice for the last four decades.

Similarly, on the final day of Cape Town 2010, a document titled *The Cape Town Commitment* was introduced to Congress delegates. Periodic meetings to create a theological foundation for reaching the world with the gospel message had been ongoing for several months leading up to the event. Senior theologians from every continent participated in the development of the statement.

The Cape Town Commitment (Lausanne.org/ctcommitment) is a two-fold declaration: It is first a theological affirmation of



The Cape Town Commitment (on partnering)

The Cape Town Commitment (Chris Wright, Cape Town 2010, Statement Working Group Chair) builds on the historic line of both The Lausanne Covenant and The Manila Manifesto. Its two parts focus on biblical convictions and a call to action. In the call to action in *The Cape Town Commitment*, the vital importance of kingdom partnering is emphasized. It reads, in part:

PARTNERING IN THE BODY OF CHRIST FOR UNITY IN MISSION

Paul teaches us that Christian unity is the creation of God, based on our reconciliation with God and with one another. This double reconciliation has been accomplished through the cross. When we live in unity and work in partnership we demonstrate the supernatural, counter-cultural power of the cross. But when we demonstrate our disunity through failure to partner together, we demean our mission and message, and deny the power of the cross.

evangelical beliefs rooted in Scripture; and second, it is a call to action for evangelical Christians everywhere to advance the growth of the church around the world. The second part of the Commitment was formulated only after feedback was received from Cape Town 2010 delegates.

Because so many international leaders were given the chance to participate in the development of the document, there has been widespread appreciation and acceptance of the content, which promises further momentum for the Lausanne movement.

I witnessed a beautiful portrait of the power of collaboration in October 2010 during the Third Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization in Cape Town, South Africa ...

6. HUMILITY AND GRACE PRODUCE A CLIMATE OF MUTUAL RESPECT

Because of Birdsall’s previous cross-cultural experiences, he already had a leg up on understanding the need to exercise curiosity, grace, and humility when working with people from other cultures. Arrogant and/or prideful attitudes are counter to a collaborative spirit. In the West we are preconditioned to be forthright and strident. We rush to get right down to business, which often lends itself to cultural insensitivity.

Birdsall’s closing remarks to Congress delegates exemplify a genuine attitude of grace. “We are Christ’s ambassadors in our generation. Let us seek God with a humble spirit. Let us work together, united around the great central truths of the gospel as we proclaim Christ in every sphere of influence, and to all peoples of the world.”

7. MANAGE CONFLICT WITH TACT AND CANDOR

Experts will say that some degree of conflict is often inevitable in collaborative situations. Power struggles, personality conflicts, and lack of clear direction rank among the leading causes of contention. With so many organizations and cultures represented at the congress, some disagreements were inevitable. But Birdsall and his team worked to resolve any such conflicts swiftly, with humility and honesty, thereby maintaining unity and a spirit of collaboration throughout.

These seven collaborative principles, which were so clearly illustrated during Cape Town 2010, may help you as you consider ways to partner with other organizations. Remember, the ultimate goal of collaboration is to come together as brothers and sisters in Christ to forge a bond of peace, which will impel our ministries forward, enabling them to “reap a harvest of righteousness” (James 3:18) and glorify God in the process. ●

DOUG WICKS, CCNL, serves as donor communications manager for The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Colorado Springs, Colo. He teaches the online course “Philanthropy: Theory and Practice” for Toccoa Falls College located in Toccoa Falls, Ga. Feel free to contact Doug at wicksd@cmalliance.org.

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DOWN WITH



Creating a Christ-centered Mastermind

By Doug Mazza

TEAMWORK!

SOMETIMES I THINK that I'm the last president of almost anything who hasn't written a book on leadership. It's not that I haven't had it suggested to me. It's just that I have read so many great books (and some not so great) that whenever I'm asked my opinion on a management issue, dilemma, plan for growth, strategy for downsizing, or about how to motivate, delegate, or terminate, someone has already examined the issue from top to bottom.

Want to know how to take your success and turn it into significance? You can't do better than *Halftime*, by Bob Buford (Zondervan, 1994/2009). How about developing a management team that uses the leadership principles of Jesus Christ? *Lead Like Jesus*, by Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges (W Publishing, 2005) is a must. I could go on.

So the fact that I think I have something to say is a breakthrough for me. My message is motivated more by a slowly bubbling issue of mine that needs an outlet, so thanks for reading. I can use the therapy.

And what's bugging me? Teamwork. Teamwork? Who's against teamwork?

It's not teamwork per se I'm against; it's what teamwork too often has become. I first learned about real teamwork when I played high-school football. (A history that gets better with every passing year by the way, thanks to no videotape in the '60s.) In football, you either had teamwork or you failed — and in 60 minutes of play you knew by how much. Teamwork could beat superior talent. That means my last truly great teamwork experience was at the age of 17. Now that's sad.

All through my early career, I strived to build great teams. I had the privilege of being at, or very close to, the top of the corporate chart six times as either a Senior Vice President or President. Some of those companies (and I hope one ministry) you would recognize: Hyundai and Suzuki among them and for the last 13 years, Joni and Friends, founded by Joni Eareckson Tada.

As I was coming up through the ranks, most places I worked strove for teamwork, but in the end, a few days after the "Teamwork" meeting, what teamwork really meant was "I'm busy — but I wish you well!" It was huddle, break, then everyone back to their cubicles and individual project calendars.

It wasn't until I abandoned teamwork for something better that the sky opened up. That something is close to what Andrew Carnegie called "The Mastermind." It exceeds the concept of teamwork and embraces a complete surrender to a fully integrated management culture that produces a practical process.

When asked by a newspaper reporter to what he attributed his success, Carnegie responded:

"Well if you want to know how I got my money, I will refer you to these men here on my staff; they got it for me. We have here in this business a mastermind. It is not my mind, and it is not the mind of any other man on my staff, but the sum total of all these minds that I have gathered around me that constitute a mastermind in the steel business."

I'm not suggesting we run our ministries like a robber baron in the steel business, but in this, Carnegie was right. Unfortunately Carnegie stopped at trusting his fellow man for integrated leadership. But when the mastermind concept is embraced by those who recognize they are operating under God-given authority — a God who is the one in charge — it's better than teamwork. It's better than what Carnegie achieved. It becomes an integrated, Christ-centered mastermind; a fully integrated ministry.

While I agree the word "integration" is over-used, it is in the technical sense precise if taken to its full expression. True integration means everyone owns the success of the program. Everyone understands the big picture and how their department fits, all for the sake of honoring Christ with program success.



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At Joni and Friends, despite a diverse set of solutions to international problems, we have established a management culture that not only breaks down silos — those barriers between departments — but so exposes a project that its success is reliant upon, and genuinely belongs to, the full ministry. A Wheels for the World international wheelchair distribution depends not only on the cooperation of our field staff, development, and Christian Institute staff, but also volunteer sharing with our domestic Family Retreat efforts. So the success of any ministry program at Joni and Friends depends on the cross-pollinated success of all other departments.

Sound risky? You bet it is. It relies on strong ministry-wide relationships led by strong Christian leaders who get it. But when it works — wow! The productivity (and therefore the stewardship) is enormous. And here's why.

Deep in its core, Joni and Friends is rooted in the absolute truth that Jesus Christ is The Son of God. He lived, died and lives again for one purpose — a personal relationship. The Messiah did it all for a relationship!

When a ministry bases everything, from the hiring process to the measurement of an associate's success, on their ability to be relational and to work in an integrative way using Christ as the model, why wouldn't God bless the effort? A ministry like that would create a Christ-centered mastermind!

That kind of culture embraces the vision, the plan, and the program that all become greater than the sum total of the individual parts because it is masterminded by Christ. Our culture at Joni and Friends has a motto: "No Surprises." We strive to achieve a process by which all disciplines are repeatedly made aware of our history as well as our future. We strive to create a unified awareness of what the full ministry is doing and why, not only for understanding but for mutual encouragement and accomplishment. Relationally, our integration objective is to be of one accord. (Phil. 2:1-2)

Our process also has a scripture reference as expressed in Romans 15:4-7.

"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that

with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."

Even our "5-year-new" built-from-the-ground-up home office, which services 22 ministry offices across the country and 28 affiliates worldwide, was constructed with this kind of integration in mind. Work stations are open pods of generally four people. The walls separating the pods are only 4 feet high, requiring people to see, know, and share with one another. Some of the people in a work area are alongside people from another department, completing the overt commitment to integration beyond teamwork.

The offices all have at least some unimpeded glass access. A beautiful 186-foot-long glass-walled ADA ramp winds around a centrally located chapel rising from the first floor to the second floor, making a not-so-subtle statement about who we are at the Joni and Friends International Disability Center. The fully paid-for facility has won an architectural award without breaking the budget, all the while honoring stewardship.

It's not teamwork per se I'm against; it's what teamwork too often has become.

So how do the employees of Joni and Friends like the integrative, Christ-centered mastermind management process and open-style office with its cross-pollination? (Whew!)

Well, for six years now they have voted Joni and Friends a "Best Christian Workplace" by the independent polling of Best Christian Workplace Institute (BCWI). Giving every employee an opportunity to express their anonymous input on more than 50 topics each year under the auspices of BCWI is consistent with a truly integrative Christ-centered mastermind process. It reflects a management that really wants to know what you think. Results of the survey are shared every year, with the emphasis on our bottom 10 scores and a plan to improve them.

Is the Christ-centered mastermind process perfect? Of course not, and it's a lot of work. Is it effective and productive? Very. And you can add to that, rewarding and even fun! Our employees say we earned a 4.11 score out of 5 on the question "Do you have fun at work?" (Our Human Resources Director, bless her soul, won't be happy until we get a 5.)

Where do you start building such a culture in your own company or ministry organization?

Take Ephesians 4:16. It's not so much about teamwork as about operating under Christ as mastermind. "From [Christ, the head] the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." That's quite a model for integration. ●

DOUG MAZZA, president of Joni and Friends, has overseen an explosive era of growth since coming to Joni and Friends in 1999. A sought-after speaker for ministry and business, he formerly served as senior American executive for American Suzuki Motor Corporation and Hyundai Motor America.

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Project. 1.27

Building alliances to transform children's lives.
By Rick Valore

IT BEGINS when God puts a vision of a preferable future in the mind of a leader. The leader catches a glimpse of what God wants to bring about “on earth, as it is in heaven” and then decides to take action. Such God-given visions usually require many people working together in order to accomplish the assignment.

I think of Nehemiah's vision to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. He needed to enlist the cooperation of government, foresters, army officials, and the local citizens to accomplish this seemingly impossible task.

In 2004, God gave such a vision to a pastor in Colorado — that one day there would be no children waiting to be adopted in the state's foster-care system because parents from local churches would be empowered to adopt them. Pastor Robert Gelinas from Colorado Community Church in Aurora, Colo., himself the

father of five adopted children, set out to make this vision a reality. He called it Project 1.27. The name comes from James 1:27, which says, “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”

In January 2005, 875 legally adoptable children in Colorado were waiting for parents to adopt them. Gelinas knew there were more than 1,500 Christian churches just in the Denver metropolitan area. If one couple from each church would apply to adopt just one child, there would be parents waiting to adopt instead of children waiting to be adopted.

Why were Christian parents overlooking local orphans and opting to pursue costly international adoptions? What were the problems that seemingly

obscured the needs of children in their own communities who needed ‘forever families’? These were the questions that Project 1.27 tried to solve via the avenue of Kingdom partnerships.

Gelinas met with then-Lieutenant Governor Jane Norton and expressed his desire to help mobilize parents from local churches to adopt Colorado kids. As a result, Norton began working through the state legislature to enact laws that would make adoption easier in Colorado. As a result, Colorado county-level Departments of Human Services (DHS) were given the green light to work with faith-based organizations that would recruit and train prospective adoptive and foster-care parents.

With the government willing to be a part of the solution, Gelinas knew he also needed to win the support of local churches. Starting with his own congregation, he gave a sermon series outlining the vision God had given him about the needs of local orphans and calling on the church to respond to the instruction found in James 1:27. His message was well-received, and excitement grew about the possibility of Colorado being the first state in the U.S. to empty its foster-care system of children waiting to be adopted.

With momentum building, someone was needed to put ‘feet’ to the mission. Chris and Sarah Padbury responded to a personal invitation from Gelinas to champion Project 1.27 and bring structure to the ministry. Adoptive parents of six children themselves, the Padburys developed recruitment strategies, training curriculum, and support systems for interested Christian parents. In January 2005, Project 1.27 held its first parent orientation and 250 people attended – in the middle of a Colorado blizzard!

It was also critical to get buy-in from the local county departments of human services. It would be these government agencies that would certify the newly recruited and trained Project 1.27 families. Traditionally, DHS had a difficult time recruiting parents from churches. There was skepticism on both sides. Project 1.27 acted as a bridge between people in each church and their local department of human services. The government gained a new way to recruit new families, while people in the church now had someone to help them navigate the adoption process through the foster-care system.

Now it was time to let the rest of the body of Christ in Colorado know about what God was doing. How do you go about gaining the support of other local churches to raise the banner for kids in foster care? Relationships, relationships, relationships!

There were two ways that Project 1.27 connected with local churches. The first strategy was from the top down; the second from the bottom up. As an assistant pastor, I was able to develop relationships with other pastors who were open to at least having a cup of coffee with me. The response from the pastors was unanimous: Project 1.27 was a great idea – but only some of the pastors wanted to know more and implement this vision into their own church. Some of those pastors were adopted themselves, or had adopted children or ministered at orphanages overseas. They immediately saw the value of this mission.

By far, the more effective strategy was from the bottom up. Adoption is a very passionate issue. Project 1.27 was a shining ray of hope for those interested in adoption and for parents who had already adopted. As a result, a lay-led movement began in many Colorado churches.

We knew each of these lay leaders needed to be equipped to successfully start and continue a new ministry within the walls of their local church. The purpose of these church adoption ministries is to support the families that are in the adoption journey and to educate and give hope to the parents who have the calling to adoption. As a result, we developed Orphan Care Ministry Leadership training for lay leaders.

We also collaborated with private child-placement agencies (CPAs) to give greater flexibility to parents looking to adopt children who may live outside of their particular county. These agencies were willing to accept the training hours and paperwork given by Project 1.27.

Project 1.27 is also helping to unite like-minded churches in a geographic area to connect with each other. Because it’s easy for members of one church not to know what is happening at another church, we have been able to make connections between leaders in different churches so they can work together for the benefit of orphans and parents. This is most highlighted by the Northern Colorado Christian Alliance for Orphans, headed by Kari Stewart. They host monthly lunches for pastors and lay leaders to talk about upcoming events, introduce new ministries, and work together on fund-raisers and adoption fair events.

Several national Christian ministries have also seen the need to mobilize the Christian church, and we are happy to work with them at a local level. We have collaborated with Focus on the Family’s ‘I Care About Orphans’ initiative, Family Life’s ‘Hope for Orphans’ and Steven Curtis Chapman’s ‘Show Hope.’

How do you go about gaining the support of other local churches to raise the banner for kids in foster care?

As a result of these partnerships, Project 1.27 continues to expand its reach and influence. We have been contacted by state governments that are interested in the success of our program and have been able to help other like-minded Christians in other states start ministries with a similar goal of mobilizing local churches for the cause of the orphan.

To date, 195 children have been adopted by Project 1.27 parents, 25 Colorado churches are considered partners, we have 14 county DHS partners, 4 private CPA partners and have trained more than 100 lay leaders who have started adoption ministries in their local church.

How are we doing with the original vision of no waiting children? Now there are only 365 legally adoptable children waiting in Colorado. Collaborative work and kingdom partnerships can make the impossible a reality. ●

RICK VALORE is the Executive Director of Project 1.27, a ministry that recruits, trains, and supports Christian parents to adopt and foster children. Rick graduated from SMU and has served as an assistant pastor at two Denver churches. He and his wife Nancy have two daughters and love living in Colorado. (project127.com)



The Critical Shift

Ministry collaboration is more vital than ever.

By James K. Lewis

“No nonprofit organization can survive and succeed in advancing its mission while living independently of other nonprofits. Organizations gain information, political power, and personal and professional support from and in concert with other nonprofits. Thus, close working relationships, partnerships, and even joint ventures between nonprofit organizations are a fairly natural occurrence.” — David La Piana

IN TODAY'S UNIQUE ECONOMIC and operational context, many ministries don't understand the critical necessity of shifting toward collaboration with others. Nor do they realize the often complacent organizational culture that can resist such a move. As many secular and religious nonprofit organizations have shown, the consequences of ignoring one's context and culture can lead to the decline of an organization — potentially forcing a merger or dissolution.

CHANGING CONTEXT

Much changed from 1998 to 2005, when the nonprofit sector expanded from 1.1 to 1.4 million organizations. In 2006, these added more than \$600 billion to the economy and almost 10 percent of jobs nationwide. This growth further led to an expansion of services and increase in required funding across the sector. But it also created an unintentional duplication of services and dilution of available funds.

That growth was checked with the downturn of the economy, as funders were hit with losses. In 2008, those watching nonprofits warned of a decline and counseled funders to reconsider whom they help. These monitoring agencies also called for a consolidation of service providers.

Ken Berger, chief executive of Charity Navigator, acknowledged a definite need for joint ventures among charities. Similarly, New York Secretary of State Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez noted that such collaboration would be critical for the survival of the nonprofit sector, stating that it wasn't the level of service demand that put this group at risk, but a deficiency in administrative capacities. And for most charities, she further called for sharing back-office functions in order to reduce the load.

The future is foreboding for nonprofits that refuse to recognize this need. Indeed, we've seen many organizations downsize into core areas of expertise. Eventually, some will seek partnerships with other organizations in their similar contexts — or cease to exist. Nonprofit leaders should take note of Peter Drucker's early stance, long before the current economic shifts

forced organizational change on all levels. In *Innovation and Entrepreneurship* (1985), he wrote that “systematic innovation ... consists of the purposeful and organized search for change, and in the systematic analysis of the opportunities such changes might offer for [or force] economic or social innovation.” He went on to identify systems of change: unexpected success or failure; incongruity (a gap between reality as it is and as it is assumed to be); and changes in industry or market structure that catch people unawares. This lack of foresight he cites is indicative of the context and culture of the at-risk nonprofit.

CULTURE

Most nonprofits have an idealistic view of themselves and their missions, which masks the changing landscape. By the time they recognize these external threats, it is often too late. In our current economic struggle, this protective culture weakens rather than strengthens, as self-preservation and reluctance undermine rather than sustain the mission.

One such habit of self-preservation witnesses the founder, long-term executive and/or board clinging to what once was, resulting in a loss of innovation and the deterioration of the organization as a whole. This is also evidenced in a reluctance to pass the mantle on to the next generation. Although the issues are complex, the recent leadership collapse and bankruptcy of the once formidable Crystal Cathedral is evidence of such cultural unawareness and reluctance.

Sometimes, founders may imagine they're being loyal to their creation. Or, mindful of personal investments, a board may fight to keep the organization afloat. In both cases, these leaders are actually exhibiting blind and selfish ownership, which runs counter to stewardship. Indeed, steward leaders must learn when it's best to let go and permit an entity to grow beyond their capabilities, or to “hear” when the organization itself conveys the need to step away. However, a hesitancy to release the reins often keeps them hanging on until there are no other options but a merger, acquisition, or the dissolution of the organization.

Such reluctance to act is often due to complacency fed by many fruitful years of funding and stable compensation. The lack of government oversight of the nonprofit sector also played into this contentment, until issues began to crop up in larger nonprofits. Revelations of high compensation invited investigation, and the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 was increasingly enforced on nonprofits.

Before, there were few market forces to compel additional governance, consolidation, or restructuring of nonprofit organizations. This lack of discipline led to inadequate methods of measuring and tracking services and outcomes. In his *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*, Jim Collins admonishes, “It doesn’t matter whether you can quantify your results. What matters is that you rigorously assemble evidence — quantitative or qualitative — to track your progress.” Yet many nonprofits lack the know-how or resources to do it. However, this information is critical for improving their activities and reporting to funders. Merely “doing good” is insufficient in light of economic downturns, despite the best of intentions.

FACING REALITY

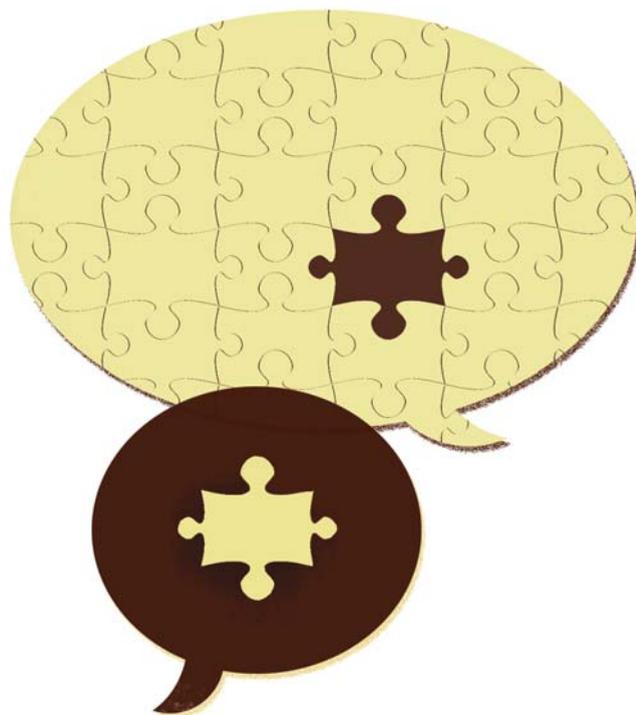
In *Managing for the Future: 1990s and Beyond*, Peter Drucker, with wise foresight, warned of the temptation to rely on the “goodness of our cause.” To be sure, there must be a shift from the “good cause” mentality to one of accountability and results. Unfortunately, nonprofit organizations develop strong emotional attachments to services they provide, and a corresponding resistance to facing reality. They often hold their operations very close and refuse to recognize the need to work with those outside their organization.

In *Integrity: The Courage to Meet the Demands of Reality*, Henry Cloud discusses the need to face new realities and question what the world is really like, rather than rest on assumptions that made sense a few years ago. Only when leaders do this can they see how to best develop assimilation and accommodation — changing and adapting the organizational culture to the context. There needs to be both awareness that something has changed, and someone in a strategic position to effect it.

STEWARDSHIP CHANGE

The duty of steward leaders, in concert with their leadership team and board of directors, is to determine the appropriate course of action for the preservation and sustainability of the organization’s mission. A leader must consider that a temporary mentoring, collaboration, or strategic alliance may be best for putting the organization on surer footing and providing time to develop long-term solutions. An independent third party — such as a consultant or potential partner — can reveal blind spots the leader may have overlooked. Collaborating with a partner, though sometimes difficult due to pride and fear of change, can be a great benefit in combining efforts, developing broader resources, and identifying a common mission, vision, and core values with others.

If the mission cannot continue through an alliance with, or mentoring by, another organization, the choice will be between a merger and acquisition, whereby core purposes are sustained by and through the resulting entity. If the mission has been sufficiently accomplished, then either the reimagining or dissolution of the organization is the appropriate choice. It takes a thoughtful leader to guide the board and staff toward either of these responsible conclusions.



CONCLUSION

As economic and other external factors trigger a change in programs and drop in funding, more organizations will experience an increasing need to consolidate services and/or merge — or else they will risk the consequences. In light of this decline, we cannot continue to expect donors to pick up the slack, but should investigate net-gain options such as collaboration with similar providers. While raising concerns about trust and vulnerability, joint ventures provide greater access to new capabilities and resources. These decisions are not to be considered lightly, but through much prayer and counsel.

The main objectives of the leader are stewardship of the people and resources, and sustaining the organization’s mission and purpose. In fulfilling those duties, the role of steward becomes central. The resulting question is: In what manner can the organization’s people continue within a community of shared purpose that sustains the mission? Will it be accomplished through mentoring, collaboration, reorganization, restructuring, or through a third-party merger or acquisition?

Ultimately, as Christians we are asked to seek missional outcomes in our organizational development. We are not called to build complex structures of disconnected and isolated organizations. Rather, we must forge synergistic and holistic ministries that create a feeling of wholeness and connectedness of community, within which people thrive and are empowered to develop their full potential. It may be that one organization’s success is the answer to another’s adversity. Leaders of both should take note and be open to innovative kingdom partnerships. ●

JAMES LEWIS, M.A., CCNL is president and CEO of the Long Beach Rescue Mission and president of the Pacific District of the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions (AGRM). He earned a graduate certificate in Non-profit Organization Management from UC Riverside, and an M.A. in Global Leadership from Fuller Theological Seminary.

A Lifelong Journey

Looking back to see God's hand along the way.

I GUESS YOU COULD SAY I've been a serial entrepreneur. I'd never thought of it being a Holy Spirit-directed thing. It seemed to be more of a sickness that got diagnosed one night after dinner a few years ago when I was 67.

For years, I'd been on the board of a Pacific Northwest marine biology educational non-profit. The board chairman, learning that I was in between my entrepreneurial seizures, asked if I'd become the executive director of this nonprofit of enviable reputation. As a friend who knew me well, he said; "Stop running around the world, quit having to raise money from churches, do something that everyone understands, and, oh by the way, how much money do you need? \$100K? \$150K? You can buy that Porsche without shame and still make a real contribution to kids' lives and society at large."

I believed in the vision or wouldn't have been on the board and helped raise money for years. It was certainly an important role for believers to play. Besides, at 67, it sounded good. I told him I'd pray and think about it. And, of course, I told my wife, Sybil. She already liked the nonprofit's mission. And to her, having traipsed around the world with me for years, relentlessly supporting my stuff while also pursuing her own successful career, the idea sounded pretty good!

For no apparent reason, about a week into this journey, one night after dinner (I now suspect the Holy Spirit!), I sat down with a lined pad of paper and jotted down every year since I'd graduated from college. No comments, just the raw years, 1958, 1959, etc. At this stage of life, it took a while.

After dutifully staring at this essentially blank page, I began considering key life turning points. It seemed about every seven to 10 years, there were fairly significant shifts in direction. Having worked my way through college in broadcasting, the first few professional years were in the mass media — first as a journalist, then in sales and, later, management.

In 1967, Interchristo was launched — first part-time, then in 1970, full-time. I said goodbye to a full-time career in broadcasting (journalism stayed in my system though, as I continued to do special features for ABC News until the late 1980s). Interchristo was an amazing journey as we fended off those who thought we were substituting the computer for the Holy Spirit while we responded to the interest of thousands of ordinary believers who wanted to do something for God.

By 1980, Interdev was born as a small, globally communications-focused training and consulting ministry. With a handful of creative colleagues, we were involved in some amazing, truly audacious, kingdom projects.

In 1985, in consultation with trusted advisors, Interdev refocused to concentrate on ministry partnership development. We had no formula, few models, and little money. But we were committed to the idea of God's people working together. As a layman, it seemed to me that the practical implications of Jesus' prayer in John 17, along with passages like Ephesians 4, Romans, 1 Corinthians 12, and Psalms 133, all seemed pretty obvious. To quote a friend, "It isn't rocket science."

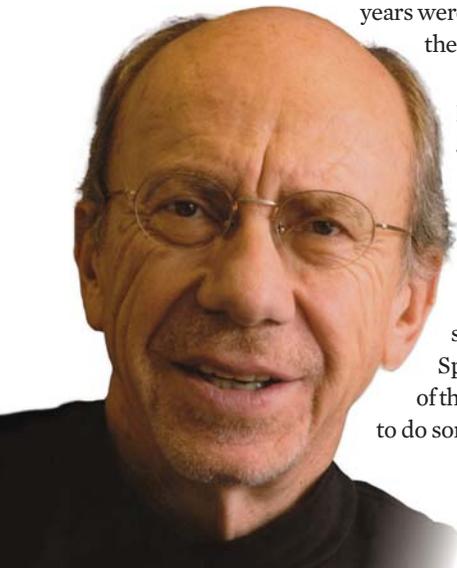
We had no formula, few models, and little money. But we were committed to the idea of God's people working together.

Over the years, God gave us a remarkable team. He allowed us, despite ourselves, to "pioneer the modern partnership movement," as the late Ralph Winter described it. We learned a great deal about what did and didn't work, what was replicable, and in the process, we were privileged to help bring hope to often discouraged and fragmented field personnel. Most important, we saw a partnership approach help make countless spiritual breakthroughs possible — thousands of new believers and countless national leaders where for centuries there had been none.

That night, as I looked over the yellow pad, I said to Sybil, "Amazing. It's plain as day. Over 45 years, each of these initiatives, on the surface apparently so different, had one thing in common: they all required God's people to work together." And, despite my exaggerated aversion to evangelical clichés, I said, "I think this may be the call of God on my life!" It was pretty late to wake up, I know. But, sometimes the patterns don't come into focus early or clearly. And, some of us are really slow learners.

Well, I said no to the nonprofit chairman's offer, visionSynergy was born with a focus on macro collaboration opportunities, and, as the saying goes, "The rest is history." ●

PHILL BUTLER started his professional life in journalism, including many years with ABC News. He then moved on to broadcast management and consulting. Following his career in broadcasting, over the last 30 years, first as head of Interchristo, then Interdev, he has worked in more than 70 countries. He authored *Well Connected: Releasing Power, Restoring Hope Through Kingdom Partnerships* (World Vision/ Authentic Media, 2006). And he now serves as Senior Strategy Advisor for visionSynergy, which focuses on international ministry network development. (pbutler@visionsynergy.net)



It's All About Relationships

Insights for building ministry engagement.

HOW DO YOU GET PEOPLE TO ENGAGE with your parachurch ministry, church, or business? Whether it's getting people in the pew or finding clients for your service, it really is all about relationships. Here are a few relationship lessons we've learned at Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) International over nearly 40 years of ministry:

STRATEGY: HOW TO GET THEM IN THE DOOR

When we asked moms why they came to MOPS, some saw signage or knew about the ministry from another experience, but most came because a friend invited them. Having great facilities and programming helps, but young families aren't likely to walk into an unfamiliar place on a Sunday morning. A relational entry point is winsome. "Come join this great group of moms who will understand exactly what you are going through," is an irresistible invitation for a lonely, isolated mom. Her first few months of going through the door of a church are likely to be on a weekday morning or evening, not a Sunday. A relational strategy can get people in the door to experience a taste of ministry, so they are hungry to come back.

Even as culture has changed over the decades since MOPS started in 1973, the relational need that attracted moms to the first MOPS group is the same one that draws over 90,000 moms to 3,500 groups around the world today. It's the attraction that God built into human hearts. How can this relational strategy extend your own ministry?

STRATEGY: ENGAGING

As you build relationships with those attracted to your ministry, the stronger the web of relationships, the more "sticky" those relationships will be. We've learned that moms who develop relationships with at least three other moms in their group are more likely to stay in MOPS. So having one connection isn't enough, we need to engage people on multiple levels with multiple relationships. That's why the structure of MOPS has always been to provide solid teaching content to equip moms to be better moms, but the core ingredient in the group experience is the small group discussions where moms can wrestle with and apply the teaching content. Such engagement fosters deeper relationships.

STRATEGY: GROWTH

Moving people from the first taste of relationship to deeper engagement is important, but growing their influence is the key to

deeper investment. Our research shows that women often desire to step into a leadership role in a group, but hesitate because they question their own abilities. They will often not believe they can lead, until their leadership gifts are noticed by someone else, and they are invited to step up and lead. Men will often voluntarily step into or create a leadership opportunity, but many women wait to be asked and affirmed.

Forming relationships in a group with like-minded women gives them the courage and confidence they need. Through MOPS groups we've seen women step into other leadership roles in their church, community and even go on to start their own businesses. Providing a platform for personal development is a powerful connecting point to the ministry. Women who can point back to their transformative experience in MOPS become champions of the ministry. They have developed relationships, become engaged and grown.

How can this relational strategy extend your own ministry?

IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

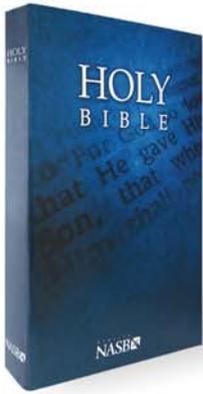
Last year alone 4,000 moms came to a relationship with Christ through a MOPS group. And the numbers don't stop there. The majority of these moms invited their husbands and children to start attending church with them, influencing many of them to start a relationship with Christ as well. They then shared their story with other moms in the neighborhood. It all started with a non-threatening group where the mom was able to simply find a friend. Pastors have seen the impact of such groups in their churches and shared stories like this one from Pastor Tom Williamson in Pulaski, N.Y.:

Twice a month, moms come to our church, drawn by the non-threatening and accepting environment of each MOPS meeting. In the two short years our church has had a MOPS group, we've seen moms come into a saving relationship with Jesus, begin to attend church with their children and husbands and serve at our church. As long as I'm pastoring this church, we'll have a MOPS group!

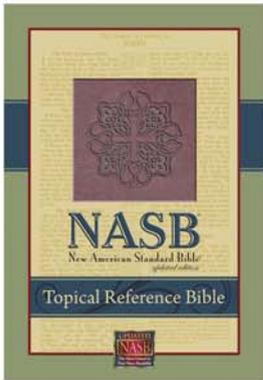
At MOPS we believe that the way to impact our world is through better moms. Better moms make a better world — one mom and one relationship at a time. ●

SHERRY SURRATT is the CEO and president of MOPS International, located in Denver, Colo. (MOPS.org). Previously, Sherry worked at Leadership Network, where she directed Innovation Labs helping church leaders develop fresh ministry ideas. She also served as Children's Ministry Pastor at Seacoast Church.





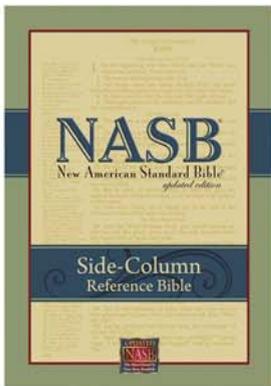
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Taking a Stand

The Faith Alliance against Slavery and Trafficking

GOOD PARTNERSHIPS ALLOW two or more entities to achieve more together than they could separately. They can be seen in almost every sector of society, especially as globalization and technology increase the connectedness of our world.

In business, the success of a partnership is often judged by profits. *Time* Magazine recently reported on airline companies whose success in partnering with hotels in their booking processes has generated millions of dollars in revenue. In media, the partnership of two superstars generally leads to more press and in turn more fame and fortune, e.g. Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie. In technology, partnerships foster creativity and progress. For this reason, Apple partners with thousands of companies so that their customers can download numerous applications, and thus, people can now do almost anything with their iPhones. Clearly, cooperation between organizations and people with complementary goals leads to an increase of innovation, more productivity, and a wider range of impact.

This concept is also used for nefarious ends. For instance, human trafficking is an enterprise of evil run by stealthy and frequently well-organized networks (i.e. partnerships) of human traffickers. Judging from the numbers of their victims around the world and their estimated \$32 billion in annual profits, human traffickers have been wildly successful in their efforts.

So to fight back against this injustice, partnerships between like-minded organizations are not only necessary but essential to stopping the trade in human beings. That's why The Salvation Army USA, The Salvation Army World Service Office (SAWSO), Project Rescue (Assemblies of God World Missions), World Hope International, and World Relief joined together in 2003 to combat human trafficking by forming the Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAAST). In 2009, Live 2 Free, a college-based ministry, joined this partnership, adding its passion and energy to the collaboration.

Each organization had been involved in the fight against human trafficking prior to forming the partnership but realized it could make a greater impact by working collaboratively. Through FAAST (faastinternational.org), these ministries form a Christian alliance dedicated to eradicating human trafficking and restoring trafficking survivors — boldly envisioning “a world without human trafficking, where all human beings are treasured and protected as unique individuals made in God’s image.”

Building on their vast connections within Salvation Army, Assemblies of God, Wesleyan, and National Association of Evangelicals’ churches, each partner organization’s reach is extended as their resources and efforts are combined to form large-scale networks. FAAST’s approach is to work through the church and its community, rather than other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The reason for this concentration is that NGOs generally break down or are unable to sustain their efforts to preserve and protect human life during times of war, famine, socioeconomic failure, and political unrest, which is when ordinary people tend to be the most vulnerable to traffickers. The church, however, often survives such circumstances and continues to provide valuable networks and resources when other systems have failed.

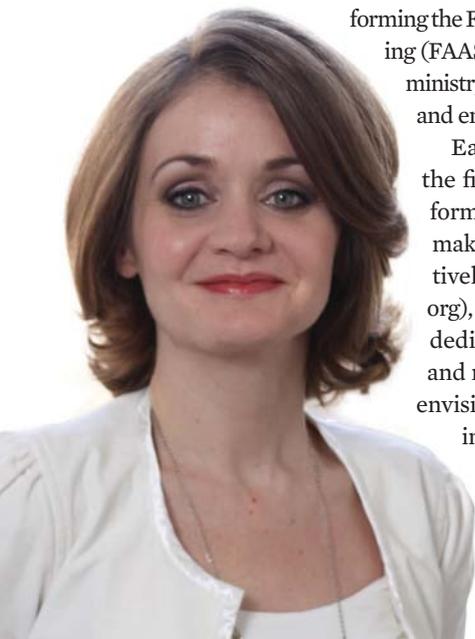
Since its founding, FAAST has developed several anti-trafficking programs which focus on the prevention of trafficking, the rescue of victims, and the restoration of trafficked persons. Additionally, FAAST has devoted considerable resources to the development of *Hands That Heal*, an internationally recognized training manual for caregivers of trafficking survivors.

The *Hands that Heal* curriculum is the result of collaboration among more than 40 academicians and field practitioners from diverse backgrounds and organizations that address the needs of trafficked individuals. Through FAAST’s networks, the curriculum has been used in countries as diverse as Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Liberia, and Mexico.

In John’s gospel, Jesus states, “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does” (John 5:19). Through this proclamation, Jesus illuminates his partnership with God the Father; he only does things in accordance with what his Father does and in accordance with his Father’s character. Their partnership is most effective because Christ and his Father are of one mind and unified in all that they do.

Thus, while FAAST is a partnership that seeks to use its resources to bring about innovation, increase productivity, and progress toward the goal of abolishing human trafficking, FAAST’s first desire is to honor and glorify God in all that it does. ●

LISA L. THOMPSON is the liaison for the abolition of sexual trafficking for The Salvation Army USA National Headquarters. In this role, she works on public policy issues and initiatives related to eradicating sexual trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of women and children. She also assists in the development of strategies for The Salvation Army to create recovery services for survivors of sexual trafficking and chairs its National Anti-Trafficking Council. Thompson has provided expert testimony to the U.S. Congress and routinely speaks and facilitates training for a variety of audiences.



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Equipping the Worldwide Church

The vision of the Langham Partnership.

I REMEMBER THE LOOK of holy jealousy in their eyes. Pieter Kwant, director of Langham literature, had just finished showing a copy of the newly published *Africa Bible Commentary* to the participants in our Langham Partnership Regional Consultation for South Asia, meeting in Kolkata, India, in May 2007. Pieter explained how 70 African scholars had produced this one-volume commentary on the whole Bible, published to very high standard in Africa and for Africa.

“How come,” our Indian friends exclaimed, “that the Africans have done this and we have nothing like it here?” Before the meeting ended, they had committed themselves to work together, to appoint an Indian editorial team, and to commission evangelical scholars from all over South Asia to write on all the books of the Bible. The project is a partnership between Langham Literature and a fully indigenous Indian publishing house. All rights are owned in India and all revenues will flow back there to finance further cooperative projects.

Five years later, it is nearing completion and will serve thousands of pastors all over the region when it is translated into major South Asian languages. The same dynamic is at work in three similar Langham Partnership projects — one-volume commentaries on the whole Bible written entirely by indigenous scholars in Latin America, the Arabic-speaking world, and the Slavic region. All of these will have indigenous evangelical publishers — another goal of Langham Literature being to strengthen such ministry.

Langham Partnership seeks to serve the church, predominantly in the majority world, by working alongside local leaders who are committed to seeing not just growth in numbers, but growth in depth and maturity. Our core documents state:

“Our vision is to see churches equipped for mission and growing to maturity in Christ through the ministry of pastors and leaders who believe, teach, and live by the Word of God.

“Our mission is to strengthen the ministry of the Word of God:

- By nurturing national movements for training in biblical preaching (Langham Preaching).
- By multiplying the creation and distribution of evangelical literature (Langham Literature).
- By strengthening the theological training of pastors and leaders by qualified evangelical teachers (Langham Scholars).”

Among our list of Organizational Values are the following:

Partnership: We seek to relate and listen to churches and Christian organizations in any country

where Langham operates and to work alongside them, seeking to understand and facilitate the vision and mission that God has given them. Programs and projects will be undertaken only by invitation of local and national church leaders, and wherever possible under local leadership.

Servanthood: We seek to be servants of God and of God’s people, and we reject actions, policies, or communications that betray pride or paternalism. We pray that humility will shape all our relationships, and that modesty and gratitude will characterize our response to whatever success God grants to our efforts.

The Langham Preaching program operates entirely by

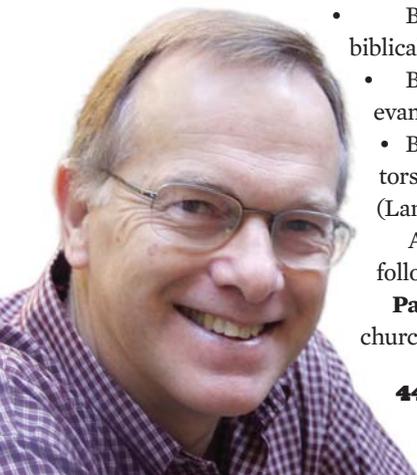
Langham was founded by John Stott, who died in July 2011.

fostering national movements under indigenous leadership, to provide hands-on training in the skills of biblical preaching. This involves creating national committees that include representatives of different churches or ministries. In Indonesia, for example, the Langham Preaching movement is “owned” by three national Christian councils — of Protestant churches, of Evangelical churches, and of Pentecostal churches (that must constitute some kind of kingdom partnership!). Elsewhere we connect with evangelical student movements or evangelical alliances, or cooperating seminaries.

The Langham Scholars program helps to fund men and women to get doctorates in biblical and theological fields, and then return to teach in seminaries in their own countries. Increasingly, we are funding people so that they can do this in doctoral programs in Africa and Asia, rather than coming to the West. So we have established written partnership arrangements with some key seminaries in which we seek assurance of high quality alongside major investments in faculty development and training.

Langham was founded by John Stott, who died in July 2011. His personal style was non-hierarchical friendship and deeply relational ministry. That is the spirit that we seek to continue in Langham, arguably his major legacy. The partnership is not just one-way. Given the growing strength of the church outside the West and the decline of the church in the West, we will increasingly need partnerships of mutual help and benefit, in which the Western church has as much to receive as to give. ●

REV. DR. CHRIS WRIGHT, from Northern Ireland, now lives in London. After pastoral ministry in the Church of England, he taught Old Testament in India and at All Nations Christian College, and then followed John Stott in leadership of the Langham Partnership. His books include *The Mission of God* and *The Mission of God’s People*. (LanghamPartnership.org)



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“ECFA has helped our global outreach to marriages, families and orphans. We are advocates and partners with a number of ministries and we only consider “partnering” with those ministries that are ECFA members. ECFA brings confidence and increased trust to individuals, donors and ministry leaders.”

Enhancing Trust

Dr. Dennis Rainey, Host
FamilyLife Today
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Book Discussion:

The Advantage

Patrick Lencioni on the priority of organizational health.

PATRICK LENCIONI, past CLA national conference keynote speaker and future keynoter in 2013, is the founder and president of The Table Group. His 10 best-selling business books have sold more than 3 three million copies. Outcomes Editor-in-chief W. Scott Brown interviewed Lencioni on his newest book, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* (Jossey-Bass, March 2012). This is his first non-fiction book as he sets out to explore the transformational nature of organizational health and why it is the most untapped advantage in business.

What is the core message of *The Advantage*, and what action steps do you hope leaders take away from it?

The Advantage explores, in depth, the benefits of organizational health. Organizational health is essentially about making a company function effectively by building a cohesive leadership team, establishing real clarity among those leaders, communicating that clarity to everyone within the organization, and putting in place just enough structure to reinforce that clarity going forward. Simply put, an organization is healthy when it is whole, consistent, and complete, and when its management, operations, and culture are unified. Healthy organizations outperform their counterparts, are free of politics and confusion, and provide an environment where star performers never want to leave.

For leaders, addressing organizational health provides an incredible advantage to companies because, ultimately, health becomes the multiplier of intelligence. The healthier an organization is, the more of its intelligence it's able to tap into and actually use. Most organizations only exploit a fraction of the knowledge, experience, and intellectual capital available to them. The healthy ones tap into all of it. Addressing health helps companies to make smarter, faster decisions, without politics and confusion.

Most organizations only exploit a fraction of the knowledge, experience, and intellectual capital available to them. The healthy ones tap into all of it. Addressing health helps companies to make smarter, faster decisions, without politics and confusion.

How can we build a culture of collaborative teamwork in our organizations?

In my book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, I discuss how a team needs to wrestle with dysfunction in order to become

cohesive or more collaborative. Successful teamwork is not about mastering subtle, sophisticated theories, but rather about embracing common sense with uncommon levels of discipline and persistence. Ironically, teams succeed because they are exceedingly human. By acknowledging the imperfections of their humanity, members of functional teams overcome the natural tendencies that make teamwork so elusive.

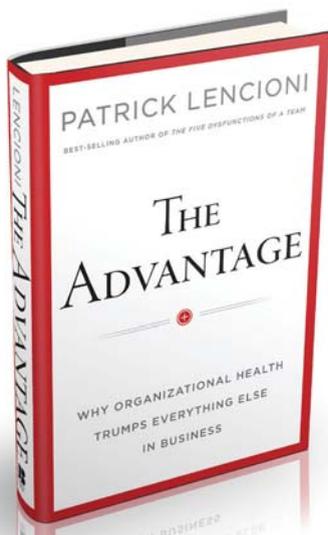
Based on your experience, what is the key to building organizational health?

An organization doesn't become healthy in a linear, tidy fashion. Like building a strong marriage or family, it's a messy process that involves mastering a few simple concepts and working to revisit and maintain the execution of those concepts over time.

- 1. Build a Cohesive Leadership Team.** The first step is about getting the leaders of the organization to behave in a functional, cohesive way. If the people responsible for running an organization, whether that organization is a corporation, a department within that corporation, a start-up company, a restaurant, a school, or a church, are behaving in dysfunctional ways, then that dysfunction will cascade into the rest of the organization and prevent organizational health.
- 2. Create Clarity.** The second step for building a healthy organization is ensuring that the members of that leadership team are intellectually aligned around six simple but critical questions. Leaders need to be clear on topics from why the organization exists to what its most important priority is for the next few months. Leaders must eliminate any gaps that may exist between them, so that people one, two, or three levels below have complete clarity about what they should do to make the organization successful.
- 3. Over-Communicate Clarity.** After these first two steps are in process (behavioral and intellectual alignment), an organization can undertake the third step: over-communicating the answers to the six questions. Leaders of a healthy organization constantly — and I mean constantly — repeat themselves and reinforce what is true and important. They always err on the side of saying too much rather than too little. This quality alone sets leaders of healthy organizations apart from others.
- 4. Reinforce Clarity.** Finally, in addition to over-communicating, leaders must ensure that the answers to the six critical questions are reinforced repeatedly using simple human systems. That means any process that involves people, from hiring and firing to performance management and decision-making, is designed to intentionally support and emphasize organizational clarity.

In addition to these four steps, it is essential that a healthy organization get better at the one activity that underpins everything it does: meetings. Without making a few simple but fundamental changes to the way meetings happen, a healthy organization will struggle to maintain what it has worked hard to build. ●

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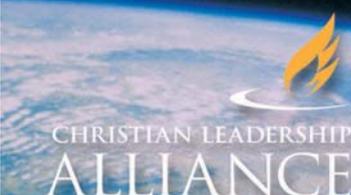
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A Leader's List

11 useful questions to assess your Christian leadership.

WE MAKE LISTS. There are to-do lists, shopping lists, invitation lists, bucket lists, appointment lists, and Christmas lists. Lists can help us remember, set goals, stay on schedule, track our progress, and keep us accountable.

Each of us is pressed by the lure of our culture to adapt to worldly beliefs and practices so it is important to consider how such influences affect us. After all, our organizations comprise the values of the people who work there. Seldom do we do a spiritual check-up. Here is a checklist of 11 questions to help you assess how your (and/or your staff's) life and leadership reflect your calling as a steward leader following Christ.

1. **Is the goal of your life and ministry centered on the Great Commission, to win others to Christ through word and deed? (Matt. 28:18-20)** Do you hold lightly the things of this earth (Eph. 4:22-24)?
2. **Are you operating from a biblical perspective of leadership?** Scripture suggests that leaders lead from the bottom up and not top down (Mark 9:35); from weakness, not power (Isa. 40:29); and by understanding one's limitations, not by having a sense of entitlement (1 Cor. 6:12).
3. **Do you acknowledge in everything (Ps. 147:5) that God is all powerful, all knowing, and always present?** Have you internalized that God is the moral authority? Leaders are stewards/managers of a sacred trust in God's organization, and are accountable ultimately to God.
4. **Do you serve a God of abundance, rather than scarcity? (John 10:10)** Acting from abundance includes making plans and decisions that do not limit the Lord. Funding goals are met as God provides, rather than as a board or CEO dreams.
5. **Are praying and reading and meditating on God's Word important parts of your life? (Acts 6:4)** Is concerted time spent in God's Word, to discern his will? Do you earnestly believe in and practice prayer, both corporately and privately?
6. **Do you relate to fellow believers as members together in the body of Christ? (1 Cor. 12:12-31)** Demonstrating genuine love, commitment, and concern for one another creates a climate of personal and spiritual growth and is evidence of the fruit of the Spirit. This also avoids businesslike outcome measurements that place demeaning utilitarian value on people.
7. **Have you internalized God's way of giving and asking from a transformed heart, or are you stuck on using the world's ways of marketing transactions? (2 Cor. 8:1-5)** Is your resource-raising focused on growing ministry partners' hearts to be rich toward God as Christ demonstrates with his generosity? Do you focus

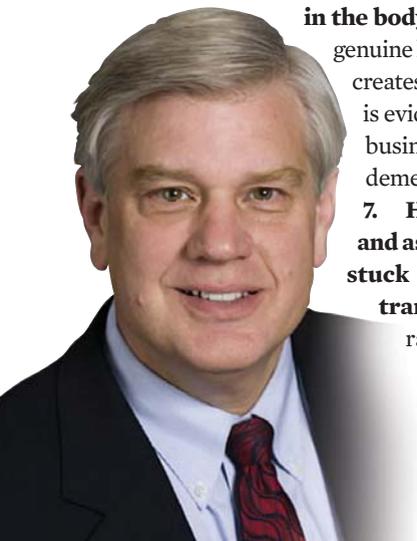
on developing stewards of God's provisions rather than philanthropists who simply love mankind?

8. **Do you lead as a sower, rather than a reaper?** Is your focus on growing relationships in light of eternity? A sower measures success from the perspective of fruitfulness in God's eyes rather than growth in the world's eyes. He invests in people created with spiritual gifts and strengths. (Ecc. 11:6; 1 Cor. 3:1-9; Mark 4:1-20).
9. **Are you more concerned with who you are in Christ, or with what you can do to build your resume? (Gal. 5:22-23)** Whatever fruit is evidenced in our lives is a result of the Spirit's work and his gracious provisions.
10. **Are you more interested in controlling people, or in supporting and encouraging? (Acts 15)** Characteristics of support and encouragement include letting go of control, stepping out in faith, and allowing God to lead—all of which nurture people's strengths and giftedness.
11. **Do you make a conscious effort to remember that decisions have eternal consequences? (Acts 17:22-31)** Christian leaders who follow a secular business model will often measure their success by the completion of current projects, the achievement of short-term goals, and the purposeful delay of a resolution. The biblical model of leadership puts a priority on fruitfulness and sustainability (John 14:12).

There is value in reviewing a checklist of how our Christian commitment affects our work."

There is value in reviewing a checklist of how our Christian commitment affects our work. But in the end, in all humility, we must echo the words of Paul: We are not "competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God" (2 Cor. 3:5). ●

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