

outcomes

The Magazine of Christian Leadership Alliance

Seeds of Hope

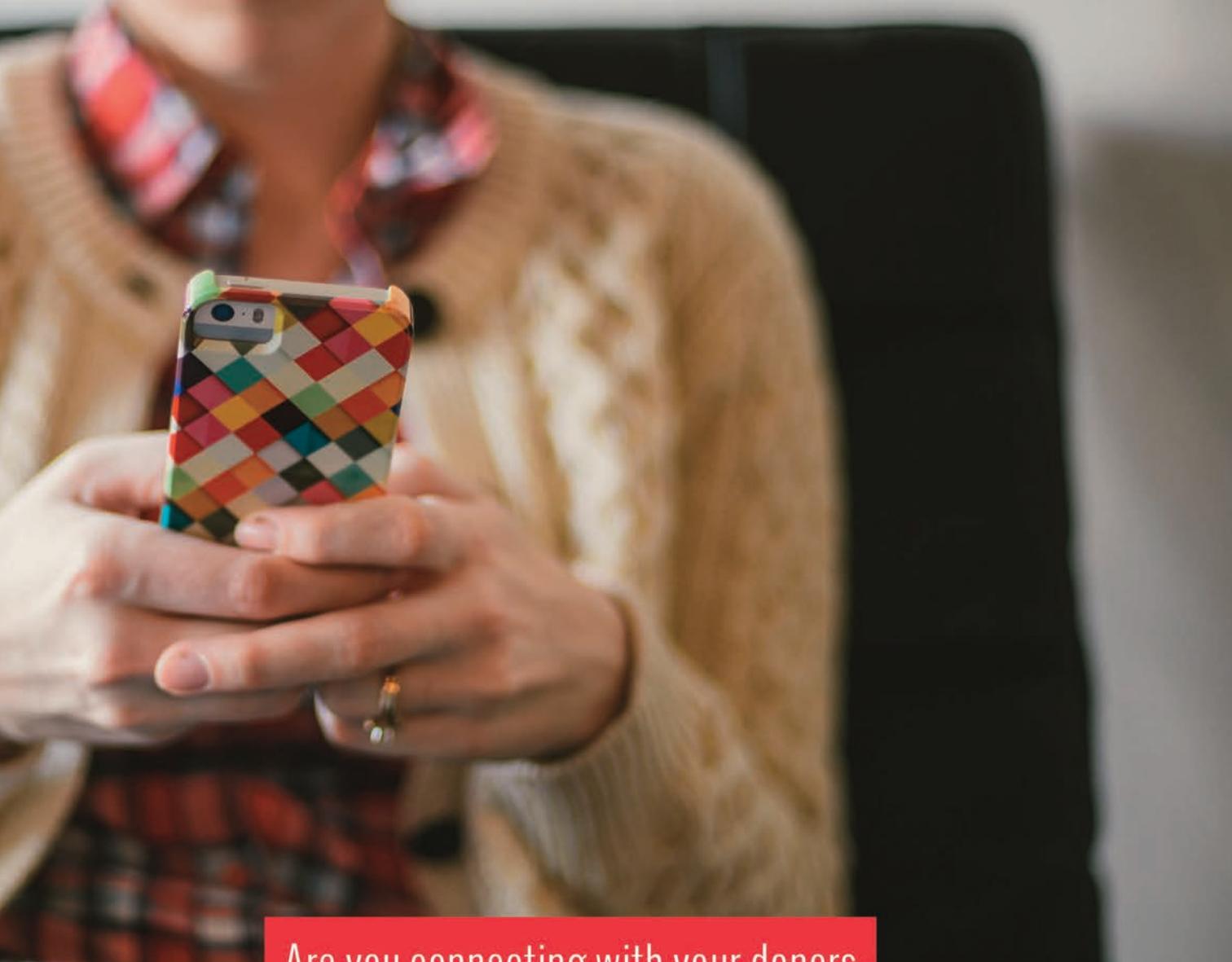
Seed Company's
Samuel E. Chiang
on stewarding our moment



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A Faithful Steward

THIS EDITION OF *OUTCOMES* FOCUSES on the theme of “stewardship.” Lately, I have thought often of the Old Testament prophet Daniel. My pastor is leading a fascinating sermon series on the book of Daniel, and several books I’m reading reference Daniel and his life in Babylon. I believe he has much to teach us as Christian stewards today.

Like Daniel, we find ourselves leading amid an increasingly hostile culture. We can learn from the wisdom, integrity and grace with which Daniel served and excelled within Babylonian culture. He exemplified God-honoring stewardship. *“Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.”* (Daniel 6:3) Even his jealous rivals ran aground upon the shore of Daniel’s firm integrity. *“They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.”* (Daniel 6:4b)

Daniel was a faithful steward because of his deep commitment to God. We see that exemplified in Daniel 6:10: *“Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.”*

Did you catch that? He gave thanks to God ... *just as he had done before.* Daniel had long been a man of prayer and thanksgiving. His course was set. He didn’t waver as the pressure to compromise his faith intensified. That’s my prayer for us as leaders in our own time. Let us likewise be faithful stewards in the service of the King of Kings.

W. Scott Brown

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The purpose of *Outcomes* is to fulfill Christian Leadership Alliance’s mission to equip and unite leaders to transform the world for Christ. *Outcomes* offers those whom Christ calls to leadership higher thinking and lifelong learning resources to equip them for excellence in kingdom service and stewardship.

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Seeds of Hope

Seed Company's Samuel E. Chiang on stewarding our moment

CLA PRESIDENT AND CEO TAMI HEIM recently interviewed Rev. Samuel E. Chiang, president and chief executive officer of Seed Company, a member of the Wycliffe family of organizations.

Chiang also serves as the senior associate for orality for the Lausanne Movement. Previously, he served as executive director of the International Orality Network. Before that, Chiang served as COO for Trans World Radio, an international Christian media organization. He has extensive experience with the church in China, and has written extensively on China, Asia and orality.

Earlier in his career, Chiang served as East Asia area director with Partners International, where he trained young leaders, developed curricula and software, and provided leadership to new and existing partnerships in China and other countries. Born in Taiwan, he grew up in Canada. He graduated from the University of Toronto and worked for the professional services firm Ernst & Young in Canada. He later received a master's degree in biblical studies from Dallas Theological Seminary, where he also served on staff. He was ordained and sent out from the Peoples' Church, Toronto.

An avid runner and reader, Samuel Chiang and his wife, Robbi, have three adult children. Recently they moved from Hong Kong to the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Seed Company, a CLA member organization founded in 1993, works with hundreds of field partner organizations and churches to accelerate the pace of Bible translation among Bibleless people. This means that Scripture becomes available in written, oral and various digital formats in local languages to facilitate church planting, evangelism and discipleship efforts led by local people.

Share with us how you've approached the transition into your new role as CEO of Seed Company. How have you sought to make this transition successful?

I am particularly glad of the strong team already present here. I served on the board for four years before coming into this role, but there is a level of operational knowledge I lack. So my strategy has been to follow *The First 90 Days* (Harvard Business School Press, 2003) by Michael Watkins. I highly recommend that book. It talks about spending the first 30 days listening.

I came in here specifically with nine questions. I try to learn from and listen to various staff members — across all time zones, and certainly multigenerational. Within the first 30 days I spent time with about 13 percent of our staff. I listened a lot and took notes. By the way, the notes were devoid of names, because we weren't looking for behavior. We were looking for patterns of what God is doing in Seed Company.

Then in the next 30 days, I specifically focused the question: How do we think about structuring, and how do we think about leaders developing into the future? Already, Seed Company is full

of younger leaders. But we are interested in how to develop younger leaders for the next generation.

Then of course, a large piece is to see in the last 30 days how to start aligning people into a new structure.

Were you surprised by anything you heard in those conversations?

First let me say that Seed Company has been in a period of leadership transition for almost two years. So my answer here is not meant to reflect negatively on anyone's leadership, but just to objectively observe where we are today. One of the things that came up very, very consistently was how we work nonstop without Sabbath. People are sending e-mails at 10 o'clock at night and on weekends.

Second, people have said to me that our core values are being squeezed. And that squeezing has predominately been for core value number two: valuing individuals and relationships, and number four: encouraging creativity and innovation.

Quite a number of people have consistently said to me, "Wow. If we are squeezing value number two, then we are squeezing indirectly value number one: honoring God in all that we do."

I've also been hearing very positive things. Seed Company places high, high value on maintaining a culture of prayer. Every workday here begins with a half-hour of corporate prayer and worship, and that mindset permeates our work environment.

How do you view this moment for the church in terms of stewarding the Great Commission in the translation of Scripture worldwide?

It is the first time in the church's history that we know all of the language communities that will or might need translation. We are stewarding *Missio Dei*, sending forth God into language communities. We know where they are. We know how we must do this in concert with organizations through the forming of partnerships. We believe the stewardship of the church cannot be done alone. It needs to be done through collaboration, especially since some of those languages are difficult to get into. We must work intentionally with the local communities if we are to steward those languages meaningfully, well, and with fruitfulness.

Do you think the church understands the sense of urgency around this?

I do not believe that the church understands at all the sense of urgency. In many places where I have spoken with people, they are surprised to learn that not all language groups have the Bible. When I tell them how many full Bibles we have currently — 540 full Bibles — they are stunned. And then I layer on that there are 7,102 living languages defined by the Ethnologue (ethnologue.com),

and they are shocked. So they move from unaware to stunned to shocked.

Part of our role in the Bible translation movement is to help the church understand the tremendous need for Scripture among so many language groups and communities. But there's a historic opportunity as well. The worldwide church can finish the work together — in this generation. We pray every day toward that goal.

Can you talk about the vital importance of the orality work of which you have been a part?

The orality work is complementary, not supplementary, to the distribution and engagement of Scripture. We come from a written paradigm: text transmission of Scripture. However, many communities of the world, even when they have a written Scripture, think in terms of oral conversation about the Scripture. Orality includes having a means of receiving the Scripture, processing the Scripture, memorizing the Scripture and passing on the Scripture. That is the very process of what those languages communities are about.

Last century, when the technology was purely Gutenberg-ish, we all looked at the printed page. This century, when the technology is all Google-ish — much more digital — we are thinking, “Wow. What does it mean when we receive the Scripture in audio format?” And we will listen to the Scripture.

Scripture has a means of entering into our minds, and we receive it there as it resonates, and we live with it. We steward that audio portion of the Scripture. So, for this century and forward, the digital portion of receiving audio Scriptures and having conversations in communities is probably going to be even more significant than how we did it in the Guttenberg era. Because now Scripture is spoken about with each other and it enters each other's hearing. That, in essence, is like the time of Jesus, like the time of the early church and the desert

fathers. So we are returning to the historical frame of the church before this interruption of textual transmission for the past 500 years. Today we see a different methodology, one much more similar to the pre-Gutenberg press era.

This is so significant that we haven't even begun to grapple with what it means for the church. But it is a wonderful opportunity for the church to talk about Scripture in the way that God has intended.

For people of the Hebraic faith, for them to become rabbis — in fact, for them to be disciplers or learners in school — boys, age 6 to 12, in those six years, must memorize the first five books of the Old Testament, word perfect. And for girls, they must remember the books of Deuteronomy, Proverbs, and Psalms, for the sake of Shabbat or Sabbath. If they have it word perfect, then they go on. The boys go on to memorize the rest of the Old Testament in three years, age 12 to 15, and then they become practitioners and are considered to be able to study with rabbis who have all this word perfect. I mention this because in the Hebraic faith, they memorized the Scripture as it was written. So the living beings who have the Scripture in them could actually talk about the text: “Yes, but it was this book that talks about here; it was Zechariah that talks about” “No, it was Hosea who said this.” They are able to pull in the liveliness of the Scripture to talk about the text. We, on the other hand, have lost that. We talk about the text in piecemeal. They talk about an entire living Scripture and examine the text from that perspective. Those are two very different methodologies.

What is your vision for Seed Company as it continues to embrace its stewardship of Bible translation worldwide?

We have two lines of ministry. The first line is continuing in the stewardship of helping language communities deliver Scripture in their heart language to their own people. Our second line of ministry, which really came from many other Bible translation organizations, is that they are coming to Seed Company saying, “Show us how you are doing this.” We do that under the banner of our mission, which is to accelerate Scripture translation and impact for people groups that don't yet have the Word of God, and doing it with Great Commission partners.

The other part is that there are only 540 full Bibles. That means that those groups have the Old Testament, and that over 6,000 language groups do not have it. We believe in this century, generations will receive the Old Testament for the first time. And that is a stretch of faith because the last century has been about the New Testament. In this century, as the language communities have depended, sourced and discovered the Old Testament, they want that Old Testament piece fast and early. That means we have to serve them based on their request. The Old Testament is three times the size of the New Testament. Yet we believe by faith that in this century we will see deliveries of the Old Testament in the heart languages of people from literally thousands of those language community groups. ●

Learn more at (theseedcompany.org)

 Want to learn more? Rev. **SAMUEL E. CHIANG** will be the keynote speaker at the Men's Breakfast for The Outcomes Conference, CLA Dallas 2016, April 19-21, 2016. (OutcomesConference.org)



A New Way to Lead

My introduction to “steward leadership”

LAST YEAR I JOINED A CHRISTIAN MINISTRY for the first time in my career, after 20 years in corporate marketing roles. I quickly noticed the “de rigueur” concept in Christian ministry: steward leadership. Everyone was talking about it.

Makes sense, I thought, as I tried to acclimate. I chalked it up to a biblical spin on what I had learned back in business school and corporate leadership programs.

The general definition was clear: one who manages the efficient use and growth of organizational resources. I read thoughtful examinations by Christian authors extolling the attributes of effective steward leaders: integrity, collaboration, transparency, humility and others. Though inspired, I wasn’t quite sure how to apply this.

To break it down, it was helpful to consider the *types* of resources under a leader’s care. It was interesting to see how my behavior shifted from the practical norms I had picked up in secular environments. I also learned that a holistic view of resources is important. When they are well-managed, positive impact is multiplied.

• **People:** I became a people manager years ago when a colleague at a start-up tech company passed away from an aggressive cancer. I was thrust into his role during the company’s most hectic time of year. While many of us were grieving the loss of our friend and co-worker, I selfishly became maniacal about managing my new reports in their workflow. I was not going to drop the ball. As I became more comfortable in my role, I realized I had to invest in the fullness of each person — not just their productivity.

Recently in my quiet time I was struck by Proverbs 3:27: “*Do not withhold good to those whom it is due, when it is in your power to act.*” I was immediately convicted that I had not properly acknowledged a staff member who had quietly been overperforming and was due a promotion. My lesson learned through the years: being a leader isn’t about facilitating workflow; it’s about nurturing others to their full potential.

• **Financial Resources:** Transitioning from a well-funded Wall Street darling to a ministry tackling a difficult cause meant spending my marketing budget differently. A few tips: the potluck holiday lunch in a home was a lot more bonding and tasty than a restaurant party. And free. Also, only hire consultants when you sincerely desire new insights and plan to implement good decisions. Sounds obvious, but I saw how the nonprofit environment overused consultants without commitment to execution. Another challenge was around partnerships. My organization is often approached by others to support very worthy projects. Though we may have shared values, the projects often aren’t clearly connected to our mission. Rather than feel guilty about politely declining, I feel affirmed that we are being better stewards of financial resources lovingly entrusted by our donors. As I’ve explained these decisions, I’ve seen staff grow in discernment, deprioritizing off-mission activity and attacking key opportunities with new confidence and focus.

• **Time:** So many books have been written on time management, but they often talk about how to better utilize time and protect schedules. I have been convicted of my need for the opposite: to be more generous with my time. Spending lunch with colleagues rather than at my desk, listening to the long answer of “How are you today?” when someone has a sick child, starting our workday’s first half hour in prayer. As my pastor Tim Keller in New York City commented from the pulpit about his financially generous but time-starved congregation, people can be quite stingy about the currency of time. I’ve been one of the worst offenders. My daily goal is still to leave at a decent hour to spend quality time with my husband, but I have reprioritized activity during the day — no longer speeding up meetings and tasks, but slowing them down by starting with a discussion about how everyone is doing. Then we can open in prayer. Then we can work. It unites hearts, calms nerves and invites our Creator to guide us in what he has called us to do.

In business school and corporate environments, I often felt sad emptiness participating in leadership training. Why? It was all about profits, productivity, nothing eternal. With the steward leader model, I have found a surprising and rewarding approach for managing the diverse resources under my care for God’s purposes. ●

SARA NAGELVOORT MARLIN is the vice president of marketing and communications for Prison Fellowship, the nation’s largest outreach to prisoners, former prisoners and their families.



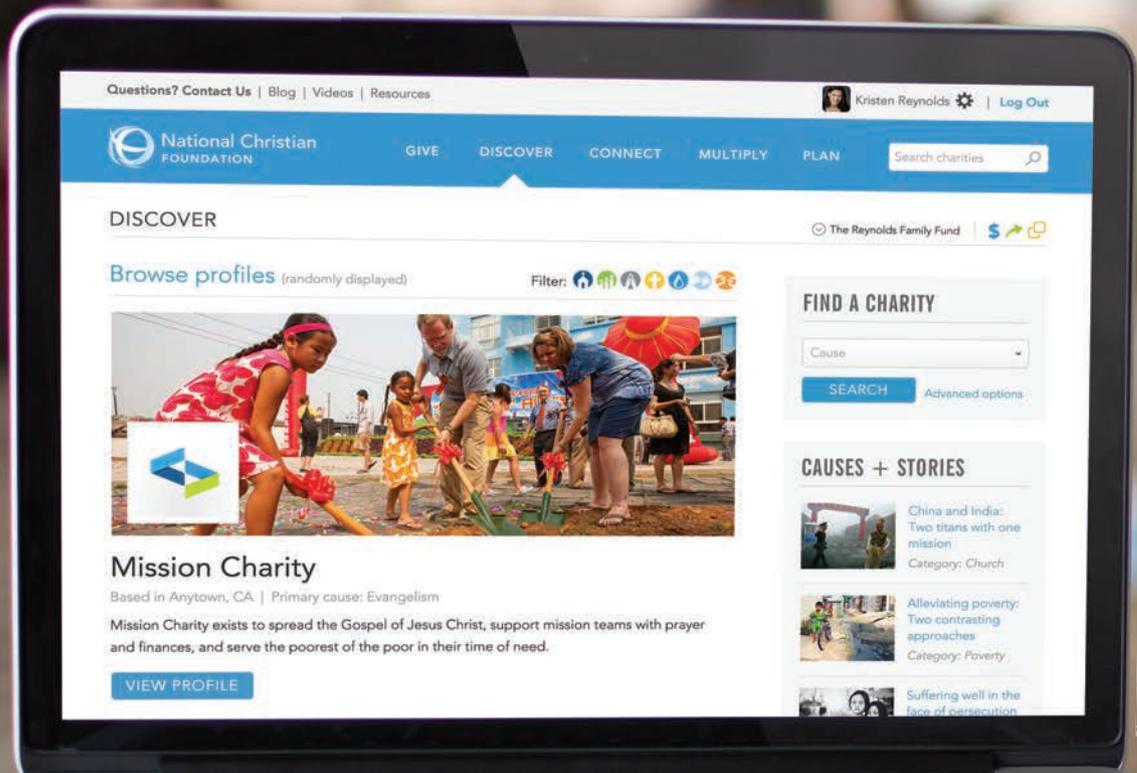


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The Prioritized Life

Successful leadership is about saying yes to God's call.

CALL. INFLUENCE. LEGACY. These are key ideas that occupy the mind of every leader, and they all begin with a daily life lived for Jesus. Doug Nuenke, U.S. President of The Navigators and keynote speaker at the 2016 Outcomes Conference in Dallas, wrote about what this means in his book *Making Waves: Being an Influence for Jesus in Everyday Life* (NavPress, 2011). Laura Leonard spoke with Nuenke about what his years in ministry leadership have taught him about living every aspect of his daily life for Jesus.

What are the keys to stewarding time well, particularly for leaders?

It starts with the idea of stewarding our own hearts and our own souls. Psalm 40:1-3 says, *"I waited patiently for the LORD. He turned to me and he heard my cry. He lifted me up out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the LORD and put their trust in him."* One of the first steps for all of us, me included, is to steward my heart, and take an assessment of where I am. Is that how people would look upon me as they are interacting with me during the day — that I'm patiently waiting for the Lord? Or that I've got a new song in my mouth? We can easily go to questions of how we prioritize or manage our time, but those just address the symptoms of a hurried heart.

How can leaders balance ministry and relationships while protecting their hearts?

Balance is a myth. God calls us to a prioritized life — a life where we hold up certain values more highly than others. I think of Jesus saying, in Matthew 6:33, *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."* Rather than thinking about balance, I think about priorities; are my priorities and my values set within the calling of Jesus on my life? Everything else will flow out of that. The Bible is full of unbalanced people who were faithful to the things God called them to. The only way we can have a life with a healthy rhythm is if we say yes to the right things — the things God is calling us into.

Why do leaders lose sight of those priorities?

We don't live out of confidence in our sonship or daughtership in the Lord. When we lose our grounding and our connection and our confidence in Christ, we start listening to all the other voices first.

Galatians 4:6-7 says, *"And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'"* So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God." (NRSV) As soon as we lose that grounding, we can easily start listening to all the voices around us. The broader we lead, the more voices there are. If I get off-kilter, it's because I hear some voice out there and I'm giving it priority, or I'm trying to find my confidence in that voice being happy. That doesn't mean I'm not going to listen; I'm a big believer in collaborative leadership. But it's about where I am finding my confidence.

A second thing is rhythms of rest and withdrawal, whether it's spending time with the Lord each morning, or minutes that we pause during the day, or honoring the Sabbath or taking time off with the idea of resting and withdrawing with the Lord. Jesus often went off to lonely places where he prayed. If Jesus could do that — and he certainly had plenty to get done during his three years of ministry — we as leaders can, too.

Learn more at Navigators.org
Find Doug's book *Making Waves* at navpress.com

AN INTERVIEW
WITH
DOUG NUENKE

Milestones

APPOINTED Rev. Joseph S. Batluck, Sr., D.Min., as president of Teen Challenge, USA. Batluck previously served as executive director of the Teen Challenge Training Center, Inc. in Rehrersburg, Penn., and earlier had 30 years of service as a U.S. Army chaplain.

DIED Macel Falwell, widow of the late Dr. Jerry Falwell, founder of Liberty University and pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church. Her sons carry on the work that the Falwells began — Jerry Falwell Jr., as president of Liberty University, and Jonathan Falwell as pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church.

DIED David Winter, former president of Westmont College who helped found the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), of cancer. He was 84 years old.

HEADLINES:

CLA Launches Outcomes365

In October, Christian Leadership Alliance launched Outcomes365, a year-long experience to equip leaders for personal and professional excellence. As a pioneer ministry partner with American Bible Society's new "Bible," CLA introduced Outcomes365 at (Leadership.Bible).

This initiative offers customizable leadership training that includes 12-month engagement via the Outcomes Mentoring Network, enrollment in the Credentialed Christian Non-profit Leader (CCNL) program, 40 hours of study in the CLA Online Academy, registration for the Academic Experience at CLA's annual Outcomes Conference, registration for the monthly "Encore Series" webcasts, a subscription to *Outcomes* magazine, the CLA "Higher Thinking" blog and CLA's daily digital paper, as well as access to CLATV.

"Leadership growth must be nurtured and developed daily," said Tami Heim, CLA president and CEO. "We live in a time when it's urgent for Christians to lead based on biblical principles and with God-honoring excellence. Outcomes365 will activate, accelerate and achieve that outcome in the life of Christian nonprofit ministry leaders across the nation and around the world."

Learn more at Leadership.Bible.

SCORECARD

THE STATE OF SIN

Recent legislation has made it clear: the moral landscape of the United States is rapidly shifting. Pope Francis' visit to the United States in late September brought the traditional Christian views on many moral issues to the forefront of public discussion. Pew Research Center's 2015 Survey of U.S. Catholics and Family Life surveyed Catholics, Protestants and the general public on their positions on many of these divisive issues, asking each group to identify what qualifies as sin. The results show how people across the faith spectrum think about sin, and demonstrate the widening gap on many issues.

IS IT A SIN TO...?

Group: US General Public/Catholic/Protestant/Unaffiliated (% that positively identified activity as a sin)

GROUP	US GENERAL PUBLIC	CATHOLIC	PROTESTANT	UNAFFILIATED
Have an abortion	48	57	60	22
Engage in homosexual behavior	45	44	62	18
Cohabit	36	33	52	12
Spend money on luxuries without also giving to the poor	35	41	41	19
Divorce	19	21	26	9
Use resources without concern for environment	19	23	19	13
Drink alcohol	15	12	19	8
Live in an overly large house	11	12	13	8
Use contraceptives	10	17	10	7

For more information on this study, go to (<http://bit.ly/state-of-sin-survey>).



*All leaders
are learners.
The moment you
stop learning,
you stop leading.*

RICK WARREN

The latest news for today's Christian leaders

Christian Leadership Alliance Offers Religious Liberty Training

Christian Leadership Alliance (CLA) is dedicated to providing CLA member organizations and leaders with training and information on how to protect religious liberty in a culture increasingly hostile to that core Constitutional freedom. Recently, Jeff Mateer, general counsel for the Liberty Institute, Plano, Texas, met with members of four CLA Leader2Leader peer networking groups based in Dallas and Atlanta to discuss religious freedom and Christian nonprofit organizations. Learn more about CLAs Leader2Leader program at (CLALeader2Leader.org).

This focus will continue, during CLA's 2016 Outcomes Conference in Dallas (April 19-21, 2016), where several sessions will address religious liberty issues, including:

- 1. ITI Seminar (6 hours): "Being a 'Daniel' after Obergefell"** led by Scott Ward, J.D., Attorney/Owner and Steve King, J.D., Attorney/Managing Owner, Gammon & Grange, P.C., and Rhett Butler, M.A., Director of Government Relations, Gammon & Grange Consulting, LLC
- 2. Workshop (1.5 hours): "New Threats: Protecting Your Ministry"** led by Douglas Napier, Esq., Senior Counsel, Chief Alliance Officer, Exec. Vice Pres., Alliance Defending Freedom
- 3. Workshop (1.5 hours): "Surviving the**

Obergefell Decision" led by Richard Matthews, J.D., LL.M, General Counsel, Trail Life USA

4. Workshop (1.5 hours): "Religious Identity Audits for Organizations" led by Scott Ward, J.D., Attorney/Owner and Steve King, J.D., Attorney/Managing Owner, Gammon & Grange P.C.

5. Workshop (1.5 hours): "Legal Hotspots" led by Robert Showers, J.D., Managing Owner, and Dan Hebda, Associate, Simms Showers Law Firm

These sessions are a part of more than 350 hours of training available at this conference. Learn more and register to attend at (OutcomesConference.org).

December and January, Leadership Training Through CLA

Outcomes Mentoring Network: Sign up for a life changing leadership experience! On average, each CLA mentor has more than 28 years of ministry or other professional leadership experience, and some 80 percent are senior leaders. Registration deadline for the next mentor/mentee cohort is **Dec. 11**. Learn more at (OutcomesMentoring.org).

CLA Encore Webcasts: Don't miss the **Dec. 17** CLA "Encore" Webcast with Dr. Michael Oh, CEO, The Lausanne Movement, as we explore "Pursuing Kingdom Outcomes - A Worldwide Perspective." Learn more at (ChristianLeadershipAlliance.org/Webcasts).

CLA Online Academy: The lineup for the Winter 2016 CLA Online Academy has been announced. Registration deadline is **Jan. 18, 2016**, and winter modules begin **Jan. 25, 2016**. Learn more at (ChristianLeadershipAlliance.org/Academy).

CLATV: Are you watching CLA's 24-7 eStation? Join the many leaders across America who are doing that daily. We offer the best in leadership thinking from some of the most compelling voices in Christian leadership today. The CLATV lineup changes weekly, so don't miss our great programming in Dec. 2015 and Jan. 2016! (CLATV.org)

Templeton Prize to Humanitarian Disaster Institute

The John Templeton Foundation awarded a \$1.9 million grant to Wheaton College's Humanitarian Disaster Institute (HDI), a faith-based academic research center focused on disasters and humanitarian crises. With the money, HDI launched a \$2.4 million research project, "Earth as a School: Finding Meaning, Relating to God, and Experiencing Growth After a Natural Disaster," which will study how the effects of natural disasters impact the spiritual and psychological lives of survivors.

Navigating the

Steward leaders in cultural conflict

By R. Scott Rodin

WE ARE ENTERING UNCHARTED TERRITORY for Christian leaders. Many feel we live in unprecedented times. The events of past months create a gnawing sense that the moral fiber and ethical foundation of the world we live in is undergoing a seismic shift. And no one seems sure where or when it will resettle. As we face a seemingly endless barrage of attacks on biblical values and kingdom ethics, the question is forced upon us: How then shall we lead?

In the current cultural chaos, I believe the steward leader is uniquely equipped to face these challenges with the courage to carry out God's work, and the humility to do so God's way. These challenging times are sifting moments where owner-leaders falter and fail. Perhaps the victory that God is working through these times is identifying leaders who will surrender themselves to him. God is seeking steward leaders who are willing to lay everything before him at a deeper level than ever before.

THE NARROW ROAD

While living in Scotland we would often drive a narrow road that wound around the hills of Royal Deeside. At the point where the pavement encroached in and our wheels seemed to hang over each side, there came a sign that read, "Danger — Road Narrows." Really? How much narrower can it get?

That same question confronts leaders today. Following Jesus means living and leading on the narrow road. Jesus tells us, *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."* (Matt. 7:13-14)

Leading on this narrow road requires navigating between two cliffs — an increasingly Christophobic culture and an ever-compromising church. The former hates the things of God, the latter is abandoning his truth. As they grow in size and steepness, the road between them grows ever narrower, and choosing it will come at a greater price.

Narrow Road



We shouldn't be surprised to find Jesus here. He walked this narrow road, confronting the church and culture of his day with his Father's truth. As a result, the Roman rulers scourged him, his followers abandoned him, the world mocked him and the religious leaders crucified him. From this same path of sacrifice, he looks to us and says, *"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."* (Matt. 16:24)

Are we prepared and committed to lead our organizations down that road? To abandon our allegiances to the values of our culture and refuse the temptations of the easier path offered by a church that has lost its first love? Both decisions will put us in conflict with those who follow the "patterns of this world," but as Paul charges us, *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will."* (Rom. 12:2)

God is looking for steward leaders to walk this narrow

road. Why steward leaders? Because the heart of a steward leader has been set free to lead in joyful obedience. Because as stewards we are driven by absolute obedience to the true owner. And because if the owner is the God we know in Jesus Christ, our work is the source of our greatest joy.

TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF STEWARD LEADERS ON THE NARROW ROAD

Here are 10 characteristics of a faithful steward leader, and why each is essential to navigating the narrow road of leadership in these times of cultural conflict.

1. STEWARD LEADERS LET GO OF REPUTATION.

One great obstacle to effective leadership is the preservation of reputation. When propping up our image becomes more important than absolute obedience to God's calling, we cease to be effective leaders for the kingdom. This is especially so in times of conflict and crisis.



When we are the caretaker of our reputation, we risk being swayed and influenced by all the external pressures thrust upon us in times like these.

When God is the caretaker of our reputation, we are set free to lead God's way. It begins by surrendering our lives, our work and our very reputation into his hands and trusting him with it. It is declaring unequivocally, "I will do whatever you ask regardless of how it might impact my reputation." How often throughout Scripture did God ask leaders to undertake seemingly nonsensical acts so that his power might be demonstrated and his glory revealed? Leaders who protect reputation refuse such direction. Steward leaders are free to follow God's leading regardless of the consequences.

2. STEWARD LEADERS LEAD BY GIVING AWAY POWER.

Steward leaders have been set free from the need to amass and wield power and control. In times of conflict and crisis, the tendency is to close ranks and concentrate control in a small group or even one person. Leaders who struggle with ownership pride themselves in taking their organization on their shoulders to lead it through crises. By doing so they cut themselves off from the skills and talent necessary to navigate difficult times. While the concentration of power may seem a reasonable strategy, it most always flows from the heart of an owner who has not been set free to trust both God and the people whom he has appointed for such a time.

Wider engagement of skills and resources is essential to leadership in chaotic times. Like a ship's captain navigating through tumultuous seas, the way through is found when every member of the crew is empowered to carry out

their responsibility to the fullest. This requires the conviction that you are truly leading God's way and the freedom to empower others to pull with you on that journey.

3. STEWARD LEADERS SEEK APPLAUSE FROM ONLY ONE SOURCE.

In times of conflict and crisis, blame is often aimed at the leader. How we respond determines the extent to which God can work through us to lead our people his way. For an owner-leader, decisions are influenced by the applause they will generate. Leaders who tie their self-image to their role equate success as a leader with success as

a person. When this happens, even the best-intentioned leader will default to making decisions based more on the approval of people than on obedience to God's leading.

Steward leaders are set free by the realization that their self-image is shaped by their status as a child of God. They are not swayed by the opinions of others when they conflict with the clear command of God. They are not oblivious to criticism; they are simply not ensnared by it. Knowing and doing God's will is the source of their greatest fulfillment and satisfaction. Steward leaders are content with the applause of nail-scarred hands.

**Following
Jesus means
living and
leading on the
narrow road.**

4. STEWARD LEADERS DIE IN ORDER TO LEAD.

Jesus said to his disciples, *“Anyone who wants to be first must be very last, and the servant of all.”* (Mark 9:35) As leaders in times of conflict and crisis, we will either seek the position of power and authority, or we will be willing to die to self and seek to serve. Dying to self in leadership means dying to our need to control outcomes. It means dying to our need to be needed, dying to our need to be liked, dying to our need to be right, and dying to our desire to be measured by what we accomplish more than by what God is doing in us and through us. The steward leader who dies these deaths is free to live into the challenging role to which God has called them.

5. STEWARD LEADERS COME WHEN CALLED AND LEAVE WHEN TOLD.

It is likely that every leader who has led an organization through times of great challenge has wondered if they would lose their job in the process. The question is natural. How we respond has great impact on how well God can work through us to bring about his will for us and our organization. Owner-leaders hold on tight and function out of fear of losing their job. They become enslaved by job preservation rather than freed for courageous leadership.

Steward leaders lead out of the freedom that their job belongs to God. He called them to the position for a specific time and purpose, and he will move them on in his timing. When leaders are free to steward their role as a gift from God and to leave when he calls them elsewhere, they can lead with courage and humility.

6. STEWARD LEADERS FAIL WITH GRACE.

When we have been set free from the tyranny of being owner-leaders, we can be corrected without defensiveness, accept blame without excuses and be found wrong without losing confidence. Owner-leaders absorb praise and deflect criticism. Steward leaders deflect praise and absorb criticism. They have been set free to do so, and as result, in the process they set free those who work with and for them.

7. STEWARD LEADERS LEAD WITH COURAGEOUS HUMILITY.

True Christian leadership focuses first on what God wants to do through us as leaders. When we have been set free from the bondage of ownership, we have the courage and humility to focus on what God wants to do through us. The power of God through us gives us courage. The glory of God and his majesty work humility in us. In times of crisis and conflict, courageous humility is the defining mark of the effective steward leader.

8. STEWARD LEADERS ENTER THE DANGER IN SPIRITUAL BATTLES.

There is danger lurking everywhere when conflict and crisis strike an organization. The battle is not with flesh and blood but with “powers and principalities.” Owner-leaders avoid battles in an attempt to prop up reputation, keep

people happy and protect their job. Steward leaders enter into the danger of these battles. They do so with confidence because they know the enemy, know the strategy to defeat him and know the victory that is already theirs.

9. LEADERS LIVE AND LEAD WITH OUTRAGEOUS GENEROSITY.

A generous spirit defuses the enemy’s attempts to get us to play the owner. It’s all about the way we are curved. An ownership spirit curves us in on ourselves in our desire to protect, preserve and advance our own cause. A generous spirit keeps us curved out toward others. It rejects a curved-in attitude. It bears witness to the one we most trust in life. The Holy Spirit will work to curve us outward as we cultivate a generous spirit both for ourselves and the organizations we lead.

10. STEWARD LEADERS REDEFINE SUCCESS FOR THEIR PEOPLE IN KINGDOM TERMS.

The growing conflict with our culture will challenge us to clarify how we define success. Any definition that is tied to a worldly standard or a nonbiblical measurement will rob us of our witness and strip us of our power when we need it most. Steward leaders define success as faithfulness. Success is measured in kingdom terms, by what God thinks and not what others think. Success as faithfulness keeps God at the center. He leads the way, and he gets the glory.

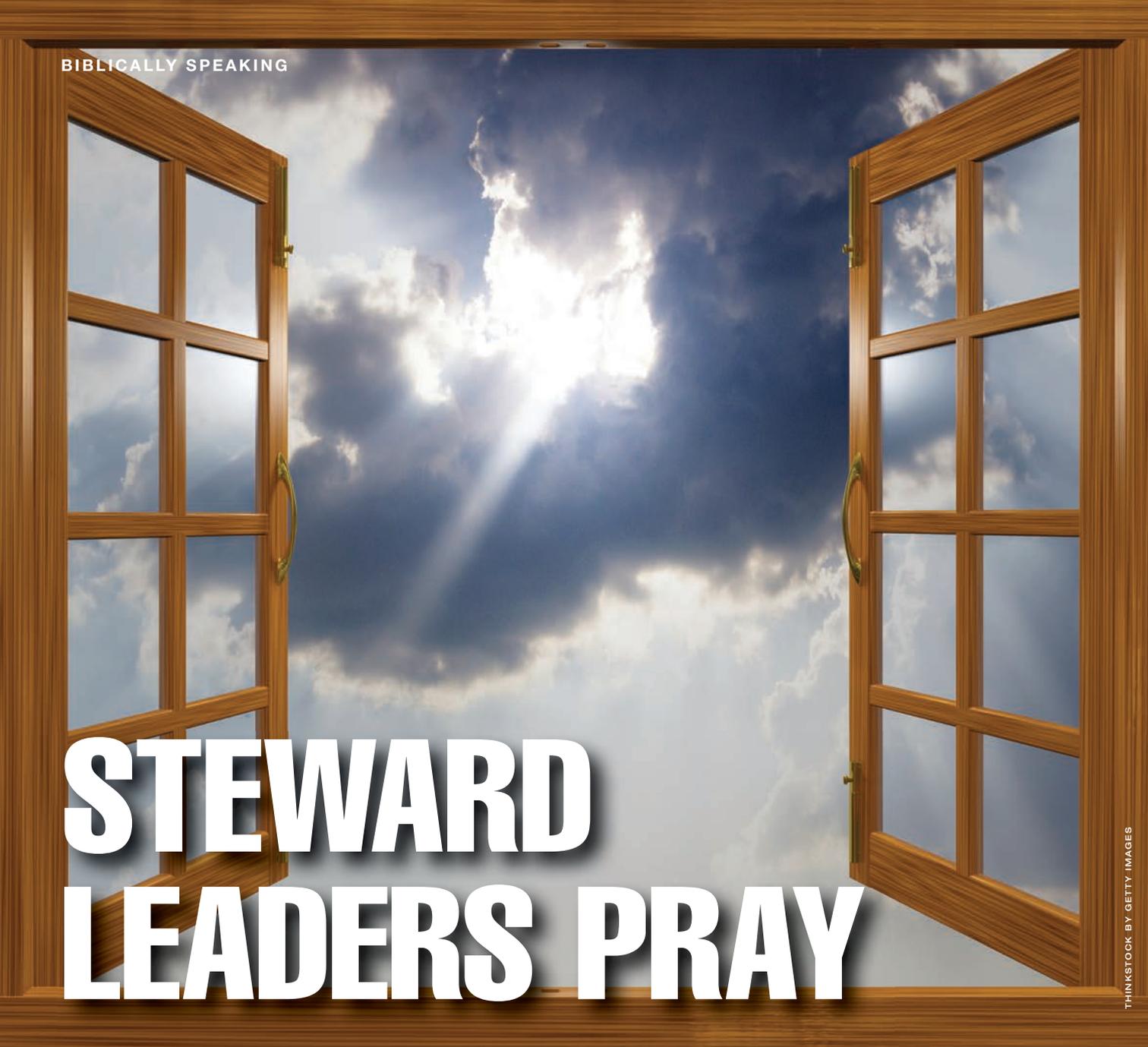
Conflict with our culture is at our doorstep. We cannot be a faithful follower of Jesus and an effective leader of his people and avoid this conflict. Kingdom success starts in the heart of every leader. Will you lead as an owner or steward? Will you seek earnestly to have God work his power and peace in you so that your leadership will exemplify these 10 characteristics?

The body of Christ, and the world, needs faithful steward leaders who understand that in every crisis, victory begins with surrender. ●

DR. R. SCOTT RODIN has a passion for helping God’s people discover the freedom and joy of the faithful steward. He is president of The Steward’s Journey and Kingdom Life Publishing and has authored 12 books. He blogs at (thestewardsjourney.com).

 Want to learn more? **DR. SCOTT RODIN** will lead an Intensive Training Institute Seminar entitled “Leading as Stewards Amid Cultural Chaos” for the Outcomes Conference, CLA Dallas 2016, April 19–21, 2016. (OutcomesConference.org)

**God is
looking for
steward
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STEWARD LEADERS PRAY

THINKSTOCK BY GETTY IMAGES

Following the example of Jesus

By Howard Rich

HAVE YOU EVER KNOWN SOMEONE who could pray in a way that seemed to open a window into Heaven? I had a friend like that when I lived in Korea a few years ago. When this man prayed, I felt like I was standing in a holy place. I learned a great deal about prayer from my friend; one of the most important lessons my time with him taught me was to be direct and transparent with God as I pray.

Some of my biggest failures and frustrations in life have had their roots in arrogance. Through the pain and mess of those failures, I have come to realize I need to stop pretending I know how to do it all. When I am approaching a new endeavor — something I haven't done before — I need to pray and seek out examples of

those who have gone before me. A great starting point is Scripture.

It is foolish to ignore the valuable lessons contained in God's Word. This is especially true when it comes to kingdom work. Jesus' example of praying before he selected his inner circle should be our blueprint for building a leadership team (Luke 6:12–16). Before we ask anyone to join our team, we as leaders must bow before our true authority, asking God to supply the right people for the organization.

Prayer was an integral part of Jesus' life and ministry. His disciples saw him praying often and even asked him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1–4). The Lord's Prayer, found in both Luke's gospel and the gospel of Matthew (Matt. 6:5–15) is a perfect picture of our relationship with God. He forgives, he guides

and he provides. That prayer shows us where we fit in Creation. God is the source of all things, and we are the recipient of what belongs to him; that means he is the owner and we are caretakers of his provision.

We can easily overlook one important way Jesus shepherded his followers. He prayed for them. Luke 6:12–16 records Jesus' selection of his inner circle. Jesus had been drawing crowds to hear him speak, but he still had not selected the group that would become his direct ambassadors. Before selecting this inner team, Jesus spent an entire night praying. He knew these would be the men he would pour his teaching into; they would be the ones to serve him in the expansion of his kingdom.

The disciples saw how important prayer was to their Lord. They knew Jesus consulted the Father intimately and frequently through prayers that were personal and powerful. The apostles wanted to emulate their master, and prayer was one of the acts setting him apart from the teachers and religious people around them. Jesus spoke to the apostles about prayer and how they should pray because he knew that the prayers of many around them were empty, lacking power and authority.

In Matthew chapter 6, Jesus instructs his followers to pray in solitude, before God and not before men. He tells them those who flaunt their prayers and acts before men receive their reward from men, not from God. His stewards pray in ways that reinforce the relationship between worshipper and God, without concern for those who may be watching or hearing. Jesus also taught the apostles that the Father hears every word of the petitioner; therefore, their prayers should be direct, to the point and meaningful.

Chapter 17 of the gospel of John records the prayer of Jesus shortly before his betrayal and subsequent arrest. In verse 2 and again in verse 6, Jesus acknowledged the men he had poured his life and teaching into were sent to him by the Father. Jesus confirmed that his disciples were entrusted into his care as part of his glorification of the Father. In verses 9 through 19, Jesus asked certain things from the Father for his disciples, differentiating between those believing in him and the rest of the world; the ones who believed in him were those belonging to the Father. The Father had given them to him. Jesus prayed for those he would be leaving behind, asking the Father to unify the disciples and keep them faithful. Jesus said he kept them safe and guarded them, but now that he was leaving the world, he asked the Father to guard them and give them joy. Jesus did not ask that they be removed from the world, but that the Father would keep them out of the hand of the “evil one” (John 17:15).

The Lord also spoke to the Father about launching his disciples into service for the kingdom. In John 17:18, Jesus transferred his earthly mission to his chosen apostles. Following his prayer for those closest to him, Christ raised up to the Father all who would come to believe in him because of the future work of the apostles (John 17:20–26). Jesus offered his blessing of unity and sanctification to both those with whom he personally walked, and to all those who would join the kingdom through the witness of those entrusted with his words.

Narrowing his focus, Jesus prayed specifically for Peter that his “*faith may not fail.*” He prayed that Peter would be able to strengthen the other disciples in the days to come (Luke 22:32).

JESUS' EXAMPLE OF PRAYING BEFORE HE SELECTED HIS INNER CIRCLE SHOULD BE OUR BLUEPRINT FOR BUILDING A LEADERSHIP TEAM.

Jesus cared deeply for those the Father had entrusted to him. It was his desire to raise up leaders who would willingly carry his words of life to all those the Father gave into his kingdom. The way Christ prayed for others is a model for leaders today. Christ was concerned for the masses, for those who believed in him, for those within his inner circle of followers and for those he was closest to among that group.

An enormous part of leading is looking toward the future for our organizations — creating a vision and setting a course for that future. It involves assembling a team to move us into that future. When we view our role as a steward, we can see the position we occupy does not belong to us. It is God's. We are challenged to take his organizations where he wants them to go. We are free to move in uncertain directions without worrying about our own position and standing. The steward-minded leader recognizes the absolute necessity of prayer and realizes the importance of asking God to create the team.

As stewards of the particular organization and group we are leading, we must realize it is God's work. He is the one who will provide leaders with the particular gifts needed for our organizations to operate well. When we realize that we are caretaker of God's possessions, we are set free to lead. We no longer chase the illusion we can do it all. We seek help from God through prayer.

A leader's success is measured by how well he stewards what is under his care. Everything entrusted to the leader is on loan from God. Realizing this truth liberates the leader to help others within their organizations to soar in their own leadership responsibilities. Once we have prayed and allowed God to direct us in the selection of a leadership team, we must operate as caretakers as we navigate the path to our future.

But first, we must pray. ●

DR. HOWARD RICH is president of Steward Development Group, a leadership training and coaching firm established to help business professionals discover the freedom of generosity and stewardship. He is also launching a CLA Leader2Leader group in the Memphis, Tenn., metro area. To learn more about CLA Leader2Leader groups, visit (www.claleader2leader.org). To contact Dr. Rich about the new Memphis CLA Leader2Leader group, email him at howard.c.rich@stewarddevelopmentgroup.com.

Rowing Together

How to build teams that work!

By Atul Tandon and Greg Schatzlein

“None of us is as smart as all of us.” Ken Blanchard /// “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” African Proverb /// How essential is teamwork toward fulfilling God’s distinctive calling of your ministry organization? /// Al Lopus, president and co-founder of Best Christian Workplaces Institute, might have the best answer. He said, “Our research reveals that teamwork in Christian organizations can be likened to an eight-oar racing crew: Three rowers are engaged and rowing together, four are indifferent with their paddles in their laps and one is drilling a hole in the boat.” /// Hopefully, your organization isn’t taking on water like this one. In the next few minutes, we want to make room inside your boat for a few fresh discoveries and practices about true teamwork that can change the course of your organization. In the spirit of the Swahili word “harambee,” let’s pull together focused on this truth: True teamwork is about the bringing together two true necessities: to grow the hearts of your people into the shared vision and work of your people.

BUILDING TEAMS THAT WORK

Building great teams, like synchronized rowing, doesn't happen by chance. Often, the best (and only) way forward is to pause and reflect on the past. Do you remember that team you were on that just didn't click? Having worked with hundreds of teams, we've seen these obstacles come to the surface:

- Lack of clear goals and objectives
- Undefined roles of who is accountable for what
- Poor team dynamic — lack of open communication, unaddressed conflicts, passive-aggressive behaviors and more
- Absence of a supportive team culture
- Inappropriate leadership styles
- Lack of coaching and staff development opportunities

When teams don't deal with unresolved issues, they become less effective and, worse, stuck in a quagmire! The "reward" is poor results, high costs, reduced quality, increased absenteeism and high staff turnover.

Is there an alternative? Yes.

In their best-selling book, *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently* (Simon & Schuster, 1999), Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman point to a Gallup study of 80,000 managers that revealed five characteristics of a strong workplace, as seen through the eyes of successful and productive employees.

Consider how your employees would respond to these questions:

- Do I know what is expected of me?
- Do my opinions count?
- Does the mission/purpose of my organization make me feel my work is important?
- Are my co-workers committed to doing their best?
- This last year, have I had opportunities to learn and grow professionally?

Each "yes" answer points to the first true necessity of building successful teams: growing the hearts of your people. Team building begins when a leader looks within each employee and finds a way to release his or her unique talents and skills, which then contribute to a great performance.

What will you, as their leader, do differently to grow effective employees? Consider these five essentials of building teams that work:

1. Build strong relationships with each member of your team. People, not programs, are the heart of every successful organization. It's about understanding the goals and expectations of your people, and then taking time to create an environment of mutual confidence and trust. And it's about each



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team member being absolutely clear what he or she is accountable for to achieve the team's overall goal. "How do I contribute to the big win?" Does each team member know how to answer that question?

2. Communicate clearly and constantly. Clear and constant communication is at the heart of effective teams. Be clear about the team's objective, its importance and place in meeting your organization's goals and, specifically, the role of each member. Be constant in affirming each individual's contributions towards both the team and organizational goals. Recognition is a tangible reward and spurs people on to do more and better.

3. Stretch yourself and your people. Once you understand your team members' goals, you can assess if they are equipped to be successful. If one or more lacks skills, knowledge or experience, it's your opportunity — and obligation — to fill those gaps, perhaps with a needs assessment. The growth process doesn't end. Be willing to place your team into "stretch projects" and make sure you're there to guide them through the tough stuff.

4. Coach to teach, not tell. As leaders, we may want to tell others when things go wrong, and then start evaluating. Reactive evaluation focuses on the past, whereas responsive coaching focuses on the future. Evaluation is a one-way communication process;

coaching is a two-way process. Evaluation focuses on shortcomings, where coaching focuses on strengths and gaining small wins every day.

Steven Covey said it best in his best-selling book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (Free Press, 1990): “Seek first to understand and then to be understood. And when you have asked a question, look for opportunities to dig deeper to root causes with additional questions. This also shows you care and gets you to lasting solutions.”

A team member can learn and grow, when we as leaders choose to listen and respond. This means asking in-depth questions and listening for 75 percent of the conversation. People then have the space they need to go through a process of self-discovery and learn the key issues, and buy into solutions for their next steps.

5. Empathize — and knock down walls.

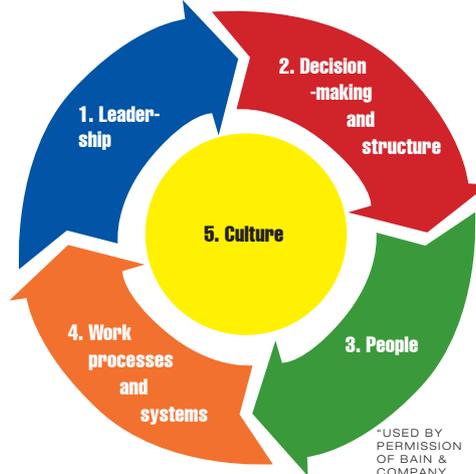
In our technology-driven society, the need and demand for empathy is not going away. As Geoff Colvin states in a Aug. 1, 2015, article in *Fortune* entitled “Humans are Underrated,” “The evidence is clear that the most effective groups are those whose members most strongly possess the most essentially, deeply human abilities — empathy above all, social sensitivity, storytelling, collaborating, solving problems together, building relationships.”

Today, you can “do in” a person with one sharp e-mail, text or tweet. A two-way, voice-to-voice, or (ideally) face-to-face conversation accelerates the mutual reward of genuine empathy and shared understanding. By showing a personal interest in people, solving problems and knocking down barriers, you will demonstrate to your team members a strong commitment to their success.

The first necessity of successful teams, growing the heart of your people, means surrendering the singular ego of “me” to the shared achievement of “we.” How is this true for organizations? And how can it be true for your organization? The answers can emerge as we move from the keys to individual performance to unlocking overall team effectiveness.

CENTERPIECE OF TEAM EFFECTIVENESS

Research by the global management firm Bain & Company Inc. in the for-profit sector — corroborated by The Bridgespan Group by its application in the nonprofit world — helps us “locate” effective teamwork at the center of effective organizations:



Highly effective organizations exhibit strengths across five areas: leadership, decision making and structure, people, work processes and systems, and culture.

The summary text of each of the first four areas: leadership; decision-making and structure; people; and work process and systems is concise and self-explanatory. The fifth area, culture, is the centerpiece of organizational effectiveness. Culture is both the staging ground and the evidence of strong teams.

Culture is where successful teams both create and reveal a shared vision, mutual respect and deepening trust.

Are the teams in your organization rowing together in the right direction? Or are they battling unnecessarily against each other? Do your teams champion a culture of high performance values, a culture with the capacity to change? Or do they expose something less than you seek for each employee and the organization as a whole?

Consider the word “best,” the first word in the name “Best Christian Workplaces Institute.” People, like organizations with a shared a passion to fulfill God’s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, will naturally aspire to be the “best” they can be, as individuals and together.

- By growing the hearts of its employees — in teams in cities and communities worldwide — United Way lived out its call to “Live United.” With teams in nearly 100 countries, World Vision lives

out its vision for “life in all its fullness” to children in communities it serves, whether helping combat HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, or responding to the Syrian refugee crisis. Teams that work well transcend global reach, denominations and budgets.

- Today, Springs Rescue Mission in Colorado Springs is redefining community, compassion and Jesus’ command to “love your neighbor as yourself.” Expressions of neighbors helping neighbors occur daily through teams of leadership, staff, volunteers, donors and local friends.

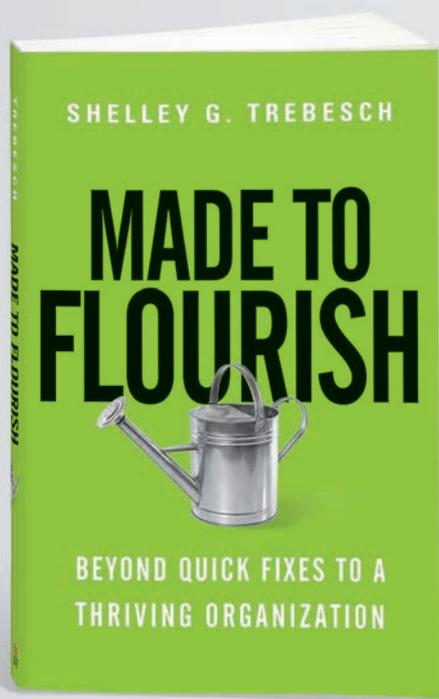
Teams succeed whenever leaders grow the hearts of people and guide them into a shared other-centered work.

What words can keep us on this course? In his best-selling book, *The Boys in the Boat* (Penguin, 2014), author Daniel James Brown beautifully captures the essence of a team at work, as the University of Washington eight-oar crew crossed the finish line and won the gold medal at the 1936 Berlin Olympic games: “All were merged into one smoothly working machine; they were, in fact, a poem of motion, a symphony of swinging blades.”

The wisdom to empower and inspire every Christian leader, and every team, is for all of us to take to heart and put to work: “*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another....*” (Heb. 10:24–25). ●

ATUL TANDON is founder and CEO of the Tandon Institute. He can be reached at atandon@tandoninstitute.com. **GREG SCHATZLEIN** is the manager, Learning & Development at World Vision, Inc. and a fellow at Tandon Institute. Greg has brought cutting-edge solutions to address team building and learning needs, at both for-profit and nonprofit enterprises, for over 30 years. Contact him at gschatzl@worldvision.org.

Want to learn more? **ATUL TANDON** and **GREG SCHATZLEIN** will co-lead a workshop entitled “How Do I Build Teams That Work?” for The Outcomes Conference, CLA Dallas 2016, April 19–21, 2016. (OutcomesConference.org)



NO MORE QUICK FIXES

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"A fine combination of leadership and organizational theory, blended with rich case studies in the contemporary context to illustrate how flourishing organizations can be developed."

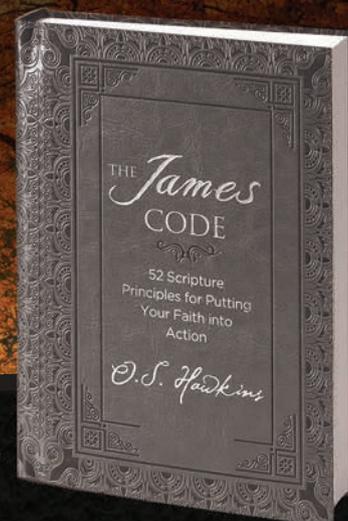
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Forging a path in the new frontier

By Andrew Hood

IT WASN'T TOO LONG AGO that the Internet was a mysterious new frontier. Though it may be hard to believe, the developed world only gained access to the Internet in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the general public in these nations didn't log on until the late 1990s or early 2000s. Things we take for granted every day — sending an e-mail around the globe and having it read in a matter of seconds, querying an incalculable number of sources by typing a question into a search engine, searching the entire Bible in a matter of seconds for a particular verse or topic — were unimaginable just a few decades ago. Even as Americans quickly incorporated the Internet into our lives, we still couldn't imagine a day when the Internet would be accessible nearly anytime or anywhere through something we could hold in our hand.

But today, most of us have logged countless miles on what we once called the information superhighway. It is easy to forget how foreign and confusing .org, .com and .edu once were in light of how ubiquitous they have become today. We are so comfortable with the lexicon of the web that now, even the occasional .net and .info can't throw us.

Given how much the technology and data landscape has exploded over the last three decades, it may be difficult to imagine how the Internet can grow any bigger. But the online landscape is once again poised for rapid change thanks to the decision by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) to allow for the creation of a new alphabet of domain extensions. It won't be long until we are once again getting acquainted with a whole host of new "dots" in web addresses. Among the new top-level domains (TLDs) rolling out are a number of faith-centric options including .bible, .catholic, .church and .faith. Each new TLD is opening up new online territories that will need to be mapped out and carefully developed.

Following a lengthy process of application and review, American Bible Society was selected to take on the challenge of overseeing one of the new faith-themed TLDs: .Bible.

American Bible Society seems a good choice for forging the path for the new .Bible frontier. After all, this is the organization that first sent pocket Bibles to the new Western frontier via Pony Express riders. As one of the oldest and most enduring ministries in the nation, American Bible

Society has always been a pioneer. From distributing the first pocket Bibles to soldiers to placing the first Bibles in hotel rooms, from creating the first audio recording of the Bible for the visually impaired to creating the first modern English translation of God's Word in the *Good News Bible*, American Bible Society has always been an innovator. So it should come as no surprise that the ministry jumped into the .Bible universe with gusto and is blazing the trail to a new online territory.

"The online universe continues to expand exponentially," says American Bible Society President and CEO Roy Peterson. "With this expansion comes the need for well-marked signage to direct travelers on the superhighway to their desired destinations. The addition of the .Bible TLD is a sign pointing travelers to content that promotes a positive view of God's Word."

The addition of .Bible will accelerate global online Bible access and facilitate engagement in ways not previously possible.

But managing the new .Bible domain also presents a new challenge for American Bible Society: how to steward this incredible opportunity. The ministry has selected a handful of pioneering partners to help pave the way on the .Bible landscape. Among the first to follow American Bible Society's launch on new TLD (American.Bible) are ministry partners such as YouVersion (free.Bible), Berean Study Bibles (Berean.Bible), Reason for Truth (apologetics.Bible), The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GreekOrthodox.Bible) and Christian Leadership Alliance (leadership.Bible). Also set to launch soon are .Bible sites for United Bible Societies, Faith Comes By Hearing, Bible Hub and Crossway. A current list of partner sites launched can be viewed at (nic.bible/launched).

"We are thrilled to be paving the way as one of the first organizations using the new .Bible domain," said YouVersion Founder Bobby Gruenewald. "We are passionate about leveraging technology to help this generation engage with the Bible, and this new digital environment will allow us to do just that."

Christian Leadership Alliance (CLA) is a pioneer partner with American Bible Society for the launch of (leadership.Bible). This site features "Outcomes 365," which highlights the best of CLA's biblically based leadership training and experiences, creating a dynamic, customized journey for a leader's personal and professional growth.

"Leadership growth must be nurtured and developed daily," said Tami Heim, CLA president and CEO. "We live in a time when it's urgent for Christians to lead based on biblical principles and with God-honoring excellence. As a pioneer partner with American Bible Society, CLA is pleased to introduce Outcomes365 at (leadership.Bible) to activate, accelerate and achieve that outcome in Christian nonprofit ministry leaders across the nation and around the world."

Part of American Bible Society's stewardship plan for the .Bible TLD is to approve only those applications for a .Bible domain that will present positive Bible-related content. All sites featuring the .Bible domain will be owned by individuals and groups that have a respect for the Bible. American Bible Society will provide ongoing monitoring to ensure the .Bible domain continues to provide a trusted online space for those seeking to engage with the Bible.

"When we were notified by ICANN that our application to administer the .Bible TLD had been approved, we were excited," says Peterson. "But, at the same time, we knew the weight of responsibility we were being given to steward this opportunity well. As an organization that has carried 'Bible' in our name and at the heart of our mission for nearly two centuries, we understand that it is a privilege to be associated in any way with the Word of God. As a leader, if that doesn't humble you, I don't know what would."

American Bible Society's management of the .Bible TLD is part of a much larger strategy to advance the Bible movement. On the eve of its bicentennial anniversary, American Bible Society has launched its "100/100 vision." In the next ten years, the

ministry will work with partners to translate 100 percent of the world's languages, opening them up for first-time Bible access, and equip 100 million people in the United States to actively engage with the Bible.

"Our goal is to make the Bible available and alive in the world's most difficult places, whether that is in a remote, undeveloped area of the world, in a nation hostile to God's Word, or among American skeptics who have a distorted view of the Bible," says Peterson. "The Internet in general and the .Bible TLD will play a significant part of helping us fulfill that vision."

It is hard to imagine what the next frontier of Bible engagement will look like in the decades ahead. But one thing is easy to predict: wherever that frontier is, it is likely that American Bible Society will be out front, paving new pathways for others to follow so that people everywhere can experience the life-changing message of the Bible. ●

ANDREW HOOD is the managing director of communications for American Bible Society, where he has served for four years. Hood lives in Philadelphia with wife Leah and their two young children. Learn more at American.Bible. Learn more about .Bible at nic.bible/launched.



Integrated Multi-Channel Campaigns



Six steps to success

By Douglas K. Shaw

TO THE AVERAGE PERSON STANDING IN LINE next to you at the grocery store, the title of this article appearing on a newsstand could be quite confusing. Just consider how they might apply it:

- **Integrated:** Perhaps it's related to racial reconciliation?
- **Multi-channel:** Could it be about my television or Pandora?
- **Campaigns:** Isn't that what politicians do?

Conversely, to any of us involved in marketing or fundraising, it not only makes sense, but it is a part of our daily vocabulary.

For the Cold War generation, we witnessed the advertising world's increased use of billboards, cab backs, newspapers, radio, television, magazines, blimps and large murals on buildings all proclaiming the arrival of IBM's Personal Computer. We saw the great mouthwash wars of Scope and Listerine, the ongoing struggle for dominance of Coke and Pepsi and a myriad of other consumer products played out before us in and on anything that could carry a message.

For those of us born into a world of Mac versus PC, BlackBerry versus iPhone, we may have just accepted that integrated, multi-channel campaigns were simply part of the world in which we live. We learned to use social media at the same time that we learned to walk and talk.

Regardless of our generational or personal context, we all live in a world offering more communication channels now than at any time in history. That's a challenging reality. Equally challenging is discerning the most useful ways to engage people with the message of your ministry.

ALL CHANNELS ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL

We need biblical stewardship principles to navigate this new world. The overarching principle is that we are, for a fact, using every channel available to us, in the most impactful way. And just as every channel is unique, so is every ministry.

Because we are driven by a desire for excellence in the name of the Master, we don't have the luxury of guessing or assuming. We simply have to know what channel should be used for what purpose.

Here are six steps to help you achieve success in building an integrated, multi-channel campaign:

Step 1: In building a campaign, we must rid ourselves of any form of ego, assumption or theory.

That's right. In communications and fundraising, we are usually the single largest impediment to our own success. You will have a much greater opportunity for success if you disallow yourself both thoughts and words that may trump reality (statements like: "I think," "I want," "I know" and "I believe").

Any successful campaign must be based on harsh reality. What we're looking for in a successful campaign is what works, not what we wish would work!

Step 2: Identify and document the single most important outcome of your campaign.

For most ministries it will be something like: "We need to raise \$500,000 to fund this unprecedented opportunity facing our ministry in order to _____."

Other non-fundraising outcomes may involve:

- Growth of your ministry
- Engagement of your constituents
- Awareness of your ministry or the issues you seek to address

While we may think that giving people a choice of actions is good, it actually deters action. Harsh reality says that you can have one outcome!

Step 3: Identify all of the channels available to your ministry.

Not every channel in existence will be available or affordable to you. So identify and list which channels are indeed available, such as:

- Face-to-face cultivation of individual major donors
- Foundation proposals
- Church interest and support
- Corporate interest and support
- Special events
- Planned giving
- Direct mail
- Email
- Mobile
- Social media
- Broadcast media
- Website
- Publicity
- Electronic media
- Print advertising (magazines, newsletters, newspapers — you get the idea)
- Outdoor advertising (billboards, cab backs, bus cards, etc.)
- Other channels unique to your ministry

Step 4: Develop a strategy to accomplish your stated outcome.

This is perhaps the most difficult step. For the less experienced, strategy is often confused with tactics. But strategy is reality-based thinking that asks the question, "Why will people respond to my stated outcome?" Tactics ask the question,

“What proven channels will enable people to best respond to my strategy?”

Strategy isn't answering the “what” or “how” of a campaign; it's answering the “why.” Why will people respond to your campaign? Sending out an email or producing a direct mail piece isn't a strategy, it's a tactic. And tactics only work well within the context of a sound strategy.

Developing a sound strategy is where most integrated, multi-channel campaigns succeed or fail. Every good strategy involves a strong offer. All of the advertisers for the consumer products I mentioned at the opening of this article know the value of a strong offer. For our purposes, the word “offer” has a very specific meaning. Here, an offer means we are answering five critical questions that apply to all channels used:

1. What opportunity or problem is my ministry trying to seize or solve? (This is your outcome.)
2. What will it cost to seize this opportunity or solve the problem?
3. What is my ministry doing to seize or solve?
4. How will the donor's gift seize or solve?
5. Why should the donor give now?

A sound strategy is also based on the *proven* use of *appropriate* channels for each aspect of our campaign. Both of these words are critical. If our outcome is to raise \$500,000, then the

word proven means that we know it will work because we've done it before in a very similar context. In the absence of our own experience, we must rely on trusted peers or counsel who can document their own success. The word *appropriate* in this context implies that we have either experienced success using this channel, or again, that we rely on trusted peers or counsel who have experienced success with this channel. A word of caution here: There are many variables in any campaign, and overlooking, missing or ignoring any of them would be very detrimental to the success of the campaign.

Step 5: Match your available channels to your strategy.

Since, in our example, our outcome is to raise \$500,000, it may involve a “seed gift” or matching corpus from major donors and/or foundations. A matching gift can be an effective tactic. For our purposes, let's say we ask for \$250,000 to be matched dollar-for-dollar.

If your ministry has an actively cultivated direct mail donor base of 15,000 supporters who have given within the past 12 months, and 20 percent of your supporters have given \$100 or more as their largest single gift in the same 12-month period, you should expect a significant portion of the match to be raised from this channel. My proven experience says a follow-up direct mail appeal, informing donors that there is still time to have their gift matched or to make an additional gift,



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should raise about 60 percent of the initial matching gift appeal.

Printed and e-newsletters should carry articles carefully written and designed to coincide with all other channels being used in your campaign. Both of these channels should provide the opportunity to give and direct your readers to a campaign-dedicated landing page.

The direct mail appeals should have digital support by e-mail and mobile texting, and your website should carry corresponding artwork and donate buttons that lead your donors to the landing page for the matching gift opportunity. Social media, again with corresponding artwork and offers, should support this same matching gift offer.

All of these channels, when fully integrated in their offer, message, style and look, will contribute to achieving your outcome. But a brief word of experience: not all channels will perform at the same level. While every channel contributes to the whole, regardless of how the donor responds, one or more of the channels will have a dominant role in receiving the revenue. The high-performing channels in this campaign will be major donors and direct mail. In this campaign example, the other channels I've identified (but not used) are not likely to have much impact on achieving the outcome.

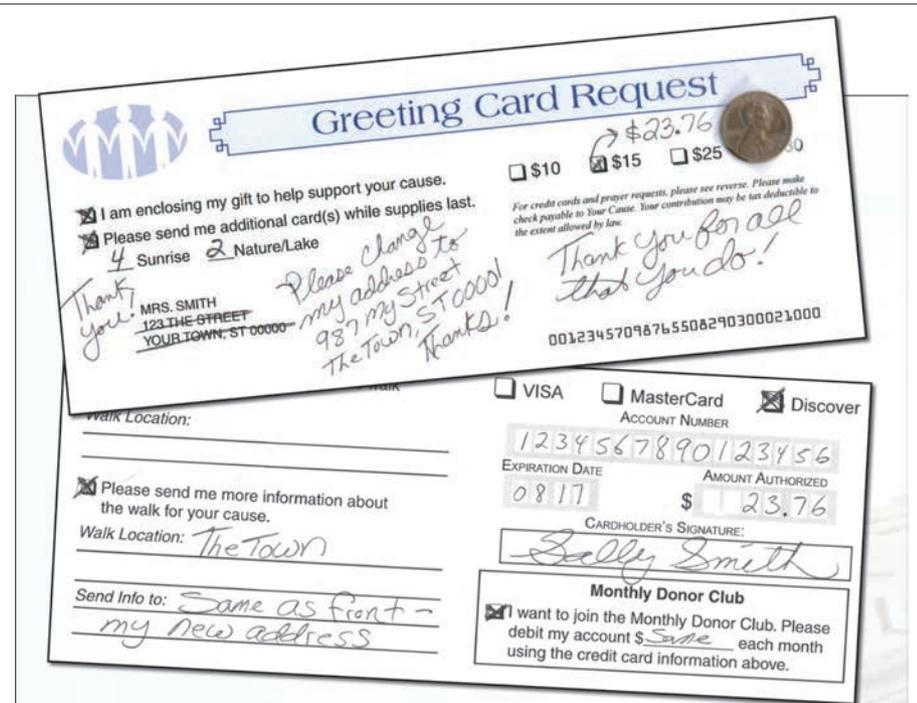
Step 6: Fully integrate this campaign within your whole ministry.

You not only want to integrate the elements of this specific campaign, you also want to integrate this campaign with all other communications and fundraising activities that are scheduled to occur within your ministry. Full integration can be accomplished by developing and using a ministry-wide communications and fundraising calendar. This will assist you in coordinating your campaign without jeopardizing other critical initiatives.

Finally, measure how each of your channels and tactics performed. Every campaign is an opportunity to learn more and understand better how your donor base performs. Following these steps should help as you seek to use all that the Master has entrusted to you, to maximize the return and hear the encouraging words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." (Matt. 25:23a) ●

DOUGLAS K. SHAW co-founded Douglas Shaw & Associates, Inc. to serve organizations through a Donor-Focused Strategic Marketing® approach to communication and fundraising. Today, as chairman/CEO, he leads a company of 40 professionals who serve more than 20 ministries. He is the author of the book, *The Rules of Fundraising* (CreateSpace, 2012). Learn more at (douglasshaw.com)

Want to learn more? Officials from Douglas Shaw & Associates, Inc., will lead a Christian Nonprofit Leadership Academy Course entitled "Building Multi-Channel Donor Relationships" for The Outcomes Conference, CLA Dallas 2016, April 19–21, 2016. (OutcomesConference.org)



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Digital Ministry

The five marks of a healthy mindset

By Wes Ward and Chad Williams

YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT ISN'T JUST MARKETING or advertising. It's not just fundraising or brand-building. While we must do these things for Christian impact, digital is ministry too ... and it's ministry first.

WHAT'S YOUR MIND ON?

You desire total ministry effectiveness. How you think about digital is part of getting there. What are you after? Is it transformative, integrated, purpose-fulfilling effectiveness? Is it leveraging all that you have and are for God's kingdom? Of course that's the stuff you long for. When your feet hit the floor each morning, it's another day to love God, love people, and, well ... be dangerous. As a ministry leader, it's your role, your calling, to see the mission furthered and completed. You want all the people and all the parts of your ministry humming together in complementary ways leading to dynamic potency.

As you clarify vision and lead people to reach people for Christ, ultimately you're longing to see life transformation. There is nothing like it. The wonder of ministry is the wonder

of seeing real men and women, boys and girls, brought out of darkness and into God's marvelous light and then nurtured and grown into Christian maturity. We never want to lose this wonder. Glorifying God and seeing life transformation is our twofold aim. As organizational leaders, we continue to keep this vision clear and invigorating for all our players.

Meanwhile, we are also leading our organizations to continuous improvement in our corporate mindsets and methods. With a gospel-informed view of Micah 6:8 driving us, we seek best practices of how to reach people, strengthen our teams and renew our internal processes. However, often when it comes to our digital enterprises, we are not seeing it reach its highest potential *for reaching* people. And we often miss how it impacts the entirety of our organization.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON DIGITAL MINISTRY?

Thinking right thoughts about digital ministry will likely mean rethinking current thoughts about digital. Some of us think of digital first as just another channel for marketing. Or, put more crassly, another channel to *monetize*. It's a billboard or a calling card.



It's reduced to fundraising and revenue or pesky draining overhead. While the ministry's financial bottom line should be growing through its online efforts, some leaders get stuck here and don't think new thoughts. Reducing digital efforts to simply a revenue channel strips their potential to be transformative (and paradoxically, hampers its revenue growth potential too).

Done right and done well, digital can fill events with people, get resources into people's hands and help pay the bills. We should see results like these, but let's be sure to keep it purposed on outreach from first thought to last.

Today, no matter the ministry, reaching people involves being wherever they are via their devices. No longer chained to desks, technology is not only ever-present with us — we now wear (and sleep with) our tech. Nothing is as ubiquitous as digital.

Your strategy to reach people today means that you need a requisite total organization, integrated digital strategy. And, we must not forget: A good strategy starts with a right mindset.

Those Christian leaders who are seeing digital ministry transformation happen are thinking right thoughts about digital's potential to reach people. They aren't thinking of it as just

another communication channel or simply as a driver of revenue. They know that digital is central to ministry strategy because digital is central to the way people live today. As we lead ministries digitally, we lead with pastoral hearts and we strive to grow and know the capabilities of technology for ministering to people today.

WHAT ARE SOME TRENDS IN EFFECTIVE DIGITAL MINISTRY?

Digital has dramatically disrupted and transformed business — and life — in the last two decades. Think about the strides of the last five years alone. It has altered music and publishing, telecommunications, mobile, daily business operations and even family life. The impact of digital on all that we know has been transformational. But what are the building blocks that lead to wise digital *ministry* transformation?

We've been privileged to work with a number of national and international ministries that are making amazing kingdom impact. As we survey organizations and watch them work, there are dominant trends that we're seeing that lead to a thriving DNA for digital outreach. We call them...

THE FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY DIGITAL MINISTRY MINDSET:

1. It's outreach, not just channel.

At its core, digital ministry is about embracing digital as a valuable platform and avenue of ministry. Digital ministry leaders see it as a credible and crucial outreach medium, not as an add-on appendage. They value direct mail, radio and TV, events, resource creation and publishing. They understand that digital is a new transformation, in the line of forbears like the printing press, radio and television. Each medium offers unique ways to create effective content. Ultimately, they know that digital is more than just a response channel for a direct mail campaign. It's a place where real ministry is happening. These leaders embrace digital as a robust place for real life-change to occur. In many ways, this has become the front line for their outreach.

2. It's conversation and relationship, not simply proclamation.

Many ministries see digital as a one-way communication channel. It's all about pushing content, marketing stuff, posting sermons online, pleading for donations. A healthy digital ministry mindset sees digital as more. While proclamation of the Word is crucial, digital ministry leaders also purposefully engage in conversation — two-way communication. They engage with real people about content, and invite questions and dialogue. They do this through sites and social and apps. When online, they're simultaneously proclaiming and "relationshiping." They're effective at stimulating conversations about the passions of their core audiences. And they seek organic ways to tie those individuals to the ministry and their mission for them.

3. It's integrated and ubiquitous.

Digital isn't just about maintaining websites. It is about integrating throughout the entire organization. Marketing automation can serve marketing and fundraising. CRM can support all communications, marketing, fundraising, financial and operational needs. Social media can offer a way to respond to customer service needs. Project management software can advance operational and ministry production needs. Digital touches every part of a ministry leader's organization. Getting everything to work together and be integrated breaks down silos, serves constituents and lowers operating costs for organizations. It's about endless integration to create once, but repurpose everywhere. Beyond the systems and the processes, leaders know that integrated communications is just plain smart.

4. It's personalized, not generic.

Personalized content is here. It is estimated that 35 percent of Amazon's sales are due to their personalized recommended resources. Digital ministry leaders love ministering to their constituents in very specific ways. That includes recommending content and activity to each individual user based on their specific needs. It makes for a tighter, warmer ministry. Leaders with a healthy digital

Thinking right thoughts about digital ministry will likely mean rethinking current thoughts about digital.

ministry mindset love the opportunities technology has created for ministry. Netflix and Amazon may use it for entertainment and business purposes, but these leaders are excited to personalize to make ministry more powerful and effective.

5. It's dynamic, not static.

Digital ministry leaders know the landscape of digital is always changing, and always will be changing. It's inherent to the evolution of technology. While some have the resources to be bleeding edge, they're content to be leading edge. They don't fall prey to the allure of trying to keep up with all the possibilities within digital. Their mindset is to pray for the wisdom to know when to adopt (and when to drop) technologies to better serve audiences. They understand that they must make decisions in the digital space quicker than ever before. Leaders with a healthy digital ministry mindset know that they've got to keep pace or lose audience and ministry potential.

DIGITAL MINISTRY IS ABOUT MULTIPLYING MINISTRY

Though we've a long way to go, healthy ministry mindsets are on the rise. Often ministries feel disrupted by digital at best, or discharged by digital at worst. From our vantage point observing ministries, there is a chronic and widespread lethargy when it comes to the pursuing the critical path outlined in the Five Marks of a Healthy Digital Ministry Mindset.

There's more to be said regarding how to lead an organization to be totally fit for digital ministry, but it should be noted that to lead best digitally, it flows from an overarching vision shared by executive leadership. That vision should communicate that digital is valid, it is outreach and it is not just a channel. The whole organization will be integrated and involved.

Ultimately, we're encouraged to see the numbers of Christian leaders with healthy ministry mindsets multiplying and reaching more people for Christ and his kingdom. ●

WES WARD is vice president for growth strategies at Five Q. He's been a media leader at Revive Our Hearts, FamilyLife Today, Moody Radio and KCBI/Dallas. **CHAD WILLIAMS** is CEO of Five Q, helping ministries develop and execute a digital mindset. He has 20 years of digital ministry experience and is a frequent speaker at ministry conferences. To learn more visit (fiveq.com).

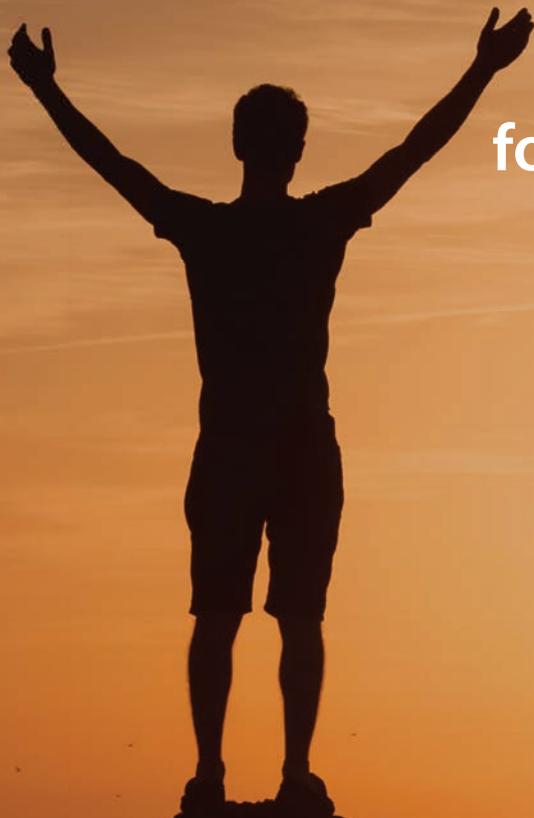
Want to learn more? **CHAD WILLIAMS** will lead a workshop entitled "Digital Ministry Trends for 2016 and Beyond" for The Outcomes Conference, CLA Dallas 2016, April 19–21, 2016. (OutcomesConference.org)

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THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON BY REMBRANDT

Leading Teams Well

Lessons from *The Return of the Prodigal Son*

By Bryan Taylor

THE COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT of the modern organization is complex, global, automated and intense. In

such an environment it has become more and more difficult to obtain an “edge.” Many believe that unique competitive advantages will become more and more difficult to develop and

sustain. In light of these findings, cohesive team building continues to grow in importance.

As Patrick Lencioni highlights in his book, *The Four Obessions of an Extraordinary Executive* (Wiley, 2000), a leader must focus first on building and maintaining a cohesive leadership team. Lencioni suggests that, ultimately, team cohesion and efficiency will be the true corporate differentiators of the future. Further, in their book, *As One* (Penguin, 2011), Mehrdad Baghai and James Quigley explore highly integrated and efficient team structures that perform “as one.” Enhanced teamwork requires enhanced leadership techniques and flexibility.

While reflecting on the growing importance of team cohesion and efficiency, and the corresponding demand for qualified, flexible and dynamic leaders, I read Henri Nouwen’s book, *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (Gardners Books, 1994). Nouwen’s reflections on Rembrandt’s painting of the same name deeply impacted me. The father is the central figure in Rembrandt’s work, and it is here that Nouwen draws us to his startling spiritual conclusion that we are called to become the father figure in the painting. As I considered Nouwen’s insights, I began to see some parallels for today’s Christian leader.

In human terms, the concept of management implies power, control, achievement and competition, yet spiritually we realize that we are called to something much greater. Ultimately, we are called to a spiritual paternity ... a divinely inspired fatherhood of those we are called to lead, guide and encourage. One wonders, does this have application in the business world of the 21st century? As we seek to lead our organizations and teams in an ever more cohesive manner, to work “as one,” and to differentiate ourselves from the crowd of competitors, do Nouwen and Rembrandt have anything to teach us? I believe that for today’s Christian leader, the answer is a resounding, yes! The father in Rembrandt’s picture has much to teach us about leadership, engagement and teamwork.

To fully grasp the kernels of knowledge that Nouwen would sow for us, we are guided first to his conceptual understanding of Rembrandt himself. Regarding Rembrandt, Nouwen states: “He discovers the light that comes from the inner fire that never dies: the fire of love. His art no longer tries to grasp, conquer, and regulate the visible, but to transform the visible in the fire of love that comes from the unique heart of the artist.” Rembrandt, too, had to give up his demand for control, pride, self-gratification and strength. The result is a masterpiece that draws us deep into the heart of the father so that we, too, may learn from the picture, the parable and the Master.

LOVE OF THE FATHER

Nouwen draws us first to the love of the father. Through the embrace of the father, we see tremendous love for a lost son, a love that transcended the wounds of a child whose pride, greed

and selfish desires had drawn him away from a safe and loving parent. A leader must deeply love his followers. A leader may foresee challenges, yet he cannot always protect his protégé from harm; else how would he learn? As Nouwen states, “His love is too great ... it cannot force, constrain, push, or pull. It offers freedom to reject the love or to love in return That freedom includes the possibility of leaving home and going to a distant country and losing everything.” How difficult this is for us! If we are to create great leaders and independent thinkers on our teams, we must love them enough to let them fail and even to share the consequences of that failure!

PURSUIT OF THE FATHER

Nouwen also points us to the pursuit of the father. This aspect can be seen throughout the painting and the parable. Nouwen notes that in early sketches of this work, “Rembrandt has etched and drawn this event with all the dramatic movement it contains.” However, the ultimate masterpiece pictures the father sitting and embracing the son. Where, then, the pursuit? Nouwen suggests it is in the eyes and hands of the father, seen in the painting through the use of light. It is the inward pursuit of a young man who was temporarily lost to his adoring father. We can also see pursuit in Rembrandt’s inclusion of the older son in the painting. “*The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him.*” (Luke 15:28)

As leaders we are not to stand on our pride and position and wait for others to come to us. Instead, we must initiate the pursuit. Significantly, the father goes out to both children. It matters not the scenario we are faced with; as the father, we must initiate the engagement. Nouwen reflects: “The elder son’s dilemma is to accept or reject that his father’s love is beyond comparisons The father knows that the choice must be the son’s, even while he waits with outstretched hands.” It may be easy to engage with my team when they come to me with problems too great for them to solve or with issues already beyond their control, but I am called to a higher standard. I must pursue their interests as if they were my own, offering to engage with them in any struggle they face, while not demanding acceptance.

JOY OF THE FATHER

Rembrandt’s painting is full of the joy of the father. The father is not content with the reception of his lost son. He throws a party – indeed a party large enough that the older son bitterly resents its lavish nature. Nouwen notes, “His joy was so intense that he couldn’t wait to start celebrating, but as soon as he became aware of his elder son’s arrival [outside], he left the party, went out to him, and pleaded with him to join them.”

Joy is infectious. It carries those around us. When our teams are frustrated, down and discouraged, it is our joy that must

*Nouwen’s
reflections on
Rembrandt’s
painting of the
same name deeply
impacted me.*

carry them. For many leaders, celebration and joy are overlooked. Once the task is completed, the hill is taken, the battle won, they are ready to move on to the next mountain top. Few

leaders take time to celebrate the victories of their team; however, the joy of celebration binds our teams together. Nouwen states, "I have to learn to 'steal' all the real joy there is to steal and lift it up for others to see This is a real discipline. It requires choosing for the light even when there is much darkness to frighten me." Leaders must learn to "steal" each small bit of joy and hold it up for their teams because joy is the light of a darkening workplace.

As I considered Nouwen's insights, I began to see some parallels for today's Christian leader.

COMPASSION OF THE FATHER

Finally, Nouwen, Rembrandt and the parable culminate in the compassion of the father. The entire work illustrates this compassion. I believe this is Nouwen's most significant contribution to our developing concept of true Christian leadership. Leadership by its very nature implies competition. However, Nouwen calls us beyond competition to

something more: a selfless life of empathy for those we lead. He says: "The compassion with which we are to love [and lead] cannot be based upon a competitive life-style. It has to be this absolute compassion in which no trace of competition can be found."

How can a leader develop this selfless form of compassion? It is developed through grief, forgiveness and generosity.

- *Grief*: Only when we truly learn to mourn with those who mourn can we develop the necessary empathy required for true compassion. Without empathy, our compassion risks becoming sympathy.
- *Forgiveness*: A leader must forgive freely without recrimination. Feuds, suspicion and bitterness characterize teams lacking forgiveness. Frequent and unconditional forgiveness will allow a leader to build secure, strong and safe relationships with her team members.
- *Generosity*: A leader must be generous. A ring, a wonderful robe, a grand feast — the father treated the son generously upon his return. As leaders, our generosity will draw others to us. Generosity breaks down the bonds of favoritism. However, it is not enough to practice material generosity. True sacrificial generosity requires that I as a leader give unselfishly of myself to others. Nouwen reminds us that the very word "generosity" carries within its core the concept of "genus" or "of one species." Ultimately, our generosity creates a generous team that believes in the generosity it propagates.

As we seek to enhance the effectiveness of our teams and organizations, we would do well to consider these reflections by Henri Nouwen. Love, pursuit, joy and compassion are vital traits for Christian leaders who desire to change their organizations from the inside out and truly model the example of the father to a lost and darkening world. ●

BRYAN C. TAYLOR, CFA, is a frequent writer and speaker on investment management and the economy for the Christian nonprofit community. Currently, Bryan is a principal of Cornerstone Management Inc. (cornerstonemgt.net) and serves as the firm's CEO and CIO, providing direction and investment expertise to the 55 Christian nonprofit institutions they serve.

Want to learn more? **BRYAN C. TAYLOR** will lead a workshop entitled "Reflections on Stewardship" during the Outcomes Conference: CLA Dallas 2016, April 19–21. (OutcomesConference.org)



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Stewarding Health Care Dollars

Three strategies that make sense

By Donna Lively

In my role as director of insurance plans for GuideStone Financial Resources, I work with many pastors and ministry leaders who are concerned about their ability to maintain high-quality employee health coverage. These individuals are battling the double whammy of rapidly rising health care delivery costs and the crushing regulatory requirements of the Affordable Care Act.

The *Kaiser/HRET Survey of Employer-Sponsored Health Benefits* found that the average annual insurance premium for a family rose to \$16,834 in 2014. That's a 26 percent increase since 2009. On average, the employer paid \$12,011 of that annual premium and the employee paid \$4,823.

While the Affordable Care Act brought new coverage options for many individuals and families, some provisions of the law — including new taxes, fees and penalties, expanded coverage requirements and underwriting limitations — continue to increase costs for employers who offer group health coverage to their employees. The American Health Policy Institute reports that America's largest employers have already spent between \$4,800 and \$5,900 per employee to implement the ACA's mandates into their benefits programs. The report estimates that the total cost of the ACA to all large U.S. employers over the next 10 years could top \$151 billion. Keep in mind that this is \$151 billion that goes above and beyond the cost of the health coverage itself.

While there are no comparable studies for churches, it's no secret they are struggling. Many church leaders, especially those serving smaller congregations, worry that providing health coverage for their employees at current levels is an unsustainable proposition.

GuideStone works with hundreds of churches, ministries and nonprofit organizations of all sizes to develop employee benefit plans that promote good stewardship of limited health care dollars, while maintaining quality health coverage for employees. What we've learned through this process is summed up in the three strategies outlined here. These approaches may provide new options to consider as you seek to balance benefits with the ministry budget.

STRATEGY 1: WORK WITH YOUR PROVIDER

No one understands all the ins and outs of a medical plan better than the organization offering it. Share your problems and tap into your provider's knowledge to craft a medical plan design that's strong, yet cost-efficient.

We advise churches, ministries and other nonprofit Christian organizations to choose a provider that offers non-ERISA medical plans. They have fewer administrative requirements, which cuts down on costs.

We also suggest working with providers who offer access to large discounted networks of providers. This makes it more convenient for employees to find network participating providers. Because about 85 percent of claims are related to provider visits, having a discounted network can also translate into lower premiums for employers.

Understanding your network is critical if you are contemplating a plan change. Before you make a switch, ask your provider to run a disruption analysis, which outlines your employees' current in-network usage and compares it with the network you are considering. If you find that your employees will lose access to a significant number of their providers in the other network, it may not be such a bargain.

Finally, look for a medical plan provider who offers hands-on tools, like a robust website that clearly outlines employee benefits and access to wellness programs. These can save everyone time and money.

STRATEGY 2: EMPOWER EMPLOYEES

Your employees understand that employer-sponsored health coverage is their best value, but they also want choices.

That's why it's important to build options into your benefit plan. For example, offer a base plan and allow employees to buy up to a plan with stronger benefits or buy down to a plan with fewer benefits as their needs merit. Employees who want more or a specific type of coverage are usually willing to pay extra for it, while employees who may not need such extensive coverage will welcome a plan with fewer benefits at a lower cost. This gives all your employees the opportunity to choose a medical plan that perfectly fits their needs.

Skyrocketing prescription drug costs is one of the factors to blame for the upward trend of health care premiums. To better manage costs, offer a plan that rewards the use of generic drugs and manages the use of specialty medications. Tiered prescription co-pays are a common way to achieve this goal.

Also, look for providers who offer tools, including personalized calculators, pharmacy management programs and side-by-side benefit comparison options.

If you must shift the cost burden to employees, compensate for those additional costs. For instance, if you switch from a PPO plan to a federally qualified High Deductible Health Plan,

develop a plan of contribution to the employees' Health Savings Accounts to offset higher out-of-pocket costs.

Health Reimbursement Arrangements continue to be a popular strategy to offset employee out-of-pocket costs while providing financial protection to the employer.

STRATEGY 3: STAY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE ACA

The ACA is a complicated law, which has created many new administrative responsibilities for employers. Failure to comply with these new regulations can be costly.

For instance, the Employer Mandate requires Applicable Large Employers to offer minimum essential coverage to all full-time employees (with "full-time" being defined as those who work an average of 30 hours a week or 130 hours a month). The coverage you provide must cost less than 9.5 percent of the employee's household income and be of minimum value, meaning the plan offered by the employer must cover at least 60 percent of the total allowed cost of medical services and prescription drugs.

(The Employer Mandate has detailed counting and reporting requirements, which are outlined in IRS Code sections 4980H, 6055 and 6056.)

If your church or ministry meets the definition of an Applicable Large Employer and you fail to offer minimum essential coverage to at least 95 percent of your workforce and one person receives subsidized Exchange coverage, you will be fined up to \$2,000 per year for each employee who receives the subsidy. If you offer coverage as required, but an employee

receives an Exchange subsidy because the coverage is not affordable or does not provide minimum value, your ministry could be fined up to \$3,000 per year for each employee who receives the subsidy. These penalties are expected to only increase over time.

Each employer's circumstances are unique, and because the penalties for non-compliance with the ACA are so steep, we always encourage employers to consult with their own tax and legal advisers with respect to their specific facts and circumstances.

PLANNING AHEAD CAN PAY OFF

We understand how recent changes in health care delivery are making it more complicated to offer health coverage. However, we encourage churches, ministries and other nonprofit Christian organizations to continue providing this important benefit. Remember, a robust benefits package is a must for recruiting and retaining quality employees.

We know that many more changes are on the horizon. However, by working with your provider, your employees and competent tax and legal advisers, you can continue offering healthy employee benefits — and still be a good steward of your health care dollars. ●

As Director of Insurance Plans for GuideStone Financial Resources, **DONNA LIVELY** combines her heart for ministry and service with decades of experience in health and welfare benefit sales and leadership. Learn more at (GuideStone.org).

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Discipling Generous

GIVERS



Five goals for your financial supporters

By Chris McDaniel

WHAT DO YOU WANT for your financial supporters versus from them?

This question has been etched in my heart lately. It's as if I cannot escape it, as though God keeps putting it right in front of me like the golden arches of McDonalds when on a road trip across the United States.

Those in vocational, support-based ministry spend so much time praying, planning and strategizing about what they want from their supporters, but they infrequently stop to think and pray about what they want for them. Rarely are strategies developed that prioritize the ministry and discipleship of supporters.

For nearly 13 years, I have served in full-time, vocational, support-based ministry. Throughout this journey, several leaders I've met through the Christian Leadership Alliance (CLA) network and conferences have come alongside of me to mentor and challenge me as a disciple of Christ. It has been a slow but steady process of transformation from the inside

out. I have a new and fresh vision; what began as a role of fundraising has now become a ministry of discipling generous givers.

However, as compelling and biblical as the idea of discipling generous givers is, how do ministry leaders carry this out practically? What do the day-to-day role and activities look like? What are the tools available to help make this discipleship practical? Many in the field of development are asking these questions, yet only a few are tackling them with tangible strategies and resources. However, collectively we must continue to produce these tools, resources and strategies and share them so we move ideas and convictions to daily practice.

A good place to start is by answering the question, "What do I want *for* my financial supporters?" The answers to this question become your desired outcomes. These outcomes become the framework for a development strategy that will result in activities that work toward the realization of those outcomes. Each outcome should align with Scripture and reflect a heart of discipleship.

Here are five outcomes you may want to consider for your financial supporters:

1. To bring glory to God through their sacrificial giving and obedience.

When approaching current or potential supporters for a financial gift, our chief desire for them should be obedience. In other words, our goal is not to secure a gift, but to discover whether they are being led by God to give to our cause. That goal shifts the objective from fundraising to ministry. Paul shares this same heart in 2 Corinthians 9:13, *“Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.”*

2. To understand that they share in the eternal rewards.

Oftentimes our focus can be on our calling and our eternal rewards, and financial supporters become a means to our ends. What if our focus shifted to engaging our financial supporters so they can live out their calling and store up treasures in heaven? Our day-to-day conversations and activities should be centered in our desire for them to hear *“Well done, good and faithful servant...”* (Matt. 25:23) We also must communicate in a way that helps them to understand that as givers and prayers, they share equally in the eternal fruit of the ministry. As they are obedient and bring God glory, they also share in the eternal rewards. Paul likewise shares this heart in Philippians 4:17, *“I don’t say this because I want a gift from you. Rather, I want you to receive a reward for your kindness.”* (NLT)

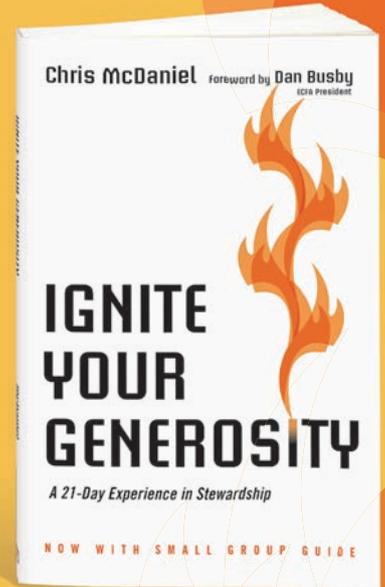
3. To know you sincerely love them. People quickly figure out if we genuinely love and care for them, or if we only see them as dollar signs. Developing any loving relationship takes time and effort by understanding who your financial supporters really are. Knowing their families, hopes, dreams and prayer needs are all examples of how to demonstrate that love. However, it goes beyond that. True love is unconditional; therefore, love for them should transcend whether they give financially or not. To engage financial supporters without love is meaningless, so we must seriously consider Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 13:1–3 and pray that our love is felt both by those who are financial supporters and those who are unable to contribute financially.

4. To trust you and the integrity of your staff and board. *“He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity.”* (Prov. 2:7, NLT) When we compromise integrity, we compromise that shield God offers when we are walking in integrity. As stewards of God’s resources, we must prove to be trustworthy. That trust comes from keeping our word and from using God’s resources in a way that obeys his word and the law. As financial supporters experience this, they will continue to give with joy. One of the most practical ways to earn that trust is to adhere to ECFA’s “Seven Standards of Responsible Stewardship” and to regularly communicate with transparency the ways in which those standards are being met.

5. To experience personally the hands-on ministry in some capacity. Oftentimes the ministry stays at center stage, and financial supporters are kept at a distance like an audience. Because financial supporters are truly partners and co-laborers, that disparity should not exist. With intentionality and a little creativity, we can engage them in very practical aspects of the ministry on a regular basis. Consider inviting supporters to sit on the board or on an advisory team; invite them onsite to pray; connect them in a mentoring relationship with staff,

What do you want for your financial supporters versus from them?

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Continued on page 41



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Continued from page 39

or discover their gifts and talents and release them into various aspects of your hands-on ministry. Such invitations are similar to Jesus' telling the disciples, "You give them something to eat." (Mark 6:37) We can thus encourage and challenge financial supporters to engage hands-on in our ministries.

Challenge yourself, your board and your leaders to ask the question, "What do we want for our financial supporters versus from them?" This is not

a question that can be answered too quickly. Set aside time to pray, listen and reflect. Write down what God puts on your heart(s). A great venue for this is a board or senior leader retreat because it allows you to break away from the busyness of day-to-day

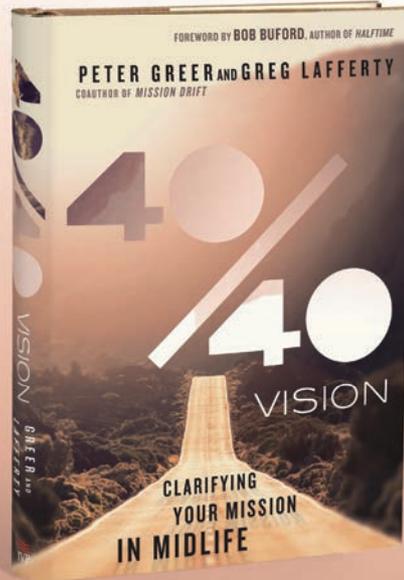
A good place to start is by answering the question, "What do I want for my financial supporters?"

operations and earnestly seek and hear from the Lord. At a retreat you can provide each person individual time with God and then come together as a group to explore common threads. In the end there should be consensus about the outcomes you want to see take shape in your financial supporters. Once those are agreed upon, start developing (or modifying) a strategy that sets goals, objectives and action points to see these outcomes become a reality.

Asking, "What do you want for your financial supporters versus from them?" is one small practical step a ministry can take to move down the road of discipling generous givers. However, this small step puts you on the path to an outward focused development strategy that places the heart and the maturity of the giver at its core. It also allows ministry leaders and development staff to place the call of discipleship, which has been given to every follower of Christ, at the forefront of their development strategy and day-to-day activities. ●

CHRIS MCDANIEL is the chief business development officer for DELTA Ministries International and author of the newly released *Ignite Your Generosity — A 21-Day Experience in Stewardship* (IVP Books, 2015).

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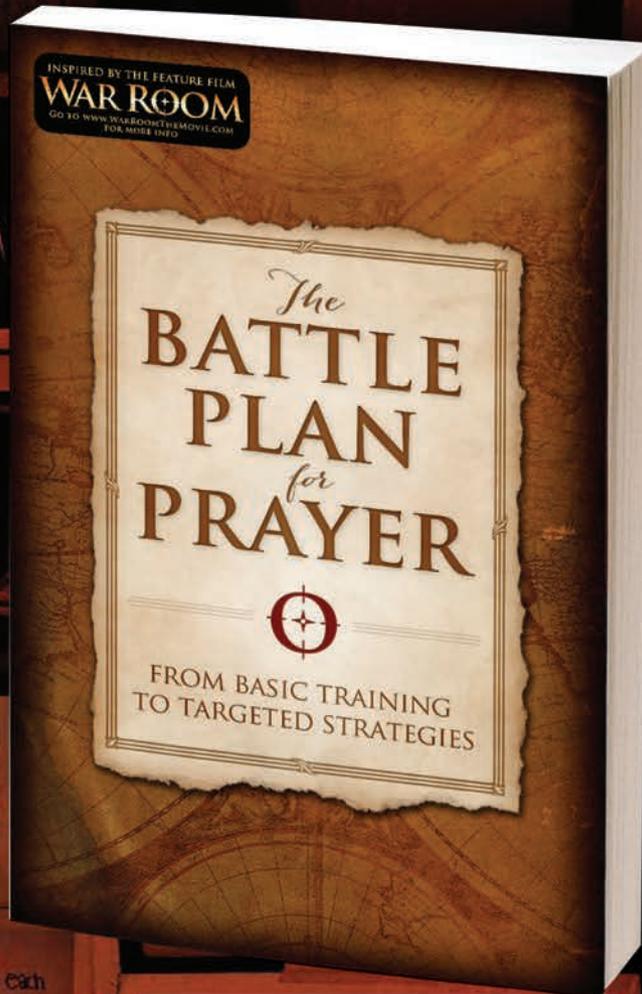
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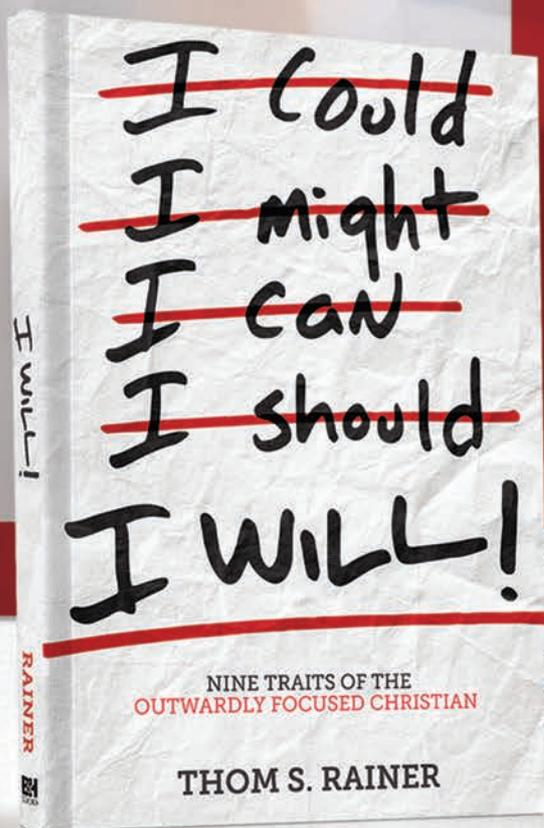
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Leading Change

It starts in the heart of the leader

AS LEADERS, we have all seen organizational change efforts come and go — kicked off with great enthusiasm, only to see the excitement wane and the initiative replaced by another. From my experience as a change consultant, I believe this happens because the most critical of all “success factors” needed for effective organizational change is the one most often overlooked, and that is the “heart of the leader.”

The “heart of the leader” can be best described by exploring beliefs of the heart that become barriers to change initiatives. Consider these questions:

- **Communication:** How can open and honest communication exist when the leader fears rejection, needs to be liked or needs to be needed?
- **Trust:** How will trust be fostered if the leader fears being hurt or has difficulty forgiving?
- **Teamwork:** How is a culture of teamwork possible when the leader has difficulty delegating, perhaps believing they have to hold all things and people together, or carry every burden?
- **Collaboration:** How can a leader encourage others to collaborate in decision making and challenge the status quo, when they believe they have to be perfect, know it all, do it all, or when they fear losing control, position or power?
- **Accountability:** How is a leader to model giving and receiving feedback on behaviors, as well as results, when they fear any weakness or inadequacy in themselves being exposed, and blame others rather than be accountable for mistakes?

It’s important to realize that behind the fears and beliefs of leaders described above, are lies that we all may believe about ourselves and about God:

Lies about ourselves:

- I’m on my own.
- I have to be strong. I can’t be weak.
- I have to hold all things and people together.
 - I have to carry the burdens.
 - I have to be perfect.
 - I have to prove my worth through performance.
- I’m not good enough.
- I’m not wanted.

Lies about God:

- He’s not there; he’s distant.
- He expects me to be perfect, and I can’t live up to his expectations.
 - He wants me to figure it out on my own.

- He’s just watching.
- He doesn’t care about these workplace details.
- He expects me to carry the burdens, and they are from him.
- He’s disappointed in me.
- He’s a taskmaster. The pressure is from him.

I refer to these lies as “strongholds,” meaning the old, false messages we received growing up from our families, schools and cultures that still control us today as leaders, instead of God’s truth and His Spirit.

We all have strongholds in our hearts, yet we are deluded into thinking that when we enter the workplace, be it ministry-related or not, that we check our hearts at the door, and somehow these strongholds don’t impact what we do there. Nothing could be further from the truth. They impact every thought, word, emotion, attitude and action both inside and outside the workplace.

If we become aware of the lies we believe in our hearts, then we’re on our way to the solution. The fact is that all lies come from our enemy. “...When he [the devil] lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (John 8:44) This tells us that the barriers we encounter in organizational change are often spiritual in nature, and therefore require spiritual weapons of warfare. Trying to make change happen in our own fleshly strength by mandating, faking or manipulating it is not going to work!

So the next time you face difficulties, barriers or your “buttons get pushed” when implementing organizational change, ask God to show you, “What lies am I believing about myself? About God? Where is he in the picture?” Remember, whenever you believe these lies, you are aligning your thoughts with those of the enemy. That is why the following spiritual weapons of warfare can help to break through: Confess the sin of believing these lies; forgive; command spirits of fear, rejection, false burden bearing, etc. to go; cancel the enemy’s authority gained from believing each lie, and ask God to show you his truth.

As a leader, your heart is the critical success factor for effective organizational change. When you use these spiritual weapons of warfare, you increase Jesus’ reign over your heart, which will in turn, give him more reign in your change efforts as well! ●

JEANNE NIGRO is a speaker, author and founder of Jeanne Nigro Ministries (jeannenigro.com), whose relevant and practical teachings transform lives around the world. Prior to ministry, Jeanne worked in organizational change consulting for 17 years.

Want to learn more? **JEANNE NIGRO** will lead a workshop entitled “Leading Change: The Heart of a Leader” for The Outcomes Conference, CLA Dallas 2016, April 19–21, 2016. (OutcomesConference.org)



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Inspiring Faithful Givers

Ways to share godly giving principles

WHEN MY KIDS WERE YOUNGER, I often read them short stories with compelling storylines. I remember their innocent faces and little eyes looking intently at me as they hung on my every word. I always loved to watch them come to life as they realized the main point of the story. Then the room would erupt with great discussion about what the story meant to them. Points were clarified, but more importantly, we talked about what God wanted them to do with that information.

That is the power of a good story. It engages listeners and allows them to have an experience outside of themselves. One thing many faith-based organizations struggle with is engaging their members and the community at large in the testimonies of the lives their ministry is changing. Plenty of ministry work today is focused on helping those less fortunate. Ministries need to kindle donors' passion around it. Like my kids, donors need a compelling description of your work. It helps them identify with your mission and invites them to come alongside to be a part of what God is doing.

Cultivating consistent givers in a world full of deceptions and schemes manipulating people out of their money is challenging. Many ministry leaders struggle with how to talk about giving in a way that is inspiring and excites donors about what God is doing in ministry.

Here are three key ways to incorporate godly giving principles that will inspire faithful giving.

MOTIVATE GIFTS FROM THE HEART

People will give time and resources to what they value. Emphasize giving as a response to God's generosity and use the goals of your mission to connect them personally to what you're doing. People are inspired when they see others sacrificing time and resources to serve the needs of many. Givers want their resources to bring glory to a holy God. They want to see meaningful work being done and souls saved.

Sometimes it may be possible to focus too much on the work and not enough on the people of the work. Regularly sharing the transformation happening through your donors'

sacrifices — and making it a part of the culture in your ministry — is the most inspirational way to motivate the importance of faithful giving.

IN A DIGITAL WORLD, BE EXCELLENT

Digital credibility is critical in a modern world. Donors research organizations on the web all the time before they decide to give, the same way a churchgoer who moves to an area decides which church to attend. Your digital footprint develops trust without your ever having a conversation with anyone. This is not a generational communication avenue; studies show that all age groups do cross-comparison research online. Your ministry is not immune to this. Don't have staffing resources available? Thankfully there are many excellent faith-focused companies that specialize in helping you build a modern and effective digital presence.

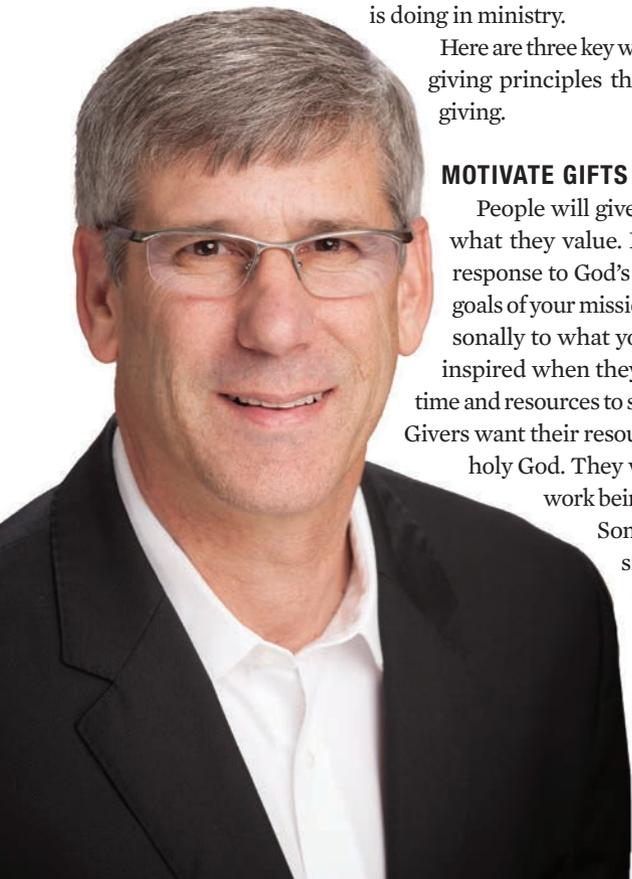
SAY THANK YOU — PERIOD

If the only time you are speaking to your donors is in relation to your ministry's needs, then you *can* begin to sound solicitous. Make opportunities to simply thank your donors. Share information about organizations that support or minister to the population your donors are passionate about and thank them for caring. God commands our generosity for two reasons: to benefit us as we recognize and trust in his provision and to benefit those around us. Identify the need around you and be passionately outspoken about it. The second greatest commandment Christ gave us is to love people. To God, people matter most, and material things fade in comparison. Lead by example and encourage your donors to share in God's spirit of compassion for people. Be mindful that giving is a part of spiritual growth. Faithful giving and spiritual maturity are both fruits of nurture.

Inspiring faithful givers isn't about money. It is about God's purpose in a donor's world. Well-intentioned marketing will not replace the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life. Point your donors to the need around them so they can act upon what God has placed in their heart, and encourage them to find the joy in sacrificial giving. People followed the apostles after seeing their willingness to sacrifice their own welfare for those Christ placed in their path. Do likewise. ●

DAVID HENKE is vice president of sales at MinistryLINQ. He is a certified payments professional with 11 years of experience serving churches and ministries. You can reach him at dhenke@ministrylinq.com or learn more at (ministrylinq.com).

Want to learn more? **DAVID HENKE** will lead a workshop entitled "Inspiring Faithful Givers" for The Outcomes Conference, CLA Dallas 2016, April 19–21, 2016. (OutcomesConference.org)



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Stewarding People

Five steps for addressing performance issues

ONE OF THE GREATEST MOTIVATIONS as a Christian leader is the hope of hearing Jesus say, *“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”* (Matt. 25:23)

The parable of the talents extends well beyond stewarding our financial resources. As leaders, we are entrusted with God’s most precious resource — his people. How we select, develop, deploy and transition our people resources matters to God.

Our ability to realize the potential God has for our organization largely depends on the quality and engagement of our staff. Hiring fantastic people who align to the mission of our team is not difficult. Maintaining that fantastic team over time proves to be the challenge. As the organization’s needs change, a gap can occur between what the role requires and what an individual is capable or motivated to provide. This misalignment results in a performance gap — a decline in attitude and performance. How and when we address the gap determines the performance and engagement of the entire team.

Leadership requires courage. Many leaders refrain from providing difficult performance feedback under the banner of compassion. Withholding truth is not compassionate, but deceitful. To walk in true Christ likeness, grace must always be balanced by truth. Candor must be measured by kindness. We would be spared 75 percent of our most difficult employment interactions if managers engaged in ongoing, specific and actionable feedback. If you provide feedback and set clear expectations, your people will have the dignified choice to either get better or decide it’s not the right role for them.

Here are five steps for addressing performance issues with truth and grace:

1. Describe the gap. Communicate the performance issue with candor and kindness. Be concise. What did you expect and what did you receive? Is this a pattern or a one-time occurrence? How does the issue impact the team and organization?

2. Be curious. Seek to understand all aspects of the situation. We do not expect a doctor to treat our illness without first doing a thorough examination. This is also true when confronting a performance issue. Is the attitude or performance decline due to a lack of skills or lack of motivation? What is the individual’s perception of the situation? What obstacles does he or she encounter at work and at home?

3. Identify the issue: Most performance issues can be categorized in one of four areas of we call “fit-concerns”:

- *Poor attitude.* The individual seems unmotivated or disengaged. He or she is negative or sarcastic.
- *Underperforming.* The individual struggles in a skill that impacts the team. He or she has difficulty meeting deadlines, keeping commitments or providing high quality.
- *Role change.* The needs of the ministry have changed and the role requires a higher level of leadership or competence. The employee does not have the skills to meet the needs of the role.
- *Employee change.* The individual has grown and needs a new challenge to meet his or her capacity, desire and ability.

4. Set a course of action. Determine the action steps and timeframe that will provide the individual an opportunity to succeed. The timeframe should match the category of fit-concern. A bad attitude should not continue more than 30 days. On the other hand, it may take six months to learn a new skill.

5. Clarify the consequences. Be clear about what happens during and after the timeframe. What happens if expectations are met or not met? Not every fit-concern ends in termination. Many employees accept the challenge with a renewed sense of energy. Others may not be able to bridge the performance gap due to the changes required. Whether the individual will be taking on a new role or transitioning from staff, the consequences should be well understood.

As our organization grows and people change, we can never fully eliminate fit-concerns. In order to steward the grander vision of our organization, we need to continually invest in our people so they can maximize their God-given talents. After expending all potential avenues of development, we may need to release staff members to use their talents and passions elsewhere. Since we know change is inevitable, we can prepare for staff detours and transitions in advance so every staff member has an honest and honoring experience. This is good stewardship. ●

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Want to learn more? **TARA VANDERSANDE** will lead a workshop entitled “Addressing Performance Issues with Grace and Truth” for The Outcomes Conference, CLA Dallas 2016, April 19–21, 2016. (OutcomesConference.org)



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Does Power Corrupt?

Insights on stewarding power well

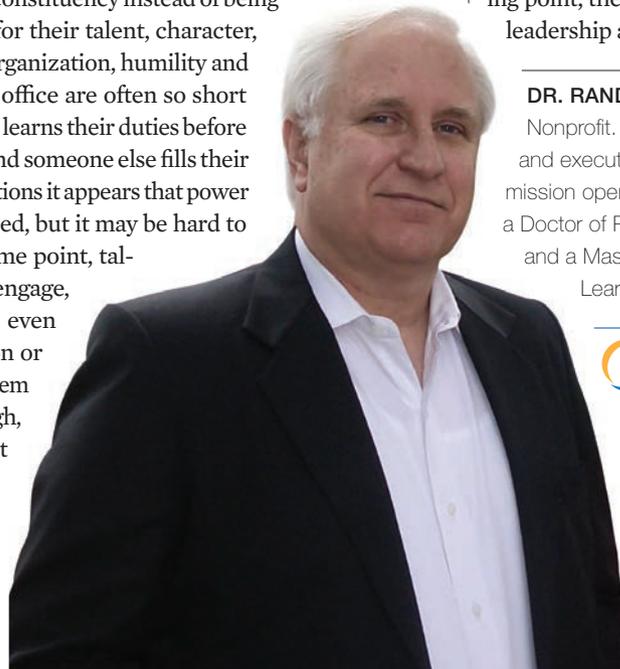
IN 1887, AN IMPOSING LOOKING MAN named John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton, the first Baron Acton (1834-1902) penned words so memorable that they have become part of American thought and leadership culture.

Lord Acton wrote: “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

Lord Acton observed something very real, but drew the wrong conclusion. It is important for followers of Jesus to understand why. The problem with Lord Acton’s statement is that he made power the cause of corruption. It is not. God has absolute power and is not corrupt. We can all point to people who wield great power yet do so in an uncorrupt manner. Besides, corruption does not require absolute power. The world is full of people with a relatively small amount of power who are amazingly corrupt.

What happens to us when we allow Lord Acton’s perspective on power in shaping our organizational culture? First, it causes us to view power in an adversarial manner, when God would have us treat it as a gift from him. Second, Lord Acton’s viewpoint tends to make us treat power as an object, a commodity that can be owned, held, bought, sold, bartered, lost, gained or traded. This in turn promotes materialism, and the worship of power and money — the visible expression of power.

In organizations or churches where Lord Acton’s statement shapes the organizational culture, I usually find lots of committees, sub-committees and Robert’s Rules. I see lots of committee reports and agendas that are primarily oriented in the past. Often these boards are comprised of people who are there because they represent some constituency instead of being chosen individually for their talent, character, commitment to the organization, humility and teamwork. Terms of office are often so short that the person barely learns their duties before they are rotated out and someone else fills their slot. In these organizations it appears that power cannot be monopolized, but it may be hard to move forward. At some point, talented leaders disengage, become passive or even leave the organization or church. When the system breaks down far enough, people work around it and ironically can gain too much unaccountable power.



I often ask Christ-centered boards: “How much of Jesus’ power and support would you like to have flowing through this church or organization?” After some initial hesitation and making sure this is not a trick question, the answer is almost always either “all that we can have,” or “100 percent.” No one wants to operate on only 25 percent of the effectiveness they could have. Yet, our interpretation of Lord Acton leads us to make sure power can’t really be powerful. This is our human culture.

Scripture shows us God’s cultural view of power. Just as there is the stewardship of money and resources, the Bible describes the stewardship of power. The thread of understanding, running throughout the Bible allows us to distill the following principles:

1. God doesn’t just have power, he is power .
2. God is good, and he views his power as good.
3. God’s power can be dangerous (not corrupt) .
4. God puts his power under control, making it safe power.

In Job 38 through 39, God provides a long monologue for Job, illustrating power with control. My favorite is Job 38:8-11: “*Who shut up the sea behind closed doors when it burst forth from the womb, when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in darkness, when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, when I said ‘This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt’?*” No one can hold God accountable, but God gives assurances to us that provide safety in our relationship with him.

Stewardship of power is all about receiving large amounts of power and passing that power along to others while placing the use of the power under enough control to make it safe power. Great governance is nothing more (or less) than the stewardship of power. It is the starting point, the heart and soul of a great board, effective leadership and a happy and fruitful organization. ●

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Want to learn more? **DR. RANDAL DICK** will teach a session on board leadership during a Christian Nonprofit Leadership Academy course entitled “CCNL Leadership” for The Outcomes Conference, CLA Dallas 2016, April 19–21, 2016. (OutcomesConference.org)

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Meet a real-life

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Profile

NAME Will Russell

OCCUPATION Pastor and
volunteer chaplain

PASSION Teaching and discipling

*"To me, generosity is
self-sacrifice."*

*"My service at Phoenix
Rescue Mission gives me an
opportunity every day to
watch Christ change the lives
of others."*

*"We can do kind acts, but it
goes beyond that. It's giving
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Leading Yourself

Your preeminent stewardship assignment

“YOU’RE FIRED!” Thanks to Donald Trump, these words have become a part of the American lexicon. Unfortunately, one Monday morning, I, too, heard those words drifting across the table — directed at me! I was stunned. I was given two hours to pack my office and leave. It was the first big failure in my life. Now, as I look back, it was also a time when God taught me lessons about leadership and integrity.

I believe it’s in the moments of pain, failure and brokenness that we learn who we really are in relation to our heavenly Father. How can we lead our ministry, or our organization, or live out God’s calling on our life unless we’ve looked in the mirror in order to *“keep a close watch on yourself”* (1 Tim. 4:16a, ESV), so that we align our leadership with the ways of God.

Fifty percent of your time should be spent knowing and leading yourself. When you know yourself well enough to manage yourself, your ability to influence those you lead — clients, peers, direct reports — is dramatically increased. You are able to make choices that build relationships and trust with those around you.

So what does leading yourself look like?

1. We need a deep understanding of how God wired us. Are you impulsive or deliberate? Are you patient or impatient? What gets you angry? Do you prefer to work as part of a team or alone? How does your behavior change under stress? If we know our strengths, our weaknesses and our vulnerabilities, then we can use those strengths for kingdom work, compensate for our weaknesses and protect our vulnerabilities.

It’s also important to remember that as we seek a closer relationship with the Lord, the Holy Spirit is transforming our personality. Consider the disciple John. He was known as a son of thunder, yet his walk with Jesus made him the disciple who wrote most extensively about love.

2. It’s important to manage ourselves — what the Bible calls self-control. Proverbs 25:28 (ESV) teaches that failing to practice self-control is *“like a city broken into and left without walls.”* Think about the last time you were in an

emotionally charged situation. What did you do? What triggered your actions? Did you lose control, or respond in a way that built trust? Your ability to manage your responses and reactions to the daily stresses, threats and leadership challenges you face has a direct impact on your ability to inspire and serve others. Every time Jesus experienced a large and intense time of ministry, he withdrew to pray and find solitude. He made a choice to lead himself and spend time with his Father.

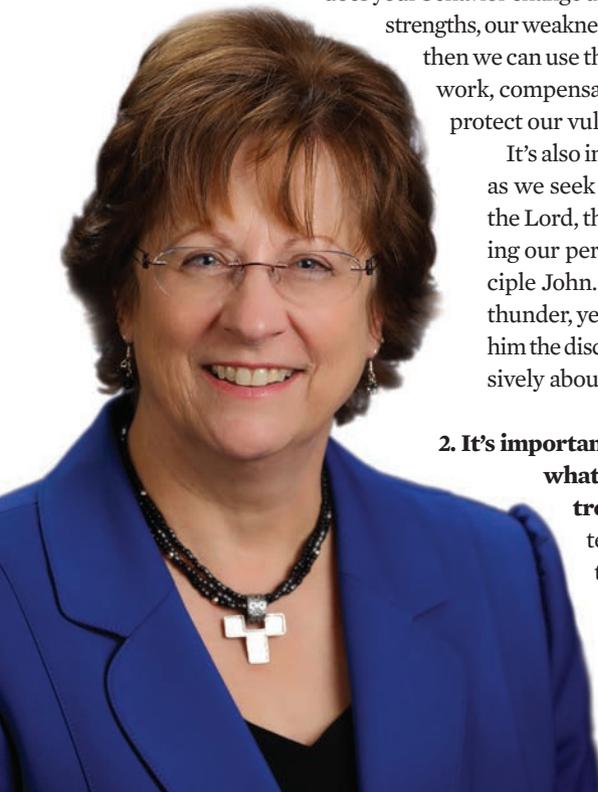
3. We need to perceive the emotions and needs of those around us. In John 6:15 (ESV), Scripture tells us that Jesus *“perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king,”* withdrew to be by himself. Jesus sensed the emotions and intended actions of those around him and chose to withdraw in order to have a positive outcome. We, too, can make choices that will have a positive impact on those around us when we lead ourselves by perceiving through the Spirit what’s in their hearts and making choices that align with the ways of God.

4. We need to make choices that will inspire and serve those we lead. If we claim the name of Christ, integrity demands that we practice what he taught — servant leadership. Jesus told his disciples in Mark 10:43 that *“whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.”* When we know ourselves well enough to manage ourselves and when we perceive the emotions and needs of others, then we can make choices to be good stewards of the human resources that God has given us. We can emphasize collaboration, trust and the fruits of the Spirit. We can encourage others to serve, while staying focused on achieving results that bear fruit.

After my firing, God took me into the heart of Chicago to work at one of the most dangerous housing projects in the U.S. There he taught me about leading myself. Ask him to teach you who you are in Christ, and trust him for the insight and wisdom to serve and inspire others. ●

NANCY REECE serves as senior consultant and executive coach with The Human Capital Group. She has a 20-year background in Christian nonprofit management and teaches Leadership/Organizational Behavior at Lipscomb University’s Graduate College of Business.

Want to learn more? **NANCY REECE** will lead a workshop entitled “Leading Yourself” for The Outcomes Conference, CLA Dallas 2016, April 19–21, 2016. (OutcomesConference.org)



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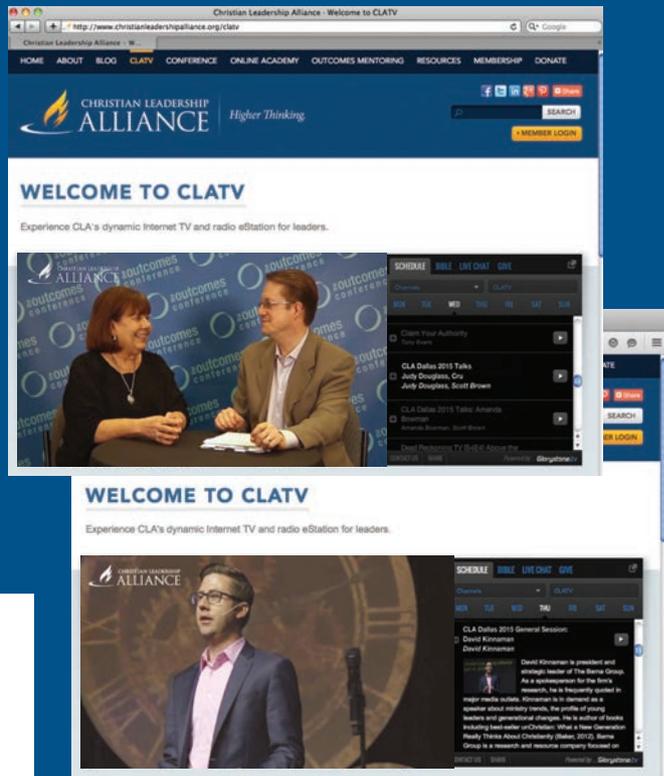
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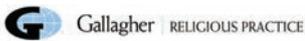
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Agents of Redemption

Stewarding the Jesus agenda

THE MEANING OF STEWARDSHIP has its roots in a word found in New Testament Greek. The word is “oikos,” meaning household, as found in Acts 16:31. That word is in the family of words like management, administration, economics and accountability. These are all business and financial terms that point to something that has been entrusted and managed. As I look closer at the life of Jesus, I become aware that the “something” that he has entrusted to Christian leaders is his agenda, his mission and his focus during 36 months of ministry.

So what is Jesus’ agenda?

As I look closer at the first sermon Jesus preached in Nazareth at the synagogue (Luke 4:14–30), I see a five-point agenda that jumps out at me in ways I had not seen before. Jesus, who was worshipping on the Sabbath at the synagogue, rises to read from the prophet Isaiah saying, “*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.*” (Luke 4:18–19) Jesus then gives the scroll back to the attendant and sits down to teach. He begins by saying, “*Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.*” (Luke 4:21) Wow! Did you read that correctly?

It was a normal Sabbath day until Jesus spoke the first word of his sermon. Had he said “Someday” or “In the future...” it would have been a normal day of worship. But, he said “*Today...*” From that moment on, Jesus would engage the poor with good news. He would be sent to tell the prisoners about freedom. He would heal the blind and the lame, and raise people from death to life. He would engage the oppressed, and announce the Lord’s favor to all those who would hear him. This is the agenda of Jesus. James, his half brother, resonated with the Lord’s agenda and said, “*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.*” (James 1:27)

We have been entrusted with the good news of the gospel of grace, and we have been charged with carrying out the agenda of Jesus in the world. When followers of Jesus practice “*religion that God our Father accepts*” by looking after orphans, caring for widows in distress and engaging the poor, the prisoner, the

sick, the oppressed to tell about God’s favor, we bring the kingdom near to them. We become God’s agents of redemption. While it is clear Jesus is the Redeemer, he enlists us in his agenda to help people redeem what has been done against them and, with God’s help, to transform it into good. As Dr. Jim Denison, my former pastor and professor said, “Whatever God allows, he also redeems.” This is what Buckner International has done for more than 135 years in Texas and overseas.

Since the early 1990s, I have followed a life mission along this purpose: “To develop kingdom leaders from my circle of influence to the ends of the earth.” My first sermon was preached 40 years ago as a 16-year-old. By my early 30s I began to shape my life mission as I perceived and understood it. I have been on the same track for about 25 years. My life mission is focused on developing leaders that focus on the kingdom of God in their circle of influence and beyond.

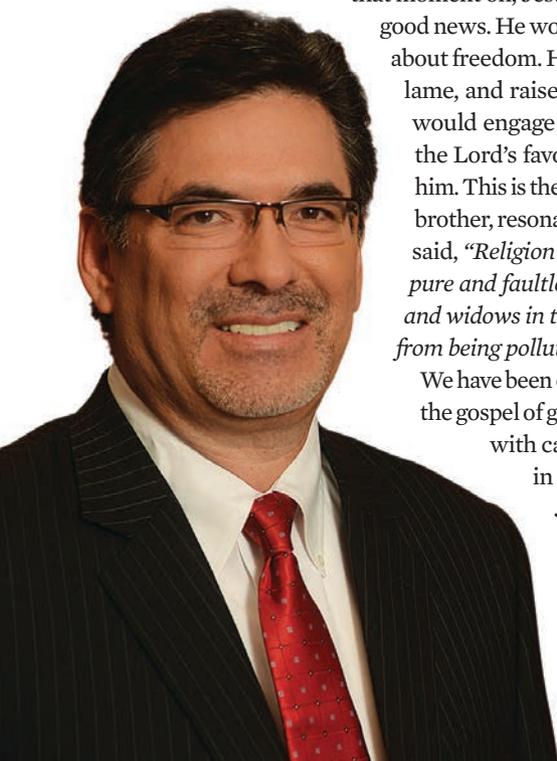
We have been entrusted with the good news of the gospel of grace, and we have been charged with carrying out the agenda of Jesus in the world.

One way to engage leaders in redemptive ministry is to call them to pursue the agenda of Jesus and to become personally engaged as agents of redemption in the lives of vulnerable children, orphans and their families. This brings the kingdom of God near to the poor, the prisoner, the sick and the oppressed. It shares good news with them for the here and now, as well as the yet to be. I have been blessed with the privilege of pursuing this mission as a pastor, church planter, adjunct professor, business leader, university president and now as CEO at Buckner International.

I invite you to consider the stewardship of your life, your calling and your leadership *today!* ●

DR. ALBERT L. REYES brings more than 30 years experience in pastoral ministry and organizational leadership to his role as president and CEO of Buckner International. He is author of *The Jesus Agenda: Becoming an Agent of Redemption* (Believers Press, 2015). Learn more about Buckner International at (buckner.org) or by emailing Albert Reyes at areyes@buckner.org.

Want to learn more? **DR. ALBERT L. REYES** will lead a workshop entitled “Becoming an Agent of Redemption” for The Outcomes Conference, CLA Dallas 2016, April 19–21, 2016. (OutcomesConference.org)





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