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Working in Teams

Dysfunctional Teams – Causes and Cures

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An Introduction

The basic m.o. (modus operandi) of a Transformational Ministry is a team. Usually these teams consist of 5 to 20 adults.

The purpose of this manual is to convince team members of the value of operating in functional teams. Most of us live in highly individualistic cultures and this often makes team life difficult. This manual is not intended to be "devotional" reading! It is a manual to study where things have gone wrong. It is to be used as you would use a manual on car maintenance and repair.

Teams **do** become dysfunctional and life on a team can be very painful. Begin by identifying the cause of the problem. Recognize that, in team life, there are usually multiple problems as one problem supplements another. Don't be superficial in your analysis. Look for multiple symptoms and then look at the part of the manual that can give you help. Apply the solutions with prayer.

There are twelve main reasons why these teams often become dysfunctional. Of course there are many more, but these twelve appear to me to be the most common. However, there is one reason for dysfunctionality not mentioned here that is ever present! That is the activity of the enemy of our souls – the devil. We need to be ever watchful and prayerful concerning his attacks. This subject is best covered in books on spiritual warfare.

1. The Team Idea

1.1 Introduction : The Rediscovery of Team

1.2 Assumptions in Team Life

1.3 A Definition : What is a Team?

1.4 Why are Teams Essential in Christian Mission?

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1. The Team Idea

1.1 Introduction : The Rediscovery of Team

The world is teeming with teams!

- Work teams
- Sports teams
- Dream teams
- Project teams
- Investment teams
- Design teams
- Planning teams
- Functional teams and cross-functional teams
- Committees
- Task forces
- Advisory teams
- Action teams
- Teams with a structure and a charter
- Teams coming together on an ad hoc basis
- Leader-led teams and leader-less teams
- Teams that live together and teams that never see each other (virtual teams)

All teams have the potential to fall flat on their faces! So why are we committed to work in teams?

Teams are as old as Hammurabi (and probably a lot older!). For thousands of years, in all cultures all over the world, people have worked in teams. Team has always been the natural unit for small-scale activity – fighting, hunting, farming etc.

It was the Industrial Revolution in the 18/19th centuries, with the mass assembly of machinery that changed the way human beings interacted with each other. It was the Industrial Revolution that led to management hierarchies, organisational pyramids, bureaucracy etc. in the way that we work together.

Industrial management led to big companies with various economies of scale. With computerisation it became possible to build even multi-national, huge conglomerate organisations. However, these quickly ran into problems. The basic problem was that people couldn't be treated as machines! The end-users were **people**. The work force was made up of **people**. People don't behave in the same way as machine parts!

As a result of the Industrial Revolution, in big companies there was a clear separation of the management from the workers. The management considered themselves the brains of the workforce – the elite! The workers were just the muscle! The result was constant adversarial war leading to death – constant labour disputes or labour complacency and apathy leading to sloppy work and low productivity.

In modern, post-Industrial Revolution management the answer to most management problems is TEAM. We have rediscovered team!

1.2 Assumptions in Team Life

- We are not individual lone-ranger type Christians.
- We were made to like one another's company!
- Deep down we need each other just as much as we need air and water.

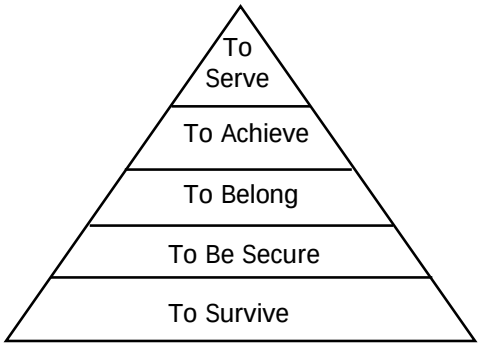
Why? From team life we get:

- **Affirmation and affection**: people without this are hardly living at all! A life without any affirmation and appreciation is really very poor.
- **Affiliation**: deep within us is a need to belong – strong feelings of tribalism if you like!
- **Exchange of ideas and learning**: again this is a fundamental need within all human beings. The easiest way to learn anything is from other human beings. We hate putting huge effort into re-inventing the wheel. At least in some circumstances we enjoy learning.

All these are basic to being a human being made in the image of God. In many societies punishment is banishment and isolation:

- Being "sent to Coventry" means that no one talks to you.
- In brain-washing techniques isolation is vital.
- Being "left out of the loop" happens in every organisation. It is a terrible feeling and is very frustrating.

So "team" is essential to life! We affiliate in order to survive. This is the driving force in labour unions – *"They can't fire me for then they would have to fire everyone."* So "team" equals staying alive, but it is more. It allows you to progress up Maslow's pyramid of need to reach the top – achievement and service.



So we are made to 'team'. 'Teaming' is in our blood! **But** teams can drive you crazy! They can:

* be put together badly
* botch their assignments
* lack vision, motivation or even lack a clue!

1.3 A Definition : What is a Team?

A Team is people doing something together.

The "something" is extremely variable:

- a soccer team
- a research team working on a cure for a particular disease

- a mountain rescue team
- a family working together doing their chores
- a team planting a church among an unreached people group

The "key" concept in team is the "together" part. In the secular world the concept of team is being powerfully pushed because of the discovery that people are important! This is something that we Christians have always known!

1.4 Why are Teams essential in Christian Mission?

1.4.1 There is a Trinitarian root for the concept of working together in teams. God is a "team" and we are made in His likeness. **God always encourages team** as a way of working rather than singularities or individualism. The Muslim concept of God is that of an absolute singularity. Ultimately this leads to people fighting each other. Team is difficult for Muslims.

1.4.2 Team is the womb of spirituality

It is in the relationships of team living that spiritual life grows and character is developed. Those without team often stagnate spiritually because they are without the affirmation, the exhortation and the admonition of others.

Ecclesiastes says, ***"Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall the one will lift up his fellow, but woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no-one to help him up. And if one prevails against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not easily broken."*** [Eccl. 4:10-12]

- It is in team life that spiritual growth is catalysed.
- It is in team that the skills of spiritual warfare are sharpened. In **Cinderella with Amnesia**[1] Michael Griffiths points out that the Ephesians 6 passage is not modelled after a lone Roman soldier – or a lone Christian soldier. The Roman army was so successful because it learned to fight in multiple units of up to 6000 men. The Ephesians 6 passage refers to **a team spiritual fighting unit**.
- It is in team that worship can more effectively take place and intercession be focussed.
- One of the basic principles of warfare is the concentration of firepower, a massing of forces to produce local superiority in order to inflict a decisive blow on the enemy. Team seeks to do this.

1.4.3 The example of the Lord Jesus in building teams

Much has been written about this. In summary, from the Lord Jesus one can deduce two things about team and team life.

a) This is **the best way to train** people in ministry and in character development.

b) This is **the best way to evangelise** the world!!

The Lord Jesus only mentions "church" twice. The emphasis is on team***. "If you get together to do something in My Name, then I will do it."*** [Mt. 18:20]

1.4.4 Team life inhibits fall-out and attrition

Worldwide the attrition rate among crosscultural workers is 5.8% per year. It is over 10% for those in the Muslim World. This is a huge loss of experienced personnel. We cannot afford this! Scripture says, ***"Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ"***. [Gal. 6:2]
The emotions of a human being are so deeply embedded into his/her cultural background that only those of a similar background and experience have sufficient commonality to make a deep empathetic response of caring.

A team member, who shares a common vision, shares the risks and joys of ministry together and shares a sense of commitment and accountability to the other team members, can weep with a team member who is weeping and rejoice with those who are rejoicing. The probability of surviving spiritually and emotionally in difficult settings – let alone thriving – will be greatly enhanced by team.

For example, the effects of culture shock are greatly diminished by having the support of team members who remain accountable for each other's beliefs, life-style and personal identity. They are the ones who can drag you from "the pit of shock".

1.4.5 Team life keeps leaders humble

The Lord Jesus said, ***"And do not be called 'leaders', for one is your leader – that is God. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted!"*** [Mt. 23:10-12]

Pride is perhaps the greatest hindrance in God's work. In a leader pride causes very great damage. As a leader, nothing is more helpful than to have a team about you, who know you well, from whom no secrets are hidden and who have the courage to confront you in all areas of your life. This keeps a leader humble and effective!

1.4.6 Team as a model for church planting/church strengthening

New believers need to **see** our faith worked out **in a community**. Team life should act as an observable model for church life. In fact, good churches are usually birthed out of team. Failure to create an adequate team life as a model to new believers is often reflected in lack of progress in church planting.

1.4.7 Teams increase productivity and effectiveness

Batteries connected up in a series produce more power. Teams allow **synergy** to take place. ***"One can chase 1,000, two can chase 10,000."*** [Josh. 23:10 & Deut. 32:30] One horse can pull about 5 tons while two horses can pull about 20 tons. A team can discuss difficult situations and since they are close to the action and have the help of the Holy Spirit, they can come up with tactics to achieve breakthroughs. Leadership thousands of miles away can never do this.

1.4.8 Teams improve communication and learning

As teams intensify their focus on the task in hand, their intra-team communication and their corporate learning improve because they are stakeholders in their own success. There is enhanced sharing of information and there is delegation of parts of the work to those most gifted to accomplish those parts. Corporate learning is often the key to success in evangelism and church planting.

1.4.9 Teams do the work that individuals can't do

Often a ministry of evangelism and church planting is multi-functional by nature. No one person is sufficiently multi-gifted, nor does he/she have time to do everything! A versatile team with the different members working together can accomplish much more, and in a shorter time, than any individual. There is often just too much to know and too much to do for any one person to know it all and do it all!

1.4.10 Teams make better use of financial and other resources

When teams work well they make sure that little is wasted. Teams focussed on the essential tasks, with good intra-team communication, use money and other resources (knowledge) more effectively. This is because they are using their Holy Spirit aided intelligence/brain power to directly impact the task in hand. There is also less chance of duplication that is a major source of wastage in Christian organisations.

1.4.11 Teams are more creative in seeing opportunities and more efficient at solving problems

When teams are motivated and are close to the cutting edge in ministry, they combine their multiple perspectives in seeing **new opportunities** for ministry and new areas of service. They are also much more efficient at problem solving since they can use their multiple perspectives and knowledge. The result is that teams invariably know more about the length, depth and breadth of their ministry than the "leader" up in the pyramid hierarchy.

1.4.12 Teams make higher quality decisions and handle crises better

Good leadership comes from good knowledge. The essence of the team idea is **shared knowledge**. Quality decisions and improvements in ministry need the best ideas and the energy of everyone in the team. This is especially true in times of crisis when a leader may be inadequately informed or even paralysed by fear! Team increases knowledge and knowledge applied at the right moment produces good decisions. Good decisions are the key to continuous improvement.

1.4.13 Teams can improve processes

Processes are often the key to effectiveness. Action can be misguided. Ideas by themselves don't produce results! Putting the right processes into action and maintaining them, produces results. Processes occur across many different functions. A team can cover all the contributing factors to the process in hand. They can do this because, as a team, they can see the whole task in perspective. So, together, teams can design ways to remove obstacles. They can speed up cycles that often appear in processes. They can apply muscle where it matters.

1.4.14 Teams allow differentiation as they integrate

Unity/Diversity is often the key to ministry. Many organisations, sensing strong centrifugal forces, want to downsize and out-source in order to increase efficiency. But too much downsizing and too much de-centralization leads to fragmentation. Teams allow a blending of people with different kinds of knowledge and experience to work together. In other words teams are centripetal:

Centripetal = directed or moving **towards** a centre or axis
Centrifugal = directed or moving **away from** a centre or axis

Centripetal organisations usually have strong structures that pull power and authority towards the centre.

Centrifugal organisations diversify and spread power and control. The spreading out of control from the centre necessitates improved communications, re-affirmation of core values and a high quality of trust in order to prevent fragmentation.

Teams allow a balance between the need for and the power of integration over against differentiation and flexibility.

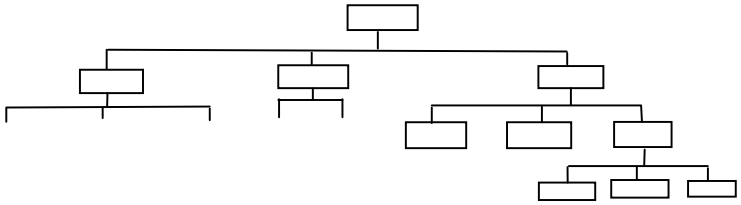
From the beginning of its history our company has worked in teams. 'Team' is fundamental to our ethos of ministry. Our vision is that**:**

TEAMS EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WITH CLEAR GOALS AND STRONG MUTUAL COMMITMENT CAN EVANGELIZE ALL THE UNREACHED PEOPLES OF THE WORLD AND BUILD THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IN ALL LANDS.

1.5 What Constitutes a Team?

1.5.1 Types of Teams

One of the purposes of team is to **replace systems of multi-layered control**. A typical organisational structure can be diagrammed as follows:



Typical of such organisations are rigid structures of control. The military is organised in such a way! Team is meant to release you from this rigidity. In teaming there are two polar extremes with a continuum in between.

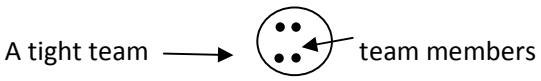
1.5.1.1 Tight Teams

This is typical in pioneer situations - such as moving into a new country. On a team like this two characteristics are usual:

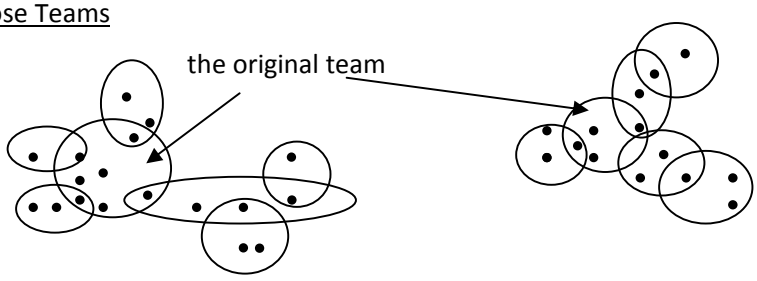
* Everyone is doing the same thing at the same time and they have one vision.

* Everyone lives closely together – either in a community or within a short walk from each other.

Mathematically a tight team is a simple situation. Normally a summer team would be a tight team.



1.5.1.2 Loose Teams



Loose teams are typical in a more mature stage of growth – i.e. there is far greater diversity. Team members might have started their own teams of nationals (e.g. a puppet ministry or a band). Each team member might have developed his or her own sphere of ministry. If you draw this out they begin to look like multi-cellular organisms. This is deliberate. Biological cells grow, move, flex, respond to stimuli etc. A team much more closely resembles **cells** than rigid architectural **building blocks**. Teams must be allowed to develop in this way as they mature. Virtual teams with built-in accountability facilitate loose teams.

1.5.2 Putting teams together

People are born and teams are made. Both can be painful processes!

1.5.2.1 Prayer-pick your team

Teams need to be put together prayerfully and carefully. Jesus prayer-picked His disciples – so must we. There must be strong mutual accountability on a team and yet there also needs to be the freedom and the ability to give room for individuality. This means there must be some freedom to move with certain degrees of independence – especially as the team matures. Jesus called the disciples to be with Him and He also sent them out.

1.5.2.2 The team needs a high degree of agreement on its **core values** – values that are held very deeply. It is interesting that they chose Matthias to replace Judas as an apostle. [Acts 1:26] The criteria for selection were a high degree of like-mindedness and common experience.

1.5.2.3 Vision

- The **glue** that keeps a team together is a common shared vision and a common understanding of its core mission, its goals and its ministry objectives.
- A calling to a particular geographic area rarely keeps people going after the first few months.
- The vision needs constant pumping up because of a strong attempt by the enemy to shrink it.
- Great care needs to be taken to avoid dilution of vision.

1.5.2.4 A Team Leader

- He/she should be a first among equals
- The critical factor is a passionate fire of love for the Lord Jesus in his/her heart **and** a deep concern that God alone gets all the glory.
- Don't accept into leadership those who are not evangelists or who don't have an evangelistic heart.

1.5.2.5 Heterogeneous Teams work powerfully

- This means multi-national, multi-cultural, men/women, marrieds/singles etc. working together as a team.
- Diversity is good!
- Unity in diversity is a wonderful demonstration to the principalities and powers of the wonderful wisdom of God. [Eph. 3:10]
- The Cross disarms the powers:
  * by exposing their strategy of division
  * by joining diversity into unity – but without homogenizing

1.5.3 How Do Teams Operate?

There is huge variety in this. It depends on what the teams **do** together. Here are a few suggestions.

1.5.3.1 Develop a set of rules for team life

- Prioritise them.
- Make sure that rule #1 is **'love one another'**.
- Affirm one another. Team life is going to thrive on affirmation as each team member disciplines him/herself to esteem the others better than him/herself. Babies need affirmation – we all still need it!
- Show **acts** of kindness and a mutual respect for the uniqueness of each individual.

1.5.3.2 Rule #2 should be, *"We don't know all the answers!"*

This leads the team to seek God's answer collectively **in prayer** - praying together, praising together and worshipping together.

Nothing is more dangerous than thinking that there is "a key" – a strategy or a mechanism that, if applied to a situation, will produce success – rubbish!!

1.5.3.3 Get together periodically

- Eat together, have fun together, periodically review the situation together.
- In the Old Covenant model, tribes were widely scattered – individual homesteaders. Yet three times a year they all had to go to Jerusalem (come together). Part of their tithe was set aside so the feasts would be a great time!
- Together they reviewed their history and their promises as the People of God.
- In the New Covenant (including our scattered team) put aside money periodically to come together for fellowship, food, fun etc.

1.5.3.4 Make sure there is adequate time to **worship and pray** together. Worship times are probably the best barometer of the life of the team.

1.5.3.5 Work on communication between members – e-mail is great. Communication costs money, but it is vital - more of this later.

1.5.3.6 There needs to be a commitment to lay down your lives for each other – especially in the area of security, crisis management, arrest and deportation.

1.5.3.7 There must be strong, loving, resident leadership.

1.5.3.8 There must be an acceptance of the need for a diversity of spiritual gifts and natural talents.

1.5.3.9 There must be agreement on and commitment to a common vision and common objectives and goals with periodic review.

1.5.3.10 There must be a clear role for each team member with periodic review.

1.6 Why Teams Become Dysfunctional

1.6.1 Broken Dreams – Broken Teams

The reality is that it is hard to work in teams! Often there are many dysfunctional teams. People leave and then return to the Field and work by themselves. They vow never again to get hurt by working in a team!

There is no single reason why team life is so hard. Below are some of the most common reasons I have seen. They are not prioritised. Sometimes just one factor destroys a team.
At other times – more usually – it is multiple factors.

1.6.2 Problems and Symptoms

The Problem	The Symptoms
1. Blurry Vision	The leadership has foisted a 'bill of goods' on the team. The team hasn't a clue where they are going or why it is important.
2. Confused Goals and Cluttered Objectives	Team members don't know what they are supposed to do or it doesn't make sense.
3. Mismatched Needs	People in the team have their own private agendas and so the team is working at cross-purposes.
4. Unresolved Roles	The team members are uncertain what their jobs are.
5. Insufficient Feedback and Information	Team performance is not being measured. Communication is bad and team members are groping in the dark.
6. Bad Policies and Stupid Procedures	The team is at the mercy of an outdated organisational handbook.
7. Bad Leadership	Leadership of the team is tentative, inconsistent or stupid!
8. Personality Conflicts	There is a toxic team atmosphere where team members fight.
9. The Wrong Tools	The team has been sent into battle with inadequate resources or the wrong resources.
10. An Unwillingness to Change	The team knows what it should do but is not willing to do it.

11. Lack of Team Trust and an anti-everything Culture	The team is not a team because the members are unwilling to commit themselves to the team vision.
12. Bad Decision-making	Teams may be making the right decisions, but in the wrong way. This leads to hurt and frustration.

1.6.3 The needs of the individuals versus the needs of the team

One of the standard pitfalls in team life is the conflict that exists between the goals of an individual team member (which are often undisclosed) and the goals of the team itself. Let me give an illustration:

There are 4 members of an evangelistic team – Stu, Diane, Eric and Woody. This sounds fine, but people aren't stick figures!

Stu has a bit of a chip on his shoulder because he feels that he has been on umpteen of these teams before. He feels pretty demoted by being put on a one-month team to do what he has been doing for a couple of years – and he is not even the team leader! He is young and ambitious and would secretly like to start another evangelistic mission. He wants to show everyone how contemporary evangelism should really be done!

Diane has also been part of evangelistic teams times too numerous to mention. She is sad that she gets no acknowledgement or appreciation for all her hard work and for her considerable input into the success of previous missions. Her dream is to go home for 6 months and rest!

Eric thinks that he is God's gift to evangelism. His goal is to get as many people as possible "making decisions". He would like to do this in the shortest possible time and by **any** means. He is all energy, a workaholic's workaholic. His individual goal is to prove that his methods of evangelism are the best and show that everyone else is a useless failure!

Woody is the team leader. He is bright and young and has a good track record of running evangelistic teams. Woody feels that his potential is not being appreciated. He thinks his career in missions has hit a brick wall. *"**This** team isn't going to achieve much"*, he thinks. He remembers that team in March '97 when revival broke out on the mission and lots of people were saved. Everyone at the conference talked about **that** team. Woody was on the platform to give a report. But **this** team has no gas to get him to those heights again!

Here are four people – no one of them is opposed to evangelism. All of them believe in teams. They have nothing against each other. But there are significant conflicts between their own personal (and rather carnal) goals and the team goals of seeing people saved and incorporated into the local church they are helping and, above all, the main goal of bringing glory to God!

This team won't blow up in a ballistic sense. Nothing dramatic will happen, but still it will miss realising most of its potential. They won't be a great team. They won't be a great encouragement to the church because the team is being subtly undermined by a whole lot of unfulfilled personal goals. Stu, Diane, Eric and Woody are not going to make it – not for lack of good intentions! But good intentions are not enough!

Effective teamwork means effectively balancing two forces – **the needs of the team and individual needs** - all those things that each of us wants and that have nothing to do with our "calling". People will eagerly agree to team (because it meets the basic need for survival

through affiliation) **if** the team helps them to meet their own needs. In general the attitude of team members is going to be, *"Please consider my needs while we meet the needs of the team"*.

It is vital to find the hidden agenda of each team member! Beware if they are saying in their hearts: *"I am not here to work with the team but:*

- *To take credit for its successes*
- *To begin a relationship with that nice person on the team*
- *To use it as a stepping stone to better things"*

Don't have this person on the team! Such things will surely destroy the coherence of the team. Good teams recognise that, in order to build trust, there must be honesty. Diane, Eric, Woody and Stu would make a great team **if** each one of them opened up and shared their hurts and frustrations as well as their ambitions. If they realised that Diane is frustrated, exhausted and on the point of despair, they could help her greatly.

In fact teams **can** meet team goals and individual goals at the same time. Personal goals that prevent us achieving team goals can be **very honourable**:

* having a baby
* spending more time with the family
* going back to school for more training

It is also possible that they may be **entirely carnal**:

* making a name for yourself
* joining a team that has a lot of money – and they pool it!
* wanting to belong to a team of "winners"
* wanting a group that you can dominate
* hiding behind the championship of a powerful leader

So one principle of successful 'teaming' is **to make sure there is opportunity for each team member to state clearly their needs and goals**. When we know what our fellow team members want to achieve and what we ourselves want to achieve, **then** there can be a very good bond between team members. This doesn't mean that these goals have to be met first! But while the team is reaching its goals, the needs of individuals can also be met.

1.6.4. God's Dream Team?

Our Founder's Dream Team!

- A big-hearted, grace-filled team
- A cutting-edge, Spirit-filled, battle-hardened team doing serious damage to the Kingdom of Darkness
- A united team that has a realistic vision
- A team committed to speaking the truth in love
- A team that is growing and learning together
- A team empowered by the leadership and accountable to each other
- A team that demonstrates the reality of God in their midst

Construct your own Dream Team.

1.7 Scripture Passages about Team

The Bible suggests basic concepts. Where do we begin? A good place is Gen. 1:1.

- **The Concept of the Trinity**

  Gen. 1:1 ***"In the beginning God ……"*** He is later revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All were involved in Creation.

  Gen. 1:26 ***"Let us make man in our image …."***

  Gen. 11:7 ***"Let us go down …."*** Three persons in one God – unity in plurality

  Matt. 28:19 Baptism – the symbol of new birth – ***"….. in the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Spirit."*** The Triune God present in Creation and in **re**-creation.

  See also: John 17:11; 5:23; 10:30; 4:34; 14:10; 10:30.

- **Men and Women**

  Gen. 2:8 ***"It is not good for man to be alone ….."*** *[NB This is God's statement before the Fall]*

  Gen. 1:27; 5:2 ***"God created man in His own image …. male and female He created them."*** We were made to be more than one.

- **The Nation of Israel** [OT]

  Gen. 12:1-3 ***"I will make of you a great nation ….."*** God planned to work out His purposes through a **group** of people.

- **The Church**

  Matt. 16:18 ***"I will build My church ……."*** Church = a group of called out ones

  Eph. 3:10 God brought the believers together, not as an end in itself, but as a group means to an end – ***"….. so that, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God might be made known …."***

- **Specific Scripture Passages that speak of people working together**

  Ex. 18:13-27 The counsel of Moses father-in-law: ***"What you are doing is not good. You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone."*** Moses was very gifted but he needed a 'team'. See also Num. 11:16,17.

  Lev. 26:8 ***"Five shall chase a hundred and a hundred shall put ten thousand to flight."*** Note the progressive ratio – 1:20 and 1:100. Bigger teams are more effective.

  Num. 32:6 ***"Shall your brethren go to war and shall you sit here?"*** The sin was one of omission in collective responsibility.

  Eccl. 4:9-11 ***"Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow …."***

  Matt. 18:19 ***"…. if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask …"***

  v. 20 ***"Where two or three are gathered in my name …."***

  Lk. 10:1 They were sent out two by two, but note that they were a line-up team for a larger team that would follow. [see Mark 6:7]

  Jn. 13:35 ***"By this all people will know you are my disciples, if you have love one for another."***

Jn. 17:21 Visible unity convinces the world.

Eph. 3:10 We are responsible for the unity of the body as a witness to the unseen spiritual world.

Phil. 1:27 ***"…… striving together for the sake of the Gospel…."***

- **Biblical Examples of Teams**

Old Testament:

- Elisha and the School of the Prophets
- Nehemiah and his reconstruction team

New Testament:

- The fishing team – Simon Peter, John and James
- The team of four stretcher bearers – Mk. 2
- Evangelism/church planting teams in Acts

- **The Teaching of Jesus with His Disciples**

  Mt. 18; John 13:34,35; 17:20-23

- **The Example of Jesus**

  Mt. 4:18-22, 18:15-20; Mk. 3:14-15, 6:7-12; Luke 8:1-3, 10:1-8

- **The Practice and Teaching of Paul**

  Paul's largest team appeared to be 9 people. But 35 people are named as Paul's co-workers. Paul didn't initiate teamwork. It was Barnabas, the pioneer, who knew how to promote others.

For more on this see:

The Training of the Twelve by A.B. Bruce, (1971), Krezel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501, USA, ISBN 0 8254 2212 X

The Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert Coleman, (1963), Fleming H. Revell, (a division of Baker Bookhouse) Grand Rapids, Michigan 49516, USA ISBN 0 8007 5467 0

NOTES

[1] **Cinderella with Amnesia** by Michael Griffiths (1975) Ch. 2, ***Salvation more than Personal***, IVP, ISBN 0-85110 381 2

2. Blurry Vision

2.1 Symptoms of the Disease

2.2 The First Task : A Clear Team Vision

2.3 Crosscultural Tensions over Visions, Goals and Objectives

2.4 Summary

2. Blurry Vision

2.1 Symptoms of the disease

People often complain about blurry vision. It is a major reason why teams fall apart. You often hear statements that indicate the following:

2.1.1 They don't believe the outcome of the process of defining vision

They see, *"Lots of talk, lots of paper, lots of money spent and finally a plan that then goes into a filing cabinet for 5 years and now we are back in the same cycle – but nothing changes!"* This causes a deep cynicism about the whole process.

In the same vein you may hear, *"Last time we did this we had a great plan and started to implement it, but then the leadership threw it out since it was a threat to their 'control' ".*

Comments such as these show a sense of betrayal and a lack of trust in the process.

2.1.2 They don't believe the outcome is reachable

"My leader has read this article on 'stretch goals' and now he has the bright idea of stretching us – his team!" The communists were great at this. It forces the team into deception and the result is once again a deep cynicism.

2.1.3 They can't figure out what the outcome should look like

Teams get frustrated with complicated goals or goals that are stated ambiguously. Multiple goals also frustrate them. They may ask, *"How are we to focus on sixteen focal points simultaneously?"*

2.2 The First Task: A Clear Team Vision

2.2.1 You have got to be right about the future!

A leader is a person other people follow! Usually they follow because they assume that he/she knows the way to a better future. Vision is about entering the future.

Your team will stand or fall based on your ability to be right about the future. If you lead people who happily follow you and you end up in disaster, you will live to regret it. Remember when Ziklag was burned by fire and David's troops spoke of stoning him? [1 Sam. 30:1-7] That was David being wrong about the future!

Noah was not perceived as being much of a leader until it began to rain! The secret of being a good footballer is to run where the ball **is going to be** – not where it is! You can be sincere, persuasive and powerful, but wrong! If you are wrong about the future, you are really wrong. It is vital to know in which direction to go and have the credibility to get others there. It is not a matter of being well liked! Aaron was liked, but Moses was right.

Over fifty years ago a rich businessman was travelling east on a train. The train's destination was Cleveland but it passed through Chicago in the middle of the night. The businessman was in a sleeper and it was very important that he get off in Chicago. He had a crucial business meeting to attend. If it went well it would net him millions. He was a very heavy sleeper and found it difficult to wake. He had slept through the loudest alarm clocks. So he paid the porter $20 (a lot of money in those days) to wake him and get him off the train in Chicago. He told the porter, *"I may fuss and call you bad names, but no matter what happens you must get me off the train at Chicago."*

The next morning he woke in Cleveland having slept peacefully all night! He was very angry! On finding the porter he was very rude. Someone overhearing this said to the porter, *"Man, you don't*

have to take that sort of abuse!" The porter laughed and said, *"If you think this man is angry, you should have seen the man I threw of the train in Chicago last night. He was really angry!"*

You can be sincere, diligent and even well paid, but you can be wrong!

Only God knows the future, but He reveals it to us! The only worthwhile visions are God-given.

2.2.2 What is Vision?

Vision is a misunderstood and misapplied term. It is not a "Vision Statement". You can't pay a consultant $250 an hour to create a 'vision' for you. A vision is rarely written down in a formal report. It is not really words. Vision is a burning thought that exists in the heads and hearts of the team. The team vision is the thing the team exists to do. Without a team vision there is no point in being a team. Vision is a picture of purpose***. "Where there is no vision the people perish."*** [Prov. 29:18] This is a much-quoted verse. Sadly it is not a very accurate translation. A better rendering would be, "***Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint."*** This is also a pearl of wisdom.

Vision is an act of seeing – an imaginative perception of things. Vision combines deep insight with foresight (being right about the future). It is compounded with a deep dissatisfaction with what is and a clear grasp of what could be. Vision often begins with indignation over the status quo and grows into an earnest quest for an alternative.

For example, the Lord Jesus was clearly indignant over disease and death, over the hunger and poverty around Him and over people who were excluded – socially alienated (the lepers) and leaderless – a prey to wolves. The result wasn't just anger, but also **compassion**. Indignation and compassion lie at the heart – the very core – of vision.

Here is a quote of what was said of Bobby Kennedy after his death, *"His distinguishing quality was his capacity for what can only be called moral outrage! 'This is unacceptable' was his reaction to many conditions that most of us accept as inevitable – poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, prejudice, crookedness, conniving – all such accepted evils were a personal affront to him."*

Apathy is the opposite of vision. Apathy is the acceptance of the unacceptable. Today there is a great need for more righteous indignation and more compassion mixed with outrage over the evils of the world that are an offence to God! How can we tolerate that which God finds intolerable?

But anger and compassion are sterile unless they lead to positive action. For positive action, there needs to be a dream of what could be! Now the heart of our dream is the Kingdom of God! It is a vision of a single, new, reconciled humanity living in holiness and godliness and being totally obedient to the King! This dream of the Kingdom needs to capture our minds. It is built around verses like Isaiah 2:1-4 and 25:6-9.

With the death of communism there was a death of idealism in the world as a whole. Communism has been replaced by the irrationalism of post-modernity, pragmatism and capitalistic economics. At the end of The Communist Manifesto Marx wrote, *"You have a world to win!"* So do we! The Gospel of the Kingdom is much greater than communism!

The world can be won to Christ by evangelism and it can be made more pleasing to Him by social action. The great mystery at the beginning of the 21st century is:

- Where are the people whose hearts have been set on fire?
- Where are the people who hate the status quo?
- Where are the people who dream of great advances of the Kingdom of God into places and to peoples who have never heard?

Nothing much happens without a dream and for something great to happen it must be a great dream!

So we care very deeply about:

- The unevangelised and unreached everywhere – in World 'A', in the 10/40 window and the unsaved in 'Christian' countries.
- The poor, the hungry and the disadvantaged
- People crushed by political, economic and racial oppression
- Millions of babies aborted and incinerated

The world **could** be so very different. In this new millennium we, the Christians, need to repent of two very horrid sins:

i) The sin of pessimism and cynical pessimism at that!

ii) The sin of mediocrity

Be ambitious for the Glory of God!

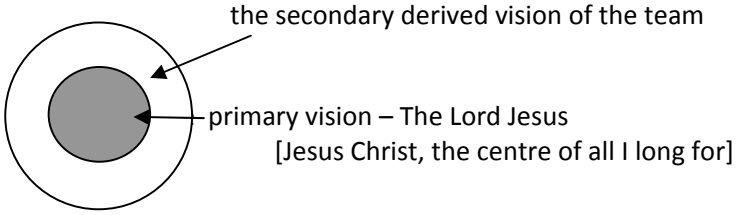
2.2.3 How do you get a vision?

2.2.3.1 Our primary vision is of God: If you lack vision or if your vision has shrunk, the first task you must set yourself is a fresh vision of God – a fresh vision of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace

"We see Jesus …… crowned with glory and honour" [Heb. 2:9]

Our primary vision must be of Jesus. All other visions are secondary and derived visions. So "visions" of the work, the future and the tasks the team is called to, are secondary. God does not give them to us unless and until we have our primary core vision clearly in place.



Our primary calling is **to follow the Lord Jesus** (***"Come after Me!"***). It is a directional thing. It is a single-minded focus on following Jesus – a passionate pursuit of Jesus and where He is going. See Matthew chapter 4. For the early disciples fishing was their life. Following Jesus involved leaving their whole way of life behind. They had to drop their nets.

If we are to follow Jesus, it will involve 'dropping our nets'. What are our nets? It may be relationships. It may be our longed for hopes of wealth, prosperity, influence, power and prestige. It may be our dreams and plans for success, comfort and being in control of the situation around us. All these nets have to go! Followers are 'netless'!

As you look back over your life you should see a path littered with dropped nets – all those small ambitions that you abandoned as you continued to follow Jesus.

There are **orbital Christians** and **gravitational Christians**. A gravitational Christian is always rapidly moving towards the centre – the core – always renewing his/her vision of the glory of the Lord Jesus. These are the people who have a sustained vision.

Orbital Christians never go to the centre. They are kept in orbit by counter forces – these are the nets! The Lord Jesus is always walking on the beaches of our lives. He is calling us to leave our nets and follow Him. Followers must be netless. The key to having a Biblical vision is to make the Lord Jesus the heart – the core - the central focus of your dream and your life. Vision is derived from a relationship – not from a system or an ideal but from a Saviour.

2.2.3.2 Secondary peripheral visions: God reveals these to us. They are peripheral to the core vision. Your vision may be different from mine. At the end of your life, like Paul, you need to be able to say, ***"I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision."*** [Acts 26:19] This is something personal that burns in your heart. The key to team is that each person in the team should have the same primary and secondary vision.

In formulating and verbalizing these peripheral visions you need to incorporate into your vision:

- **The Past**: Very rarely does God do anything really new. We stand on the shoulders of many others. This means that a knowledge of the spiritual history of your area is extremely important. Often the further you look back; the further you will be able to look forward. Focus on what has been accomplished by others before you.
- **The Future**: You must put your vision into its **global** perspective. This will help you think through the threats that will occur as you begin to implement your vision. Expect opposition – e.g. from universalism. If it is a '**frontier**' vision, if you plan to reach whole unreached people groups, expect much opposition. Wherever there is a mountain of unbelief that has not been reduced, expect opposition. Your vision needs to focus on what yet needs to be done.
- **A Biblical Perspective**: Don't rely totally on data from social anthropology and other sociological disciplines as you formulate your vision. Make sure there is an adequate Biblical foundation. You need a Biblical vision.
- **A Reproducible Component:** It must be a reproducible vision. It must be expressed in such a way that others can buy into the vision and make it their own.

Vision comes as the Lord makes clear to the team:

PURPOSE: A clear sense of what the team is to accomplish is vital.

PRIORITIES: Paul said, ***"This one thing I do…."*** [Phil. 3:13]

PRAYER: There is no substitute for this.

PAIN: Tozer wrote a book about the price of revival - **Born After Midnight**.[1]
Visions are often born out of pain, sacrifice and suffering.

PERSISTANCE: We need the determination to cling to a God-given vision no matter what!

2.2.4 **Standard pitfalls in communicating vision** (for leaders)

2.2.4.1 Assigning a team its vision: The leader presents to a team "the vision" in a manner that says, '*This is what it is. Memorize it and replicate it!"* In other words there is no input whatsoever from the team. This only works if every member of the team is an exact clone of the leader!

2.2.4.2 Dullness: If the leader's pilot light has blown out, he is unlikely to light fires under his team members. Vision is a 'must' but there is no vision if the emotions are not involved. Anger, compassion and hope are all highly emotionally charged words. Emotion is a vital part in the creation and communication of a vision.

2.2.4.3 Waffling: A 'waffling' presentation of the vision just produces a fog in the minds of the team. If you explain the vision as a sort of moving, evolving target, then you can be sure that the team will miss the target! Be clear, concise, succinct and excited.

2.2.4.4 Selling: This sort of thing happens fairly frequently on our teams. A leader goes to a conference and is charged up from the outside with some new methodology about evangelism and church planting. He comes back to his team and 'sells' the vision to them. This is a bad role to play because the leader has positioned himself as an outsider to his team. In a very subtle way this tends to cause team disunity.

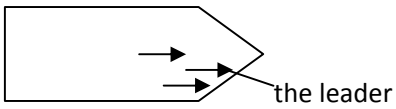
The leader should always position himself as an insider. He can share ideas but should cut out the soft-soap sell! He should present the facts, let the team interact with the material and then, perhaps, together they can modify the original vision.

2.2.4.5 Non-aligning: The proper way to spread vision is to work with each of your team members as individuals and seek to bring **their** wants and needs into alignment with the new vision. They must be fully persuaded and able to claim it as their own vision. Treat everyone as equal. There should be no arm-twisting, wheedling or cajolery! Show people the respect they deserve. Deal with every question with patience. You cannot own the vision for them. They must own it for themselves – on their own.

2.2.4.6 Typical problems if the whole team doesn't share the same vision there will be problems.

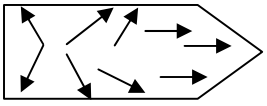
These are illustrated in diagrammatic form.

1.

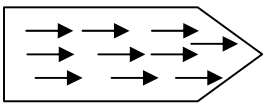


The team is going in the direction of the arrow. The leader and a couple of others know and own the vision. This is often true of small teams with a common bond of friendship and loyalty.

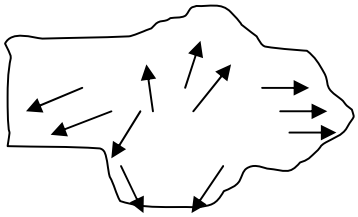
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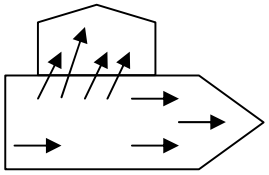
But further back in the team there is growing confusion as to the vision and direction of the team. This is usually true when more members join a team. There is a dilution of the values and vision of the team. Never assume that everyone is going the same way. Team members often have hidden agendas and mixed motives.

3. 

The effective team will have each team member fully focussed on the same vision and moving in the same direction.

4. 

This represents a dysfunctional team! Some have a vision – the leader and a couple of others. But others on the team are pursuing their own visions. Ultimately this is going to cause the team to go in any direction. You no longer have a thin, penetrating arrow. Now there is greater resistance – "middle-age spread"!

5. 

In this situation you clearly have the beginnings of a split. This is sometimes called a "shark attack".

2.2.4.7 How do you instill vision and values into your team?

a) It takes lots of time!
   - Patient teaching
   - Working together
   - Vision is "caught" not taught
   - Vision is modelled – seen in the leader's life
b) It must be demonstrated
c) You must get lots of feedback (see section 9)
d) It generally helps if you have participatory leadership
e) Tell "fireside" stories from the past
f) Set up memorials
g) Write up lessons learned by the team.

The job of the leader is to focus the projector!

Burt Nanus says in his book **Visionary Leadership:**

"Leaders live the vision by making all their actions and behaviours consistent with it and by creating a sense of urgency and passion for its attainment." [2]

2.2.5 Factors that shrink vision in team life

One of the main reasons teams fall apart is because their corporate vision shrinks. One of the great plans of the enemy is to shrink vision or, better still, destroy it altogether! This is a major reason for attrition and also the underlying cause of many other diseases in the team – such as toxic atmospheres.

A frequent phrase in the Psalms is, ***"Magnify the Lord!"*** There is no sense in attempting, by our feeble efforts, to make God greater than He is. I suggest that this phrase means, *"Expand my view of you, Oh God! The enemy has shrunk my vision, please blow it up!"*

2.2.5.1 Disappointments

The team starts well. But results are meagre and not a lot happens. The team prays and works hard, but there is no change. The team completely identifies with the disciples who said, ***"We worked all night and we caught nothing!"*** [Jn. 21:3] It is so easy to get disappointed with people – the leader, others on the team, people in the church, the new believers, contacts who seemed interested but have now lost interest. It is so easy to get disappointed with situations – the climate, the lack of amenities, the housing, the traffic, the vehicles etc. Everything is so different from your expectations.

Most people can handle one or two disappointments all right, but a steady accumulation of daily disappointments can shrink vision (and faith and hope) and lead to cynicism and despair.
A 'collection' of disappointments can destroy vision on a team.

2.2.5.2 Betrayal

If a team member, or even a whole team, is deeply hurt and feels let down by a colleague – especially the team leader – then vision will shrink very fast. Many are shattered by the sin and failure of those they deeply trusted. We read in the Psalms***, "Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me."*** [Ps. 41:9]

Betrayal like this pricks the balloon of your team's vision as if with a pin! Words like: **censured** (*"I have heard from others that I have not been doing my job."*) **belittled, discredited, invalidated, disparaged, abandoned** etc. are all deeply felt by a team or an individual. If matters are unresolved it will lead to attrition.

Anger leads to grief, which leads to insecurity, which leads to depression, which leads to physical and emotional pain, which leads to paralysis, which leads to burnout. Burnout is curable, but if burnout is not dealt with, it leads to an irreversible position – meltdown!

2.2.5.3 Fatigue

Fatigue is the result of a failure to pace yourself wisely. In my twenties I used to be impressed by people like David Brainerd (who died aged 27) and Henry Martyn (who died aged 31). When Henry Martyn arrived in India he said, *"Here let me burn out for God!"* Now, in my sixties, I realise it was **not** a good phrase! Our calling is to **burn on**!

We often get very fatigued. When this happens, vision becomes bland! At best the goal is now mere survival. The drive has gone! They have run out of fuel. Teams often go in with a blaze and come out with a whimper. Why? It is simply because fatigue has sucked out their vision.

In my early days on teams in the 60s I was rarely tired. The weekly all night prayer meetings weren't arduous and I could work the next day without much difficulty. Now, in my sixties, it is very different! Many of our leaders – no longer in their twenties – have a vision blunted by tiredness.

The classic Biblical example is Elijah. He was chased by the secret police for 3½ years. Anyone who has had a similar experience knows that such high stress will inevitably lead to weariness. Then Elijah confronted the prophets of Ba'al on Mount Carmel. This would certainly have kept his adrenaline levels high! Then there was the long run over many miles racing the chariot! No wonder he was tired. No wonder he collapsed!

It is a joy to read the biographies of the saints. F.B. Meyer, Charles Spurgeon, Campbell Morgan and in fact most 19th and 20th century preachers all took off three months in summer to recharge their spiritual batteries! Our teams are in great danger in this area and we need to guard against fatigue.

Winston Churchill had an amazing political career in parliament. He also had time to write 57 books. Most of these were well-researched, scholarly books on history. He also painted and had many hobbies – such as bricklaying. Yet he used to sleep each afternoon for 3 hours! Take care to guard against fatigue. It will rob you of your vision!

2.2.5.4 Fear

Fear, like betrayal, is a major shrinker of vision on a team. As Joshua began to lead his team, he was told four times, ***"Only be strong and very courageous."*** [Josh. 1:6, 7, 9, 18]

In the area of **planning** it is easy for leaders **not** to be bold. The team will know of the strategic objectives. Tactical goals and the monthly planning needed to achieve these objectives are often left as the "fuzzy area" because of fear.

The team leadership needs to **state clearly** the tactical goals and the future plans of the team. Why is this hard? It is because of the fear that the leader and the whole team will look foolish if they don't achieve them.

Planning should not be of the 'do or die' variety. The environment of the organisation should be evaluative but not threatening. So teams need to go public with their tactical goals and their plans. Then they need to go all out to achieve them. We need to give teams the environment to dream. They should be able to go all out for big things even if that sometimes means failing.

On his first trip to Africa, Raymond Lull loaded all his luggage (mainly books) on to a ship in Genoa to sail to Tunis. Just as the sailors cast off and the ship was beginning to drift away from the wharf, Raymond jumped off the ship! He was overwhelmed by fear and panic and refused to get on again. It took several years for him to regain his courage. He did eventually go to Tunis and had about 25 years of ministry in North Africa before finally being stoned to death in Bejaia in 1315 AD.

2.2.5.5 When your personal vision and gifting differ from what others want you to do

This happens on teams. Because of an urgent need your leadership wants you to do something new to you that is neither in line with your vision or your gifting. You may be a personal evangelist by both vision and gifting but you may be asked to meet an urgent need on your team for a bookkeeper because you are the only one available. The possibilities are limitless:

- Evangelism and church planting/building vs. team administration or some ancillary role
- Media production vs. media distribution

Under circumstances like this vision can shrink and gifting can atrophy, so the tension needs to be resolved. The first question to ask is, *"Is this a discipline of the Father?"* [Heb. 12:5-11] The Father often disciplines us so that, ***"We may share in His holiness."*** The Father often disciplines us when, either consciously or unconsciously, we show pride in our Christian activity. Pride is the factor that causes the most damage to the work of God. This is particularly so when one team member, because of gifting, feels that success in public ministry (preaching, as an evangelist/Bible teacher etc.) means that he/she is more important that the ancillary staff (secretaries, mechanics, book-keepers etc.) The Father often disciplines such a person by removing from them their public role and putting them in a role for which they are not gifted and for which they have no vision. He does this as a discipline. They can accomplish the task, but it is hard to do.

So the first question to ask when your personal vision and gifts differ from what others want you to do is, *"Is this a discipline of the Father?" "Do I need to humble myself and learn again how to serve others?"* When you have learned the lesson you need to learn, you can be sure that the Father will lift the discipline.

The next thing to do is to share with others your gifting and your vision. Tell them about your problem with pride and your sense of being under discipline. In time they may move you to where you sense God is leading you, but learn to maintain a submissive spirit.

What if your team always wants you to remain in your present role? Well, you must leave! There may be other teams just longing for a person like you. But when you leave, leave with a sweet spirit. Leave the team with your relationship with each team member in good shape.

The exception to the rule that gifting and vision dies if not used and pursued is mothers. For a period of time, mothers of small children often can't use their gifts or pursue the vision God has given them. Their gifts and vision must go into "God's deep freeze". Years later, when the children are grown up, God takes them out of the deep freeze and gives them back as fresh as ever.

2.2.5.6 Dilution of vision by newcomers on the team.

If we do not have a continual infusion of new blood on our teams the work will stagnate and the team will die. We need new team members with a fresh outlook, with enquiring and sometimes disconcerting minds, with their improved training and methods as well as their new ideas and suggestions. We should welcome them and seek to profit from them.

But newcomers can dilute the vision. Under the Old Covenant all the People of God were to meet together three times a year. In all about 3½ weeks were spent away from home and work. They met in Jerusalem with the purpose of restoring their national vision. They heard the story of the Exodus again. They remembered the covenant and re-affirmed their call to, ***"Be a light to the nations"***. We constantly need to renew our vision. The problem with the Old Testament People of God was that the new generation 'forgot' the vision/the mandate and were sidetracked into so much else.

As the team expands with new members, there may be a problem of dilution. We have a vision. We have distinctives. We have core values. We have collective learning experiences – our history. New team members joining us must catch the vision and own it or they will dilute it!

So, guard against 'vision dilution'. Vision is easily eroded with grave consequences. Newcomers must absorb your God-given vision or you will have to move them out! Make time to share the history and let them absorb the values and vision of the team. Keep urging team members to emphasize the basic distinctives. Tell stories that illustrate your corporate learning. Have "camp fire" sessions. Remember that **shared vision that is the glue that keeps a team together**, not organisational structures.

Recruit your team members to a vision, not just to a place or to an organisation. If you recruit to a vision you will find you don't have to force your people to go out on evangelism. You won't have to force people to work. If you find yourself doing this, it means that they have lost the vision.

An effective team has an agreed common vision to which each person says, *"Yes, that is what I believe. Yes, I own that future. I am willing to make that happen!"*

2.2.5.7 The Settlers win over the Pioneers

Movements start, countries are entered and projects are initiated by pioneers. But very often there is a need for pioneers to be succeeded by consolidators who can fill in behind them and conserve and build on the foundations laid by the pioneers.

In any organisation, church or team you have pioneers and settlers. The balance between these two types of people needs to be kept. **Vision dies on a team when the settlers take over**. Every team needs its **consolidators** (the settlers) – the administrators, the accountants, the people who formulate policies and procedures. These are the **process people** who are good at analysis, establishing methods and means, evaluation, refining (fine tuning), quality control and low risk, informed decision-making. These people focus on the means rather than the end and can easily get bogged down in details. Above all they fear change and anything new.

Teams need such people and for lack of them many a project flounders! We really need to affirm settlers. They do a vital job. But if you let the settlers become the majority on a team and if they are the decision makers on the team, vision will die. The cutting edge will become blunt. Pioneers tend to get very impatient with settlers. If the pioneers consistently lose, they will withdraw. Teams with too many settlers drive away pioneers.

2.2.5.8 Reason wins over Revelation

In the early part of the history of the company I belong to we were risk takers. We had many wild ideas and we tried to carry them out. We prayed much and we tried to understand the will of God for us. Many of those risky ideas were "born after midnight" in prayer meetings. Now we have become much more reasonable and respectable. Experience has taught us much! But there is a very great danger in this. Look up 1 Corinthians 10:1-4.

The People of God in the desert had the daily discipline of waking up in the morning and sticking their heads out of their tents to see if the cloud of God's presence was moving. Where was God going that day! I imagine that if they saw the cloud moving, there would be a hasty scramble to feed the children, pack, collapse the tents and follow the cloud. If the cloud stayed, perhaps there would be a sigh and back to bed for another half an hour!

So the People of God had to learn the daily discipline of keeping their eyes on the cloud. Every day they would follow the cloud. Paul says in 1 Cor. 10 that **if** they followed the cloud, **the rock** would follow them! The rock of Christ's provision for all their needs followed the cloud.

If the cloud moved to an area of no water, they could choose not to follow. But if they did follow the cloud, their experience was that the rock always followed them and water was provided.

God does reveal His will to us. We are still to follow the cloud. We may sense, collectively as a team, that God is calling us to take a particular course of action – perhaps start a new project. But everything cries out against it. We can't do that. *"It's not in the budget." "We can't raise the finances." "We don't have the manpower or the expertise." "It will get us thrown out of the country."* Hundreds of objections come up to the course of action we believe God wants us to take. All the objections are very reasonable. This is a dilemma that is frequently faced by teams.

Revelation (following the cloud) must always win over reason (following the rock) or else vision will die on your team. If the cloud is truly moving in that direction, then we dare not stay where we are! If we walk in faith and obedience and follow the cloud, we can be absolutely certain that the rock of God's provision will follow us. The rock does not go in front of you. It follows you. Never follow the rock! Never get into a situation where you only act when all the provision of finances, manpower etc. is available.

Make this a clear team core value. Revelation must always win over reason. If you stick to this you will maintain your vision.

2.3 Cross-cultural Tensions over Vision Setting

2.3.1 People-oriented cultures versus task-oriented cultures

On your team you might find members who are very task-oriented. They find great personal satisfaction in reaching and completing objectives. They are motivated and directed by an unending succession of objectives. There is a great danger in this. Such people are tempted to live life at a frantic pace. They tend to become workaholics. The social life of task-oriented people is often an extension of their work activity. A typical example of this would be a Japanese businessman. Task-oriented people tend to be bored by topics of conversation outside realms that relate to their work. Our western education systems tend to promote the values of task-oriented people. They are not designed to reward people-oriented cultures or people.

Individuals and cultures that are people-oriented have as their priority the establishment and maintenance of personal relationships. They enjoy social interaction. Since this is their goal, they need the acceptance and stimulus of a group of friends. Time, energy, money etc. all go towards fulfilling their obligations to the group. They sacrifice personal goals, and even team goals, for the interests of others. Failure to accomplish a task is far less critical to them than the quality of personal relationships.

2.3.2 Most western team members are task-oriented

This is a generalisation and certainly not true of everyone. In missions you often have a higher proportion of people-oriented personnel than in the population as a whole. But the majority will probably be task-oriented or at least will think that they should be. These team members like to schedule their own activities and enjoy working independently of others. If they are allowed to do so they are effective in their service. Their frustrations lie with their fellow team members who are people oriented. These frustrations are multiplied if they are working in a people-oriented culture. They are intolerant of those who show less commitment to the task than they do. They say things like, *'They have completely lost the vision….'* They watch their people-oriented team members spending an inordinate amount of time on parties and social activities that seem very frivolous. This is because their own lives are organised round a list of goals. Task-oriented team members are often extremely critical (inside) of people-oriented team members accusing them (inside) of being lazy and unproductive.

2.3.3 Most non-western team members are people-oriented

Again, this is a generalisation that is not always true! People-oriented team members tend to disapprove of task-oriented people considering them selfish, ego-centric, arrogant, striving and unsociable people. They see task-oriented people as demanding and opinionated with a very low sensitivity to people and having narrow one-track minds. Task-oriented people tend to be rejected by people-oriented cultures and people-oriented team members.

2.3.4 Some preliminary points

- Don't dichotomise work and social interaction. Learn to integrate them as much as possible. The stated purpose for a team is to gather people together and collaborate to jointly accomplish agreed upon team outcomes – i.e. to get things done! The purpose of social interaction is to have personal needs for affiliation and "togetherness" met by being involved in a group. If the 'glue' of lots of team interaction isn't being attached to every team member, then watch out! Your team is becoming dysfunctional. Social interaction is a major stress reliever. Problems occur when some people on the team are focusing on the task in hand while, at the same time, others are socialising. Remember: 'All work and no play' makes you dull. All play and no work makes you unemployed!' Getting your team in sync. is the important thing.

- Remember Phil. 2:3, ***"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves."***
- Remember your calling. You are sent to work with this team – to love them, to serve with them and to serve them, to communicate through your unity the wonderful wisdom of God. [Eph. 3:10]
- Focus your mind on listening. It is easy for task-oriented people to be present in body while their minds are elsewhere. Task-oriented people need to take a course in listening.

2.3.5 A Biblical Perspective [Look up Mark 6:30-46]

In the ministry of the Lord Jesus on earth there was an amazing balance between being task-oriented and people-oriented. The work was overwhelming. The "team" was so busy that they had no time to eat. Jesus had been rejected in His home town. [Mk. 6:1-6] Herod was threatening Him. [Lk. 9:9] The natural tendency would have been to withdraw, but not so the Lord Jesus. Motivated by compassion, He made people His priority. Finally He went away and prayed until dawn. Was Jesus task-oriented or people-oriented? Look up Luke chapters 4-9.

- <u>Evidence for Task-orientation</u>
  1. Declaration that no prophet is accepted in his home town [4:26-30]
  2. Declaration that he must preach in other towns [4:3]
  3. Teaching that His disciples don't have to keep all the rules of fasting [6:1-4]
  4. Refusal to see His mother and brothers and the declaration that those who hear His word and practise it are His true family [8:19-21]
  5. Settlement of the argument as to who is the greatest – whoever is least [9:46-49]

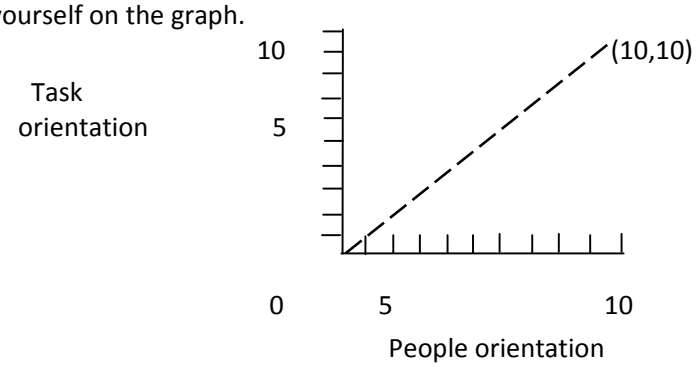
There are many other statements that support the view that Jesus was task-oriented.
"I must be about My Father's business." [Lk. 2:49]
"My meat is to do the will of Him who sent Me." [Jn. 4:34]
"Lo, I come to do your will." [Heb. 10: 7, 9]

- <u>Evidence for people-orientation</u>
  1. Healing the sick [4:31-41]
  2. Delivering the demonised [4:31-41]
  3. Healing of a leper [5:12-14]
  4. Healing and forgiveness of a paralytic [5:17-25]
  5. Eating with "sinners" [5:29-32]
  6. Picking grain on the Sabbath [6:1-5]
  7. Healing on the Sabbath [6:6-11]
  8. Healing of the centurion's servant [7:1-10]
  9. Raising the widow's son [7:11-15]
  10. Forgiveness of the sinful woman [7:36-50]
  11. Healing of a demonised person [8:26-39]
  12. Raising of Jairus' daughter and healing a chronically sick woman [8:40-46]
  13. Feeding the five thousand [9:10-17]
  14. Healing the demonised boy [9:37-43]
  15. Refusal to curse hostile Samaritans [9:56-57]

It is clear that the Lord Jesus was both people-oriented **and** task-oriented. He held both in balance. He gave perfect attention to tasks and to people. We are to learn to be 'imitators of God'.

"Be imitators of God as dearly beloved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." [Eph. 5:1-2]

Place yourself on the graph.



All of us should be moving from a place of personal comfort (our own orientation) to a (10,10) position. The discipline required to do this will help us to appreciate others on our team who have a different orientation and are also trying to discipline themselves to be 'imitators' of God. The more we approximate a (10,10) position, the greater will be our ability to identify with the goals of any culture to which we are sent.

2.4 In Summary

Powerful team visions are:

- God given
- Inspiring – "zap not sap"
- Empowering the team to act
- Challenging
- Long range
- Owned by the team
- Bold
- Practical
- Transforming

NOTES

[1] **Born After Midnight,** A.W. Tozer (1959 - Revised 1992), Christian Publications Inc., Harrisburg, PA, USA; ISBN 0 875 094163

[2] **Visionary Leadership,** Burt Nanus (1992) Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, USA

3. Misplaced Goals and Confused Objectives

3.1 Bridging the Gap between Vision and Strategy

3.2 Strategic Objectives

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3.4 Team Sadism and Tactical Goals

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3.9 Maintaining the Big Picture

3. Misplaced Goals and Confused Objectives

Vision needs to be broken down into **Strategic Objectives** and these need to be broken down into **Tactical Goals**.

3.1 Bridging the Gap between Vision and Strategy

Here are a few key steps that are vital to bridge the gap between vision and the development of strategic objectives.

Step One Make sure your "vision" is condensed into a brief **Mission Statement** with the following ingredients:

A. **Purpose**: "Our team exists to do….." i.e. the **Why**

B. **A Service Commitment**: **What** does the team provide or do?

C. **Identification of the client**: **Who** receives the services provided by the team?

D. **Scope**: **Where** are the services given?

Step Two: A SWOT Analysis

More details can be found in any standard management book. Here are the main points:

A. Look at the **strengths** of your team. Get the team to brain-storm about this and then identify the key strengths.

B. Look at the **weaknesses** of your team – the gaps, the inadequacies etc. Again this should be a **team** exercise.

C. Identify external **opportunities** that the team potentially faces. These should be confined to the areas of the mission statement and should be identified in a team brain-storming session followed by prioritization.

D. Identify external **threats** that might threaten the ability of the team to carry out its mission.

This SWOT analysis should be done at least on an annual basis by the whole team.

Step Three: Identify your **key results areas** and **critical success factors**

Step Four: Do a **Gap Analysis** – where you are now versus where you would like to be. In other words, look at a timeframe for the lifetime of your team.

Now you are ready to set strategic goals. Get as much help as you can from outside the team.

"Where there is no counsel the people fall, but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." [Prov. 11:14]

3.2 Strategic Objectives

A strategic objective is not a number. In terms of strategic objectives, numerical targets and quotas do much more damage than good.

A vision needs to be translated into concrete aspirations. Kennedy said, *"We will put a man on the moon!"* That sentence illustrates almost all you need to know about strategic objectives. It is clear. It is significant and it communicates passion.

Strategic objectives are ambitious, broad, long-range goals. They don't alter much with time. They help the team to concentrate on the task at hand while giving a continuing vision of what the team hopes to achieve together. If they are clear enough, these strategic objectives will engage the hearts and minds of the team. The objectives themselves will assume much of the 'leadership'. They become a continuing corrective against distraction, confusion and decay.

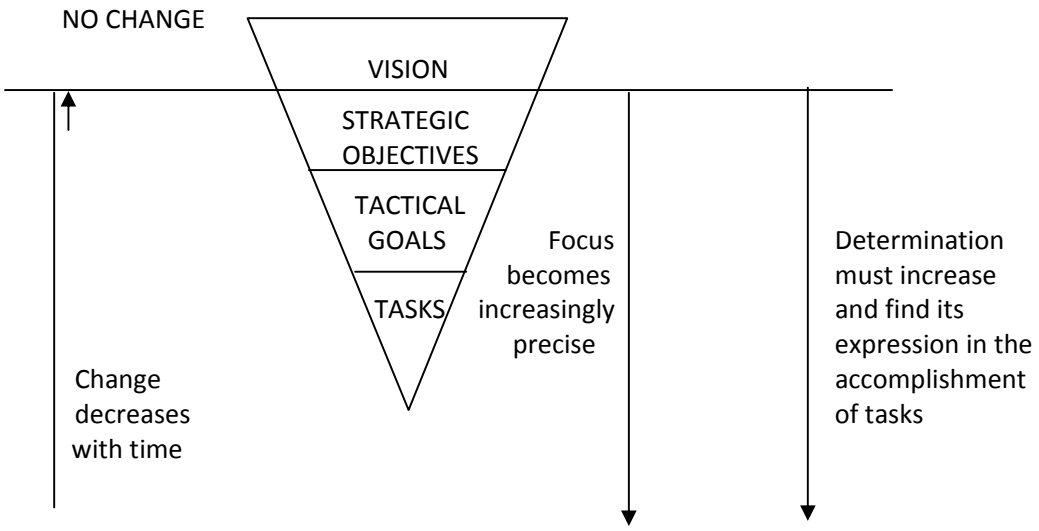
In setting strategic objectives for your team, **avoid**:

- **Objectives that are trivial** – e.g. to give out 100 tracts per day. This sort of objective just measures activity. It doesn't measure effectiveness. It is not an objective at all. It is just an item on a list of 'to do' activities.
- **Objectives that grow out of modernity**. Modernity is often below the level of our awareness. The western world is strongly influenced by what we typically call logical positivism. This states that, *'All that is meaningful can be verified by empirical data and all that matters is observable'* – i.e. empirical data is the only reality.
- **Bad theology**. The external outcomes of our ministry in teams are in the hands of God. It is bad theology to set objectives such as, *'We will plant a new church every year.'* Jesus said, ***"I will build My church"***. [Mt. 16:18] He may use us, but He is the prime mover.
- **Mushy objectives** that are nebulous, poorly defined and no one can really understand them. What may easily happen is that everyone is happy if they are kept busy, but nothing is achieved.
- **Objectives that are too easy to reach.** This stifles life on the team.
- **Objectives that are donor driven –** i.e. setting objectives that will make us look good at the end of the year in our annual report to donors. This is a demoralizing, dishonest and dreary exercise!
- **Objectives that are too rigid.** If the situation and circumstances change, we must be able to change our objectives. Often the objectives for a team are initially based on inaccurate factors. Later, with experience and greater knowledge of the situation, objectives can be changed.
- **Objectives that encourage the leader to control and manipulate people.** Don't use your team members as resources to help you, the leader, accomplish **your** objectives.

Things to remember when setting Strategic Objectives

- They should be **visionary** – a picture of how the Lord God Almighty might use the team to make an eternal difference in the hearts of people.
- They should grow out of **good theology**. They must begin with a fresh vision of the God of hope. We are convinced that the promises of God are true and trustworthy and so we must go for big objectives even if they seem to be impossible!
- We should seek **eternal results**. We are not in control of eternal results and so a certain ambiguity is all right. Strategic objectives need not be precise because we will never get the whole story of what happens in the hearts and souls of people until we get to heaven. Aim for eternal results not just temporal results.
- Strategic Objectives should be **born out of prayer**. They are the result not of computer projections, but of collective prayer.

- They should describe **qualities rather than quantities**. Don't say that one of your team objectives is to recruit ten new team members. Describe the qualities you want to see in their lives, their gifts, their talents. Don't just say, *'We want 50 people to be saved'*. Give a description of the godly character you are going to implant in them. Describe what is going to happen to them when they come to Christ. Describe the healthy church you are going to plant rather than giving the number of churches.
- They should grow out of **team ministry**. They are not individualistic but depend on the input of your whole team.
- They should be **written down** and declared to all.



In Summary

Make sure your Strategic Objectives obey the following six rules:

1. The objectives must be derived from your Mission Statement. Don't confuse the means with the Strategic Objectives.
2. You can't **do** a Strategic Objective. Later the objective will be translated into tactical goals and work assignments.
3. The Strategic Objectives must concentrate on the really important things. You must focus the resources on the team on the critical issues – resources are always limited.
4. Have multiple objectives – approximately prioritised.
5. Objectives must make sense. Ask questions like, *'Can we really do this? Is it reasonable? '*
6. Objectives should not be cast in concrete. They are a vision of the future. The future holds surprises. Objectives should recognise this fact and allow for it.

3.3 Tactical Goals

These are short-term and can be altered frequently. They are usually numerical or measurable. Good tactical team goals have several components:

- **A task** – what you are going to do
- **A promised limit** of what you are doing – unlike the magical brooms in the Sorcerer's Apprentice, you know when to stop

- **A promised level of performance** – e.g. you'll spare no expense; you will all stick to a tight budget; it will be world class work; good enough is OK.
- **A deadline** – a sunset clause after which even the best coach reverts to a pumpkin!
- **A definition** of the **customer** – **who** is all this effort for?

Very often tactical goals are, in fact, **projects or tasks** that have to be accomplished if the strategic objectives are to be achieved. Very rarely are these tactical goals accomplished in a nice, orderly environment where everything goes smoothly. Many tactical goals don't work out at the first attempt. Our teams may be in a 'jungle' where it is hard to see the way ahead. The work needed to accomplish a goal is often confusing and cluttered. Team members are people with all the variation and inconsistency that humanity implies.

Given the inherent disorder of the tactical goals of most of our teams, it is important at the onset to insist on diamond-like clarity of the link between the task and the overall strategic objectives.

So you start with the strategic objective to plant a church, for example, and then you chart a path through the jungle towards achieving it with the team members assigned a series of do-able short-term steps.

Successful teams live and breathe **the short-term**. That is where the action is and that is where intelligence in problem solving is put to work. Teams should **plan** for the longterm but they will **act** for the present.

Good teams only concentrate on **a few goals** at a time. Don't aim to do 30 tasks in the first year. Most teams would go into shock if confronted with 30 tasks or tactical goals! Then they would need a time to recover before they could do anything! Most of us can only do one thing at a time.

Goals and projects that are not being worked on at the present tend to gnaw away at your mental innards. This decreases productivity. There is a rule: The more tactical goals a team is working on, the worse their performance will be!

The key is **sequencing** your tasks. List the goals, sort them out into appropriate time frames and prioritise them. If a task doesn't appear high on the list, leave it. Review your list periodically. The order may change with circumstances. Make sure your team is not working on a goal that anyone who has been paying attention knows is no longer relevant.

After prioritising the goals, sort them into short-term, mid-term and long-term.

- short-term means less than a month
- mid-term means 1-3 months
- longterm means 3-6 months

If it is longer than 6 months it could be a pipe dream or it might be a strategic objective. If you have a tactical goal longer than 6 months – like learning Arabic – break it down into shorter time frames. This way your team is continuously achieving goals. They experience success. They stay on track. They are moving forward and this raises their level of motivation.

Remember goal sludge. These are unfulfilled goals that always come at the bottom of any prioritised list of goals and even in review are low priority. They are not bad goals – just not especially useful. Let them die in the desert sun.

The tactical goals must be developed into a step-by-step written plan. Make sure the plan specifies:

- ✓ When each step is due
- ✓ Who is going to do it

The plan will assign tasks to different team members. Select people whose experience, talents and abilities match the requirements and then assign them the tasks.

Review the plan with the team members involved. Answer questions. Incorporate the suggestions of the team. Each team member needs to understand the whole plan **and** their particular role in it. Often these tasks need to be reviewed monthly and changed if they are not working.

3.4 Team Sadism and Tactical Goals

There are various stresses, pressures and degrees of rigour you may expose your team to. At one end of the spectrum you can make life too cosy for your team. That is no good. We are supposed to "endure hardship" as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

The opposite extreme can be horrific. Some team leaders have an almost psychopathic willingness to cause their team pain by making them attempt to accomplish unattainable tactical goals. It is easy to declare the goal in a team meeting, but what pain it can cause to the team members!

It is one thing to throw your team in the deep end of the pool to teach them to swim. Call it tough love. But it is sadism to stock the pool with piranha! Remember that pastoral care and people development are also part of your strategic objectives!

3.5 Intra-team Warfare and Tactical Goals

One of the dangers of setting tactical goals on large teams is that one part of the team is assigned to a particular task while another part of the team is assigned to another task, but these tasks are not linked or co-ordinated. Intra-team warfare starts when one task impinges on another and these tasks even run counter to each other. This leads to recriminations, finger pointing and our equivalent of duels at dawn!

3.6 The Need for Passion

Passion needs to be evident in both Strategic Objectives and Tactical Goals. Don't have boring objectives and goals. Dull goals lack originality, personality and sizzle. Teams get turned on to good, sizzling objectives and goals. These are the goals they buy into and take ownership of.

Use words like:

- results
- expected outcomes
- opportunities

Avoid using words like:

- activity
- need
- project

3.7 End-visioning and Reverse Problem Solving

Every team leader must become skilled at end-visioning. This will help the team focus their efforts on the true purpose of the team. It helps in prioritising efforts. Below is a model I hope will help.

Step One: Consider what your vision would look like if fulfilled

- Imagine what the complete evangelisation of your people group would look like. It would mean having a church in every city neighbourhood and every village for each language/dialect represented. This is the DAWN strategy of saturation evangelism.

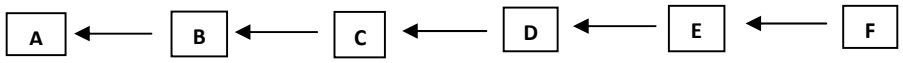
- Map the location of every village and city neighbourhood.
- Map the locales by language/dialect
- Map the location of all existing churches and ministries
- Determine the number of new churches needed and where

Step Two: Consider what it would take to get there

- You must have multitudes of local churches
- Churches must have a burning desire to plant other churches in villages or neighbourhoods that have no church
- Churches must have the ability to fulfil that desire
  - Do demographics and help existing churches to understand how influence flows in societies. This will lead to the discovery of the initial base of operations to start church planting movements.
  - Share this information and motivate actual and potential ministry partners.
  - Establish a measurable tactical goal so you will know when you have reached it.

Step Three: Work backwards from the ideal future to your present position

For example:



The ideal future

Where you are now

If you are at **B** you can easily see how to get to **A**. So, in your mind you now have to get to **B**. Mentally you can see that if you were at **C** you could then get to **B**.

- This process of thinking helps you by:
  - Giving you a long range panoramic view
  - Increasing your awareness of decisive factors and forces at work
  - Assuring as direct a path as possible to the solution
- The essential steps to the development of a church planting movement emerge:
  - Churches have a plurality of leadership so a shortage of leaders is never a limiting factor.
  - All church members are active in ministry.
  - Leadership training must be:
    - Conducted within local congregations
    - Appropriate even for poorly educated individuals
    - Accessible – not protracted in time or professional in nature

- ✧ A mutually aware network of leaders is essential in order to know where churches are needed and to co-operate to reach new areas.
- ✧ A common vision for and commitment to the total evangelisation of their people and beyond is necessary. This must be the constant theme of all activity at every level, leading to intentional evangelistic outreach.
- ✧ A corps of committed church planters is necessary to initiate this process. These church planters must be able to speak the language and communicate effectively in the culture.

Step Four: Take the necessary actions to retrace the steps forward through time to your goal.

- ➢ Sometimes the ideal is not possible. Compromise is better than procrastination.
  - ✧ Sometimes the route from C to B doesn't work. Try and think of another route to B. If you were at X then you could get to B. Then the tactical goal is X; if you are at Y perhaps you can get to X and Y ← Z ← F.
- ➢ It is imperative to know where you are headed from the beginning.

3.8 Measurement and People Development – Getting the Balance

Teams are usually very poor in the area of measurement. Once strategic objectives have been set, tactical goals have been worked out, tasks have been organised and each team member has been motivated, the team needs to be updated on what is happening. They need to know what progress is being made towards the strategic objectives! This means measurement. Without measurement there can be no observable improvement in performance. Each individual needs measurement and the whole team needs measurement. It is the function of the team leader to analyse and interpret these measurements and share with the whole team how he/she evaluates that performance. There should be open discussion for further input.

Questions that should be asked regularly about team performance include:

- What information does each team member need to be able to do the job effectively?
- What information do we need that will enable us to measure our progress towards the desired results in the tasks the team is doing?
- Are these meaningless statistics or meaningful measurements?
- Are we making things more complicated than necessary?
- Can we produce charts and graphs that show deviation from the norm and are helpful?
- Can the measurements be set up so that each individual team member can exercise control over the results?

Remember that, in general, tasks will be accomplished more quickly if the development of the team members is also a primary focus.

So work systematically on getting each team member to grow – spiritually, emotionally and mentally. The aim is growing maturity. The key word is **systematically**. Efforts at increasing "production capacity" (the goose = the team) must be consistent and continuous. Growing and increasing "golden egg productivity" is a long process. The objective is to help the person

develop his/her gifts, talents and abilities so he/she can make an effective contribution to the team. The ideal is for each team member to achieve "excellence" within the limits of their gifts. It is not doing a 'make-over' on people or trying to change their basic personality! If you try this, your team will resent it and they will see you as manipulative – even immoral!

The team leader must develop an environment that encourages team members to develop themselves. Talking to them, listening to them, understanding them and learning their strengths and weaknesses can do this. People development is motivating them to enhance strengths and learn from weaknesses.

A good team leader provides his/her team with appropriate training to upgrade their skills. If you are a team leader, don't smother your team. Give them room to develop their job. Develop a climate of excellence. Above all, don't drive your team. If you do, you will kill the goose that lays the golden eggs!

Probably the single most important thing a team leader can do to improve the productivity of a team is to improve him/herself.

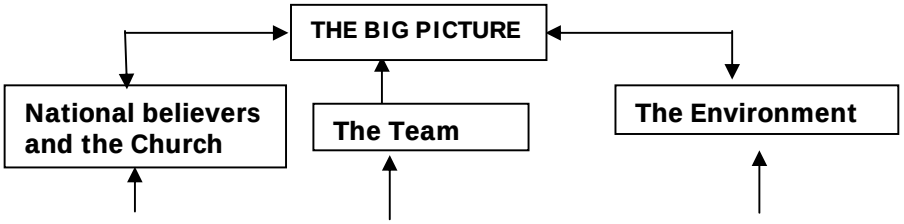
Remember the following:

- The leader should be in a training programme him/herself.
- Actions speak louder than words.
- The leader should constantly monitor his/her own progress.
- The leader should know what qualities and skills he himself needs in order to lead the team successfully. If a check list is made of things to do and this is constantly reviewed, by God's grace, he/she will improve and so will the team!

The team leader must help the team to focus on productivity – getting the tasks done – so that both the tactical goals and the strategic objectives can be accomplished and the vision realised! His/her task also involves reducing the 'goal sludge' – non-productive tasks.

3.9 Maintaining the Big Picture

The 'Big Picture' is built up by integrating into a whole all the component parts of the life and ministry of a team. The diagram below will help you think about some of the component parts. Please write your own chart of **all** the component parts of **your** ministry. Integrate these into a big picture.



Includes:	Includes:	Includes:
Relations with authorities	***company structures***	***Political***
* formal - informal	***Home supporting constituency***	* Attitudes to West
* legalisation	***Finances***	* Attitudes to Christianity
Doctrinal Issues	* issues of accountability	* Terrorism
* charisma/word	* ownership	* Youth identity crisis
* deliverance/healing	* projects	* Attitudes to new national believers
* tribalism	* local ministries	***Economic***
The Institution	* tithes etc.	* unemployment
* buildings	***Other agencies***	* possibility of micro credit
* church discipline	***Growth in numbers***	* establishing small businesses
* local church relationships	***Widening roles***	* effect of globalisation
* leadership	***Building partnerships***	***Technology***
√ styles	***Integration of ministries***	* access to the media
√ lay/ordained		* use of the Internet
√ paid/voluntary		* electricity and utilities
√ development		
Growth		
* discipleship		
* marriage/family		
* children		
* development of gifts		
* relationships/reconciliation		
* unemployment/illiteracy		
Evangelism		
* approach (holistic?)		
* local		
* to the unreached		
* openness to foreigners		
* majority oral preference		
* Increased use of mass media		

4. Unresolved Roles

4.1 Some Symptoms of Unresolved Roles in Teams

4.2 Resolved Roles

4.3 Getting the Hard Jobs Done

4.4 Avoiding Turf Wars in Teams

4.5 Authority and Responsibility

4.6 Confusing Leadership, Management and Administration

4.7 Put an Emphasis on Equality in the Team

4. Unresolved Roles

4.1 Some Symptoms of Unresolved Roles in Teams

When we were children we never worried about roles and responsibilities. We formed gangs and swarmed about doing what we pleased. It was a non-hierarchical, de-layered, super-flattened, inverted–pyramid, matrix/clustered – a mob! And we liked it!

Then we got a job. Now everyone knew his or her role. Everyone had a job description. Each job description described exactly what we did – our tasks, roles and working relationships. And we were assigned a grade in the hierarchy. We didn't like it, but it was orderly and, in the end, comfortable.

Now, we are in a team. Job descriptions are very imprecise and roles are hardly mentioned at all. But these roles and relationships – mentioned or not – play a vital part in the success of the team.

Teams are for adults who have to grow out of the pigeon–holing of hierarchical structures and conventional job descriptions. But the temptation is to revert to the 'mob approach' - doing what we like or what we are good at!

There are many differences between mobs and teams. You have a mob when:

- Each member thinks they are grouped together just for administrative reasons, but each works independently and often at cross-purposes with others.
- Members approach their job simply as a hired hand.
- Members are told what to do – suggestions are not encouraged.
- Members distrust everyone else in the mob because they don't understand the role of other members.
- Conformity appears more important than positive results and so on.

Resolving roles is vital in turning a mob into a functional team.

4.2 Resolved Roles

To turn **a mob** into **a team** requires three conditions:

- All team members must know the tasks they must complete.
- These roles and responsibilities must not be so restrictive that they cut off the circulation to the brain.
- All the unpleasant, hard, unattractive but necessary work must get done.

Some issues you should work on:

- Discuss with each team member his/her role.
- Roles are usually better fulfilled when they are narrowed down and specific.
- Team members should analyse how they spend their time (prayer, Bible study, correspondence, team time, ministry time etc.) Check if the way time is spent correlates with established priorities.
- A job description or a performance index may be useful, but it must be a help rather than a hindrance!
- Primary roles should never be exclusive. The role of a team member may be as a book-keeper, but this person may well have a secondary role – e.g. teaching a Bible class.
- Roles may change. Make sure there is sufficient flexibility. Plan the phase-out of one role in order to phase in another.
- Prominence: A role is not more important because it is more visible. All roles are important.

- There must be mutual respect – respect for the roles of other team members. Support each other in prayer and with understanding.
- Keep the end in view. The role of a team member must never become an end in itself. Keep the agreed end in view – watch it.
- Proficiency: Each team member must strive to be proficient in what he/she is doing.
- Dependence on God: Proficiency in any given role must never take the place of dependency on God. It is not the technical 'know how', training or gifts that count, but Christ working through the team member.
- Every team needs at least one musician/worship leader.
- Every team member needs a pioneer spirit – the ability to face the unknown with faith – ready for anything!

4.3 Getting the Hard Jobs Done

There are lots of tasks to be accomplished in seeing short-term tactical goals met, that nobody wants to do! They are routine or unpleasant or do not play to anyone's strengths - filing reports, emptying the office coffee pot and that sort of thing.

What often happens is that some team members are exempted from their fair share of such work on the basis of seniority, *"They are longtermers"* etc. or for other reasons. This leads to a two-tier team and this is bad. All unpleasant tasks must be assigned fairly with the team leader taking his/her share. Rotation of unpleasant tasks is usually a good idea - *"On this team, every-one does the dishes."*

4.4 Avoiding Turf Wars on Teams

Turf Wars arise when one person on the team has the responsibility for a single (usually very appealing) task. This person sees that task as **their turf.** They are prepared to violate the spirit of love, harmony and unity to ensure **their** turf remains theirs.

Why do people fight? James 4:1 has the answer. It is so easy for "turf" to represent power and control. When a Turf War starts the key to the resolution is communication. Communicate with everyone on the team the content of the task and how you can all agree on procedures for updating, linking with other tasks, collaborating and accountability. Remind people that, by nature, **teams** are cross-functional.

4.5 Authority and Responsibility

A failure to understand Biblical principles of authority and responsibility lies at the root of most of the unresolved roles I have observed on teams. We live in a world where there is resistance to authority. This is nothing new. Adam started it! It is more obvious today because there are about six billion of Adam's children around. The essence of sin is self – autonomy – self-rule, rejection and rebellion against God's rule. Satan started this. [Is. 14:14]

4.5.1 Authority and Responsibility must be co-extensive in team life

Have you ever heard a team member say, *"…but I don't have the authority"* ? Usually it is when they are refusing or rejecting the responsibility for taking action. Have you ever heard, *"I can't get them to do a thing properly. They just won't take responsibility"* ? Some people want more authority, but won't accept more responsibility. Some want to part with their responsibilities, but won't part with their authority!

The Bible teaches a vital management principle. It is impossible to have authority without responsibility. The two go together. If you have responsibility without authority it leads to confusion, failure and attrition by the people involved.

Authority and responsibility are to be equally balanced and co-extensive in the sense of one equalling the other. A team member/leader should accept responsibility only up to the authority he is given. Never should a leader ask a person to accept responsibility for a task without giving them authority in the situation.

4.5.2 What do we mean by authority?

Jesus Christ exercised authority. Mark 1:22 tells us that He spoke with authority in the synagogues. Mark 1:23 says that He commanded with authority and the demons fled.

What is authority?

- It is power to command – authority vested in a person or a position – e.g. the team leader.
- It is the ability to take action – vested in character and competence.

The Roman officer understood authority. A man under authority had the right to exercise authority over those under him with all the power of Rome.

4.5.3 The source of authority

Jesus was asked, ***"By what authority are you doing these things?"*** [Matt. 21:23] Those we lead have a right to know the source of our authority as a team. Each team should act with due authority. You must be able to answer the question; *"By what authority are you here in X?"* **By God's authority!** We do well to realise that! Is that all? I have met earnest workers who say things like*, "My authority is not of man – but from God – and you cannot tell me what to do!"*

Team life becomes a mob when members have no obligation to obey anyone. A person who never submits to human authority knows very little of divine authority in his/her life. Jesus warned about those who would only come under their own authority. [John 5:43]

So ultimately our source of authority is God – the Alpha and Omega, the Almighty Creator and Ruler of the Universe. He is the beginning and the end, the ultimate source of all authority for everything and everyone. [Rev. 1:8, 21:6; 22:13]

But God delegates His authority to:

- Governments – Rom. 13
- Parents – children are to obey their parents in the home – Col. 3:20
- Church leaders – Heb. 13:17; Col. 3:20

Church leaders have delegated some of their authority over the members they have sent out into the company leadership structure. We are accountable to the local church and to God for its exercise.

4.5.4 The components of authority

These are:

- **A job assignment** – a clear commission. See Moses in Ex. 3:10, ***"Moses, come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt"***.
- **The backing** of the one who gives them authority – this is vital. Note the tremendous backing to 'The Great Commission' - ***"All authority … go … I will be with you right to the end."*** [Mt. 28:18-20]
- **Confidence** – based in the two above.
- **A deterrent factor**! If you like, an "or else" factor – a built in penalty for disobeying authority. See Gen. 3:3, ***"… lest you die"*** and John 3: 16, ***"… should not perish"***. A team member, or even a whole team, can refuse to obey. They cannot be allowed to escape the consequences!

4.5.5 The exercise of authority

This can be:

- **Autocratic:** Only God can exercise authority in this way. Humans always end up as dictators if they exercise authority this way.
- **Democratic:** i.e. sharing authority with those subject to that authority
- **Passive:** Direct authority kept to a minimum, ***"No king in Israel"*** [Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25]
- **"In the fear of the Lord":** Read 2 Chron. 19:7 and the story of Jehosophat. God's authority must be exercised in a Christ-like way.
  - **As a servant** – caring for those we serve. This means that, in assigning roles, we will have to give up wanting to be liked and give up favouritism towards those we like.
  - **As a pastor (father)** The authority of the leader's position must be mitigated by his/her caring attitude. So fill your position with authority, but always be approachable and correctable.
  - **With impartiality, integrity and loyalty** to the team and to those above you. Your authority will be enhanced by your character of sincerity and reliability and by your competence in leadership.

It is how you exercise authority that will make or mar you and develop or break your team.

4.5.6 The limits of authority

All authority is delegated from source – God. Therefore all human authority is limited. Only God has unlimited authority. So no team leader is all-powerful! Make sure that you know the limit of your team leader's authority! Make sure how much has been delegated to him. Don't usurp authority from the person over the team leader or from those alongside you. Respect the limits of your authority or you will blow the team apart.

4.5.7 The lines of authority and responsibility

Everyone in the team needs to know the lines of authority and responsibility (accountability) on the team so that the role of each person is clearly understood.

4.5.8 Responsibility

I have heard team leaders say: *"How **can** I get him to accept responsibility? I tell him, he says, 'yes', but he doesn't do it! He is so irresponsible! I tell him again. I show him. He says he understands. But still nothing happens. He has no sense of responsibility."* What is the trouble?

- No obligation
- No motivation
- No accountability
- No deterrent factor

What does responsibility consist of?

- **An obligation** – a commitment – a pledge – a guarantee – a sense that we must do what we have been given to do. How do we create a sense of obligation? In teams, the only effective way is by creating an obligation to God*. "I am Christ's servant and I must be faithful to Him. He is always faithful to me in all that He promised. I must be faithful to Him in what I have promised."*

  Leaders must set an example of faithfulness in small things. Teach and practice faithfulness.

- **Accountability** – I have to give an account! How do you do this? By audit, by receipts, by reports, by checking their work, by discussion, by consultation, by examination, by inspection, by demonstration and by encouragement.

4.5.9 How is responsibility acquired?

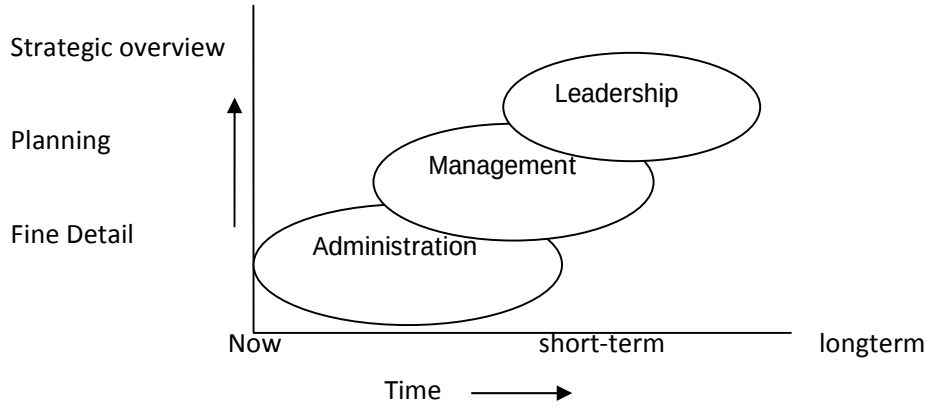
It may be imposed on a reluctant Moses or a resisting Jonah, but despite reluctance or resistance, Moses, Jonah or we remain accountable.

Usually we invite responsibility by agreeing to join the team. Once you join the team you become accountable. We can create responsibility by being proactive and taking the initiative in something that the team is doing. Even if you take responsibility voluntarily, you remain accountable.

Roles become resolved when each team member has accepted authority and responsibility for the task in hand. This is crucial in turning mobs into teams.

4.6 Confusing Leadership, Management and Administration

If teams get large, the effectiveness of the team usually decreases. The reason is often a confusion of roles between management, leadership and administration.



Leadership on a team sets the overall long-term strategic direction of the team.

Management focuses on the plans and tactical objectives.

Administration is the means to carry out the short-term action plans.

Management focuses on co-ordination, monitoring, project/budget control and constructively holding others accountable. On a large team, overseeing the work distribution and checking that tasks are done is very mundane for the leadership, so they don't do it! Things start to fall apart.

Administration is often "stamp licking" – small, trivial, but vital tasks! Administrators **maintain** the status quo. Leaders **change** the status quo!

What often happens is something like this:

The team starts small. The leader does most of the management and delegates some of the administration. The team begins to grow and a full time administrator is chosen, on the team, to do the task. This is often a secretary! The team continues to expand, so the role becomes more demanding. The poor secretary is stretched by the higher demand of the new tasks. The calibre and volume of the work can't now be done successfully in a few hours by a well-meaning typist – perhaps one of the wives on the team. The team experiences difficulty.

The same is true in finances. Simple bookkeeper training is OK for a small team, but more and more is involved as the team expands and the budget becomes more and more substantial. Eventually all data entry and bookkeeping must be in the hands of people with financial experience and training.

So there is a progression in expansion that involves two major changes:

(i) **Administration is separating from management**.

This is not task variation. It actually requires a different personality. The faithful, simple secretary is now a square peg in a round hole. The old job, when things were smaller, was largely responding to situations and the secretary thrived. Now she is expected to be pro-active and much more forward-thinking!

(ii) **Management is separating from leadership**.

As the team gets bigger the role of leadership gets more and more demanding, especially on multi-cellular organic teams. The leader needs to give much of the managerial responsibility to someone else. Often this doesn't happen and the leader is forced into the role of a manager. This leaves the team effectively leaderless!

Here are a few ideas in terms of solutions.

1. Invest regularly and substantially in the development of the management and administrative personnel on your team. Their needs may well change more rapidly than those of the leadership.
2. If you expect expansion on your team and you are about to appoint a secretary or an administrator for the first time, consider what the needs will be in a further three years time. If there is the likelihood of growth into a much more demanding role, don't promise too much – especially in the length of time. This will give the opportunity to re-assess the job later.
3. Don't give people flashy titles. It will be harder to move them later. Distinguish carefully between the leader's secretary, the team secretary, the team administrator and the leader's personal assistant. This will save much heartache later.

4.7 Put an Emphasis on Equality in the Team

Emphasize that we are all equal in worth and that we are all different in our endowments. We are all equally created in the image of God, but each one of us is a unique, distinct individual with differing natural abilities and gifts. We are each 'an original'. This is the wonder of God's creation.

What are the implications of our equal worth?

- We all stand equal before God and the law. We all have a right to justice and fairness. We all have an equal responsibility to keep the law, to help each other and to work together.
- Social snobbery is a horrible blight on any team or mission agency.

What are the implications of our differences? [male/female, race, clever/less clever etc.]

These are huge and need to be discussed at a team level. Here are a few broad principles:

- Inequality of endowment is no excuse for inequality of opportunity – especially in the matter of education, training etc.
- The allowance system on the team should never reflect privilege.

Remember that the equality of creation was doubled and re-enforced by the redemption we have in Christ.

5. Bad Decision-making

5.1 The Symptoms of Bad Decision-making

5.2 Choosing the Appropriate Decision-making Process

5.3 Types of Decision-making

5.4 Evaluating Oneself as a Decision Maker

5.5 Team Values Clarification

5.6 Motivating People to Accept a Difficult Decision

5.7 Avoiding Making a Decision

5.8 An Exercise to Build Consensus

5.9 The Dangers of 'Group-think'

5.10 A Summary

5. Bad Decision-making

5.1 The symptoms of bad decision-making

I have seen numerous examples of this on teams. In every case and in many locations, team morale has been seriously weakened. Sometimes the problem is caused by too strict an application of rules and regulations. This results in a loss of focus on the whole purpose of the team.

Decision-making is very much related to problem solving. The decisions we make should solve the problems we have. We solve the problem through a decision **that is faithfully implemented**. Bad decision-making usually has **two** causes:

- A failure to identify the problem correctly
- The inappropriate way the team or the team leader has chosen as a process for **how to decide** (make a decision) about the problem. Right decisions are decided in the right way. It is extremely dangerous for long-term team health to rely consistently on wrong processes for arriving at decisions. A team has several options in determining how a decision should be made. **All** should be used, as appropriate, to tackle different problems. Different problems need different decision-making techniques.

5.2 The DESMA Drill

Teams will be confronted by a huge variety of problems. These problems will vary in character and complexity. Is there a way to train people to systematically analyse all these problems and find solutions for them?

The answer to the above seems to be in the answers to some further questions such as:

- Is there a common 'thought pattern' that is always followed automatically and instinctively in solving various categories of problems?
- Is there a basic formula for the solution of **all** problems?
- Can this basic formula be stated and codified?
- Could it be reduced to a 'drill' with separate stages?
- Could the human mind be trained to obey this drill automatically by frequent drilling?
- Could repetitive use of the 'drill' induce a habit of mind – an instinctive thought process?
- Might this prove to be the secret of speedy decision-making?

In order to develop a problem-solving drill we need to 'strip to the bone' the processes by which different people arrive at their varying decisions. The aim would be to see if a common 'skeleton' underlies all the 'flesh'. Do the doctor, the social worker, the criminal investigator, the house-wife, the industrialist and the business consultant each follow the same basic formula to arrive at a solution to his/her problem? Is there a basic framework around which all processes for arriving at solutions are built up?

In fact there is indeed a basic framework, or skeleton, around which all processes of a solution to problems are built. This basic framework can be applied with amazing consistency!

The basic stages in any process of decision-making were found to be:

1. **D**etermine the real problem
2. **E**stablish the known facts
3. **S**eek answers to the unknown factors (make the unknown into the known)
4. **M**ake deductions from 2 and 3 – i.e. from all known factors
5. **A**rrive at your decision

It has been proved that the process of decision-making in the solution of any problem (medical, criminal, domestic, administrative etc.) will contain these five basic stages. This is the DESMA formula. It is a tremendous help to train yourself to follow these steps when seeking logical solutions to problems. As with any other systematic accomplishment – driving or practicing medicine – it will require concentration, perseverance and constant practice to become proficient. Eventually it will become automatic and instinctive.

The system explained

We will go through the drill trying to solve a simple problem. The problem is to find out the sort of present to give to a friend on his birthday.

The Drill	**The Application**
1. **D**etermine the problem	What sort of present should we give to our friend for his birthday?
2. **E**stablish the known facts	We know: * He is a friend * He is a man
3. **S**eek answers to unknown factors	Unknown factors – what is our friend's: Answer * age? 32 years * special likes/needs books, shirts, boats, chocolates and motorbikes How much money can we spend? £10
4. **M**ake deductions from 2 & 3	We deduce that: * We must buy a present for a 32 yr old man * We must limit the cost of the present to £10 * We cannot buy a boat or a motor bike * A suitable present might be a book, a shirt or some chocolates
5. **A**rrive at a decision	From the store buy a present from the list that is the best buy for £10

The system analysed in more detail

Stage One: Determine the problem (identify the problem)

Don't rush in with snap decisions. Listen. Ask yourself what is the **real** problem. If someone says to you, *"I've got a problem with X. He constantly does Y."* The problem is probably one of relationships rather than Y.

What is the problem? You can't start making decisions until you have pinpointed the problem. Often the problem presented hides the real problem. The team member who brings you the problem explains it from his point of view and this inevitably distorts the problem. Always ask, *"Is this a symptom or is this the cause?"*

The best illustration of this is a sick patient. He will describe what is wrong with him and present a series of symptoms. It would be a poor doctor who only treated the symptoms! A proper diagnosis needs to be made before an effective treatment can be given.

If we can write down the actual problem that needs a solution or a decision, it will help us to crystallize the final objective in our minds and will prevent us being drawn off by "red herrings". We are all apt to leap to false conclusions. Writing down the problem forces us to think out what the problem actually consists of. This clarifies the position and points us in the right direction.

Stage Two: Establish the known facts

What are the known facts? Write these down in detail – the people involved – the place – the time etc. What are the causes of the problem? Writing them down will help us not to overlook anything when we make our decisions.

It is vital to get the facts from a number of sources, much as a policeman at the scene of an accident collects evidence from as many witnesses as possible. A composite picture of the known facts then emerges. Without the facts you will make an ineffective decision. The problem will not go away just because you overlooked the facts.

Stage Three: Seek answers to unknown factors

- There are always factors that are not known but that need to be cleared up. The decision will depend on as complete a knowledge of all the relevant factors as it is possible to get. It is very important that no unknown factor is ignored.
- The factors that need investigation should be listed on paper and followed through until one of the following obtains:
    - ✧ The answer is found
    - ✧ The information is supplied
    - ✧ The action has been completed
    - ✧ We come to a 'dead end' – we can't get any further
- The sort of questions we must ask ourselves are:
    - ✧ What is it that we don't know but need to know?
    - ✧ Are there any questions to which we need answers?
    - ✧ What is it that needs investigation?
    - ✧ What should be done?
    - ✧ Is this or that true?

If you can't find the answers ask others to provide you with the information. The most profitable questions are those that come naturally into your mind. Ask the simple questions.

- You won't be able to arrive at a good decision until all the unknown factors become known. This means that failure to investigate will lead to an incomplete picture and a poor decision.
- The art of being able to ask the right questions about issues is the main secret of competent analysis. This art is developed by constant practice (i.e. always asking questions) as well as the use of ordinary common sense.

Stage Four: Make deductions from stages two and three

Deductions should be made from the known facts that you had at the beginning as well as the answers to the research you did on unknown factors. If you have unearthed all the unknown factors then you will be able to link these with the known facts. You will quickly arrive at the right decision.

The deductions will depend on the amount and character of the information that has been gathered. Ask yourself what options you have. Examine one, two or three options in the light of the facts. Look at the consequences of adopting each course.

Stage Five: Arrive at a decision

If the previous steps and stages have been carried through adequately, it should be a fairly simple matter either to suggest a solution to the problem or to come to a satisfactory decision. Write down the decision. Briefly state your reasons in support of the decision. State why you have rejected certain other options.

Conclusion

The DESMA drill is simple but effective for making decisions about problems on a team. With practice it becomes an almost instinctive routine as a result of constant use.

Preparation for consensus building

Preparation is necessary in most cases. With the agenda for the meeting send out a memo that:

- Sets out the problem
- States the major factors involved
- States the options and the consequences of taking each action.

Team members can then have time to think about the problem before coming to the meeting.

5.3 Types of decision-making

The way a team decides how to decide is one of the most important decisions it makes. There are several ways to make a decision on a team.

- By consensus
- By majority voting
- By sub-committee
- By compromise
- By using an expert
- By dictatorial rule without discussion
- By participative decision-making

Teams start by learning and they begin to reach their potential when they act. How action is triggered varies with the action in question. Good decisions are made when the method of decision-making is right and appropriate.

- **Consensus decision-making**

This is where all the team members get a chance to air their opinions and must ultimately agree on the outcome. If any team member does not agree, discussions continue. Compromise must be used so that every team member can agree with and be committed to the outcome.

Advantages

- ✧ Produces an innovative, creative, high quality decision
- ✧ Elicits commitment of all team members to implement the decision
- ✧ Uses the resources of all the members
- ✧ Future decision-making ability of the team is enhanced
- ✧ Useful in serious, important and complex decisions to which all team members will be committed

Disadvantages

- ✧ Takes a lot of time and emotional energy and a high level of communication skills – both listening and speaking
- ✧ Time pressure must be minimal
- ✧ There can be no emergency in progress

Comment

In the company I belong to this is the usual method of arriving at decisions in the case of decisions that are important to the whole team.

- **By majority voting**

Majority decision-making is democracy in action. The team votes. The majority wins. It is simple.

Advantages

- ✧ Can be used when there is no time for a consensus or when the decision is relatively trivial
- ✧ Can be used when 100% team member commitment is **not** critical to implementing the decision
- ✧ Closes discussion on issues that are not highly important for the team

Disadvantages

- ✧ Usually leaves an alienated minority – a time bomb for future team effectiveness
- ✧ Important talents of minority team members may be snubbed
- ✧ There is only partial commitment for implementing the decision
- ✧ The full benefit of team interaction does not happen.

Comment

This method is very rarely used on our teams - usually only in trivial decisions like whether the prayer meeting should start at 7.00 pm or 7.30 pm.

- **By sub-committee**

Sometimes it is best if the larger team chooses a sub-committee from the team to investigate information and make recommendations for action. These sub-committees are often put together just to make one decision.

Advantages

- ✧ Useful for simple, technical or routine decisions
- ✧ Appropriate when only a few team members have the relevant expertise or knowledge
- ✧ Useful when broader team commitment is not needed to implement the decision
- ✧ Facilitates decision when it is hard to get everyone together to make the decision
- ✧ Useful when there is a time crunch

Disadvantages

- ✧ Doesn't utilize the talents of all team members
- ✧ Doesn't build broad commitment for implementing the decision
- ✧ Unresolved conflict and controversy may damage future team effectiveness
- ✧ Not much benefit for team interaction

Comment

This type of decision-making is usually used in our company over technical details – i.e. the best computer software to buy and also in leadership selection committees.

- **By compromise (haggling, horse trading and bargaining)**

This is usually what happens in politics, in the UN etc. The idea is that eventually you arrive at a compromise of everyone's self-interest. The process involves haggling, making deals and negotiating the middle ground. Usually no one is happy with the result except the moderates.

Advantages

- ✧ Individual and extreme opinions tend to cancel each other out!
- ✧ Better than a dictatorship model of decision-making

Disadvantages

- ✧ The opinions of the least knowledgeable members may cancel out those of the most knowledgeable members
- ✧ Commitment to the decision is likely to be very weak
- ✧ Letting team members with the greatest expertise make the decision is almost always better than a group average

Comment

This method of decision-making should not be used on our teams.

- **By using an expert**

This is simple. Find an expert/consultant. Listen to what he says and follow his recommendations.

Advantages

- ✧ A useful approach when all the members of the team are fairly ignorant about a specific area. It makes sense to call in an outside, knowledgeable consultant.
- ✧ No damage is done if not much action is required by the team in implementing the decision.

Disadvantages

- ✧ How do you determine who is the best expert?
- ✧ There is no commitment built in for implementing the decision
- ✧ Advantages of team interaction are lost
- ✧ If there is resentment and disagreement on the team there will be a deterioration of team effectiveness
- ✧ Knowledge and skills of team members are not used.

Comment

This form of decision-making should be fairly rare!

- ➢ **Dictatorial rule without discussion**

The team leader hands down pre-determined decisions to the team. This method kills trust! If the team leader tries to fool the team members into thinking that their opinions about this decision can really affect his decision, their disillusionment will be complete.

Advantages

- ✧ It takes very little time and therefore should only be used in an emergency.

Disadvantages

- ✧ One person can never be a good resource on every decision
- ✧ Advantages of team interaction are lost
- ✧ Zero team commitment is developed for implementing the decision
- ✧ Resentment and disagreement abound
- ✧ Resources of team members are not used

Comment

This method of decision-making should only be used in an immediately threatening emergency such as a fire in a room. The team leader might then shout, *"Everyone leave the room now!"* This would be an appropriate time to use a dictatorial command.

- ➢ **By participative decision-making**

Here the leader makes it clear at the beginning that he/she is going to make the decision. But he/she also starts a lively discussion on the team, where members can freely express their opinions. When the leader has heard enough he/she cuts off the discussion and makes the decision. He/she then gets back to the team, presents to them the range of options and tells them which option he has picked and why. The team members know that they have been listened to and their opinions considered.

Advantages

- ✧ This works best in administrative situations where there is a need for simple, routine decisions. It should be used when the weight of the decision is not worth extended time.
- ✧ It is clear who is ultimately accountable for the decision.

Disadvantages

- ✧ It requires good communication skills on the part of the team members.

Conclusion

The important thing is for the team to decide in advance what decision-making method to use.

An Outline of Team Decision Procedure

1. **See what the problem is**
   - What is the situation? (what? who? and why?)
   - What factors in the situation are important and must be taken into account?
   - What are the specific issues to be decided?
2. **Consider all possible alternatives**
   - Look for possible options to meet the situation and problem – what are the possible courses of action and the reasons for each?
   - What bonds/unites the team? On what is there already agreement - in fact, principle or objectives?
   - What are the chief differences in fact, objectives, principles and wishes?
   - Look at the differences as to facts and points of view
     - ✧ What additional information is needed? How can it be secured?
     - ✧ Can the differing points of view be talked out?
3. **Reach a conclusion**
   - What decision will best take into account the relevant factors - the team's purposes and desires and the various points of view?
   - What are the reasons for this decision?
4. **Move towards action**
   - What are the ways and means of putting the decision into effect?
   - What are the next steps? Who is responsible for what? When? Where? How?

5.4 Evaluating yourself as a decision maker

1. Are the strategic objectives of the team clear to me?
2. Are the strategic objectives of the team clear to the whole team?
3. Do I carefully consider the overall mission of the team when making decisions?
4. Am I able to identify and integrate my individual goals and objectives with the general goals and objectives of the team?
5. Do I tend to shrink from decision-making or do I face each decision with courage, conviction and the faith necessary to handle the decision competently?
6. Am I able to analyse my own problems clearly?
7. Do I generally have difficulty in analysing the problems of others on the team?
8. Am I able to distinguish the cause properly?
9. Am I able to verbalise understandable statements about organisational and other problems on the team?
10. Do I have sufficient rapport with my team members to gather information effectively for the decision-making process?
11. Does decision-making occupy an inordinate amount of time? Do I tend to spend a lot of time gathering data and do I keep procrastinating about making the actual decision itself?
12. Am I consistent concerning the accuracy of the facts in every decision-making situation?
13. Do I face the issues open-mindedly and honestly, considering the various alternatives?
14. Do I generally achieve good acceptance of my decisions by the team members?

15. Are the team members agreeing to implement my decisions because of fear of my authority or respect for my judgement?
16. Do I tend to get unduly involved in my decisions to the point that I react emotionally if someone on the team challenges the wisdom of the decision?
17. Am I being too dictatorial or unilateral in decision-making – i.e. Do I fail to delegate decisions that can and should be delegated?
18. Do my decisions show a logical pattern of consistency over a period of time or does each one relate only to itself rather than to the whole?
19. Am I able to help other people make decisions as well as to make them myself?
20. Am I able to evaluate the wisdom and correctness of the decision?

5.5 Team values clarification

The purpose of the exercise below is to help team members to inventory and share some of the events in their lives that have shaped their values. These values are often a determining factor in decision-making.

One person in the team becomes **the focus person** and one person records the response of the focus person to the following questions. Then **the focus** rotates, as does the recorder. One person on the team – not the focus person or the recorder – asks the focus person the questions, clarifies the questions and helps the process along. The rest of the team should encourage the focus person by asking clarifying questions, but should **not** engage in a discussion of the answers. The maximum time per focus person should be 20-30 mins.

1. What was the happiest year or period in your life?
2. What things do you do well?
3. Tell about a turning pointing your life.
4. What has been the lowest time in your life?
5. Was there ever an event in which you demonstrated great courage?
6. Was there a time of heavy grief? More than one?
7. Tell about some things you do poorly but which you have to continue to do anyway.
8. What are some of the things you would like to stop doing?
9. What are some of the things you would really like to improve in?
10. Tell about some "peak" experience you have had.
11. Tell about some "peak" experience you would **like** to have.
12. Are there some values you are struggling to establish?
13. Tell about one missed opportunity in your life.
14. What are some of the things you want to start doing **now**, right at this point in your life?

Compile the answers and make them available to all on the team.

5.6 Motivating people to accept a difficult decision

You can usually make a team go along with a decision they don't like by giving them no choice! However, the team is not likely to put much effort into implementing the decision. You really need to be able to get them to be on the side of the team leader. The team might not **like** the decision, but on balance they can see that it might possibly make sense. For this reason they want to make it work. How do you motivate them to do this?

- Outline the basic decision that has been made and ask your team to give you their views. Listen to them. Write these down and let them know you are really listening.
- Demonstrate that you can see they have a good case for thinking that a mistake has been made. It is important emotionally to acknowledge that their attitude is a valid one.
- Let them see that you have really listened to their counter argument by referring to points they have made.
- Suggest a modification of the decision, if that is possible, so that the team can see you are trying to accommodate their reasons.
- Give them good reasons why you believe your decision is more effective. [Usually the decision has been taken by a person outside the team and imposed on them via the team leader.] Avoid using value judgement statements like 'better'. Hopefully there **are** good reasons (data unknown to the team) for the decision.
- Ultimately people on the team are not there to work for the team leader or even for the team. They are there to accomplish the task or vision. Never, ever give the reason for a decision as, 'The Field Leader/Team Leader has decided'! Give the reasons for the decision in terms of, "We can't reach our target/objectives…..if we don't….".

5.7 Avoiding making a decision

Some teams find decision-making very difficult. This is a little exercise in identifying the way a team makes decisions and how they avoid making them.

The Task: The team has 25 minutes to avoid making any decisions and to record as many ways as possible that this can be achieved.

The Result: Usually the initial result is bewilderment and then the team usually ends up making a decision not to complete the task. There is an inherent paradox within the task that cannot be solved. It is impossible not to make a decision.

Hopefully the team will see that their inability to make decisions is usually a result of not understanding the range of choices available. The team polarises the choice to just two and then cannot decide with any degree of consensus. They haven't done the DESMA drill!

5.8 An exercise to build consensus

Please read the following statements carefully.

- **As an individual** either agree (circle A) or disagree (circle D) with the statement.
- **As a team** you have 30 minutes to reach a consensus decision on the statements again circling A or D.

The statements are as follows:

1. In a team with a strong leader a person can achieve greater personal security. A or D
2. Leadership is the intelligent control of team activity rather than just getting others to follow you. A or D
3. When the leader is doing his/her best, you should not openly criticize them and find fault with their conduct. A or D

4. Generally there comes a time when democratic methods must be abandoned in order to solve practical problems. A or D
5. In the long run, it is more important to use democratic methods than to achieve specific results by other means. A or D
6. It is sometimes necessary to ignore the feelings of others in order to reach a decision. A or D
7. By the time the average person has reached maturity, it is almost impossible for that person to increase their skills in group participation. A or D
8. Silent members constitute a threat and a nuisance to the group. A or D
9. Conflict is not the expression of differences in individuals, but of their failure to make differences contribute to the common good. A or D
10. A group functions most efficiently when it ignores, rather than discusses, rivalries between members. A or D

The purpose of this exercise is not to convince you of the virtues of consensus decision-making on a team. It is to help you experience the joys and frustrations of this form of decision-making.

5.9 The dangers of group think

In the last 60 years there have been serious mistakes made in US foreign policy. In fact all governments have made serious mistakes. Three mistakes by the US government have been thoroughly analysed. They are:

- The failure to prepare for the attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941
- The Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961
- The escalation of the Vietnam War

In each case the president and his advisers deeply regretted the poor decision-making that had taken place. President Kennedy said, after the Bay of Pigs debacle, *"How could we have been so stupid?"*

But 'stupidity' is not the explanation! Advising Kennedy were some of the most brilliant minds in political history – Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, Robert Kennedy, Allen Dulles, Arthur Schlesinger and others. It was not stupidity on the team, but something went wrong with the **group dynamics** as they reached for consensus decision-making. They were victims of what psychologists call **'group think'**. This is a real danger on our teams!

Social conformity is a very powerful force. It is brought to bear by members of a cohesive team whenever a dissident in the group begins to voice his/her objections to a group consensus. Some people call this "groupy" feeling. This feeling helps the group to have a high morale at the expense of critical thinking.

For example, the team remains loyal to each other by sticking to the decision that they made together, even when it is obvious that the decision is working out badly and having unintended consequences that are damaging and are causing team members to have a guilty conscience. This happened in the escalation of the Vietnam War.

So ‘group think’ (like George Orwell’s 1984 ‘newspeak’) occurs when consensus becomes so dominant in a cohesive ‘in-group’ (the team) that it overrides the realistic appraisal of alternative courses of action. There is no reality testing and moral judgements are suspended.

What are the symptoms of ‘group think’?

- When team members are motivated more by being united than anything else, with the result that they avoid being too harsh in their judgements of the ideas of their leader or fellow team members.
- Team members are ‘soft’ and ‘woolly’ in their **own** thinking about issues.
- In team meetings everyone is amiable and nothing is done to spoil the cosy “we” feeling.
- Although soft-headed towards other team members. They are extraordinarily hard-headed towards those outside the group. They easily resort to dehumanising solutions where they are concerned.
- There is an unwillingness to deal with the more difficult and controversial issues that come up from time to time, especially if these raise ethical issues.

The norms of ‘group-think’

When a team member feels accepted by others, you might **expect** that each team member would feel less of a necessity for overt conformity to the group norms. For example, the more people are accepted by the team, the more free you might expect them to be to express themselves without fear of censure and social punishment.

But ‘group-think’ actually leads to **increased** conformity and a **non-deliberate** suppression of critical thoughts. This is very different from deliberate suppression on the basis of expected threats and social punishment. So the more cohesive the group, the greater the inner compulsion on each team member to avoid creating disunity. The result of this is an increased belief in the soundness of whatever proposals are agreed by the majority of the team.

The Result

- Each team member will fail to reveal his objections to what others propose.
- The group will fail to scrutinize carefully the pros and cons of all the alternatives.
- Each person will decide his/her misgivings are not relevant and should be set aside.

Group consensus decision-making is a very powerful and effective tool. But its advantages are lost **if** powerful psychological/emotional pressure arises because the team members are working closely together and share the same values. In this case, **in a crisis situation**, when there is pressure to make a decision, independent, critical thinking is replaced by ‘group think’.

Eight warning signs of ‘group think’

1. Invulnerability
2. Rationalisation
3. Ignoring ethical/moral consequences
4. Stereotyping outsiders
5. Pressure on dissidents
6. Self-censorship
7. The illusion of unanimity
8. Development of mind guards

1. The illusion of invulnerability

Team members in 'group think' have an illusion of invulnerability that leads them to be over optimistic and willing to take extraordinary and unwise risks. They have a sense of triumphalism. This is why they fail to respond to clear warnings of danger.

An example of this involves the leadership team around Admiral Kimmel who was the admiral in charge of Pearl Harbour, Honolulu in 1941. There were repeated warnings of a Japanese attack. When he was informed by his intelligence chief that radio contact had been lost with Japanese aircraft carriers, he joked*, "What, you don't know where the carriers are? You mean they could be rounding Diamond Head (at Honolulu) and you wouldn't know it!"* In fact the carriers were moving full steam ahead to Pearl Harbour at the time. Laughing together about a danger signal labels it as purely a laughing matter and is a characteristic of 'group think'!

2. The rationalisation of failures

Group think causes the team to construct rationalisations in order to discount any form of negative feedback, warnings and failures. If the team took them seriously they would lead the team members to reconsider their assumptions in making the original decision. J.C. Thompson, a Harvard historian, has made an extensive study of President Johnson's decision-making group relating to the Vietnam War. He observed that the policy makers avoided all critical discussion of their prior decisions and continually invented new rationalisations to explain why the North Vietnamese were winning! The group's optimism about being on the road to victory was continually buttressed by presenting selected evidence and even inventing plausible forecasts with no basis in evidence at all.

3. Ignoring the ethical or moral consequences of a decision

'Group think' often works more by the things that are **not** said in the team meetings. At the Bay of Pigs fiasco, two people - Arthur Schlesinger and Senator Fulbright - wrote strong memos to President Kennedy, but these were ignored at the meetings. The President moved on to other items on the agenda! There was an unwillingness to deal with the ethics of the issue.

4. Use of stereotypes relating to those who oppose the decision

In 'group think' a team tends to speak of those who oppose their views stereotypically. In this way they can avoid genuine attempts at negotiating differences. Another result of 'group think' is to speak in slogans and to underestimate the problems.

5. Pressure on dissidents

Teams involved in 'group think' apply direct pressure on any team member who momentarily expresses doubts about any of the team's shared illusions or who questions the validity of the arguments supporting a policy alternative favoured by the rest of the team.

Professor Thompson, the historian, wrote that whenever a member of President Johnson's in-group making decisions about the Vietnam War began to express doubts, the group used subtle social pressure to "domesticate" him. First the dissenter was made to feel at home. He was praised as long as he kept his criticisms to himself and didn't challenge any of the fundamental decisions that had gone into the group's prior commitments.

6. Self-censorship by the team

The team involved in 'group think' learns to keep silent and to minimize to themselves the importance of their doubts. In **A Thousand Days** Schlesinger writes, *"I can only explain my failure to do more than raise a timid question or two by reporting that one's impulse to blow the whistle on this nonsense was simply undone by the circumstances of the discussion."*

7. The illusion of unanimity

A team in 'group think' shares an illusion of unanimity so that everyone supports the majority view on everything! Usually there is a false assumption that any team member who remains silent during any part of the discussion is in full accord with what the others are saying.

When a team who respect each other's views arrive at a unanimous opinion, each member is likely to feel that the belief must be true. This is called consensual validation. It replaces the responsibility of each team member to think critically and to do a reality test on all decisions.

So, in the decision to invade Cuba in 1961, it was painful for the decision-making team to confront each other with disagreements. Disagreements aroused anxieties about making a serious error. Once the illusion of unanimity is shattered, no one can feel complacently confident about the decisions they are about to take.

Every team needs at least a few hard-headed, critical members. These people generate troublesome uncertainties, but they are needed to prevent 'group think'. If 'group think' gets hold of a team, they will unconsciously suppress all disagreements from surfacing.

Again, Schlesinger wrote, *"Our meetings took place in a curious atmosphere of assumed consensus."* This consensus was clearly an illusion.

8. Mind Guards

Teams involved in 'group think' tend to appoint each other as mind guards to protect the team from adverse information that might break the complacency of the effectiveness and ethics of the decision.

The consequences of 'group think' - bad decision-making

Teams in 'group think' make poor decisions! Why is this?

- The group limits the discussion to a few alternative options (usually only two) without looking at all the alternatives.
- The group fails to re-examine the course of action initially preferred by the majority after they learn of the problems, risks and drawbacks they had not originally considered.
- The team spends no time discussing the non-obvious gains they may have overlooked or ways of reducing the cost (both human and financial) that made rejected alternatives appear undesirable to them.
- The group makes little or no attempt to get information from experts both inside and outside the company. Such experts might be able to supply more precise estimates of potential gains and losses.
- The group shows positive interest in facts and opinions that support their preferred policy. They tend to ignore the facts and opinions that do not.
- The team members spend little time deliberating how the chosen policy might be hindered by massive bureaucracy etc. So they fail to work out any contingency plans to cope with foreseeable set-backs!

Why does 'group think' happen on teams?

There appears to be two reasons why teams get into 'group think'.

a) Mutual emotional support

There is a mutual effort in the team/group to maintain self-esteem and emotional balance by providing social support for each other. This is especially so at times when the whole team shares the responsibility for making crucial decisions.

It is easy for a leader to begin to doubt the wisdom of his decisions when he begins to get negative feedback and information about set-backs. Such a leader can strive to develop unanimity or strong consensus in decision-making that will boost morale and create an optimistic outlook about the success of pending decisions. In other words, he will get his team into 'group think' as a protective mechanism from criticism.

b) Pride

Shared illusions of invulnerability reduce anxiety about taking risks. Rationalisations help the team to think all is well. Assumptions about inherent morality avoid feelings of shame or guilt. Negative stereotypes function as a stress-reducing device by enhancing a sense of moral self-righteousness.

I have referred to American political bodies, but 'group think' is a fairly common occurrence in our company - particularly whenever our teams rely on consensus decision-making. It is vital for teams, especially team leaders, to take steps to avoid 'group think'.

Remedies for 'group think' on teams

1. The team leader should assign the role of critical evaluation to each member of the team. He/she should encourage the whole team – especially the non-native speakers of English – to give a high priority to the open airing of objections and doubts. This needs to be re-enforced by the leader's acceptance of criticism of his/her own judgements. This will help to discourage members from 'soft-pedalling' their disagreements and will prevent consensus decision-making from inhibiting critical thinking.

2. If a small sub-committee on the team is assigned the job of deciding on a particular course of action, then the leader should adopt an impartial stance. He/she should not state preferences and expectations at the beginning. This will encourage open enquiry and impartial probing while looking for options.

3. From time to time a team would do well to ask an outside consultant (outside the team) to work on the same policy decision as the team. The results can then be compared. This will indicate if the team has insulated itself in 'group think'.

4. Before a final consensus is reached, the team leader should ask each team member to discuss the team's deliberations with members of other teams in the same area or with like-minded teams in other organisations. They would then report back to the team the reactions they have received. Again, this is a reality check.

5. The team should invite the more senior leaders, an outside consultant or a team leader from another agency to each meeting where major decisions are being made. Their purpose for being there is to challenge the views of the team members.

6. In the team meeting, whenever the agenda calls for an evaluation of policy alternatives, at least one team member should be asked to play devil's advocate, functioning as a good lawyer in challenging the testimony of those who advocate the majority position.

7. When the team is surveying different options for feasibility and effectiveness, from time to time they should divide into two or more sub-groups. These should meet separately under different leaders and then come back together and examine the differences.

8. After reaching a preliminary consensus about what seems to be the best policy, the team should hold a "second chance" meeting in which **each** team member expresses as vividly as possible all his/her residual doubts. In this way there will be a chance for a re-think of the entire issue before a definite choice is made.

Putting the remedies into practice

These recommendations have a number of disadvantages:

- Prolonged and costly debates are part of the consensus decision-making process. There may be a growing crisis that requires an immediate solution.
- They can cause feelings of rejection, anger and depression on the team. 'Group think' is emotionally secure and comfortable.
- The fact that the team leader doesn't seem to be authoritative might give the impression of weak leadership. This might set off a power struggle.
- A disruptive power struggle might occur if the emerging consensus was completely opposed by the leader.
- Asking outside consultants to help might increase the risk of a security leakage.

In spite of the dangers of 'group think' in consensus decision-making, it is still the most appropriate method for serious decisions.

5.10 Conclusions concerning decision-making

In summary

- Identify the problem.
- Bear in mind your objectives and goals.
- Gather all the information and facts necessary.
- Review factors influencing the decision.
- Consider all the options open to you.
- Select the solution that will best advance the purpose of the team.
- Ensure this is as consistent as possible with the best interests of each team member.
- When you, as a team leader, have made a decision concerning the solution to a problem, write it down as a clear, concise minute.

Good team decision-making

There is joy in knowing that when you participate in finding a wise solution to a problem, you have established a precedent. You have facilitated the day-to-day work of the team and have had a share in advancing work of eternal significance. Each team member should ask him/herself:

- Am I **a non-participant** in decision-making? Am I contributing constructively by stating my viewpoint or do I sit in silence? You might have a heart of gold and a head ripe with wisdom, but it is not much use if you are silent!
- Am I **overly talkative**? This is the opposite of the above. Don't monopolize the discussion!
- Am I **defensive**? Do I have a vested interest to defend? Am I in a Turf War? Am I being aggressive? Do I enjoy riding a hobbyhorse?

- Am I **a rubber stamper**? Such a team member sees how support is building up for or against a proposal and then votes with the majority without applying his/her mind and judgement to the merits of the matter.
- Am I **impatient**? Do I feel I have the solution already and so become impatient with further discussion?
- Am I **prejudiced**? Do I hold my opinion fast with a closed mind? Do I refuse to listen to the viewpoints of others and hate to be confused with the facts? In this case there may be strong emotional attachments preventing rational examination of alternative proposals.

Avoid Team Frustration

Don't have meetings that:

- Are too long, too late or too frequent
- Lack a relevant agenda, purpose or achievement
- Deal with symptoms and not causes
- Keep reverting to issues that were supposedly settled before
- Keep deferring decisions
- Give major time to minor issues
- Are dominated by a few with the majority giving mumbling assent/dissent (no one is quite sure which!)

6. Wrong Policies, Procedures and Precedents

6.1 The Use of Experience

6.2 Policies – what to do

6.3 Procedures – how to do

6.4 Have Written Policies and Procedures

6.5 Bad Policies and Procedures

6.6 Conclusion

6. Wrong Policies, Procedures and Precedents

6.1 The use of experience

Henry Ford is credited with saying, *"All history is bunk".* By this, I think he meant that what has happened is past is useless and outdated already. Henry Ford was a great innovator. He made cars – millions of them – on conveyor belts. Before this they had been made by hand. His cars were cheap and reliable. He brought the motorcar to the world. Henry Ford was not content with horse and carriage/cart – horses were outdated and useless. The future was in cars.

Is all history outdated and useless for today? Some of it is! Some years ago my father was responsible for building a hospital/clinic in the Hazarajat Mountains in Central Afghanistan. The workmen had to carry a lot of rock and rubble away from the site that was nearly 3000m high. They did this by using old oil drums cut in half with two poles attached so that two men could carry the load – one man behind and the other in front. My father ordered a number of wheelbarrows to make the work more efficient. When they arrived the men attached two poles to them and carried them just like the half-drums. Why? They had never seen wheels used before! When they were shown what a wheelbarrow could do, they were amazed and delighted! History, in terms of carrying with poles, was bunk. The future was in wheels!

Experience is something we learned from the past that we practise today. Henry Ford thought people were too bound by the past - the horse and cart mentality - the two-pole mentality. He was looking to the future – innovation.

Policies and procedures make use of the past. Scripture is a record of God's dealings with men and women in the past. They were written down to warn us, guide us and encourage us. [1 Cor. 10:11] So God uses experiences to teach us. We can learn from history but we must not be bound by tradition. Jesus frequently dismissed the traditions of men (oral teachings handed down from the past of the Jewish people) because they conflicted with the law of God.

We can frame policies and procedures on teams by using our experience and, in some circumstances, by observing precedents. All teams make mistakes, but most teams find that procedures that work smoothly improve the efficiency of the team. These teams adopt the appropriate methods and write down the procedures.

Policy tells us what to do – Procedures tell us how to do it.

6.2 Policies – what to do

Teams in larger organisations such as ours have policies. Policy tells us what to do. Do teams need policies? Did Paul have policies on his team? 1 Cor. 4:17 ***"For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church."***

To me this implies not just doctrine, but policy. Paul had policies (*what churches ought to do*). His team knew them and taught them.

6.3 Procedures – how to do it

Mechanics, bookkeepers and doctors – all have standard procedures in their work. If you have a car, you want the mechanic to follow the standard procedures while doing the six-monthly service. If he doesn't, he will probably neglect to check many things. Airline crashes sometimes occur when rigid maintenance procedures are not strictly adhered to.

Every team needs procedures – procedures on communication, when and where to have meetings etc. Procedures help teams because they become predictive - i.e. every Wednesday at 9:30 there is a team meeting in the office. Teams need procedures to operate smoothly and efficiently.

Policy is a settled course of action adopted by the team. It tells everyone what has been decided regarding the matter at hand. Procedure is a standard way of doing a job. Both use the experiences of the past. We don't need to operate continually on a trial and error basis. We learn from the past and we adapt it to the present.

6.4 Have written Policies and Procedures

The team policies and procedures need to be written down and a copy should be available to every team member. This helps to organise efforts and to maximise the joint endeavours of all the team members.

Policies and procedures are rooted in events that happened in the past – good or bad. But new things are always happening. We should always be learning, so policies and procedures should be under constant review.

6.5 Bad Policies and Procedures

6.5.1 Red tape

Red tape is used to bind up files in government departments. Bureaucrats love red tape and use lots of it. To be bound by red tape means you cannot do anything that is not in "the book". You can't suggest any new idea or try a new experiment. Even sneezing is not allowed unless the process in "the book" gives permission!

Any team bound by red tape is dying. Team members will be exceedingly frustrated! It is like living in a cemetery! **So teams must not be bound by experience!** The lessons of yesterday may need changing tomorrow. A balance is needed. It is too easy to pass over the past in an eager pursuit of "something new". Paul said this of the Athenians. [Acts 17:19-21]

6.5.2 Credible policies and procedures

Teams must create policies and procedures that are **credible**. Credibility means that the information in the policies and procedures **parallels reality**. If your team is living a double life – life by "the book" and life as it is - you are in trouble. Disunity is bound to happen. Some team members will like to "go with the flow", while others will prefer to go "by the book" and this will help them to perform better. They will cling to it "chapter and verse". The result will be deep frustration felt by all.

Don't allow people to laugh at policy and procedure manuals! If they do, they are sniggering at your team culture. They are acknowledging that they are living a lie. Bad manuals have a very corrosive effect on holding teams together.

6.5.3 Update manuals regularly

It is tragic to see teams blindly following policy and procedure manuals when they are clearly outdated. Manuals are like "paper supervisors" or "paper dictators". Occasionally teams make a religion out of the manual because vision and purpose have died.

A proper manual should include the **basic things** that team members need to know about the working of the team, its mission, its objectives and goals, what is expected of each team member and the different roles in the team etc.

6.5.4 All manuals must be kept short

Manuals should be small and handy. Put an expiry date on all policies just as one is put on medicines. On the expiry date, if the policy is still relevant, it can be kept or modified. If it is irrelevant it is removed.

Good teams constantly re-evaluate all their processes and that includes the rules they follow to get things done. They get rid of irrelevant ones, modify others as necessary and create new ones in order to be more effective.

So good teams check their policies and procedures regularly. They also try and identify any barriers - people-barriers and structures - that are getting in the way of achieving their desired outcomes. Often a bonfire is in order!

6.6 Conclusion

Is history bunk? The Bible is history written for our learning. It gives us principles. **These principles are not culture bound.** Policies and procedures are **always** culture bound.

Learn to distinguish between Biblical principles and policies/procedures. Try and frame your policies in accordance with Biblical principles. If you do this, they are less likely to change and also they will be less culture bound. Adopt procedures lightly. Don't forget to be innovative.

Always strive to do better for the Glory of God.

7. Poor Planning and Poor Organisation – especially in managing change

7.1 Planning – an Introduction

7.2 Benefits of Planning

7.3 Misgivings about Planning

7.4 Planning Tips

7.5 Organising

7.6 Scheduling and Programming – using time

7.7 Change Issues

7.8 Guidelines for Preparing Plans

7.9 A Basic Checklist of Planning Questions

7.10 A Master-Plan Team Checklist

7.11 A Weekly Checklist for Team Members

7.12 A Planning Questionnaire

7. Poor Planning and Poor Organisation – especially in managing change

7.1 Planning – an introduction

Often you see disorganisation on teams with team members frustrated and energy wasted. There is no planning and no organisation. Such teams rapidly become dysfunctional.

Why plan? Planning needs to have a clear **purpose** or goal. There can be no effective plan without a clear aim. Don't start to plan unless your purpose is clear.

The first time the plan is explained to the team **the intention** of the plan must be made clear. It should be written down.

Step 1 in planning is **determining your purpose**. Only then can you begin to make your plans to fulfil it. For example: ***"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel"*** is the purpose. The beginning of a plan to fulfil the purpose is, ***"You shall be witnesses unto me, in Jerusalem and Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth"***.

Some Christians refuse to plan. They believe it is unscriptural. They say, *"Trust the Holy Spirit to guide you from day to day. Planning is an indication of a lack of faith."* But you find them planning when necessary. They book ahead to get a seat on a flight. They repair that hole in the roof in the dry season. That is forethought and **forethought is the essence of planning**.

The Holy Spirit sees the future as we see the present. He can guide us for events in 5 months or 5 years as easily as those in 5 hours or 5 seconds ahead. The further ahead you plan, the more dependant you become on the Holy Spirit for guidance and wisdom. The problem with planning lies not with the Holy Spirit but with us. Long-term or short-term, we need continuous sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's guidance.

7.1.1 Being controlled by the urgent or the important

Planning stops us from doing just the next thing or anything – called "ad hoc-ing" along. Planning stops us from substituting the urgent for the important. Which controls you?

You have to prepare a talk to give to a conference. Unless you plan a place and a time, urgent calls for help, the needs of others and family concerns will crowd out your time to prepare. So often the urgent, with its increasing demands, will crowd out the important issues.

7.1.2 Planning guides the future

To plan enables us to say today what we will attempt to do tomorrow, next month, next Christmas programme, next year: to fulfil our aims. What about James 4:13-16? I think James is writing to a proud, self-willed people, not to those who earnestly seek first the Kingdom of God and His purposes.

7.1.3 Planning does not exclude prayer

Waiting on God is part of the planning process. Planning requires us to seek and find God's will and God's method. It **increases** our dependence on the Holy Spirit and makes us increasingly aware of His role in our work. Prayer forces us to choose the best course of action between several options. Prayer focuses us on the will of God.

Joseph told Pharaoh that he must plan and organise to lessen the effects of future famine. Nehemiah prayed and planned in rebuilding the wall. Daniel prayed and planned. But above all God plans! He planned our redemption back before time! Jesus planned:

- When the crowds would have detained Him in one place He said, ***"I must preach the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent."*** [Lk. 4:43] He had a purpose and a plan. He followed through on His plan.

- When Jesus fed the crowds, He told the people to sit down in groups. He organised them and the twelve disciples so that there could be an orderly distribution of food. Jesus was used to the discipline of planning and organising.

7.2 Benefits of Planning: Co-ordinates, eliminates and concentrates

7.2.1 Planning co-ordinates

That is, it fits together in working order different things, different people and different functions – like the chain, pedals, cogs and wheels of a bicycle. You can have these together with the handlebars, saddle etc. - everything you need - but you will get nowhere without the **frame**! **A plan is a frame** that brings the parts together in a co-ordinated whole so that each part can function as it should.

Planning co-ordinates the work - our efforts to achieve the objectives and goals we have set. As a team no one of us can work on our own – we are all parts of the bicycle. We need to be fitted together to the frame (i.e. a common plan) to go to the place we intend. **To get the team working together you must plan!**

7.2.2 Planning eliminates the non-essentials

Planning cuts out the less important and the less necessary to make way for the really important. All actions and activities of the team should be planned to fulfil the objectives and goals of the team. Other issues get laid aside however good they are in themselves. We no longer dissipate our efforts. We no longer proliferate our actions because planning gives us control. We have a goal. We have a plan and we limit our actions to God's priorities. We eliminate the non-essentials.

7.2.3 Planning concentrates

Planning applies time, effort, resources and people to fulfil a common purpose. Such concentration of effort increases the likelihood of fulfilling the team's goals. The extent to which we commit ourselves - our effort and our time - to these goals will be the measure of our effectiveness.

Is your team called by God to achieve much? If so, **plan**. Your commitment as a team to your objectives can be judged by the time, effort and thoroughness of your planning.

7.3 Misgivings about planning

Some teams don't plan. They say it limits the Holy Spirit! They want to be free to obey Him. Team members want to be like Philip sent off into the desert to some seeking soul at a moment's notice. Does planning restrict the Holy Spirit's work in the team? No, planning is a discipline of the Holy Spirit by which we know the direction of the Holy Spirit. Teams that don't plan tend to have a lot of free–wheeling, loose canons firing away but doing no damage. They just do the next thing in mind with no plan. This leads to frustration and huge inefficiency.

I think of a team that was led by a devoted, energetic visionary leader, but a leader who refused to plan carefully. The team initiated a vital work amongst an unreached people group. Many others joined the team. But the leader would not plan. The team became very frustrated – no plan – poor organisation – great frustration. The leader had to be replaced and it was a very difficult and traumatic time!

Teams filled with activists often prefer to get stuck in rather than think and pray and plan what they should do. Does your team, perhaps unconsciously, resist the planning process because you fear being restricted, no longer able to dash here and there, no longer able to dabble in this or that?

Planning disciplines a team. Planning imposes the discipline of the Holy Spirit with the sensitivity and flexibility to obey an unanticipated direction in which He might lead the team. Planning under the Holy Spirit's guidance gives **both liberty and discipline**!

7.4 Planning Tips

Ask: **Why?** Purpose
Who? Who will carry out the plan – the team? Others?
When? What time do you have to accomplish the goal? A week or five years?
Where? Do you have space – a place – premises? Is there a best place?
What? Resources needed? Transport? Funds? Equipment?
How much? Are finances a limiting factor?
How to? Implementation, organisation, delegation.

Then DECIDE! Remember it is the team that makes plans work. God uses **people** to fulfil His plans and purposes.

The Human Side of Planning

If you are a planner, your plan must be acceptable to the team. Their viewpoints must be taken into consideration in the planning stage. They will carry out the plan. They must "own" it. Consult the team. Listen to them. Get their support. It is not enough for the team to understand the plan. They need to see that it is sensible. It may add to the burdens of the team and so they need to sense that the outcome of the plan is worthwhile. It will be largely the 'feelings' of the team that determine the response, acceptance and effectiveness of the plan.

Many plans fail (Murphy's Law) and the tendency is to blame others when things go wrong. At this point the plan might need minor (or even major) modification. It is vital at this point for the team to give major input. The team leader must maintain confidence and heighten the sense of unity. The team must reinforce its sense of vision and values. Remember that most of our team members are "inner directed" rather than "outer directed" (following a leader irrespective of almost anything!). People who are "inner directed" work well on teams as long as plans are not imposed. The risk is that the team's considerations and modifications will overshadow and weaken the need to achieve the team's goals. So teams need to constantly re-focus on their goals.

Four simple steps to inside-out planning

- Analyse the talents and abilities of each team member to see if everyone is making maximum use of their abilities.
- Beef up key abilities (temporary recruits) to supplement or reinforce team efforts to be even more effective.
- Examine the core abilities of the team. Are they in line with the overall objectives, goals and vision of the team?
- Check on all team objectives and goals continually.

If a team is to achieve its goals, their values, attitudes and aptitudes ("state of mind") must be taken into account. For most teams this means "doing the most we can at what we are good at."

So planning needs to be tailored to what people can do and what they have confidence they can do well. The team builds on individual strengths and people are shielded from their limitations.

7.5 Organising

7.5.1 Learning to organise

You plan to achieve your objectives, then you organise to accomplish your plan.

In Acts 6 the early church had a problem. It arose out of the daily distribution of food, some were being left out and people were being accused of favouritism. This was essentially an administrative

problem but it had racial and spiritual overtones. The apostles appointed competent, trustworthy, Spirit-filled men to organise the matter of proper food distribution.

Organising is grouping together different and necessary parts of the work that must be done to make the plan work. For example, the team can be assigned different tasks in arranging a party. The programme is the plan, assigning people to different parts of the plan and showing how each part integrates into the whole, involves organisation.

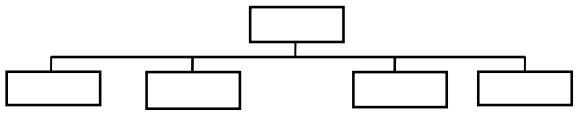
For organisation to work well, all the team need to agree to the plan and to the common shared goal. Organisation should be kept as simple as possible. If you organise simple, regular duties, team life will definitely improve.

Organisation is particularly necessary when there is growth and change - see Acts 6:1,***"In those days when the number of disciples was increasing…"***. At this point further organisation was necessary. The organisation of the team needs to grow and develop with changing needs. Often problems arise because organisation in the team is slow to change when the environment has changed. Don't fossilize! Change the way you organise team life!

So, a key concept in team life should be: regularly review the way you organise your plans. Organisation should never be made to perpetuate a plan of action. It is there to help achieve a purpose and it will constantly need to evolve and develop.

In the early days of our company, there were no Areas or Fields. The organisation was small and, in reality, it was one team. Grouping teams into Fields helped better organisation. Later still came Areas. So organisation divides people and their tasks into groups and then organisation helps the groups relate to each other so that all are supported in fulfilling their purpose.

Whose job is it to organise? Usually it is the job of the team leader, but it can be delegated. Go back to the party. The team has decided to run an evangelistic party. Who is going to make the food? Who is going to do the decorations, the invitations, the music, the games, the evangelistic message etc? In some cases it might be one person, in others (such as the food) it will be several people. The plan describes what should be done and the overall purpose. The team leader assigns tasks and integrates the separate parts into a whole. You could even draw up an organisational chart for the party:



A chart shows how the work has been divided up and who is responsible for getting what done.

Problems arise, when there are lots of "echelons" (French for ladder) in your organisational chart. These echelons are levels of organisation. It is easy to multiply these. The key is to keep it simple – "flat" with as few echelons as possible. This makes communication easier and decisions are made more quickly.

Nehemiah is a great example of spiritual organisation.

- **He took stock of the problem**. [Neh. 2:11] Three days after his arrival in Jerusalem, he went out at night to survey the situation. It was a thorough study of what needed doing physically. He also examined the spiritual and emotional state of the people in the city.
- **He fixed his priorities**. He had a plan. [Neh. 2:17] First the walls were to be built for protection and then the gates. He arranged the tasks.
- **He organised the people**. Each group was given a specific portion of the wall to build (near his house). [Neh. 3]
- **He set up a system of security** [Neh. 4] to enable the work to continue. He had a purpose and he was going to fulfil it despite opposition.

- **He assigned tasks** to people to celebrate the building of the wall. There were gate keepers, singers, Levites etc. [Neh. 7]
- **He taught God's standards and required compliance.**

It all started in Susa in the Persian court. ***"I prayed to the God of Heaven."*** He prayed, mourned and fasted. Nehemiah really meant business. Prayer is the environment of every work of God. Alan Redpath has summarised it as: **Agonize** (in prayer) **and Organize**.

7.5.2 Organising Principles

First I would like to give you some "laws". Note that these are **not** Biblical principles, but are found in books on management.

- The effectiveness of an administrator is in inverse ratio to the number of committees on which he/she has to sit!
- The effectiveness of a committee varies inversely with the number of members on the committee.
- **Parkinson's First Law**: Work expands to fill the time available for its completion.

  A re-statement: The work to be done swells in perceived importance and complexity in direct ratio to the time available for its completion.
- **Parkinson's Second Law**: Expenditure rises to meet income.
- **Parkinson's Third Law**: Delay is the deadliest form of denial.
- Administration expands to absorb all the money – and then some!
- If you want to get along – go along!
- When in doubt – mumble! When in trouble – delegate! When in charge – ponder!
- **Webster's Law**: Common sense never ceases to be needed.
- **General Patton's Law**: A good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow!
- **President Truman's Law**: If you can't convince them, confuse them! (a very bad law) Never argue with a fool, as people might not know the difference!
- **Lord Falkland's Law**: When it is not necessary to make a decision, it is necessary **not** to make a decision!
- **Murphy's Law**: If things can go wrong, they will **or:**
  Left to themselves things tend to go from bad to worse **or**:
  Every solution breeds a worse problem.
- It is impossible to make things foolproof, for fools are so cleverly ingenious.
- Once a job is fouled up, everything done to improve it only makes matters worse.
- If a project works well, something must have gone wrong!
- **Menkin's Law**: Those who can – do. Those who can't do teach others to do. Those who can't teach manage those who can.

Most of these "laws" are very pessimistic and cynical! Our aim is to be **kept from sterility and meaningless activity**. We must be flexible and welcome change. At the same time we must keep our stability. Our aim in leadership and the management of teams is to maximize the output (evangelism, church planting, mobilisation, training etc.) while operating from limited resources.

7.6 Scheduling and Programming – The use of time on your team

Much has been written on the personal use of time and learning to use time wisely. Everyone should read a book or attend a seminar on Time Management. I want to address the issue of the use of **team time**.

Full-time ministry is fraught with managing time well. Often there is little accountability, no clear structure to the working day and strong expectations coming from your prayer partners and supporters, but actually there is more potential flexibility than in most secular jobs.

First we need to be clear about **the distinction between effectiveness and efficiency**:

Effectiveness means doing **the right things** - answering the question: **what?**

Efficiency means doing **things right**, answering the question: **how?**

Questions of effectiveness should come first, for it is very possible for a team to become terribly efficient at doing the wrong things! If you are being pressed for time, the solutions usually lie in resolving effectiveness questions rather than in efficiency drives. You can't read a book much faster, make a phone call that is shorter or drive across town faster (legally anyway). The real issues are should we read that book at all and do we need to make that phone call today.

Each team-member, and especially the leader, needs to stand back and **question the value of the activity of the team**. A hallmark of an **effective** team member will be his ability to say "no" to secondary things.

Secondly the team needs to focus on what are **"The Key Results Areas"** for your team. Don't ask the question, *"What is my role?"* Ask, *"What should I achieve in the next six months? What should my 'major deliverables' be?"* If God is going to be pleased, in what key areas will I have to produce results? A list of 10 is plenty! This will help you establish priorities according to importance and not just according to urgency. Share those lists with your team.

7.6.1 Time is stewardship

- The New Testament indicates that a steward is not an owner but a guardian of what is owned by another. God owns time. The team's time is not your own, don't waste it.
- Because we are guardians and not owners, we are accountable to the owner, God, for the team's time. We must use it productively.
- This is what Paul meant in Eph. 5:16, ***"Redeem the time!"*** The secret of having enough time is to make use of **all time** profitably.

7.6.2 Christ's example

Reading through the Gospels and looking at the life of Jesus one is impressed how tremendously busy His ministry was. There were times when neither He nor His team had time to eat. There were numerous times of crisis that urgently needed His help - sickness, death – storms etc. Yet He was never in a hurry. He was never too late! How did he do this? What was His secret? He was **Master of Time** – He **used** time. He was not under the tyranny of time. He left us the example of an ordered disciplined life of doing one thing at a time.

In this matter of time we need:

- ✧ the order of God
- ✧ the control of God
- ✧ the peace of God

The order/plan of God

His Father had a plan for Jesus to fulfil. Several times Jesus said that His time had not yet come. [Jn. 7:6, 12:23 & 37, 13:1, 17:1] What about us? We learn in Eph. 2:10 that we are, ***"Born again to do good works which God has already planned for us."*** So **plan** your programme and time as a team – according to the vision God has given you.

The control of God

When Jesus was at the wedding feast at Cana, He said to His mother, ***"My time has not yet come".*** [Jn. 2:4] He responded respectfully but firmly. He did not allow any interference in His timetable.

When Lazarus died, Jesus remained for two days where He was. There was no rushing off ahead of God's plan and control. [Jn. 11:6-9] So at the end, Jesus could say ***"I have finished the work you gave me to do".*** [Jn. 17:4]

We not only need to **plan** our time, but to **live under the control and discipline of the Holy Spirit.**

The peace of God

Jesus said, ***"Are there not twelve hours in the day?"*** [Jn. 11:9] There should be no rush, no fret. There is enough time every day to do **graciously** everything God wants us to do. This was Jesus' response to a warning that He might be killed if He went to Jerusalem. He went with quiet, gracious courage to fulfil the will of God – time for all His Father's will.

So often, pressurised by time, interruptions and delays, we lose our peace. Jesus never lost His peace because He knew that His Father was in control and that there was time to do all that His Father had planned. We need to know in daily practical experience the sovereignty of God. He will bring order, control and peace so we can use our time effectively.

7.6.3 Four steps to the wise use of time

Investigate – Eliminate – Concentrate – Tabulate.

You need to follow these steps regularly. As responsibilities grow, follow the steps more frequently. Ask God to make your team good stewards of **His** time.

- **Investigate**

  Investigate where time goes. Each week there are 168 hours (7 x 24). Each hour needs categorising. For example:

Sleep	8 hours daily	=	56 sleeping
Meals	3 x per day one hr.	=	21 eating
Work	8 hrs. daily	=	56 working
			133
Balance of spare time			35 weekly or 5 hours per day
			168

  You might have time for travel etc. You should know where each hour goes. How you use your time is a measure of the kind of servant of God you are and your ultimate effectiveness. So log your time. Check for one day how you spend every 30 minutes. Do this for one week. Now you know what you do with your time! Now, thoughtfully budget your time according to your God-given priorities.

- **Eliminate**

  Set aside the less important. Ignore it or leave it out - get rid of it. You will never have enough time for all that you want to do and certainly never enough time to do everything **everyone else** wants you to do. Most of us attempt too much. We cut back on sleep or on recreation. We get overtired, fatigued, worn out and we burnout. This sometimes takes months to recover from.

  What will you eliminate? At a personal level and as a team this will depend on your vision, your strategy, your tactics and your plans. You will eliminate by giving priority time to your aims. What are you spending your time on that is unnecessary or unhelpful? Ask yourself, if I eliminate this activity, what effect will it have on my aims? If the answer is, 'No effect', cut it out.

Eliminate the non-essential, the less important and the unnecessary, so you can give priority to your objectives. **A warning**: don't eliminate time for food and sleep. Don't eliminate time for relaxation, exercise and recreation or time with your family!

- **Concentrate**
  Focus on your priorities. Ask God to clarify your vision, objectives, tactics and plans. Get your priorities in order. Time governs our life! Is praise and worship important? If the answer is *'Yes'*, how high a priority is it? If very high, then give the best time in the day to this activity. Remember to give time to people, but don't let them waste that time!

- **Tabulate/Schedule**
  To tabulate means producing a timetable - a programme - of your activities and the time you plan to give to them. Schedule the things you have to do daily and weekly. List the books you need to consult and the things you need to remember. Schedule time to read. Learn to keep an eye on time, but don't come under the tyranny of time. Keep looking to God to guide you in your use of time.

7.7 Change Issues

Teams don't like change – usually they hate it. There are three classic responses to change:

- Don't change – but change overtakes the team and it explodes.
- Embrace change – but it stills throws the team into a loop.
- Anticipate change, plan and be ready – still it doesn't seem to make much difference to the team who are still confused and flustered!

Change is pain! But change is going to happen! The more flexible a team is, the more easily it will cope with change. It may be tedious, but your team will die if it does not adapt to change! If one wave engulfs you, remember its big sister is coming up behind!

7.7.1 Understanding change - seven hard truths

There are seven hard truths about change the team must understand when undergoing change:

i. **People feel awkward, ill-at-ease and self-conscious**. Team members who easily adapt to change are those who grew up in an ever-changing environment like TCKs and MKs. For the others, change is scary, painful and unwanted!

ii. **People will always think first about what they will have to give up** when they are confronted with plans about change. The team will think about what they will lose, not what they will gain. It is a defence mechanism. They will always come up with the worst–case scenario!

iii. **People will feel alone**. Most teams don't share their feelings of anxiety with each other for fear of being thought unspiritual! As a result there is little communication at the very moment when good communication is most critical. Basically, the stiff upper lip won't do! When it comes to change, feelings are facts.

iv. **People can handle only so much change**. One of the keys to successful change is timing. Drip-feeding change usually lowers morale and people don't comply with the proposal for change. Major steps of change need short time frames, with the end product carefully described up front - i.e. the team will tolerate short-term pain for a clear long-term pay off. Incremental change only heightens the sense of mistrust in leadership structures.

v. **People have different readiness levels for change**. Anytime a team is asked to change, some team members will be excited and others will appear to have their enthusiasm tied to a lead balloon! The challenge for the team is to boost the readiness of the least ready member, because these people will determine the pace of the team as a whole. Push faster and you will meet resistance.

vi. **People will fret that they don't have enough resources.** The first objection you often hear is, *"We could do it if only we had more resources; it is going to cost too much."* The answer is look around, use the unused or underused. Make do – or don't do! There are always untapped, available, shared but hitherto unknown resources.

vii. **If you take the pressure off, people will revert to their old behaviour**. Momentum is a wonderful thing for it keeps you going in the same direction. However, if you are going in the wrong direction momentum can kill you! Momentum, like a magnet, can pull you back in the old direction - in the old way of doing things. If change is a **temporary** force pushing you in a new direction, it won't work. If you take the pressure off a team too early in a change process, the team will revert to the old way of doing – old relationships, old behaviours, old processes, old habits and it will die of fossilisation.

7.7.2 Overcoming the brakes to change

The brakes to change come in three forms – People, Processes and Structures

- **People Brakes**

Resistance to change appears to be deep seated in us - why?

- ✧ Unplanned change creates anxiety
- ✧ Anxiety drags its feet in resistance
- ✧ An invisible force collides with an unmovable object
- ✧ The team explodes in an immense fireball!

We are creatures of habit. Each person surrounds him/herself with an individual comfort zone of behaviours and interactions. Change implies leaving our comfort zones and facing unknown consequences. When the consequences are perceived to be negative or when there is continued uncertainly, we resist. We resist because of:

- ✧ **Fear**… of failure, of loss - loss of identity, belonging, control, meaning, security, etc. Fear of the unknown and of negative consequences such as criticism for mistakes.
- ✧ **Laziness**… not wanting to put in the effort to make the change happen. Often laziness is the cause of myopia – seeing what is close at hand, but failing to see the big picture and the trends of the future.
- ✧ **History**…distrust of the initiators of change. This is where "getting even" sometimes takes place. Because you don't like the person responsible for the change, you resist as a Christian – passively. It is still sin!
- ✧ **Previous momentum**. Much time and effort has been spent developing the old ways. The team feels good and comfortable about the old ways. Now they are asked to put on the brakes, turn and go in a new direction. This doesn't do the brake lining much good. It causes friction, heat and a slowing down. It requires total team readjustment.
- ✧ **Pay off**…what's in it for me? We are not only creatures of habit, we are selfish as well! If we don't see an immediate advantage for ourselves we 'brake' the process!

- **Process brakes**

These include poor planning, poor communication, poor follow through and poor follow-up.

Planning and communication must go hand in hand. You might have a great plan, but if the team doesn't know about it, it's useless. Communication systems are great if they are used.

Poor follow-up is a major brake on change. To become real, a vision must end in action plans that are carried out and evaluated. Talking about change doesn't produce change.

You must check progress at predetermined times down the road. Otherwise the team will fall back into old habits of behaviour and performance.

- **Structural Brakes**

If the team says, *"You can't do that because of…"* and then quotes the policy manual, team handbook or some rule or regulation; then you have a structural brake!

Most policies and procedures were created for specific reasons at some time in the past. They may still be a good brake, but this is a good time to re-examine, in the light of current events or future goals, those rules and regulations and modify them as necessary. This will require the agreement of senior leaders.

Rules and Regulations are not the law of the Medes and Persians. Biblical principles don't change but practical procedures should be cast in "jelly" not in cement. Often people come and go, but stupid rules are forever.

7.7.3 Rules for team change

1. Plan for change

If your team plans for change, they will have some measure of influence over it. Planning for change means re-focussing on where your team is going and what it wants to become.

Questions the team needs to ask are:

- What are **our** objectives/strategies?
- Are they in line with and tied to the overall mission statement of our company?
- What resources do we need – people, money etc?
- What is our implementation schedule?
- Who should be involved in formulating the change plan? How? When?
- What is the desired consequence of each change step?
- How will we know we've been successful?
- When will each change step be completed?
- What alternative strategies can we implement if "Plan A" fails?
- How will we deal with unanticipated events?
- Who needs to be influenced to make this plan work?
- Who else will need to be involved in the plan? How? When?
- Who might block this? How can we bring them on board?

Essentially, in planning you gather lots of information from lots of people. As the team begins to process this data it will help to:

- Build up an expectation of change
- Enhance their trust in the process
- Involve them

It also increases their impatience to see tangible change outcomes. It sets the clock ticking and this raises stress!

2. Get agreement and commitment from your team

The team won't resist obvious **positive** change. It is negative change that people don't like - such as having to learn Arabic in a falling lift!!

To reduce resistance to change, move the discussion and the process out of the shadows into the light. Encourage every team member to participate in the process. Participation should always be active – being directly involved in asking and answering questions, being involved in the communication and feed back processes, bringing anticipated problems to the team and asking their help to think out possible solutions. All this will help reduce resistance.

The most important aspect of involvement is **getting people orientated towards the future**. Try and get all the team to reach an agreement on what is **the desired outcome of the change**. Figure out what the outcome will look like, taste like, smell like etc. The pathway to achieve this outcome may have many twists and turns. The **whole** team should be the **drivers** of the change vehicle - deciding what maps to use, what roads, by-roads, short-cuts etc. to take. This should allow them to set the pace (speed) of the change. In other words, it makes **the** change – **their** change.

3. Communicate, communicate, communicate!

Because we are all people of habit, making a team change direction in some way tends to make them upset! **Surprise especially builds anxiety and anger!** A team rarely objects to **the content** of change. It resists **the process** of implementing change. This resistance is usually due to poor communication about both the content and the process of the change.

For change to occur successfully there must be continuous information, before, during and after the change process. There must be a constant reminder of the following issues:

- If this is our vision/objective/goal, how do we plan to get there?
- What will have to change in the process of getting there?
- Who in the team will be involved and how?
- When can we, the team, begin to see results?
- How does all this affect me?
- How can I know how much progress we are making?

Many channels of communication are better than one – intra-team weekly reports, notes in every person's mailbox, small/large team discussions using the grapevine and informal networks.

The goal of communication is that each team member should not feel **a victim** to change but **an active participant** in the change process.

4. Generate good expectations of the outcomes of change

If you can create a positive expectation for change and help the team to see what change will look like after it has taken place, they will feel safe and more secure when the change actually happens – i.e. it looks like what it is expected to look like.

5. Create check points

The team needs to create, either formally or informally, checkpoints for the process of change. These tend to relieve anxiety.

- Are we still heading in the right direction?
- What should we modify – in terms of structures, resources, schedules, etc.
- Is anyone hurting about the change progress or direction to date?

Change causes everyone's comfort zone to shrink. But shrinkage can be minimized if constant monitoring of progress is accompanied by pastoral care and input from those with resources who are outside the team (advisors etc.). This eases personal anxiety.

6. Obtain adequate resources

The team needs to ask for help in obtaining the needed resources (both in terms of people, money and material) to sustain the positive change. You may not get all you need, but you will have tried! A benefit of asking and not receiving is that, hopefully, you will learn why the request was turned down. This is very good information to have for the next request.

7. Generate critical mass to maintain the momentum of change

Your team may not be enough. Often you need a broader base of outsiders – other teams, a senior leader and a healthy number of advocates, champions and friends on the outside. Once the change effort achieves momentum, use this movement as impetus.

8. Follow up

The change-process requires constant monitoring. This should not be viewed as policing, but as coaching. We all have habits that get in the way of change. Coaching allows each team member to identify personal and ministry–related barriers to change and to talk about ways to correct them. Follow-up needs to be regular and at pre-determined times.

9. The price of change is mistakes

Change is risky. Risk means mistakes. Fear of punishment for mistakes is often deeply ingrained into us in our educational days!

In a major manufacturing company, members of the engineering department came to the CEO with an idea for a "better" process for making a certain component. It was costly to change, but the engineers were sure it would pay off in the end. The go-ahead was given. It failed miserably! The engineers responsible were called into the CEO's office, where, to their great surprise there were balloons, cookies – a party in fact. They asked why? The CEO responded that just because the outcome was less than expected that did not mean their decision was wrong. True failure would have been **not** to try new and different approaches. *"Innovation is the hallmark of success"*, he said. That company is highly successful because of all the unleashed creativity and willingness to change that is present in the entire workforce.

10. Encourage early, often and always

Being controlled by habit, it is very difficult for us human beings to change instantly from the "old ways" to the "new ways". Change usually occurs by incremental steps. The 'grease' that keeps the change process going forward without too much friction is encouragement. A pat on the back often motivates people. Encouragement doesn't need to wait for results. It should be built into team life. Not only the team leader, but every team member should be an encourager.

11. Keep the mechanisms of change simple

People say that complex problems require complex solutions – not so! Like eating an elephant, complex change must be accomplished one bite at a time – a simple operation.

12. Team Leaders must lead the way

The importance of the Team Leader in the change process can't be over emphasised – coaching, encouraging, maintaining vision and clearing the path. Leadership keys to positive outcomes include **attitude, analysis and action**. The on-going feedback of progress needs constant monitoring to make small adjustments so the team remains all 'fired-up' and on the right track. Team leaders need to think through "what–if" scenarios with their teams. How will you adjust your change plans if you encounter an unplanned variable – civil war, collapse of the local currency, team members unable to return etc. Most "what–if" scenarios are not catastrophic. Using your team's imagination to think ahead is an important tool in your 'tool box.'

The above twelve "rules" of change should help your team through change processes.

7.8 Guidelines for Preparing Plans

1. Don't confuse objectives and goals

An objective is a broadly stated basic intention that grows out of critical issues, the agency's purpose statement and basic principles. It is stated in terms of an indefinite time frame. Objectives are achieved through well–defined goals and well-conceived action plans to achieve these goals.

A goal is a statement of **dated** intent to obtain a measurable quality or quantity based on a strategic objective. When added together, the goals should have the potential to achieve the appropriate objective. Goals must be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**esults-oriented and **T**ime-limited (SMART).

- Objectives are broad; goals are specific.
- Objectives are somewhat indefinite; goals have time limits.
- Objectives give general direction; goals define specific, measurable results.

2. Don't confuse goals and action plans

- Goals seek desired results; action plans define the steps to reach the desired result.
- Goals have projected completion dates; action plans have both beginning and ending dates.
- Goals indicate what the team's primary responsibilities are; action plans indicate what specific people do.

3. **An event** (conference, workshop, retreat etc.) **is an action** and needs **an action plan**. It is not a goal. What result are you expecting from the event? This should be aligned to the goals.

4. **Most team goals should focus on the desired outcomes** that depend on actions taken **by that team** and not by other leaders in the area/home base or outside consultants. Goals depending on the actions of other teams should be kept to a minimum.

5. **Goals should be written in a way that leads to clear evaluation of completion**. When that is not possible, the evaluation criteria should clearly define the basis that will be used for evaluating the completion of the goal.

6. **When the goal is clearly stated, specific action plans need to be generated**. They must be prioritised and placed in order - i.e. step 1 must be completed before step 2 etc.

7. **A system of accountability needs to be clearly defined** whenever the action plan designates a person to carry out an action.

8. **The number of action plans and goals in a team should be reasonable and attainable within a specified time frame.**

7.9 A Basic Check List of Planning Questions

1. What are my team's predominant:
   - Hopes…
   - Fears…
   - Expectations… for the future?
2. What do we particularly want to:
   - Protect…?
   - Maintain…?
   - Achieve…?
   - Change…?
   - Create…? In the:
     - Short range…
     - Medium range...
     - Long range…
3. What are the:
   - Strengths
   - Weaknesses
   - Opportunities
   - Threats
   - Other factors… that need to be considered?

   In particular, what obstacles would prevent success if not changed or overcome?

4. How is the team going to develop the action plan – i.e. what is the process?
5. What methods, tools, strategies look the most promising? What can you learn from cross-fertilization with other teams?
6. How much time and effort is the team willing to exert on this and for how long? What outside–the–team resources are likely to be available?
7. Assuming that adequate time/effort is expended to fully implement the plan within whatever resource constraint is likely, what outcomes are the team realistically expecting and when?
8. Given whatever answers you have to the above questions, is the venture still worth doing? If so, start your actions plans. Who should do what? When? What are the first steps?

7.10 A Master Plan Team Checklist

1. Does the plan aim at comprehensive access to the Gospel for those you work among?
2. Does the plan include a wide variety of possible evangelistic resources?
3. Are the components of the plan in sequential order?
4. Will church planting result from the implementation of this plan?
5. How many of the team's people group/city will hear the Good News if the plan is implemented? How many won't have heard the Good News after implementation?
6. What role does the whole team play in implementing each aspect of the plan?
7. What role will only be carried out by a sub-section of the team or an individual?
8. Will the implementation contribute to the over-arching objective?
9. Is this plan dependent only on the team? What part do others play in our company and in other partnerships and agencies?
10. What must be accomplished in the next three months and the next six months?
11. What response is anticipated from the evangelism being planned?
12. When will Bible studies of believers emerge?
13. What extraordinary intervention of God is needed to accomplish this plan?
14. Does this plan envisage team growth or team building to produce two or more teams? How are you going to achieve this amicably?

7.11 A Weekly Checklist for Team Members

1. How many hours this week will I invest in:
    - Survival needs?
    - Platform/work-related needs?
    - Ministry with little evangelistic potential?
    - Support activities for the team?
    - Mobilisation and recruitment for the team?
    - Communication of vision?

- Administration?
- Fund-raising for the team and myself?
- Activities to bring goodwill to neighbours?
- Personal evangelism?
- Discipling members of the new group?
- Planning and implementing action plans that accomplish the main thing?

2. How many will hear the Gospel **for the first time** this week because of my actions?
3. How many will hear the Gospel **again** this week because of my actions?
4. Do I anticipate that anyone will come to faith this week?
5. How many will grow in the faith this week because of my actions?
6. How many will share their faith with others this week because of my actions?
7. What do I need to accomplish this week that will result in bringing the greatest number of people in contact with the Gospel?
8. What do I need to do this week that will strengthen the new believers and contribute to the objective of an indigenous church planting movement?

7.12 A Planning Questionnaire

1. What are the things you are doing now?
2. What things are you responsible to see that others do?
3. What should you be doing that you cannot do or have not time to do?
4. What are you doing that you should not be doing? What could/should others do?
5. What do you see that needs to be done and is not being done? Who should do it?
6. What is being done that can be eliminated?
7. What are the things you feel you are best suited to do?
8. What equipment, facilities, supplies do you feel we could have that would make your work easier, more effective and more efficient?
9. What recommendations do you have for any part of the programme?

8. Leadership Failure

8.1 An Introduction

8.2 Myths About Team Leadership

8.3 The Leadership Spectrum

8.4 Leadership Problems

8.5 Changing your Paradigm of Leadership

8.6 Delegation

8.7 Dealing with Leadership Strengths and Weaknesses

8.8 Better Leadership Training on Teams

8.9 What a Leader must do to get his Team to Follow Him

8.10 Conclusion

8. Leadership Failure

8.1 An Introduction

Leadership is the most used word in organisational/management literature about teams.

- It is a word very commonly used in our company when talking about all of what we do.
- The leader bears the burden for so much of our hopes and expectations.
- Everyone agrees that leadership is vital to the life and effectiveness of teams.
- It is the chlorophyll that turns the sunlight into chemical energy (sugar). When a team is in trouble or functions badly, its leadership is very often the cause of the problem.
- One of the best ways to understand the function of leadership is to observe when it isn't there. It is not a pretty sight!
- When leadership is not present, the team tends to adopt **a machine approach** – everything is automated – regulated – rules are imposed – a Pharisaic Team!
- The result is that people in the team get disillusioned, upset and hostile with each other. Productivity drops and spirituality drops. Ultimately there is melt-down in genuine despair because there is:
  - No rallying point
  - No one to complain to!
  - No one to intercede when things go wrong
  - No one to get everyone on track

So team members get angry with each other. There are three common results:

(a) explosion in anger
(b) implosion in despair
(c) decay into lifeless orbit (the worst).

Commitment and energy drain away and people leave. The team is dead! If this sounds bad, you are right! It is! Leadership is **that** important!! I want to cover:

- What makes a good leader
- How a team can help its leader lead – this is crucial – often teams train their leaders
- Different ways/styles of leadership
- Supervision of individuals on the team

If leadership is working well, then the other problems mentioned are usually solvable.

Every team should have a clear understanding of:

- Exactly what team leadership is
- How to foster it
- Where it ends and autonomous teamwork begins

8.2 Myths about team leadership

There are lots of myths about team leadership. For example, *"Give our team a good leader and everything will be OK."* Not true! There are lots of false assumptions being made.

1. **Assumption**: **Teams require a single individual to lead them.** It is not true; often team leadership is a better option. Models of leadership run from:
   - Iron–hard dictatorial rule
   - Through various degrees of self-direction
   - To apparently leaderless teams

Leadership can rotate by the clock or by the task in hand. Simple models don't necessarily work for complex teams.

2. **Assumption: Strong leadership ensures success.** It is not true! A good leader is useless if the people will not follow or are incompetent or not committed to the vision of the team. A "bad" team can't be led!
3. **Assumption: How a leader is selected is not important.** This is completely wrong! Leaders must be selected in a way that harmonizes with the vision of the team and the ethos of the team. A freewheeling autonomous team in a pioneer situation will not welcome a team leader who has been imposed on them "from above". New leaders have trouble adjusting to an established team. However, if a team has never been allowed to make decisions for itself, it may be unable to choose its own leader.
4. **Assumption: Team success is all that matters.** Success, however this is defined, matters (e.g. pleasing God). But strong leadership driving the team on to "success" is meaningless if the vision and tasks are wrong, duplicative, wasteful and pointless!
5. **Assumption: Team structure is a minor consideration.** It is **not** minor! Team structures vary enormously – they can be functionally aligned (i.e. type of ministry - e.g. immigrant outreach), geographically aligned, a matrix, networked, led by a single leader, led by multiple leaders. Teams will only function well at the task at hand, if the team has the right structure.
6. **Assumption: A good leader can solve any problem.** Not so! Not every task is appropriate for team action. If the team should not do the task at all, it doesn't matter how good the team leader is. In any case many of our problems are not functional, but spiritual, political etc. This dramatically affects what a team does.

8.3 The Leadership Spectrum

Leadership in a team situation can look like just about anything.

Model (1) - the leader is boss, everyone does what the boss says - i.e. old-fashioned, hierarchical, top-down dictatorship!

Model (2) - ultra–flattened, inside-out, molecular, shared leadership teams – no individual is set above any other - everyone pitches in to keep the team focussed.

Which is better? There is no absolute answer! Model (2) is better at achieving a 'buy-in' to the team ownership. It creates fewer hurt feelings, less resentment and better morale.

Model (1) is better in a crisis. When bleeding is profuse or in a fire, autocratic leadership is better. In war the military model makes terrific sense.

In both models you can have "good" and "bad" leaders.

Can you "fix" bad leadership?

- It is easier to fix your own failures – than someone else's!
- To fix your own:
  - ✧ Know yourself.
  - ✧ Acknowledge there are areas you will never be good at – get someone to share leadership with you who is competent in these areas.
  - ✧ Build up and strengthen areas where you are weak.
  - ✧ Ask the team for understanding and assistance.
- To fix others? Very difficult!

If they are aware (even vaguely) that they are part of the problem it really helps! But if they think they are doing their best and it's enough or if they are behaving just as their personalities allow them to behave then there will be no change!

The company senior leadership should be asked to remove such a team leader from leadership.

This requires:

- Courage on the part of the interviewer
- Great honesty on the flawed leader's part
- Good intentions on everybody's part

8.4 Leadership Problems

Here is a list of 25 common leadership problems that can be seen on our teams. These problems can be looked at in two ways.

- Is this a problem with **my** leadership?
- Is this a problem with my **leader**?

It's a long list and by no means comprehensive.

1. **Stupid leaders** – this is not insulting – it is statistically likely!
   (i.e. without the capacity to understand the task and communicate it lucidly to others!)

   How do you observe such people?

- The leader makes frequent repeated mistakes, does not remember important facts and comes to the wrong decision based on clear evidence to the contrary.
- Teams have covered for their leader by dividing the tasks of leadership among themselves or assigning those tasks to someone competent.
- Very few of our team leaders just have a low IQ!
- They are often stupid due to hard-headedness or stubbornness. They are unwilling to listen to alternatives - i.e. some team leaders are "flexibility challenged".
- Often leaders are appointed because they are skilled in "politics" or have done well in a very stable situation. But now the situation is different!
- Some leaders can survive for a while on charisma, enthusiasm and personal charm because their intentions are mainly good. But in the end they must go.
- If their intentions are bad, then the leader is often skilled at covering up his own failures and blaming failure on the team. Such leaders need to go fast!

2. **Leaders who are ignorant**

   Ignorant leaders are better than stupid leaders. On our teams some ignorance is always a given! We have never had any all–knowing leaders! The whole concept of team is based around "pooled" knowledge.

   But ignorance does not need to be forever! Stupidity is terminal! Ignorant leaders can learn! Gaps in their knowledge can be filled. However there is **good** ignorance, **humble** ignorance and **bad** ignorance. There is ignorance that is proud of being ignorant and closed to new ways. It is stuck in a rut. This ignorance is built around experience. *"This way has always worked for me in the past, I am not going to learn anything new."*

   What can a team do if their leader lacks knowledge that is critical?

   - Offer to fill in the gaps
   - Bring in a consultant from outside

   It is a delicate situation!

3. **Over-eager leaders** – the "eager beaver" syndrome

These leaders have attended too many leadership seminars and read too many books on leadership. They are often faddists for the latest management theory. They want to stop everything everyone is doing and start following the latest fad, methodology etc.

The problem with such leaders is that they are learning too much, too fast to fully integrate what is being learned.

What should the team do? Again this is hard. If you protest, then you are labelled 'change-resistant'! Somehow you must get the fact across that, as a team, you want to learn, you want to change; but learning is a means to an end, not the end itself. It takes time to fully integrate a new idea and get it settled down in practice.

4. **Leaders who are too talented**

This is when leaders are so bright that their personal competence exceeds their ability to teach! An example might be a university professor trying to teach primary school kids! In this case, teams never catch up with their leaders!

The solution is to move the person from team leadership to team resource, then everyone will sigh with relief!

5. **Leaders who are too kind and patronising**

Some leaders begin to see their team members as their little children. They become patronising! These leaders "know what's best" for their team and are usually very directive! It is hard for a team of grown men and women to be coddled along as if they were a favourite cocker spaniel! You don't want managerial sadism either! That's worse!

6. **Leaders who are closed to new ideas**

This is related to problem 2 - ignorance. Most leaders have at least one tool they have used before with consistent success. Let us call this symbolically 'a hammer'. This leader is ready, willing and very good at pounding in nails! The problem is that the task of leadership is not all nails. The tried and tested problem–solving approach - 'bang-em in' - is not applicable to every situation!

Good leaders have a whole tool kit, not just a hammer. Bad leaders only have a hammer and they keep hammering away when it is clear it isn't working. This is a learning issue! Leadership is about learning. Good leaders are open and hungry for knowledge. It is said that ostriches stick their heads in the sand when challenged. I don't know if it is true of ostriches, but it is certainly true of bad leaders!

How does the team cope with a closed–minded leader? We don't **select** team leaders with this quality – although sometimes it appears so! In fact, we are **all** resistant to new ideas. It is a fear reaction! If the team leader has succeeded with approach A and approach B is not familiar then, by definition, approach B won't succeed.

We all become calcified in this fashion – it's not unique to leaders! The antidote is to develop on the team a culture of conscious and continuous openness. Always be open to fresh approaches and new perspectives. This sort of team is usually suspicious of reliance on the tried and allegedly true method. This is the spirit of continuous improvement – nothing is ever so good that it can't be made better!

7. **Leaders with inappropriate styles of leadership**

An empowering type of leader expects team members to function autonomously with a minimum of direction. This is typical on a team with several longtermers. But it doesn't work where the members have no experience of this type of team and don't know how to take initiative e.g. a summer team of brand new recruits.

Autocratic leaders ["*Do this", "Do that", "Now do this*"] often find their orders carry no weight with their teams and a revolt is on the way. All teams need:

i. Skilled communication
ii. The willingness to teach
iii. The willingness to co-ordinate

Autocratic leaders rarely provide this.

8. Leaders who put themselves ahead of their team

This is perhaps the most common complaint against our leaders! Such a leader has no loyalty to or real identification with his team.

Symptoms:

- An unwillingness to 'run interference' for the team's goals
- A disinclination to fight for the team and so alienate outside forces
- A reluctance to share credit in times of success
- A cheerful willingness to point the finger of blame when things go wrong
- An unwillingness to take risks and ruffle feathers for their team
- Their only goal is to succeed individually!

9. Leaders who don't really know their team

Teams mustn't just be committed to "the vision", but to each other as people. If I am your team leader and I know your daughter needs an operation, I should want very badly indeed to help your daughter to get that operation! We are committed to **love** one another! At a minimum this means we should know one another, sympathize with one another and care for one another.

You don't need to live together – eat, breathe, sleep, dream together to do this – i.e. share the same physical space. But there needs to be some degree of intimacy. Leaders have to link their team together by hand (i.e. the work) and by heart.

10. Inconsistent leaders

Team members often complain about this. It is a very human weakness. Leaders are complex and have internal contradictions just like everyone else. Most human beings have ups and downs - often in cycles or rhythms.

Questions the team should ask are:

- ✧ What are the causes of lapses in the leader's judgement?
- ✧ Are they random?
- ✧ Are they predictable – deadline stress, visit from a senior leader?

The solution is to understand and improve things that can be changed. Take more group decisions. Encourage delegation etc. and accept the parts of your leader you can't change except by prayer.

11. Leaders who can't be followers

Team leaders are often members of more than one team. Often they are part of the leadership team for the Field or part of Regional Partnerships etc. On other teams they may be members not leaders. If they can't accept this role it signals danger ahead.

12. Leaders who refuse to accept team members

They leave them out of the loop. If you ignore anyone on the team, you seriously damage the team. Constantly give credit away. This is a great way to develop solidarity on the team.

13. A leader who has favourites

It is true that the 80/20 rule often applies on teams – 80% of the work is done by 20% of the people. So why not favour the 20%? On teams, special treatment for a few causes highly dysfunctional teams. Favouritism is a cancer that eats away at team harmony. Teams thrive on the musketeer slogan, "All for one, and one for all".

14. A leader who doesn't allow failure

Teams are melting pots of learning and creativity. We can always be continuously improving. But you can't try new things without some failure! But failure is never final. Mistakes are not **just** mistakes! If made thoughtfully and properly, a mistake teaches you a lot about what works and what doesn't. Each failure can be a golden nugget of information!

So on our teams we need a culture that **encourages** failure – not just allows it! Trial and error is about **learning**. If your team leader is uptight about failure, it is a sign that fear rules the team. Leaders must give their teams hope by showing courage in the face of embarrassment. Embarrassment is reduced if it is called a pilot project! Your team must find ways to overcome, mitigate or minimize the fear of failure!

15. Leaders who protect themselves and blame others

In times of stress teams sometimes cannibalise themselves - they eat their own! The pattern is frightening! The useless team leader is terrified of personal retribution when a mistake has been made– the proverbial ton of bricks – so he points the finger at a hapless team member. This leader is controlled by fear. Good leaders step in front of the team and take the occasional bullet. In our company we aspire to develop a culture of blamelessness. We acknowledge that bad stuff happens, but we are all in this together.

There is not much a team can do if their team leader betrays them. This is an issue that goes deep into our corporate character. If we have a culture of blame – where failure is not allowed – then we are in a fundamentally dishonest and sadistic situation.

16. Unethical, dishonest leaders

So much has been written about principles in leadership. Leaders who lack integrity cause dysfunctional teams. The leader is there to coach team members in skills and teamwork, to assist them with problems, to acknowledge achievement and effort, to share and teach knowledge, to model behaviour and periodically to remind the team of its mission.

All of the above demand moral simplicity and directness. A leader can't tell one team member one thing and another team member something quite different. A leader must never deceive the team. The team has put its trust in the leader and if this is violated then the leader is finished.

17. Leaders who are remote

The greater the distance the less communication there is. Distance is a prop and allows the leader to create "a cult of personality". A close team feeds on information. Remote leaders starve their team.

18. Leaders who fail to model team behaviour

Leaders can't get away with, *"Do as I say, not as I do"*. If a team sees its leader behaving counter to everything we believe in, he/she will lose respect and trust. This is what we call hypocrisy!

19. A leader without passion

Passion originally meant suffering. The general loved by the solders suffers with them. A willingness to suffer alongside your team is crucial in gaining their confidence. But there is also passion in the modern sense – a high level of emotional commitment to the team and its vision. This too is essential.

20. Leaders who are oblivious to the team member's needs

For the entire team to be effective, the needs of each member much be acknowledged and met whenever possible. This is the crucial issue of member care and career development. Leaders who actively involve themselves in helping team members achieve their aspirations; build trust, loyalty and camaraderie.

21. Leaders who are unwilling to fight for their team

Christian leadership is servant leadership. The servant leader concept translates into the one who establishes direction (vision, goals etc.) and then runs alongside other team members shouting encouragement, knocking down barriers, opening up networks and 'running interference'. Why would a team fight for a leader who won't fight for them?

22. Leaders who are unwilling to take risks

Leaders must take risks if we are to succeed. Those who only take the safe routes tend to have mediocre teams. Good leaders encourage risk taking that is well-informed and well-researched – i.e. not stupid. If all goes wrong, good leaders separate the outcome from the decision. Failure of this sort is very valuable. Such a leader encourages further risk-taking. Leaders who do not encourage their teams to make stretches are rewarded in kind with un-elastic, brittle teams.

23. Leaders who can't permit "lively discussion"

The ideal team does not exist. The leader presents his idea and the team members sort of listen. As soon as the leader is finished, twenty reasons why the idea will not work burst in the vicinity of the flip-charts. Team members appear to compete passionately with each other to undermine the idea. At times this takes on a unpleasant personal edge.

This shocks many team leaders and they ban all debate. The fact is that at times teams look more like kennels than think–tanks! Team leaders who try and "control" this always lose out because such control throttles communication and communication is vital to team life.

24. Leaders who don't value diversity

Many teams are highly diverse. This type of diversity on a team in a global world is an obvious strength. A team that is not diverse is usually a gaggle of 'yes' men – quite literally. Diversity brings together not just people with different backgrounds but also people with different ways of thinking. This means there is not an automatic, cultural agreement with anyone else. A good team leader is one who can not only live with this diversity, but who revels in the great potential it can bring to a team.

25. Leaders who are passive

Leadership is about **initiating** activities. It is about moving things – ideas, people, "the Gospel" – from here to there.

Managers are reactive – responding with existing knowledge to existing circumstances.

Leaders are pro-active – acquiring and teaching new knowledge for continuously changing circumstances.

Managers mostly stay in one place. Leaders are on the move. Leadership is not better than management. Management – knowing when and how to react appropriately – is the **foundation** for leadership. Once the foundation is in place, leadership builds on it. It finds the confidence to take the initiative, to take risks and to move the team ahead.

Many are good managers – reactive, fire fighting etc. But not so many go on to be good leaders – proactive and planning. You can't be a good leader without first being a decent manager.

8.5 Changing your paradigm of leadership

There must be a change from autocratic leadership to participatory servant leadership. Many of the problems in leadership come as the result of a poor model of leadership – an autocratic model. The Lord Jesus gave us a very different model of leadership – **servanthood**.

Communication involves not just words, but also meta-language (body language, actions etc.). The washing of the disciples' feet by the Lord Jesus in John 13 is classic meta-language communication.

Jesus came to earth in two roles:

- The suffering obedient Servant of the Lord.
- The Lord Christ

The first role **we** can model. The second is always exclusive to Jesus.

1. The pilgrimage towards being a servant leader

We tend to give labels to ourselves and we assume that we are what we label ourselves! The factors that are characteristic of servant leaders include:

- **Openness**

  This is the ability to welcome people into your home/presence/office and make them feel **emotionally safe** there. The key meta-language is hospitality and proactively going out to people in a degree of vulnerability. See the example of Jesus in John 4, ***"Give me a drink."*** Part of this is the concept of peace. Is your team "at peace" with you in the Semitic concept of the word – wholeness? It comes with openness.

- **Acceptance of team members**

  A servant leader has the ability to communicate esteem, value, worth and acceptance to each of the team members. We read in Rom. 15:5-9, "***May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of <u>unity</u> among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. <u>Accept</u> one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy……."***

  - There is a call to unity/solidarity – for it reveals the glory of God.
  - There is a call to acceptance.
  - There is a call to mission.

  In these verses, if there is no unity on the team God's glory is veiled and mission stagnates. The key is "the acceptance of one another" - the respect and affirmation of the dignity of every human being who has been accepted by Christ. On teams there are no neutral contacts with team members. We either build one another up or we destroy the image of God in each other. Christ has accepted us because we are of great value to Him. We need leaders who value their team members.

- **Trust**

  Trust is the ability to grow in confidence in a relationship so you know that person won't betray you. The vast majority of team members joined our company on the basis of trust in the organisation. They joined your team on trust. Destroy this trust and you will have a dysfunctional team.

  So what builds trust? This is a **culturally determined** thing! Ask each of your team members – *"What can I do that will help to build trust between us?"* For some it will be "hanging out together". In some cultures trust is built up by reciprocal visiting.

Tim Stafford wrote an excellent book on this subject called **The Friendship Gap**[1] about his experiences in Kenya. [See also Section 10]

- **Learning**

  Learning is the ability to gain information. So learn about the people on your team

  - ✧ **From them** – put yourself at the feet of your team members keep learning from them for you will never learn everything.
  - ✧ **With them** – benefit from all the synergy of learning together with your team members – "iron sharpening iron".

- **Understanding**

  Good leaders have the ability to see the patterns in the behaviour of their team members. They begin "to make sense" of it all. And with this comes compassion.

- **Serving**

  There is no serving without compassion, no compassion without understanding, no understanding without learning, no learning without trust and no trust without acceptance. Your team members won't accept your leadership unless they feel safe with you – openness.

2. From positional/autocratic leadership to relational/participative leadership and beyond

Step One: The Flexibility to Change

The Bible teaches servant leadership – relational / participative leadership. Our problem is that information is not enough. We might know that too much cholesterol is likely to clog up our arteries and cause a heart attack, but we still enjoy eating hamburgers. When our barrel is fall of information we may do something (Fig 1)

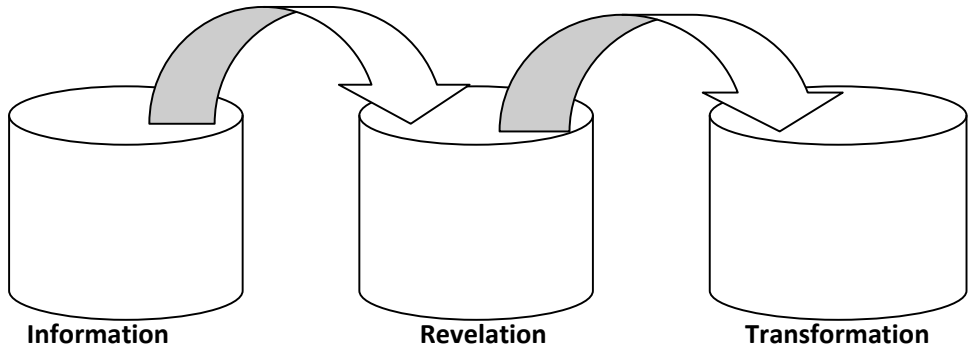


Fig 1

Spiritually, information is changed to revelation when God begins to speak to us about a situation. God has spoken to us about the model of servant leadership. The information needs to come to us as a revelation of His will for our lives in a very personal way. When the revelation level is full, the Holy Spirit will help motivate us to transform our model of leadership (transformation = change your shape - i.e. you change).

Our problem is that our minds are often **shackled**. I am told that the way you train Indian elephants is to put a shackle on one of their legs when they are young. The shackle is then attached to a chain - say 10m long - and the chain attached to a strong post. The young elephant soon gets bored staying in his 10m radius circle and tries to walk out of it. But he can't! At the beginning he tries every day. Finally he accepts the situation. He knows that when the shackle is on his foot he must stay in a 10m circle. When this acceptance comes, the trainer can gradually reduce the size of the chain, so eventually there is no chain and no post. The elephant, trained in this way, will stay within a 10m radius even though the shackle has nothing attached to it!

Our minds are shackled like that! We haven't seen anything except from a worldly model of leadership that is autocratic and positional - the leader-is-always-right syndrome. We need the Holy Spirit to take the shackles off our minds. So identify the shackles in your mind and ask God's Spirit to break this dominant mind-set.

Beware of the Kilroy Syndrome. Kilroy is always observing over the wall. It is so easy to look over the wall, observe what others are doing and copy them. This is the Kilroy Syndrome - importing ideas into your team, as a quick fix, without going through the journey that others went through to get to that idea. In this way you will avoid "fads" and changing "jargon" when in reality nothing else has changed.

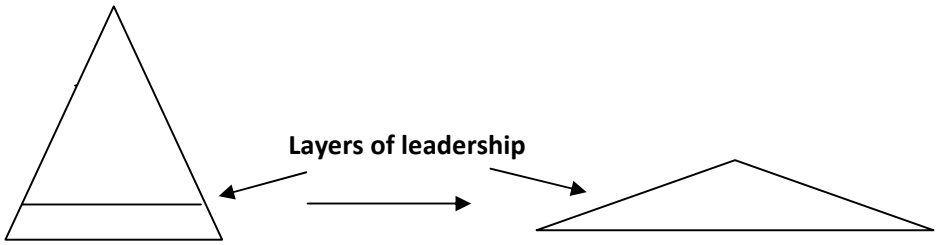
Leadership is leading your team through the three stages:

information – revelation – transformation.

Step Two: Identifying where you are

The characteristics of autocratic leadership -the worldly model

- Typical of immature leaders – but you can grow out of it.
- Insecurity – this leads to domination and a passion to control everything and everyone on the team.



A Hierarchical Team **A Flat Team**

Fig 2.

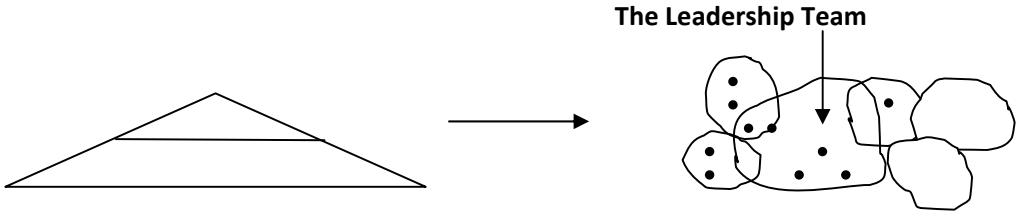
Leaders who are threatened by those they are leading make most leadership mistakes.

- They control and regulate.
- They are manipulative
- They can't manage diversity
- Titles are crucial
- Autocratic leadership only works if there is fear on the team
- It also works when there is a high motivation of greed
- The spirit of control causes:
  - *"I check up on you because I don't trust you."*
  - *"I must be better than you, so I don't want you to learn."*
  - *"I will take the glory for what others do."*
- Autocratic leaders **talk** about relationships being more important than structures, but only when they are outside the structure. They have a "mask of co-operation".
- The reality is that leaders can never control anyone – you may control outward conformity, but never the inside.
- Autocratic leaders **like** hierarchical team structures. (see Fig. 2) In this structure there is a small base and lots of layers of management until you get to the top. The leader then issues orders from the top down. There is great social distance between the top and the bottom. In secular management books autocratic/hierarchical leadership is out because it is inefficient and wasteful of resources. It is to be replaced with "flat structures".

A Flat Team:
Has a smaller distance between top leadership and the bottom. Such a team is friendlier, more efficient and more cost effective. Autocratic leaders become participatory leaders.

Some companies have become flat by firing most of their middle management and by downsizing and outsourcing. This is **not** the way to do it. It requires a change in the mindset of the leader. If the autocratic mindset is still shackling the leadership, changing structures is never going to be enough. The mindset of the spirit of leadership must change.

Are flat teams Biblical? No, I don't think so. The Bible gives us a different model.



Flat Team **Multi-cellular Organic Team**

In the multi-cellular organic team there is no hierarchy at all. There are no control structures. There is a leadership team that seeks to facilitate all the others. There is mutual accountability. The team needs leadership but it is **servant** leadership. What characterises such a team is **interdependence**. The result is a family of individuals and ministries linked together by a common vision and common values.

How do you go from a "flat" team structure to a multi-cellular organic model? Again the shackles need to be removed from our minds as to what real servant leadership is all about.

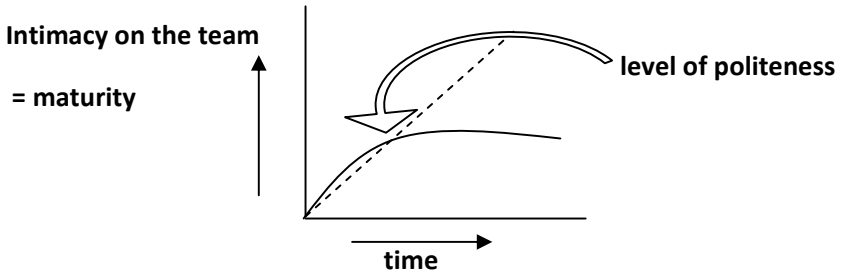
Many teams don't like this style of leadership. With a flat or hierarchical model they don't have to take ownership of the team. When things go wrong, they don't have to take "collective responsibility". Teams sometimes like "a learned helplessness" for it makes leaving easier. Leaders also like to be needed and at the centre of things. The result is disempowerment.

In his article, **The Revolutionary Messiah**, E. Abraham says, *"Empowerment is nothing more than sharing decision-making power with others…. The cancer of bureaucracy cripples more organisations than anything else, with people caught up in non-value-added activities. Their primary concern revolves around maintaining a position or moving up a layer of management - not value creativity …. Future leaders will have to master teamwork. They will have to understand how to work with and through others because no one person can possibly master all the divergent sources of information required to make good decisions…. The essence of empowerment is a recognition of the dignity and worth of all people in the 'organisation'…. Today's leaders must each have parts of visionary, empowering and team leadership."*

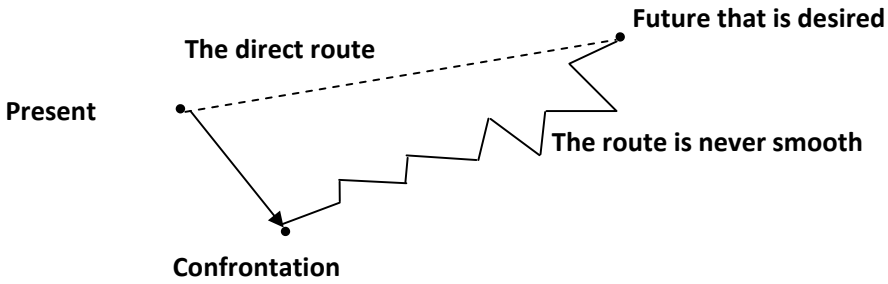
Step Three: Precipitate a Crisis!

Crisis is too strong a word, but you do need to have a major discussion on the team to move to a multi-cellular organic team. For if you do move, it is going to cause confrontation and considerable upheaval.

The problem on many teams is that they can't move beyond politeness with each other. Confrontation and conflict may be destructive (see section 11) but they can also be an invitation to growth. To move beyond politeness often means the team must be allowed to fight! But if it merely remains on a level of politeness then there will be a slow decline into ineffectiveness.



If the fight gets too hot, there needs to be a system of appeal to an outside arbitrator. Usually we have some concept of the desired future and our expectation is that we will move from the present in a smooth and easy transition to the desired future by a nice direct route.



This almost never happens! It nearly always gets worse before it gets better. The first results of change are confrontation and confusion. The confrontation needs to be done with care and with love. But there must be a breaking down of mind-sets before there can be a building of fresh mind-sets. Generally we don't like change - see section 7.7.

More often we reject the gift because it is wrapped in the wrong (for us) wrapping. It must start with the leader. He/she has to give permission to the team to confront him/her on every issue. This is hard to do! People would rather have a slow death, than a quick operation! But if you want change it is imperative that there are confrontations and, if necessary, blow-ups!

While all this is going on it is necessary to:

(i) pray regularly with the team

(ii) have frequent social times with the team

(iii) have a place where secondary issues can be dumped/stored (neutral ground or a neutral person) until the primary issues have been dealt with.

Step Four: Motivation

Change is painful; so why change? Teams will only change to a multi-cellular organic model if they are motivated to do so throughout the process. A good leader motivates his team by:

- Involving the team in the preparation for change
- Making the change seem exciting, crucial and significant
- Giving the team loads of affirmation, praise and encouragement
- Giving the team members good reasons to continue changing
- Delegating - a key part of motivation, but delegation will lead to mistakes. Good judgement is the result of experience and experience is the result of bad judgement!

8.6 Delegation

(a) Reasons to delegate

1. You are not doing the major tasks that need doing.
2. You are missing deadlines.
3. You are pushed by trivial tasks others could do.
4. People on the team, if trained, could handle the job better than you.
5. You have imbalance in the workload on your team.
6. You have team members who need new worlds to conquer!

(b) Reasons for resistance to delegation

1. Reluctance to admit limitations
2. Fear of competition
3. Tradition - desire for prestige - love of control
4. Lack of confidence in your team
5. Doubting your ability to train someone else to do it your way
6. The time of training - mistakes, lack of uniformity etc.

(c) How to delegate authority

1. Make sure the delegation of authority is as clear and precise as you can make it. Delegate by the results to be achieved and not by the tasks to be performed. The end result of the delegation must be clear and precise. You should judge by results rather than method.
2. Try and avoid delegating authority until you are sure the recipient knows how to use it. There must be a training period (see 8.7).
3. Define the limits of authority and responsibility in the training period and afterwards.
4. Agree on a standard against which the results will be measured.
5. Ask for an Action Plan.
6. Establish control indicators – regular feedback - especially in the early stages.
7. Implement the delegation.
8. Get them to accept responsibility for the results.
9. Don't stamp all over your delegate when he/she makes a mistake in the exercise of delegated authority.

(d) Characteristics of delegated authority

1. The nature and bounds of delegated authority are clear. Responsibility and authority are **always equal**.
2. The date that the authority is to begin and terminate is explicitly stated.
3. All interested parties are notified.
4. The basis of the authority to delegate is clear.
5. Everyone involved understands the accountability and proposed control indicators on the exercise of authority.
6. Note: authority comes from above (senior leadership) **and** from those who serve the team. They have to give you authority over them!

(e) Leadership is the stewardship of the talents and gifts of the team

Leadership is giving each team member **all** the authority he/she needs to fulfil the responsibilities that have been given to him/her, but not enough authority to invade the responsibilities of others.

8.7 Dealing with leadership strengths and weaknesses

"You know what his problem is, don't you? He's insecure." I've heard this statement about many of our leaders, countless times. It may be true, but it is not very constructive. Having identified the behaviour caused by insecurity, we can't really help unless we know the nature and the root of the problem. We are all somewhere on a continuum without any of us being totally secure.

(a) Some of symptoms of insecurity in leadership

- Defensive listening
- Separation from the team
- Missing the real issues the team is struggling with
- Missing the team's felt needs
- The leader puts lids on a fire – he doesn't put it out
- The leader is reactive (vs. projecting the future)
- Feeling alienated from the team
- Encouraging division - "them and us"
- A "martyr complex"

(b) The roots of the problem

"Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses" is a frequent question in appraisals. It is an interesting question, but only from the point of view of hearing the leader try and balance the strengths and weaknesses! To help leaders grow out of their insecurity, we need a better approach than mere identification of the problem. Below are four broad categories of weaknesses to help us identify the appropriate action.

- ***Character weaknesses***

These include being prone to anger and lacking patience - indeed any shortfall in the fruit of the Spirit. [Gal 5:22] The remedy usually includes self discipline and pastoral care. An encounter with God will help too! Often these weaknesses are the hardest to deal with. There are no quick fixes. Gal 5:22 is a useful checklist.

- ***Skill weaknesses***

Examples include the inability to master such things as financial matters, aspects of DIY like simple vehicle maintenance, the use of a particular software package etc. Poor inter-personal communication skills would also be included here. The answer to this cluster of weaknesses lies in coaching and training.

- ***The reverse side of strengths***

There are weaknesses that are typically associated with our strengths – a sort of baby and bath water problem! You can have both or neither. Strengths have predictable vulnerabilities as part of the package.

- A diligent team leader will tend to become a workaholic.
- A caring, supportive team leader who relishes all the friends he has on the team will always find decision-making hard, for there is always the possibility of really offending a team member.
- Team leaders who have a great ability to influence people will tend to be manipulative and control freaks.
- Team leaders who lead by setting the pace – trailblazers - seldom find teamwork easy! Others seem so slow, prosaic and blind! In fact the bigger the challenge, the greater the **personal** response by such a person. He/she doesn't usually have a desire to involve the team.

There are no easy remedies to these "dark sides" to strengths. Where we have a strength, we will be particularly vulnerable to a certain temptation on the "dark side". Personal growth is about being able to spot the temptations early and to manage them better. Resisting the enemy effectively in these areas is a key part of spiritual warfare.

Peter was a great enthusiast. He was ready to have a go at anything. When he committed himself, his passion for the cause was apparent to all. His wrong decisions sprang from his impetuosity. Impetuosity and enthusiasm have the same root. The way Jesus mentored Peter is instructive. He didn't stifle Peter's "action man" approach. Jesus knew he couldn't crush the weakness without jeopardising the strength.

You can't be good at everything. Certain pairs of characteristics are complementary and you can't have one without the other. The solution lies in teams, not in trying to improve in our weaker facets.

- There is a need for both creative and analytical thinkers.
- We need long-term, big vision strategists **and** short-term detailed task planners.
- The evangelist is seldom a pastor/teacher.

So the key for a leader is to practise his/her strengths and find someone to complement him/her in the weaknesses.

Differentiating between failings and being a failure

God has shown us how to loathe sin and yet love sinners. He separates the two completely. In a similar way team members must differentiate between a team leader **having a failing** (weakness) and **being a failure**. It is very easy to merge the two! My team leader has a failing and therefore he is a failure - replace him! To focus on failing and to couple failure with failings is to lose sight of the message of grace.

(c) Growing into security in leadership

1. A team leader must always remember he/she has been called/appointed by God.
2. The team leader must face the facts about him/herself. David refused to wear Saul's armour.
3. The leader must trust God for all he/she needs to accomplish the will of God.
4. The leader must acknowledge his/her limitations to the team. Christian maturity is often a growing interdependency on the body.
5. Look-up to those beneath you - see the potential in the team!
6. The leader needs to choose to be a learner from those on his/her team.

8.8 Better leadership training on teams

There are four stages in leadership training. This is also true of all coaching.

Stage 1: The enthusiastic beginner

The new potential leader is very glad to be asked to be a leader. This is the honeymoon stage. He is enthusiastic but ignorant and he makes lots of mistakes. He also feels some anxiety: what is expected of me? He tends to depend on authority and hierarchy.

Stage 2: The disillusioned learner

Now the honeymoon is over. The new leader is beginning to see the problems and difficulties. He is experiencing a discrepancy between hopes and reality. He is beginning to feel the strain and stress of leadership. He is overwhelmed with his weaknesses. He is disillusioned with those over him and is dissatisfied with dependence on authority. He is beginning to lose heart. Some leaders drop out here, many others plateau and don't develop. They feel angry about goals, tasks and action plans. They compete for power and attention.

Stage 3: The disciplined worker

Here the leader is beginning to cope. He is learning discipline. He is learning to draw on resources - heavenly, from outside the team and from inside the team. He is a bit like a seventeen year old. He can drive, but don't give him the keys to the car! He is using team language. He is sharing responsibility and control. He is being more open and giving more feedback. He is developing self-esteem and confidence. He is gaining harmony, trust, support and respect from his team.

Stage 4: The effective leader

Now he/she is working well. He/she is effective in leadership. The leadership of the team is now delegated to him/her. If it is not delegated to him you will lose him. Now the new driver can have the keys to the car. But you must check on him from time to time. The trainee is feeling the team strength. He shows high confidence in accomplishing tasks. He is getting everyone working together.

The key to training is to move at the right speed from Stage 1 to Stage 4. This is the **process of delegation**.

Process of Delegation

- *Highly Directive Training*

The trainer has a high degree of involvement and responsibility in the life of a trainee. He **watches** you while you carry out the tasks of leadership. There must be a high level of interaction between trainer and trainee. This was the first stage in how Jesus trained His disciples. They were with Him. They saw what He did. They heard what He said. They went with Him wherever He went.

- *On-the-Job Training*

The trainee starts by helping the leader. He starts doing "stuff". At this stage the trainee needs lots of affirmation with some evaluation and correction. Much of what the leader does is **done together**. The trainer is still doing things. This requires a period of a huge amount of time and effort. If you stay here the trainer burns-out!

- *Beginning the Handover*

Now the trainee is doing it! The trainer is involved in monitoring the progress of the trainee. He helps out at the difficult points of decision-making or conflict resolution. This trainer is more of a supporter than a coach.

- *Delegated Task*

Here the trainer watches the trainee. There is very little direction. There is still a lot of affirmation needed and some correction. The trainee has full responsibility for the task.

This process of delegation will work for any task. The key is to move from stage 1 to stage 4 at the right speed. Going too fast or too slow will hinder the whole process. Vital keys are **the transition points**: one to two, two to three and three to four.

Before you start the process, set the goals for each stage. Both the trainer and the trainee need to know what these goals are. When the goals for stage one are met, then the trainer gives many congratulations to the trainee. The trainee knows he has graduated to stage 2. Now the goals for stage 2 are carefully gone through by both parties. Don't assume time is a good criterion – it is not! There are fast and slow learners. The same is true for stages three and four.

Most leaders long for more training and more coaching. But God has specifically given us the Holy Spirit to be our companion. He is to be the great mentor in our lives – our spiritual Father, leader and guide. The problem with human mentors is that invariably they reproduce in others their own weaknesses. This is never true of the Holy Spirit for He has no weaknesses. Never look for a human mentor to replace the role of the Holy Spirit.

8.9 What a leader must do to get his team to follow Him

Introduction

Don't head towards any cliffs! Only lemmings will follow and we don't recruit these!
A leader must know what the needs of his team are and must help to meet them.

A starving army can't fight – as Napoleon found out on the way to Moscow!

A frustrated team never achieves its objectives.

Essentially team leaders **add value** to their team's assets so that the team's outcomes go beyond the expectations of the sum of each team member's input. Value-adding leadership enhances performance in four areas:

- They constantly seek to "improve" in themselves and help each team member "to improve".
- They constantly seek for better-reasoned insight, better awareness and more thoughtful choices. They constantly do a SWOT analysis.
- They constantly look for innovation as well as better "performance" and action taking.
- They focus on integration.

Teams exist because of synergy. But synergy isn't automatic. Just having a bunch of team members in the same place doesn't create the power to do the work. It is the function of leadership to get the team to work together co-operatively. Leaders guide the team though problem solving, fixing things and being innovative in capturing opportunities.

Team leaders are not super human – we get none of those on our teams! What we expect of team leaders is that they should:

- Have a high performance level themselves in contributing to what the team is doing
- Encourage/develop effort and performance from each member at least to their level

What team leaders should do:

1. To add value to self and to the team

They need to constantly learn to be a good leader in their own performance – i.e. to be good models - examples to their team. A good name for a team leader is "the quiet revolutionary"! A leader must be an infectious self-starter who can't help but positively influence others on the team. This sort of leader:

- Projects energy
- Is involved - involving and empowering others
- Assists evolution and change
- Persuades and perseveres

- **Projects energy**

They constantly project excitement and motivation. They completely embrace the vision of the team. They can be quiet or noisy personalities, it doesn't matter, but deep down there is a **hunger for action**. They want to **catalyse positive action**. They avoid the negative. They refuse to go to the periodic complaining sessions where a million reasons are given why *"you can't get from here to there"*. No, they look for solutions. They get participation.

- **Is involved - involving and empowering others**

Good leaders walk around nudging, assisting, helping and asking questions almost without being noticed. They share all the information they have. They build into others the disciplines they have. They encourage new projects and new ways of working. The result is that all the team is

involved. Good team leaders get total involvement and this needs constant input into the team by sharing with the members whatever power, influence and other resources they have. Yes, they empower others to do the job willingly, rapidly and well. Good leaders are not concerned about losing control or sharing power. They trade those slight risks to improve motivation.

- **Assists evolution and change**

The good leader guides, smoothes the way and helps others map out and explore new pathways of opportunity. In today's world, the ability to evolve, adapt and change is the key to effectiveness. But change is hard! (see 7.7) Change produces fear; it threatens our habits and weakens our present momentum. Leaders manage the process of change on their team well. They involve others early on – planning ahead – communicating **why** and **what** to the whole team. Above all they champion the advantages of "success" to the team.

- **Persuades and perseveres**

Good leaders identify obstacles and – to use an American footballing expression – 'take them out': blocking and tackling to create running room for the team. [You aren't allowed to do this in rugby!] Unlike in America football, good leaders clear paths by winning over those who stand in the way. This is done in a variety of ways. Some go straight to a home office leader and plead for support. Others use more subtle strategies – using third party advocates, bargaining etc. Team leaders may not have as much positional power as a senior leader, but instead may find support from many in our company for all know they are on the 'coal face'. This requires the skill and tenacity of a terrier! They grab you by the trousers and keep shaking! They persevere for their team. Amazingly, most people are turned on rather than turned off by terriers! Perseverance pays!

2. To seek for better awareness and choice

Teams succeed when they know their strengths and weaknesses and are quickly aware of opportunities and threats. This sounds elementary, but many teams follow a "ready – shoot - aim" philosophy. Without understanding teams do what has always been done – often with regret later.

Good team leaders have a balance of action and reasoned, thoughtful insight leading to rational choices. Good team leaders do this by:

- Looking beyond the obvious
- Maintaining perspective
- Pyramid learning

- **Looking beyond the obvious**

Our teams are not anthills where instinct is the bulwark against destruction. We need to **think things through**. Good team leaders value and encourage the search for information and for the best feasible option among many choices. "Fly-by-the-seat-of-your pants" team leaders frustrate their teams. Good team leaders think ahead, find out the right questions to ask, analyse situations and most importantly they involve others on the team in this exercise! Their enquiries are nearly always informal. They will spend time/money to get information so they are prepared with a forward plan. They are distressed at the necessity of "engineering in the field."

- **Maintaining perspective**

Any team that has lost the big picture - its overarching vision and its objectives and goals – has lost everything. Good leaders keep their eyes on the prize! These leaders keep preventing their team from being myopic – having tunnel vision.

Good leaders also protect their team from the impact of goals or changes that other people in the company try to impose on the team without thinking of the consequences. They ask lots of *'what if?'* questions upfront, seeking to avoid unintended consequences. They don't want their team to be involved in the chaos that ensues when a cannon ball is fired from a "loose cannon".

- **Pyramid learning**

Good team leaders are habitual teachers. They stress the need to understand a situation, to look at all available options and make rational choices. They teach people to think like leaders. This openness to learning explains the best thing about good leaders - they are replaceable by a whole team of potential leaders because the whole team has been opened up to knowledge and caught the spirit of inquiry.

3. To help their team to focus and integrate

Focus is the ability of the team to fix its attention on the vision, the objectives and the goals of the team. Integration is getting all the diverse individuals on the team to get involved in such a way that their gifts are being used. So often teams look like a "spaghetti toss" – every one going every which way – completely unfocussed. A team is people doing something **together**. Integration often means breaking up little "turfs" – areas where people put up barriers of control.

To do this good team leaders need to:

- ✓ Focus energy on key opportunities
- ✓ Foster linkages with others
- ✓ Influence co-operative action

- **Focus energy on key opportunities**

All teams have experienced the problem of too much opportunity and not enough direction. Great opportunities are often disguised as impossible situations. Each new path forks off into a dozen different pathways. Good leaders help their team to choose the right paths and set the right priorities. This is not done by telling them what to do, but by teaching them a process of good decision-making. This process helps the team to focus and gets much better collaboration from all. The team learns to test alternatives and get their bearing on the most promising course of action. There needs to be cross-functional, cross-level analysis by the whole team. This encourages a co-operative spirit in the implementation stage. Good team leaders facilitate this.

- **Foster linkages with others**

Teams often function in "a labelled-cage" – the Tunis team – the Uighur team - the Dutch home office team etc. Within these cages we work at tasks assigned to us and we can lose perspective. Good team leaders break down cages and expand the team members' way of seeing things. They create linkages and common bonds with other teams right across the whole organisation. Team leaders spend a lot of their time on this. They help people feel, *"We are in this together".*

- **Influence co-operative action**

Creating linkages is not enough. Good leaders go beyond that to get real co-operative action in the team and across teams. This is not an easy task! Co-operative action needs lots of set-up and follow-through. Why is there so much "dis-co-operation" in our company? Basically some people see no great need for co-operation, and never bother to learn the skills required to co-operate. Sometimes we fear credit-sharing! Many don't plan, so there is no time to co-operate. Good team leaders purposely build relationships inside and outside our company **pre-need**. Also they never burn their bridges to others no matter how great the provocation. Future co-operation is too important to throw away in a moment of emotional indulgence.

4. To encourage and develop innovation and learning in each team member so each one is using his/her gifting.

Most team leaders are very ordinary and they generate improvement bit by bit – *"little by little taking ground".*

To do this they:

- Support creativity

- Take initiative
- Accentuate the positive
- Are never satisfied!

- **Support creativity**

Good team leaders keep challenging their team to invest time, talent and resources in innovation re: evangelism and church planting or whatever the team vision is. Team leaders should value highly creative approaches to perceived problems or some new twist that captures an opportunity. Good teams are unrelenting in their quest for small innovations that will lead more people to Jesus and help them to be incorporated into fast growing churches.

- **Take initiative**

Good team leaders seize the initiative – they are activists. They catalyse *'what if?'* thinking into **action**. They take reasonable risks and encourage the whole team to do so. They quickly size up improvement opportunities, involve the team, come up with a plan and then simply get on with it!

- **Accentuate the positive**

The team leader continually works on a team environment where the members are glad to participate. They create a positive outlook for the team. If this is not present then team members spend their energies grumbling about their troubles, "getting even" or pursuing outside interests. Good team leaders create a positive environment by:

  - ✧ Modelling and coaching positive interaction
  - ✧ Getting rid of negative rules and practises if possible and if not, helping to buffer people from their effects. If you mutter, *"How bad it is!"* within earshot of a team member, you are gently encouraged to take the opportunity to make it better!

- **Are never satisfied!**

Good team leaders develop a spirit of continuous improvement on the team. No team leader should be convinced that "this is as good as it gets". They have **process abilities** incrementally changing and transforming their team bit by bit. They are very satisfied (rewarded) when they see great outcomes from this.

5. To handle complaints wisely

- Welcome complaints! Give team members time and respect. Indicate that you accept plain speaking and the opportunity to discover "what hurts" and "where it itches". This is a major way to help improve situations for all concerned.
- Anger is better expressed than suppressed! Don't let anger threaten you. Encourage forth-rightness. Create a friendly atmosphere on the team and build rapport with team members.
- A complaint is a negative reaction to some event or happening. If the complaint is expressed with a positive intent to a leader and a team, it can improve the situation.

Therefore respond positively to complaints with:

  - ◆ **A disclaimer:** For example: *"I wasn't rejecting/criticising/finding fault with you personally – but just concerning the situation/event."*
  - ◆ **An affirmation**: For example: *"I appreciate your attitude to …..your plain speaking on this…..or that"* or *"the way you handled…..the role you played,…your achievement in this…"* or *"your support for my efforts in….your relations with the team…your ability to…."*
  - ◆ **An assertion**: For example: *"You were right to take action….to point out… to visit…"* or "*You have a right to a clearly defined policy…clear instructions for such an assignment…. to opt for this or that course…to adopt such procedures". "Nevertheless", "but"* and then

explain the other side of the coin. Explain the principles, the constraints, the policies to be kept or the strategies to be furthered.

The aim is an interacting relationship of responsibility and accountability - of freedom between team members within accepted limits leading to co-operation and synergy. Synergy requires mutual confidence, understanding and support.

All team members – including the leader – need to recognise:

"I am a person under authority", as the Roman officer so clearly recognised in Luke 7:8.

It has been said that when a person gets "really mad" at you – **you'd better listen**! You might learn some "home truths"! They may be valid or not, but if buried (long suppressed) they will damage relationships and team work.

"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." James 1:19

8.10 Conclusion

(a) **Team leaders must involve their teams early and often**. If they do so they value-add their efforts to the team, while focussing the skills of the team. They get co-operative synergistic action as they tackle problems and grasp opportunities.

If your team is falling apart, poor leadership is probably at the root of your problem. Work hard as a team to improve this. Keep trying things - like Edison and his light bulb - until something lights up.

(b) **Ten Things Needed in Leadership**

- ✧ Good Modelling
- ✧ Compassion – Pastoral Care Skills
- ✧ Communication Skills - output and input (listening)
- ✧ Priorities
- ✧ Servanthood
- ✧ Clear philosophy and ethos of operation – a sense of purpose
- ✧ Everything about vision, objectives, goals and tasks written down and annually reviewed and revised
- ✧ Management skills:
  - ◆ Planning
  - ◆ Organising
  - ◆ Decision-making
  - ◆ Delegation
  - ◆ Evaluation - measurement and analysis
- ✧ Continual learning
- ✧ **And finally anointing**

NOTES

[1] **The Friendship Gap** by Tim Stafford (1984), IVP-USA, ISBN 0 87784 975 7

9. Communication Shortfalls

9.1 Teaching, Learning and Communication

9.2 The Rules of Communication

9.3 Learning about Listening

9.4 Feedback

9.5 Communicating Outside the Team

9.6 Conflict, Communication and Culture

9. Communication Shortfalls

In our company we want to see great teamwork. But good teams are sustained in the 'old-fashioned' way - lots of TLC – Teaching, Learning and Communication!

9.1 Teaching, Learning and Communication

A good team is a learning team. Knowledge is absolutely vital in our ministry. How can we get it, how can we improve it and how can we pass it on? Knowledge - of God and much else - is the primary driver in our company. So the distinction between working and learning is often very fuzzy even on good teams.

Most problems on teams are failures of learning.

- Leaders who pay attention to their learning - listening to those that they lead - will learn to be better leaders.
- Teams that have struggled with ill-defined objectives in the past will know how to identify a fuzzy objective in the present and bring it into sharper focus.
- Team members, who in the past have gone down in flames doing battle with others on the team, will realise the futility of infighting and intolerance and will develop skills for appreciating one another.
- Good teams learn from past experience. If they don't, then the team is not sharing what they are learning. This is one of the mysteries of team! Why do we keep our mouths shut? In management books this is called the Abilene Paradox – first documented by a man called Jerry Harvey.

  He tells of an absurd family outing on a very hot day in Texas (hence Abilene). The family was sitting comfortably at home in the air-conditioning when the father-in-law said, "*Let's get in the car and go to Abilene and have dinner in a restaurant."* When polled, every family member said it was a good idea. So they all piled into the non-air-conditioned car and drove the 106 miles in 106^{o} F (41^{o} C). On the way the conspiracy of cheerfulness dissipated. Everyone wanted to know whose bad idea the trip was. *"I just wanted to go along to be nice." "I went along because you went along".* In the end it was clear no one wanted to go on the trip - not even the father–in-law!

So people miscommunicate just as badly out of good intentions as out of bad. So often people agree to do something just because it is thought that this is how to be a good "team player". This is bad for a team – it is a form of laziness and cowardice. Clearly what is needed – besides the bare minimum of good intent - is an easy method for better communication.

9.2 The Rules of Communication

1. To communicate there must be an exchange of information

- There must be at least two individuals in communication
- There must be an exchange of information. All communication should be a two way process; both partners need to get and give information.

2. All information exchange should be as clear and complete as possible.

A variation of Murphy's Law is that: *if anything can be misunderstood – it will be!*

There are several reasons why we don't understand information we receive:

- Different words mean different things to different people.
- We don't pay attention all the time! This is especially true of verbal communication. Our minds wander. We can think faster than we can talk!

- Often we think we are familiar with the subject and so mentally we jump steps. So carefully review your communication and make sure it is complete and there are no jumps in it.

3. The information should be meaningful to the individual who is receiving it.

He has to see it as important or it will go in one ear and out the other. For him to think it is important it must be relevant to his situation.

- Always get confirmation that the message you are communicating has been understood.
- Feedback is crucial!
- Information can be given in many ways. The more ways you use, the clearer and more believable it will be. However, the message must be consistent.

4. Developing a team culture of listening

Someone has said, *"The road to the heart is the ear!"* People rarely listen well enough to really hear! There are two kinds of listening:

- **Evaluative**: when we listen critically to what someone says, interpret it according to what we know, evaluate it for being true to reality and then formulate our position.
- **Connective**: when we listen to understand and get a feeling of rapport with the speaker. As we listen, we develop a warm feeling of connectedness and identity. We don't need to agree – just to understand.

On teams both these forms of listening are needed, but connective listening is harder to develop. The key to connective listening is **unconditional respect**. In most cultures respect has to be earned. On our teams we need a culture of respect. A team member who is speaking deserves to be heard. When team members feel they are understood they will feel more secure and be less reactive.

We have all experienced telling someone something without really communicating. You tell someone what should be done. They agree and even repeat it. Later you find they didn't do it or they did it very differently from the way it should have been done. Is this insubordination? No, it is just distorted understanding. Few people listen openly. Most think evaluatively. They interpret and judge through their thought filters. They hear what they are conditioned to hear. So **how** are you to communicate?

Rule One: Show respect and compassion for the listener.

Aloofness, superiority and a judgemental attitude will close the ears of the listener. If you show compassion to the listeners on your team and show that you understand the discomfort they are suffering, it will really open their ears!

- It will give a sense of security to the listener. This will make it easier for him/her to drop their defences and really hear what you have to say.
- It will help you to say things that are meaningful, responsive and inspiring.

Rule Two: People will learn what you live!

Leaders need to care for their team members. This care and service originates in a state of mind. If a listener is able to sense that the speaker is not being self-centred **and** there is a track record to prove it, then there will be a sense of security and team members will pay attention.

Everyone wants excellence. Many don't know what that might look like. Many don't think they are capable of achieving it! Excellence is the result of operating at a level of high intensity and involvement, free from distracting thoughts that are birthed in insecurity.

Teams don't have to be 'motivated' to perform really well. They just need the chance and the tools. The desire to excel and improve is given by the Holy Spirit. Listening is crucial to this as it opens creative channels and provides fresh perspectives. When listening increases, morale, quality and effectiveness also increase on the team.

So a key part of communication is to have a team that respects and understands one another.

9.3 Learning about Listening

When we think about communicating, we tend to picture ourselves talking. If only we could:

- Say things more clearly
- Say things more slowly or simply louder
- Say things with more erudition

Then the team would understand better and we would get our way more often!

This is not what communication is all about!

- Good communication is a series of checks we run:
  - on ourselves
  - then on others
- Listening is three-quarters of good quality communication.
- When good communication is working in a team each of these four elements should be working in each team member.

Talking	Listening to ourselves listening
Listening to ourselves talking	Listening

- **Talking**
  - We often focus too much on ourselves talking.
  - It is true we are an essential factor in communication.
  - But listening is more important because the quality of listening determines the quality of communication.
- **Listening**
  - Always begin by listening
  - This should be very easy – but it is often ferociously hard!
  - You must simply listen!

  The other two squares are the keys to both talking and listening.
- **Listening to ourselves talking**
  - Are we going on too long?
  - Are we exaggerating a little – embellishing the story?
  - Are we getting little subtle jabs into others?
  - Are we assuming that the listeners know something they don't?

  There can be all sorts of contamination in what we say on the team – often unconsciously expressed. What comes over to our listeners is:

  - My importance
  - My superior knowledge
  - My prejudices
  - My disdain for the views of an adversary
  - My insecurity about what others think of me
  - My lack of importance in the team
  - My ignorance of the topic at hand
  - My worry that someone is waiting to shoot me down

And all this unconsciously!

In team meetings keep asking yourself, *"Am I saying something helpful and relevant to the team as a whole – to its objectives, to its overriding vision, to the tactics and plans that the team has set out?"*

At all times, make sure that what you say is:

- Direct
- Relevant
- Respectful

Then people will begin to understand you!

➢ **Listening to ourselves listening**

This is more difficult and more important!

- ***Are you thinking too much?***
  Are you busy thinking about the reply to what your team member is saying? If so, you are not being fair. Forget your reply. Do your team members the courtesy of paying attention to their thoughts.
- ***Are you jumping to conclusions?***
  Are you impatient to begin to mentally finish off your team members thoughts for them! This is arrogant. Be patient. Let them finish. Listen the whole time. There may be a twist in the tale!
- ***Don't do instant analysis!***
  Don't subject your team member's thoughts to rigorous instant analysis. Think of conversation as a garden to wander about in and appreciate the flowers. Conversations are not shooting galleries! Analysis is good, but do it later.
- ***Don't be so cocksure!***
  We tend to run what we hear through our internal database of what we know. *"That won't work…that violates the second law of thermodynamics…that's stupid and illogical."* But our internal database is not always right and we are often wrong.

If you always listen as you talk and listen as you listen, then your worst communication dysfunctions – your own agitation, your own ego-needs and your own impulsive reactions – will be checked.

9.4 Feed back

This is a crucial part of good communication – especially on teams. There is definite performance value in getting useful feedback. Feedback communication, mutual evaluation and keeping score are all vital if the team is to thrive. Good teams are observably strong in this area.

♦ **What feedback does**

We live in an information–driven society. We measure everything to see how we are doing. Our teams need to know how they are doing. We have a voracious appetite for feedback:

- ✧ From one another
- ✧ From the team leader
- ✧ From the local people
- ✧ From the organisation as a whole
- ✧ In the form of members' comments
- ✧ In the form of written words
- ✧ That is scheduled, formal and official
- ✧ That just happens
- ✧ On the big picture

- ✧ On the here and now 'nitty–gritty' picture

This feedback should be continuous so that every team member has a living thread of information about how he/she is doing.

- ♦ **Good and bad feedback**

Surprises

If you give a team member good, honest feedback and he/she is surprised, then something is wrong! What is wrong? You have waited too long before clueing in this team member. Continuous feedback beats periodic evaluation. Then mistakes don't have time to become habits. If you put off corrective feedback too long, people will resent you, *Why didn't you tell me before?"* Annual evaluations are for the birds! By the time someone finds out they are not doing well, it is too late! It feels like the Nuremberg Trials!

Soft-peddling

- ✧ The most important feedback we can give is often negative
- ✧ There should be lots of affirmation
- ✧ We need affirmation and thrive on it – e.g. babies learning to walk
- ✧ But rebuking – correction - is hard and unpleasant
- ✧ The very worst thing you can do is to ignore a problem or minimize it
- ✧ For want of a nail, the war was lost!
- ✧ Replace nails now before a small problem grows into something huge

Good news/bad news

- ✧ No one takes criticism easily – so give it with care
- ✧ Affirmation, yes – but never give compliments that don't ring true – flattery – "buttering people up"
- ✧ When you have something good to say, focus on the good - be clear, honest and direct
- ✧ Honesty is the most respectful way to handle the problem

Crosscultural rebukes

The open, honest, direct way is very "western". I think it is Biblical, but some cultures never do it this way. Try to gain an understanding of the ways of different cultures.

- Always rebuke in private – praise in public
- Use a third party
- Ask how do you correct people in their culture

A Comment

Feedback is not just a top-down phenomenon. Normally it is team leaders who monitor their teams and provide regular feedback and evaluation. But the opposite ought also to be true.

A Question

Can a self-directed team self-monitor?

- ✧ If all team members have the designated role of giving feedback, then giving feedback becomes an ad hoc, undocumented, informal process. This is not bad, but not great. On most teams there is a lot of vague feedback already, *"By the way…you led the prayer meeting really well last night!"*
- ✧ All teams can institute official feedback sessions. These are times especially set aside for feedback. We did this in our family and it worked really well. Make it friendly and make it orientated towards problem–solving so people leave feeling positive.
- ✧ 'Buddying' – pair people (not husbands & wives) so everyone has a sounding board. The buddies should meet once a week over lunch to discuss problems, encouragements and

performance questions. Note that this time is not a back-patting session! It is best if there are hard questions to go over each time. Then the pairing will accomplish something.

- **Obstacles to feedback**

  1. Lack of availability

  Both team leaders and team members must make themselves available to listen. Not listening is a very common complaint teams have of their leaders.

  2. Fear

  "If I share frankly what I really think I will get myself or others in trouble." Team members must be free to disagree. We must encourage one another to speak the truth in love and wisdom.

  3. The triviality of the problem

  Often there is little feedback because the team member doesn't want to 'bother' the leader with such a small matter when he/she has so many big issues to attend to. To a team leader every concern of his/her team members is an important issue and is relevant to be discussed.

  4. Inactivity as a result of suggestions and criticism

  If suggestions are not acted upon – i.e. there is listening but no resulting action – team members will get very disillusioned. There must be action! A procedure should be in place for acting on suggestions made, as well as for keeping the team informed what progress is being made on implementing ideas.

Rarely do teams need new techniques. Most already know how they should give feedback. They just need to practice this in the context of open fellowship.

So be frank and be accessible; welcome warmly all ideas – including the new and the different. Accept criticism. We should see criticism as healthy and normal and be concerned if there is a lack of criticism. Be sensitive and compassionate to all on the team. Listen very carefully. Let it be seen that something is done concerning every criticism and complaint.

Help team members to realise that during their time with our company they will probably have some significant ideas. These can never be introduced and implemented unless they are willing to share them. Encourage everyone to share. Realise that some team members will find it very difficult to do this. They may be hesitant. They may not be too clear in their minds exactly what to say and how to say it. This will especially be an issue if their first language is not English. Do all you can to encourage each person. Learn to summarize what a person is saying - i.e. elicit and formulate their key points and repeat back in an organised manner what may have been put over in a disorganised way.

9.5 Communicating outside the team

A team may have good internal communication, but may become starved of resources - prayer, finances, new recruits, visits etc. This is often the case in tight security situations. The problem is the gap between your actual situation (reality) and the perception that others in a support role have of you. This section is a tool to help you close that gap by helping you identify what you **want** them to think of you!

Step One:

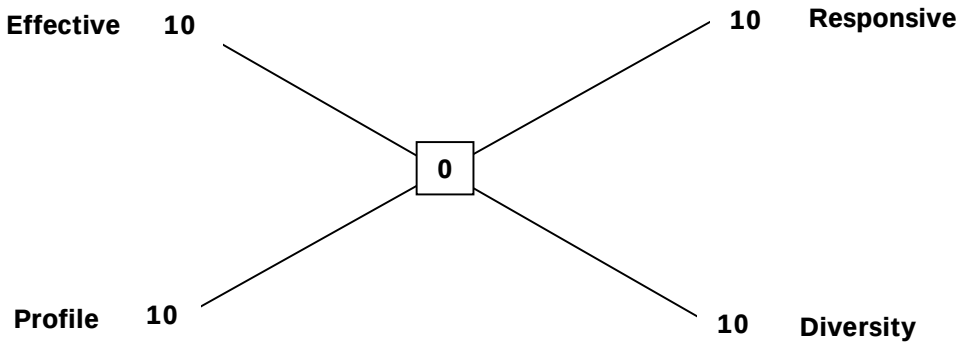
Write down all the factors you think are important about what you are doing – your distinctives, your attributes etc. You might include:

- Multi cultural diversity
- Key unreached people groups
- The integrity/ethos/character of your team

- Your effectiveness in evangelism/mobilisation/member care/training etc.
- Innovation/pioneering
- Ministry emphasis, social action/student work/street work
- Flexibility/adaptability
- Exciting image/vision
- The spiritual challenge

Step Two:

Then choose four of these key characteristics of your team.



Say you choose:	Score
Effectiveness in ministry	7
Responsiveness to people's felt-needs	4
Diversity of ministry/training	6
Profile (others perception)	1

Give yourself a score on a scale of 0-10 for each of these attributes, and plot this on a graph. Now discern what you would like to score (probably four 10s!).

So how are you going to communicate who you really are? Hints:

- Don't come up with a to-do list
- Think specifically what you can do to bring about change
- Don't think in terms of slogan-writing
- Think in terms of communication:
  - The content of the communication
  - The style
  - The believability of the message - both now and in the future.

9.6 Conflict, Communication and Culture

One of the greatest blocks to understanding other people inside or outside our particular culture is the tendency to judge the behaviour of others by your own standards.

- **The monkey and the fish** – innocent & tragic!

A group of monkeys coming down to a river observed another monkey fishing. He was catching the fish with his hands and putting them on the bank. Since monkeys don't eat fish, they asked why he was catching the fish. Here is his answer:

"I was watching the fish swimming up stream. I thought to myself how tired they must be swimming so hard without a breath of air so I thought I would give them a rest. I noticed with the first one I caught that he was so happy to be in the air. He just flicked about on the bank with joy and then lay still to rest. So now I have saved a lot more. They were all so happy to be rescued and now they are comfortably resting on the bank."

Assumption: a fish is the same as a monkey. The monkey acted with ethno-centrism! It was courageous, caring, serving – well-intentioned and mobile. Motives are not enough.

- There are two purposes for knowledge
  - ✧ Knowledge to change others – i.e. power
  - ✧ Knowledge to change ourselves

The Nature of all Culture

- ➢ Most people are proud of their culture – it works more or less, at least for them.
- ➢ Possibly some people are envious of a 'square' culture.
- ➢ Usually 'round' heads think 'square' heads are arrogant – i.e. 'square' heads have nothing to learn!
- ➢ If the square heads do try and learn their language, the 'round' heads appreciate the effort and communication can begin.

Directness and Language

- ➢ Westerners tend to enjoy direct language that uses the active voice.
- ➢ Nearly everyone else prefers using indirect language and the passive voice.
- ➢ Direct language is more precise. It gets to the point and minimizes ambiguity. It favours efficiency and precision.
- ➢ Indirect language is better at building and protecting relationships. Negative and potentially damaging communication is always framed in indirect language so the other person is not shamed or caused to lose face.
- ➢ The passive voice allows nuances with just enough ambiguity to communicate without rupturing relationships.

Example: Someone was washing glassware in a lab. and there was a crash. The conversation went something like this:

Me: *"M. did you break the flask?*"	Light voice – no judgement or disgust.
M.: *"No sir, the flask fell from my hand!"*	I thought this was irresponsible!
Me: *"Do you mean you broke the flask?"*	
M.: *"No, the flask fell from my hand"*	A bit stunned by the answer. I thought he was avoiding being accountable for his actions.

"What's his problem?" There are only a few others in lab. The flask is on the floor in bits. Why doesn't he just say, *'Sorry!'* But he refuses to be responsible! I won't trust **him** again!

Later analysis

M: He dropped the flask and it broke.

Me: I used the active voice, direct speech and used his name.

M: This brought embarrassment (shame, loss of face, dishonour) by my calling public attention to the mistake.

Me: I was precise in identifying both the problem and him as the cause of the problem. In many cultures the active voice and direct speech communicates **intentionality**. From his point of view, what I really said was:

"Did you intentionally break the flask?"

M: He had no intention of breaking the flask, so he used indirect speech:

"The flask fell from my hand."

Western World (Direct speech/active voice)	Much of the rest of the world (Indirect speech or passive voice)
I missed the bus.	The bus left without me.
I was in an accident.	An accident happened to me.
Someone stole my radio.	My radio has been stolen.
I made a mistake.	A mistake happened.

Example (Spanish)
I forgot - Se me olvido = "It forgot itself to me."

There is something called the negative attribution theory.

- If someone does/says something that doesn't fit your notions then you ascribe negative notions to that person!
- This is a very powerful theory in the west – i.e. we have no holding tank for reserved judgements.

So Core Cultural Values for Westerners are:

Directness – face– to–face – confrontational – forthright

Honesty – tell it like it is – no ambiguity – straightforward

Individualism and independence

Be accountable – take responsibility

Trust based on written contracts

Committed to the active voice in speech

Confrontation is the best way to handle problem situations.

Truth is the under-girding value.

Shame and Honour Cultures

- They resist using the active voice/direct speech for two reasons:
  - The active voice/direct speech implies intentionality. To use it would be to miscommunicate.
  - *"I cut my hair" – "I made my suit"* – I, as the direct cause, so OK if it honours me!
  - But never do so if it self-inflicts shame – loss of face or dishonour.
- The values of not being shamed – not losing face – are core values in many cultures.
- In a shame culture the worst thing a person can do is to cause another person to experience shame before their family, friends or business associates.
- Few things are more serious than exposing someone to public shame.
- The result is always a broken relationship.
- In some cases serious retribution toward the one causing the shame is taken as a way of restoring honour or 'face'.
- At least in the Arab World, westerners feel very great stress in relationships with nationals. They have few friends because using direct speech deeply offends people in a shame/honour culture. Without knowing it they often offend people.
- This is especially true in conflict situations.

Directness and Indirectness and Conflict

- Westerners are taught that confrontation is the best way to handle problems.
- If I see you doing something that bothers me, I go to you to talk about it. I do so quickly so that the problem doesn't grow.
- That is OK in a culture that values directness.
- It is **not** OK in a shame/honour culture for it causes shame and a lost relationship.

Another problem

- Someone from an indirect culture may approach you, a Westerner, looking for help.
- They tell you the problem they are having with another person (a westerner).
- But you have been taught that it is a Christian value never to talk "behind the back" of someone. It is gossip and is sinful!
- So you tell the person they must go directly to that person and discuss the problem with them, otherwise they are guilty of gossiping!
- Now you feel you have done the right thing and the other person goes away confused and offended. He/she will never come to you for help again!

Another Situation

We had student meetings in Beirut, Lebanon. I invited many people to come. There were notices everywhere. Invariably everyone would greet me warmly and thank me for the invitation. They would say they were very interested and would sincerely say they would come. However only 50-80 people came!

I was confused hundreds said they would come. If I compared this with the usual response of British students, I came to the conclusion it was very rude! Were all Arab students liars? irresponsible? deceptive? A Palestinian believer finally explained to me that:

- They never intended to come.
- Because I was a guest in their town and their culture and I was a graduate student and a teacher, they couldn't refuse my request because to do so would cause me loss of face. I would feel shame.
- Denying a request of an honoured guest in their town would also shame them.
- Rather than hurt me, they gave me "a relational yes" – i.e. they want to maintain the relationship but no they won't come to the meeting.
- I was wrong in the way I approached the situation. My first mistake was that going round student dormitories like that was not good for I did not build relationships. I should drink tea etc. before I invited them to the meeting. In an indirect culture little of any consequence happens outside strong interpersonal relationships.
- My second mistake was that I asked them a direct question, *"Will you come to the meeting tonight?"* Politeness obliged them to say a "relational yes"! What I should have said was, "*It would do me a great honour if you would be my guest at the meeting we are having tonight".* Or *"We are having this important meeting and we are inviting everyone in the student world of Beirut to come. I hope you can find the time to be my guest.*"
- I should only ask them to come to a meeting after a couple of months of getting to know them.

Indirect Strategies for Handling Conflict

Direct confrontation in indirect cultures is a crude strategy and very harmful to interpersonal relationships. A better way would be:

(1) Calling in a mediator or intermediary

- Very common in indirect cultures
- Call in someone fair – known to both parties and not emotionally involved - to help negotiate a win/win solution.

(2) Being humble and asking for protection from shame

- If someone is in serious danger of losing honour, he calls on someone else to protect him from danger.
- Sometimes use this with a very difficult situation or at police station etc.

An example of trying to get an exit visa:

"Oh dear, this is very difficult for me and I don't know what to do. I am expected to speak at a conference of some really important people soon. There will be great disappointment to them, because some will have travelled along way. It is going to be so embarrassing for me if I can't be there to greet them and speak at the meeting. I really need your help. Anything you can do for me will be very greatly appreciated. I am so sorry to have to cause you this difficulty. I don't know what to do. Please rescue me!"

- Extend lots of courtesy and respect for the official – smile etc.
- It works! I found it to be so with Saudis and with many others.
- In a shame culture one is morally obligated to protect another from shame if they are able to do so.
- An exception: When there is no relationship, there is no effort!

(3) Story telling

- My students were cheating in exams! They were very clever and hard to catch.
- I designed four different papers. They looked identical on the desks as they went in. If you copied from a neighbour you definitely got your answer wrong! It was easy to prove who had copied! They got caught and they were very indignant!
- I got the students together and told a story about very poor medical services in a country. The doctors were very bad. It was a terrible situation! Why were the doctors so bad? It was due to ignorance. Why were they ignorant after 7 years of medical school? It was because they cheated in exams!
- The cheating almost stopped. Cheating could be detected and was now seen to be culturally shameful.

(4) Blaming a third-party!

- What happens when someone is asked to do something that he can't honour?
- *"Can you take this boy to UK and give him a good education?"*
- He can't say, 'No' as this would break the relationship! What is he to do?
- Blame a third party!

- *"My company doesn't allow me to be involved in such things and if I did I could get into trouble."*
- He blames his company or the government etc.
- They withdraw their request because they don't want him to lose face or be shamed by his boss.
- You could get your team to have such policies!

Very useful for getting out of situations

- A woman is in hospital. It is very dirty. She believes she will never get better. How can she discharge herself without breaking relationships!

- She didn't complain about things. That would have brought dishonour to all. So with great authority she told everyone she would never get better in the hospital because of the "bad air". She must go home because there was "good air" in her part of town. So she left. People probably guessed that the air was not the problem, but everyone saved face!

Summary

- Inter-cultural living and working requires diligent attention to learning the core values of a culture and its various expressions.

- As you learn these, the results will be better understanding and fewer broken relationships as well as more effective ministry.

These core values determine how conflicts are to be resolved and how better communication can take place.

10. Turf Wars and Depleted Trust

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Nine Strategies for creating trust on your team

1. Clear, consistent goals
2. Be open, fair and willing to listen
3. Be decisive
4. Support all team members equally
5. Take responsibility for team actions
6. Give credit to team members
7. Be sensitive to the needs of your fellow team members
8. Respect the opinions of others
9. Empower team members to act

10.3 Crosscultural Perceptions and Trust

1. Selection and editing
2. Organisation of noticed input
3. Interpretation of the facts

10. Turf Wars and Depleted Trust

10.1 Introduction

Team leaders can quickly lose all credibility with their teams. A single perceived act of betrayal - even not knowing all the facts - can cause a team to abandon any trust in their otherwise well–meaning leader.

What is true of team leaders is equally true of all the team members. It doesn't take much in the way of betrayal – a false statement, a misunderstanding not cleared up, evidence of self-serving above team serving - and trust dies.

Turf Wars occur where two team members see their task as their 'turf' and are prepared to violate the spirit of unity on the team to ensure that task remains theirs. That task represents power to them. Intra-team warfare of this sort is nearly always the result of the death of trust. Deep-seated resentment that one member of the team (or a group) may have towards another happens when the fabric of openness, honestly and reliability on a team is torn.

Distrust is rational. It can be described as closure. When we lack information about something or someone, it is ordinary human nature for us to fill in the gap (i.e. bring closure) with **negative** information of our own making.

When I don't know your intentions, I assume the worst! If I don't know you are telling me the truth, I assume you are not! This suspicion is a survival mechanism.

In the team situation, loss of trust in someone on the team, results in pulling that person out of the loop so they are ineffective and unable to perform as a team member. No one pays them any attention. When we are told something that conflicts with what we see, trust dies and with trust confidence, rapport and team relationships.

Stephen Covey in **Seven Habits of Highly Effective People** [1], describes trust as a kind of bank account. It is a good metaphor. An example would be:

A new team member joins the team. He is given a deposit – say $100. If that team member behaves in a consistent and trustworthy way then the deposit begins to grow. However, a **single** act of dishonesty can blow your entire account. Then your promises, explanations etc. come back marked ***"not sufficient funds"***.

Restoring trust when your account is empty is very difficult. You are like the boy who cried 'wolf'; you have no basis upon which to rebuild trust. You are going to be penalised for a very long time!

10.2 Nine strategies for creating trust on your team

Try not to break trust in the first place! But at times, in order to protect a confidence, there may be no option and now there is a long road ahead of you to win your team back. Keep telling the truth. Keep your promises. Be reliable. Rebuild your account by planning regular, small deposits. If you fail again, acknowledge it to the team. Ask forgiveness and keep going.

In order to build and maintain trust the team member/leader must:

1. **Have clear, consistent goals**

   Vision, strategic objectives and tactical goals are the glue that keeps teams together. They are also part of the foundation of trust.

   If a team member doesn't know what he is supposed to be doing or where he is heading, there is a tendency to be guarded and defensive. When I feel myself adrift and uncertain, commitment to the team is considerably weakened and trust levels are very low. But when the team is moving in a predicted direction towards agreed-on outcomes, that foundation of trust is built up.

If your team is being plagued with a series of ever changing priorities and team members are confused and disillusioned, trust dies and team members become self-indulgent and team–indifferent.

If this happens, it is absolutely vital to drastically step up communication to re-assert the purpose of the team. Trust and communication are in direct correlation. They rise and fall together. This is especially true during a change period. Low communication results in low trust.

2. Be open, fair and willing to listen

The more open, fair and willing to listen team members are, the more likely they are to receive the trust of others on the team.

"Fairness" is important. People need to hear you talk about being fair ["*I'd like the outcome to be fair to everyone", "It's important to me that people feel the process is fair*."]

Show a **genuine** interest in what the other person is saying by learning and practising active empathetic listening skills. [See section on communication] Set up ways of making yourself accessible to others – an open door policy.

On a team that is truly pulling together there can be no outsiders, secret-keepers or conspirators. Being open means, in large part, **letting go**. This is harder for non-Westerners than for those from the West. But there is **an inverse relationship between control and credibility**. If you keep a tight grip on information useful to your team and don't release it, you are not going to be trusted. Once again it is the mind filling in what it does not know with negative assumptions. To have credibility you must let go of control over others.

3. Be decisive

A truism: **When it comes to building trust, even a bad decision is better than no decision**.

Like all truisms, it is a generalisation and not always true. But nothing sucks the air out of a team more than having outcomes that need to be achieved, but having no one making any decision. People just do not trust people who are indecisive!

We have looked already [section 5] at poor decision-making and especially at crosscultural decision-making. The emphasis here is on trust-building. I have seen many a team frustrated and angry because decisions are not being made. Motives are called into question etc. Equally, distrust is created when the team doesn't understand **the process** by which important decisions are made.

4. Support all team members equally

Loyalty is a vital part of building team trust. The concept comes from family life and **a team is a family**.

In families sibling rivalry is common. You occasionally beat up on your brothers and sisters, but you fight tooth and nail if any one else dares to want to beat them up! That is what team life should be like (without the physical violence)! Fights occur, but you keep them within the team! You stick together. You protect other team members from becoming victims of non-team member abuse.

5. Take responsibility for team actions

This is hard, but vital. If something goes wrong, you don't point a finger. Each member of the team takes responsibility for the actions of the team as a whole. Accusing each other always destroys the team. In a culture of blame on a team, no one is going to speak freely. They won't offer ideas or provide honest critiques if they are going to get a ton of bricks thrown at them. So the culture of the team should be, *"Yes, our team has made mistakes. God has forgiven us, we have learned from them and we are moving on."*

6. Give credit to team members

If anything good happens, give credit to the whole team. Shine the light on the team and not on individuals. Shine sincerely, not in a superficial and artificial way or you will kill trust.

We need to work hard on this because we are all selfish and self-protecting. Leaders of teams need to be especially careful about this as they often get credit for what the team has done.

7. Be sensitive to the needs of fellow team members

Working (whatever it is - fixing vehicles, doing evangelism, writing recruiting letters etc.) is hard. We all appreciate it when others understand the pressures on us and sympathize. So a major way to put deposits in the 'trust' bank account is by showing awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of other team members – their struggles etc.

Different people and cultures have a preference for different forms of communication:

- "Say it with flowers"
- articulate it with words face-to-face
- e-mail
- lots of details or just a pat on the back!

Find out how people like affirmation and then try and relate to them within **their** "comfort zone" - not yours. This will take flexibility and thought on your part.

8. Respect the opinions of others

Often on a team, another team member comes up with an idea that you think is the stupidest thing you have ever heard! First check that it is not a joke! If it is not, still try and understand why the idea was proposed. Learn to distinguish an idea from the person presenting the idea. Always **respect** your team members. If you don't respect them, they won't trust you.

Westerners are usually very stingy with respect - "*I won't **give** him respect – he has got to **earn** it".* If you are finding it hard to respect someone on your team, acknowledge that **you** are part of the problem. It is your fallen nature that is making you react in this way.

To learn respect for people return to the basics of your goals and roles. Focus on the task and not just on your team members. Put aside past bad behaviour and personality quirks. Learn to serve people by affirming them. At the beginning this may be on a narrow base of whatever the person does well.

Gossip kills respect. Often you get advance word through the grapevine, *"Watch out for Ben!"* Don't listen to gossip. Form opinions about Ben by working with him, not by listing to vague rumours. Ben's reputation is not Ben!

9. Empower team members to act

Trust given results in trust, support and loyalty given back in return.

Team members need to create an atmosphere where other team members feel free to take risks and take action towards the completion of the task. Teams empower themselves. If teams are afraid to take action or risks without getting approval from some higher authority, then those teams cannot be empowered. [Informing "the bosses" what the team is doing **is** necessary – it is good communication]. In teams like this trust begins to grow.

10.3 Crosscultural Perception and Trust

It is amazing how two people can view the same situation in different ways and arrive at conflicting interpretations. Obviously when two people are seeing the same thing in different ways, they start to wonder about the other person – in particular their sanity! *"Is he mad?" "She must be psychotic to delude herself in that way!" "What sort of organisation am I in, that recruits people who cannot see the nose on their own face?"*

Perceptual differences between team members - even of the same background and culture - are a major cause of trust breakdown. The crosscultural element only exacerbates this. To reverse this breakdown we have to understand that everyone's perceptions of the world differ.

Everyone, from every culture:

(i) **Selects and edits** information

(ii) **Organises** that information according to importance or in an attempt to bring closure.

(iii) **Interprets** the information

We will look at these three superficially. The point is to see the incredible diversity in the way we do these things as human beings. It is a major wonder we communicate at all! This is where we, as teams, need to pour in grace.

(i) Selection and Editing:

Our brain is constantly receiving millions of stimuli from activities we are engaged in – lights, noise, talking, wind, our own thinking as a source of stimulation, our feelings of hunger etc. To make sense of this huge bombardment of stimuli, we become **selective** in our conscious perceptions and block out the rest. We **edit out** what does not meet our **expectations**, **needs** or **wants**.

For example, our first impressions of people are very fast. We make a judgement in a couple of seconds, and **then** we tend to select only those actions that support those first impressions. We **expect** certain things to be true and, sure enough, we find them so. We don't realise that we have only selected data that reinforce our expectations.

An example: if you need space for a desk, you begin to notice all the vacant space in the building - space you had never noticed before. If you are thinking of getting a new car, you become aware of all the second-hand car lots along the road you travel daily.

In summary, it is only when you **notice** something in your environment that you can effectively interact with it. Different people - and especially different cultures - notice different things. Egyptians don't notice dirt in public spaces, but they notice it in private spaces and keep their houses very clean inside, while the street may be filthy.

(ii) Organisation of Noticed Input

We organise input by two methods:

- Importance
- A desire to bring closure

Importance: We focus on what is important to us and everything else is pushed into the background.

On a team, it often happens that two team members think they have been talking about the same thing, but actually they are talking about two different things. For example: at the end of the conversation, you think you have an agreement. Then you notice the person doing something totally different from what you thought you had agreed to. Your trust in that person

is blown! In reality, you both heard quite different things from the same conversation based on each person's **pre-determined** priority of importance. Each person was actually listening to himself rather than to what the other person was saying! It was never a dialogue – always a "dual-monologue".

There are ways of overcoming this sort of misunderstanding. The best (if you have time) is to write down:

- **Who** is responsible?
- **For what** is he/she responsible?
- **When** is what he/she is responsible for finished?
- **How** you are going to check on each other to make sure you are on track?

Go over it slowly – details are important.

Desire to bring closure

This is the 'leap' that says, *"Where there is smoke, there is a fire"*. When we have incomplete information, we tend to fill in the blanks with pre-suppositions that we already know [smoke=fire]. This is OK. The problem is our fallen nature! We always fill in the blanks with negative pre-suppositions. So when we are "left out of the loop" for any reason, we always assume someone's intentionality – they want to harm us.

Very rarely do we see the full-picture. What we do is see a partial picture and then we fill in the blanks and to us that is as real as if we actually observed the full picture. This is why rumours are so easy to start, and so powerful in their effect! So be sure, as best as you can, to get the facts and reject your desire for closure based on pre-supposition.

(iii) Interpretation

This is all very interesting and very much culture bound. It involves:

- Environment
- Attitude/mood
- Our comfort zones
- The last bit of information we heard - i.e. context

➢ <u>Environment</u>

If you don't tell a person how you want them to interpret the information you are giving them, they are free to interpret it based on whatever was rumbling around in their brain at that moment.

Example: After you have spoken at a meeting about your team and world evangelisation, someone presses £20 into your hand. He does not speak. You think, *"Isn't that great…that will help me to buy the laptop I have always wanted!"*

➢ <u>Attitude/mood</u>

Our moods change - often on an hourly basis! You know what your attitude and mood is at a particular time. It really helps if you **know** (by either verbal or non-verbal communication) people's attitude at the time you speak with them. How things look on the outside and how we interpret information depends a lot on what is happening inside.

➢ <u>Our comfort zones</u>

We have comfort zones where we like to stay. These comfort zones vary enormously due to background, culture, worldview etc. Each person's comfort zone is probably unique. We interpret information in such a way that we can keep within our comfort zones.

- Context

We all interpret information we hear based on the last piece of information we were thinking about. This skews our interpretation – seeing false patterns – making avoidable mistakes.

The lesson in all this is that is terribly easy for misunderstanding to lead to a breakdown in trust. This is particularly true on multi-cultural teams. Our suspicious natures usually do us a great disservice. It's OK to trust your sensory input. It is your brain you have to watch carefully. Once trust is destroyed, it may sometimes be almost impossible for it to be restored - one strike and you're out!

What happens when there is no trust on a team? Trust is replaced by:

- Control
- Rules
- Regulations
- Structure
- Polices and procedures etc.

As much time is spent on policing the team as is spent on accomplishing the task! The team develops a "lawyer culture". There are rules and regulations that are very clear but that stifle creativity. A team with a "lawyer culture" doesn't focus on what is best for the ministry - how best to plant churches, how to meet the needs of people etc. It focuses on technical aspects of how it can comply with the rules.

NOTES

[1] **Seven Habits of Highly Effective People**, by Stephen Covey (1990), Simon & Schuster
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11. Toxic Team Atmospheres

11.1 Introduction

11.2 Symptoms of Toxins Invading the Team

11.3 The Causes of Toxic Atmospheres

11.4 Principles of Handling Personality Conflicts

11.5 Crosscultural Resolutions

11.6 Notes on Negotiation

11.7 Consultants as a Resource in Resolution

11. Toxic Team Atmospheres

11.1 Introduction

When we think about teams, we tend to picture perfect teams. Each member is an enthusiastic self-starter, intelligent, generous minded, a clear communicator and quick to jump in and help when others are not doing so well. This sort of team member falls somewhere between an angel and the people you see in clothing adverts! So ideal teams are composed of near perfect people whose egos and individuality are crucified daily, who are clothed with the beauty of holiness and who have a white-hot passion for the vision of the team.

But real teams - like your team - are made up of living, breathing and very imperfect real people. In a small sample of newly formed teams on a summer campaign, team members were asked what their initial impression of their fellow team members was like. All were taken aback by the personalities of the others in their team. They were filled with dismay, for X was rather nerdish, Y appeared to be a jerk and as for Z - he should have been certified! *"Why, Oh why did I have to be in **this** team?"* was the initial reaction.

The biggest reason why teams fail is romanticism! They rapidly self-destruct in an orgy of personality conflicts, misunderstandings, crosscultural tensions and criticism. So team building is moving beyond mere expectations of perfection into the muck and mire of what it is to work together with other fallen human beings.

11.2 Symptoms of Toxins Invading the Team

11.2.1 Continuous setbacks due to misunderstanding

What we intend to communicate is very rarely what we succeed in communicating. The message transmitted is not the message received. The result of this is not usually an obvious and immediate catastrophe. It is like a plane with a small fault in its autopilot. It won't crash. It will stay in the air. The people on the plane are happy, even the pilots are happy, until eventually they realise that the plane is miles off course and they have a crisis.

In such a situation we nearly always blame the 'receivers'. We must work very hard on communication skills and on analysing and being alert about our **transmission** styles.
We will think more about this later.

11.2.2 The variety of "personalities" on the team

Even homogenous people - from the same background, speaking the same language and with the same interests - are not all the same. They are as different as thumbprints. This is not just in trivial things, like whether they prefer their turkey meat white or dark, but in every area. The people on your team are different up and down, through and through, coming and going. Their likes and dislikes, their fears and their joys, the way they think and decide are just plain different.

In addition to this, all people have their ups and downs. Their judgement varies widely from day to day. A team member can make incredibly wise decisions on a Monday and extremely foolish ones on Tuesday!

Imagine, if you can, the communication and other difficulties on a team of four native speakers of English made up of:

Isaac Newton
Madonna
George Patton
Oprah Winfrey

Difficulties occur when the expectation is that everyone is exactly the same as you!

11.2.3 A spirit of competition within the team

A team is not a team until the team agrees it's a team. Competition implies a win/lose situation. The essence of team is people doing things **together**. It is a collaborative effort - i.e. everyone wins. This keeps a team mutually reinforcing each other.

A spirit of competition can easily enter a team. Who can win the prize for the most Bible verses learned? Who can sell the most books? The problem is that competitors are opponents.

Team members start withholding information from one another and the atmosphere gets toxic. Collaborators share information; they don't hoard it. They rely on one another's experience and expertise to support team goals and outcomes.

It is generally a bad move to pit team A against team B. It promotes exactly the opposite results to those teams are capable of achieving. The goal is always to optimise resources and these are wasted in the team that comes second.

Leaders are often responsible for the team climate. Where a team leader is confident, open and comfortable with the team and where there is very easy access to the leader, the team is usually very productive. But some leaders are closed and remote. This causes a team atmosphere filled with insecurity, striving and jockeying for survival.

11.2.4 When a team has become a mob

In a 'company' often groups of people are hastily put together and the resulting groups are too big, too lumpy, too mismatched and too confused to be called a team – they are a mob!

Mobs	**Real Teams**
1. Members think they are grouped together for administrative purposes only. Each individual works independently – usually at cross-purposes with others.	Members recognise their inter-dependence and understand that both personal and team goals are best accomplished through mutual support. Time isn't wasted fighting over turf or attempting fame at the expense of others.
2. Members tend to focus on themselves because they are not involved in planning the team's objectives. They are, in effect, simply hired hands.	Members feel a sense of ownership of their team because they are committed to the goals they helped to establish.
3. Members are told what to do rather than being asked what the best approach would be. Suggestions are not encouraged.	Members contribute to the team's success by applying their talents and knowledge to the team's objectives.
4. Members distrust the motives of other team members because they don't understand the roles of the others on the team. Expressions of opinion or disagreement are considered divisive and non-supportive.	Members work in a climate of trust and are encouraged to openly express ideas, opinions, disagreements and feelings. Questions are welcomed.
5. Members are so cautious about what they say that real understanding is not possible. Game playing occurs and communication traps are set to catch other team members.	Members practice open and honest communication. They make an effort to understand each other's point of view.

6. Members may have received good training, but the leader or other team members don't allow them to practise this or share it.	Members are strongly encouraged to develop skills and apply what they learn. They receive lots of encouragement from the team.
7. Members find themselves in conflict situations with others on the team that they don't know how to resolve. They can't differentiate between confrontation on an **issue** and conflict with a **person**. Their leader puts off intervention until serious damage is done!	Members recognise confrontation as a normal aspect of team life and see it as an opportunity for new ideas and creativity to emerge. All the team work together to resolve difficulties quickly and constructively.
8. Members don't participate in decisions affecting the team. Conformity is more important than positive results.	Members participate in all decisions affecting the team - except in a crisis when the leader decides. Positive results are encouraged - not conformity.

Friction on a team is a serious matter for it quickly turns a team into a mob! Often the conditions under which teams operate tend to ruffle relationships:

- Little privacy
- Isolation and loneliness
- The "fish bowl" effect
- Pressure of surrounding spiritual darkness
- The heavy pressure of work
- The effects of an energy–sapping climate
- Other ills that exhaust our vitality

When we are over-tired and spiritually depressed, little things tend to irritate and the result can be turning a team into a mob.

Diversity of personality and temperament, as well as nationality and culture, can really enrich fellowship and ministry. But it can also make for incompatibility and mob formation.

11.3 The Causes of Toxic Atmospheres

What are the causes of tense inter-personal relationships? They are legion! I would like to isolate the four that are most common on our teams.

11.3.1 Unloving Criticism

Fault-finding criticism of fellow team members is very toxic. It may be criticism of the way things are run or criticism of the team leader. Criticism is very potent at producing toxic atmospheres.

It creates tension and spoils inter-personal relationships. A number of things may trigger this critical spirit:

- Tiredness
- Anxiety
- Reaction to culture shock
- An inability to adjust to changes fast enough
- A love of gossip

Whatever the cause, it is spiritual failure – it is sin.

There **is** a place for **constructive** criticism that seeks "to gain your brother". You do this by going directly to the person in question, sharing your concern and trying to help think through solutions to the problem.

A well-developed analytically–trained critical faculty fully yielded to the Lord, is urgently needed on teams. It is essential in an analysis to discover solutions to the many difficult problems the team faces. We urgently need more problem solvers. But unless these people discipline this faculty, they are a danger to the team! They may become harsh, critical team members who tend only to discourage and weaken their brothers and sisters. If you do have an analytical mind, then it has been given to you by God to help the church (and your team) and it needs discipline and submission to the Holy Spirit.

11.3.2 Complaining and Grumbling

Some team members may complain about the weather, the food, the vehicles, the living arrangements and finances etc.

There are three major sources of complaints:

- **People**: The personality traits, idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies of other team members. It may be the people you have been sent to love. They are so unlovable!
- **Environment**: The deficiencies, inconveniences and undesirable elements/pressures you live with as a team.
- **Self**: Team life can bring out the worst in us – character defects, weakness of our wills, physical illness and lots of deficiencies that we may not have been aware of before.

There is always something to blame and someone at fault. How Moses suffered from this! It is really rooted in self-pity and nothing will kill this attitude but death to self and to self-interests – to one's own right and claims. This fussy thing called "I" must fall into the ground and die!

11.3.3 Undisciplined Habits

We come from a wide diversity of customs and backgrounds. We bring those with us and, if we are adaptable people, they should enrich our fellowship. But we also bring to the life of a team habits that **irritate** those we have to live with. Be constantly on the watch and discipline yourself in matters such as:

- Tidiness
- The way you eat and drink – normal to you, but perhaps offensive to others
- Punctuality
- Extravagance
- Loudness - shouting, banging around early in the morning or late at night
- Slovenliness
- Talkativeness
- Moodiness

11.3.4 Disagreements

There will be disagreements on your team about a number of things – for example:

- How to run the team
- How to organize and do the ministry
- Finances
- Holidays
- Standard of living

You may disagree over methods, policies, actions taken, the decision-making process etc. in any given circumstance! Here are a few things that you should not do:

- Don't argue
- Don't sulk
- Don't denounce those you don't agree with
- Don't dogmatise
- Don't press others to walk by your light (your conscience)

Always lead others to search the Scriptures and seek the mind of the Spirit for themselves. Isobel Kuhn said we should have, *"A passionate devotion to the things that are vital"*. If you cultivate this, many disagreements will disappear. Sometimes we need to disagree. There are times when we must disagree to be true to the light that has been given to us. **Let us agree to disagree, but let us never be disagreeable.**

11.4 Principles of Handling Conflicts

There are two basic questions we need to ask?

1. What is your concept of God?
2. What is your concept of your fellow team member?

11.4.1 What is your concept of God?

What will help you most in your perspective of relationships with others in your team? It is your concept of God. Is your God too small? God is Sovereign and whatever God allows to happen to you will be for your good, because He loves you.

1 Cor. 10:13, ***"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."***

Two examples:

(a) **The argument between Paul and Barnabas** [Acts 15:39]

This led to Paul's second missionary journey that included the arrival of the Gospel in Europe and the planting of the first churches in Greece. It also led to the restoration of John Mark without which we may not have had Mark's Gospel. According to tradition, Mark brought the Gospel to Egypt (with Barnabas?).

(b) **Joseph** [Gen. 50:20]

Joseph had great difficulties in his relationship with his brothers. This led to slavery in Egypt, imprisonment and finally his position as "Minister of Food" in a time of famine. Joseph's relationship with his brothers was finally restored. But over all the sovereignty of God was evident.

God only expects of us that we should expect a lot of Him! So if you are in a toxic team atmosphere, ask yourself, *"Is what is happening to me worse than what happened to Joseph?"* ***"The LORD was with him; he showed him kindness."*** [Gen. 39:21] This is always the state we need to be in, ***"The Lord is with me"*** - even in this situation.

We **will** be mistreated and misunderstood. We will be part of less than perfect teams. Our leaders will not match up to our expectations. Our team members will often appear to be weird. But above all, **remember the sovereignty of God** and His plan and purpose for your life. This will relieve you of so much stress and frustration in toxic team atmospheres.

Gen. 45:5 ***"And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you."***

In your life there are basically only two people – God and you. Humanistic thinking is usually our greatest enemy.

Gen. 50:20 ***"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."***

So if you are in a toxic team atmosphere, remember above all that God is with you and it can turn out for your good if you maintain godly attitudes.

11.4.2 What is your concept of your fellow team members?

2 Cor. 4:7 ***"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."***

1 Cor. 1:27-29 indicates the probability that God has not put you on an all-star team. So don't be romantic about your fellow team members! We are all earthen vessels:

- We make mistakes
- We are often wrong
- We have weaknesses
- We have bad habits
- We have character weaknesses
- We have troubles now because of a dysfunctional upbringing
- We frequently fail.

We are earthen vessels and often God's lessons in our lives are to humble us and remind us of this fact. Yet there is something very, very wonderful about us – **the treasure within**! We are made in the image of God! [Gen. 1:26] God has been in control of all our past – the heredity and environmental factors. The precious blood of Christ has redeemed us because we are of immense value to Father. We have been adopted into His family. God can transform us and is transforming us – metamorphosed into the image of His Son.

Never underestimate **the treasure** within your fellow teammates.

So why is it so ferociously difficult to get along with each other? We want to get along with the team! We pray for unity! It is a comfort to me that even in the presence of the Lord Jesus the disciples quarrelled with each other! How did Jesus handle this?

James and John asked Jesus for a very high position in the coming Kingdom. The other disciples were very angry. James and John had ignored the fact that the other disciples had made the same sacrifices to follow Jesus. Here was a toxic team atmosphere! What did Jesus do? Firstly, He didn't give them a terse, ***"No"***. He didn't even scold them for asking! He explains to them the implications of their request and leads them to think about the realities of their demand. He puts the request into its administrative context - ***"It is not for me to grant this…"*** He calls the entire group (team) together to discuss the matter. And He gives them a radically new principle: ***"The great people are those who have a servant heart."***

The disciples learned a great deal through the conflict - both those who caused it and those who suffered in the conflict.

11.4.3 Four steps to resolving conflict

1. Accept your team members as they are

Accept one another as you are, not as you think you ought to be! Show respect for each other. Especially give dignity to those you are in conflict with. Do this by your mannerisms and by your body language as well as by your words. The key question is: Does the person you are in conflict with know that you respect him or her?

In Rev 12:10 Satan is called the ***"accuser of the brethren"*** [see also Job 1:9-11 and Zech. 3:1] Satan in Hebrew means "accuser". Satan will always try and infiltrate God's people and cause them to discourage, criticize and, by showing disrespect, demean fellow believers.

In accepting others, try to **understand them**. We often judge by outward appearances and condemn another person based on that which is purely superficial. God told Samuel to evaluate the ***"hidden things of the heart"***. We need to do the same. Much stress and tension comes because we don't try to understand one another in a spirit of love and sympathy. We fail to understand the backgrounds of our team members. Perhaps they have come through hard struggles and have had to fight constant battles to discipline themselves, to control their temperament and to develop Christian character.

We are all different. Some are extroverts. Extroverts, when under stress, like to have people round them. They tend to be very talkative and demanding of company. Introverts under stress like to be left alone – they withdraw from people. So remember when team members behave irrationally and erratically to check for:

(a) The physical problem they may be having

- Don't forget the influence of amoebic dysentery, malaria, guardia and various forms of hepatitis. The medication for these diseases often causes "weird" side effects.
- Don't forget how long it takes to recover from viral inflections.
- Don't forget the physiological effects of heat/cold, a restricted diet or a change of diet on the human body.

(b) Psychological/physiological cycles and work patterns

Again we are different. For example:

- The morning person vs. the night person
- The early week person vs. the late week person
- The different paces at which people work

(c) Battle scars

Older team members who have been several years in the field are often suffering from a deep down fatigue. This makes them overly rigid with younger, newer team members. They don't like their routines changed nor do they appreciate being told they are unnecessary! Don't rush changes on veterans!

People who feel professionally inferior (there were less options for training in the "old days") usually compensate by being overly dogmatic.

(d) Cultural differences

We are all ethno-centric! There are differences in dress, in manners, in cultural customs, in ways of showing respect etc. All these differences can cause strained relationships simply because they **are** different. We naturally expect everyone to be like us! What should we do?

- Avoid national stereotypes.
- Don't joke about another person's accent, dress or behaviour.
- Be careful about humour. Only Irish people should tell Irish jokes.
- Usually we misunderstand because we don't take the trouble to ask! Ask your fellow team-members about their background, history, and culture. The more you understand, the more you will appreciate why they do as they do.

(e) Language

This is an enormous source of confusion even among native speakers of English. The English, Texans, out-back Australians and Singaporeans often find they are unintelligible to one another! The rule is never to get offended before asking them what they mean. In some languages there is no word for "please". Don't be offended by other people apparently speaking "rudely".

(f) Unfulfilled expectations

You are often likely to be the target of displaced anger. Why are your fellow team members angry? They are frustrated because all their expectations – about themselves, their team, the people they have come to serve - have not been met in reality! Our expectations are often based on romanticism!

2. Learn to understand yourself

It is important to understand our own limitations and weaknesses – the points at which we need personal discipline to add to our faith, virtue, goodness, reliability and all the fruit of the Spirit.

We are all prone to cultural superiority. How easy it is for the English to give the impression by their bearing and attitudes that they 'thank God they are not as other men' – particularly those from the other side of the Atlantic or across the Channel! We are all able to fall into this trap. ***"Let each esteem the other as better than themselves"*** [Phil. 2:3] We need to work this out in the issues of culture, language and nationality. Essentially this is part of "dying to self" and living a crucified life.

One of the root causes of team conflict is the attitude that says, *"I didn't come to minister to my team members but to be ministered to by them."* Having 'the mind of Christ' often means giving up our own way – yielding our own preferences in favour of those of others – surrendering our gifts – relinquishing our "rights'. We are not in transformational ministry to be ministered to in our little vanities, our comforts and the way of life we prefer or in our pride in any of its guises. We are here to minister to others and to give our lives away on their behalf!

So often we, ourselves, are the source of the problem. This is probably because there is **an area of immaturity** in your personality that has remained undetected until you have been put under a lot of stress. Stress activates areas of immaturity and this causes problems. This often explains why stress causes problems. Although the stress was enormous, this was never the case in the ministry of the Lord Jesus. So problems like:

- Depression
- Unexplained anxiousness
- A tendency to run away
- The need for dependency

are symptoms of an underlying **immaturity** that is surfacing!

(a) **Immaturity** – largely consists of negative emotions.

- Bitterness
- Jealousy
- Resentments
- Anger
- Hatred

These emotions often lie buried deep in our subconscious. The stresses of team life tend to exhume them - which is why they are so horrid and smelly! These negative emotions are then put on others in the team or whoever is in the sufferer's environment (displacement). This makes no one happy!

(b) **Signs of Immaturity**

- Difficulty in trusting others on the team
- An inferiority complex
- Boastfulness
- Being overly dogmatic

- Overly dramatising events
- A tendency to exaggeration
- Persistent jealousy

(c) **Dealing with Negative Emotions**

- Don't brood about the problem. Commit it to God and ask for His help. He wants to come to your rescue.
- Confess the problem **to some** on the team and ask them to pray through with you to complete victory. Don't tell everyone.
- If the problem is jealousy, ask God to show you all the people you have ever been jealous of. Think through what in their personalities made you jealous. Try to find a Scriptural promise that meets that lack in your life. Read it, memorize it and repeat that promise daily. For example, you might be jealous of someone because he is so bold and fearless. Your problem is fear. Learn 2 Tim. 1:7. memorise it, and whenever those negative emotions of jealousy appear, say the promise confidently and with faith.

(d) **Learn to understand your role in the body of Christ** and our mutual inter-dependence on one another.

Many of us find it hard to understand our own limitations. We always wish we had other gifts and abilities. We can't accept that God has made us in a particular way with particular gifts and abilities for a specific role in the body of Christ.

We need to accept:

- How God has made us
- The training He has given us
- The temperament He has given us
- The talents He has entrusted to us

Then we need to fulfil our role **with contentment** in the place of His choosing. The consequence will be much less strain and tension because competition has been eliminated.

Others may have **an inferiority complex** that shows itself in many ways and causes much tension in a team. This is also a failure to accept ourselves and the place that the Lord has for us. This makes us envious of others. It turns us sour and spoils our usefulness.

We need to remember our position in the body of Christ. Then we will be able to rejoice that we are different from others. We will be able to encourage others to fully use all **their** gifts and abilities. Affirmation and encouragement are so important in maintaining team life.

At the same time we will be able to do our best to fulfil faithfully God's purposes in our own lives. The cause of much conflict on teams is an unwillingness to recognise our own place in the body of Christ and to accept that limited role. Conflict comes when we are seeking greater things for ourselves. Conflict comes when we seek to match up to others to whom the Lord has given other gifts for other purposes. Let us recognise God's sovereignty in our lives and rejoice that He has given to everyone His gifts as He wills so that His body will function well and His purpose will be fulfilled.

(e) **Remind yourself of your overall personal goal**.

Our overall goal is, ***"That in everything Christ should have the pre-eminence"***. [Col. 1:18] When this one supreme passion grips us, we will find it easy to cultivate a thoughtful and disciplined spirit. Discipline is not just negative – things not to be done. We have to add to our faith godliness and develop a character that is marked by the fruit of the Spirit.

Discipline can be defined as that which produces self-control, orderliness and a capacity to work in co-ordination and co-operation with others. So discipline **is** a denial of self - a pruning away of

the dead and rotten - but it is **also** a positive strengthening and enriching of our character. The purpose of our conformity to Christ in His death is, positively, so that His life can be demonstrated in us. Discipline demands not only daily dying, but also the daily cultivation of character.

We read in 2 Peter 1:3-7, "***His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love."***

If you are a **"man of sand"**, God wants to make you into a man of rock-like character. He wants to give you an established heart, a settled faith and steadfast dependability. You will need to work on:

- Being sober
- Being watchful of yourself
- Resisting those impulses to be lazy
- Resisting those tendencies to give up – to skip obligations
- Resisting your failure to concentrate and see a task through
- Training yourself to be faithful in that which is least
- Strengthening your sense of duty so that you become steadfast, unmoveable and acquire spiritual stickability and grit.

If you are a **"man of steel"** – a hard driver of yourself and others – critical, inconsiderate and insensitive, then God wants you to become patient, understanding, kind and lowly. By His grace you will have to take yourself in hand again and again. You will have to humble yourself under the mightily hand of God.

If you are a **hedonist** whose life consists in self-interest, self-pity, self-assertion – ever seeking some way to get others to serve you - then God wants to change you by renewing you day by day, in your spirit, with His mind. This will be a reversal of your whole temper and attitudes. You will have to go out daily and deliberately serve others in little things. You will have to rejoice at every knock and jolt to self. For every criticism you receive, you need to say, *"Thank you Lord! That hurt the old self that we are working to destroy."*

On our teams we all need to wage constant war against:

- The love of ease and comfort
- An untidy life
- Unpunctuality and an undisciplined use of time

Paul found the answer in the physical realm, ***"I buffet my body to bring it into subjection"***. [1 Cor. 9:27] We need to experience the mastery of spiritual concerns over bodily concerns. We must learn to choose the hard over the easy - to endure hardness cheerfully, to go without and to accept problems, difficulties and hard situations as the 'raw material' of spiritual victory. We need to be disciplined, remoulded and sanctified.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." [Phil. 4:13] This should not be just a statement we agree with and quote. We must turn it into an experience of daily achievement in the disciplining and moulding of character. This is the **only way** that we will be able to be disciplined in our relationships.

3. Enlarge your empathetic capacity

Rom. 12:15: ***"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."***

Heb. 4:15: ***"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet without sin."***

We need to do everything we can to understand our team members, but just as important, we need to **show** them that we are trying to understand them. Your team members' **perception** of your trying hard is important.

When there is a difference of opinion on an issue, as an exercise, put yourself in their shoes and try and argue their position. Come up with ten good reasons why they are right and you are wrong! This can be wonderfully rewarding.

Try and understand why others behave towards you as they do. Usually they are totally unconscious of causing you any stress. So often **understanding leads to compassion**.
If there have been hurts, be quick to forgive.

4. Be open, honest and transparent in confrontation

Rom. 12:9: ***"Love must be sincere."***

Eph. 4:15: ***"… speaking the truth in love."***

1 Jn. 1:7: ***"… But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another."***

So don't pretend to love! Love is a very poor actor. You will fool no one but yourself. Love your team members. When in a confronting situation:

i. LEEP – before you confront people

- **L**ove them – does the person know you love them?
- **E**ncourage them. Has there been lots of affirmation beforehand?
- **E**xample. Have you been an example to them of the principle you are trying to defend? If not, you are in danger of being a hypocrite.
- **P**ray before you go and confront. It is not gossip if you go to another mature person for counsel in private, if your motive is reconciliation.

ii. Be specific – Be concrete

Don't say things like, *"I don't like your attitude".* Be more specific. Put yourself in their shoes. In listening to what you are saying, would **you** know specifically what you should change? You can't plan a course of action when charged with nebulous accusations.

Be very careful with the words you use. You can very easily hurt people and the hurt may go very deep. Avoid using colloquial expressions. They are often misinterpreted – especially by non-native speakers of English. Above all, don't exaggerate!

Tell it honestly like it is. Define the good and the bad points. Give people plenty of time to talk and explain their side of the issue. Write down the specific steps towards improvement (change) that you have agreed on.

iii. Keep praying for them

After his initial failure, John Mark turned out to be very "useful". Thank God for Mark's Gospel!

iv. What do you do when you fail?

After the split between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15, it says, ***"And the grace of God went with them."*** Jesus will never leave them or you! God will overrule even our failures, provided we set our hearts to do His will.

11.4.4 Maintaining team harmony

The root cause of so much miserable team life is that our proud spirits remain unbroken before the cross of Christ. Every broken relationship on the team is basically a spiritual matter. Each team member needs to maintain a humble, broken and contrite spirit. How is this to be done?

- By having regular times of fellowship before the Lord around the Word of God
- By bearing one another's burdens and failures
- By supporting one another in a deep bond of love and prayer based on a real understanding of each other's weaknesses and blessings, needs and hopes.

When you do this:

- Little points of friction will be revealed and adjustments can be made in an atmosphere of love and humility and with a deep desire to love and help one another.
- God's Word will shed light on the problems of loving and working together. God's will and ways and the mind of Christ will be revealed.
- Together each one will develop a sensitive conscience in regard to attitudes and actions and will seek to become a positive force for healing and help.
- Rough places can be smoothed; feeble knees strengthened and our arms can be made strong together.

We read in 1 Pet. 3:8-9, "***All of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing."***

11.5 Crosscultural Resolution

11.5.1 Some causes of conflict

Below is an overly simplistic list of cultural reasons for conflict on our teams. At least it is a beginning. Let me assume that there are basically two cultures in the world! One I will call a **Closure Culture**. Most Western cultures will probably fit into a **Closure Culture**. The other culture is a **Non-Closure Culture**. Many of the cultures of Africa and Asia fall within this broad culture. This is adapted from **Christianity Confronts Culture**[1] by Marvin K. Mayers.

Characteristics of Closure Cultures

- **They are time-oriented**. Doing things on time is important and being late is a sin. People watch the clock a great deal.
- **They are crisis-oriented.** Things get changed when the culture is in crisis. For example: all sorts of new safety procedures are introduced after a train crash. Crisis produces change.
- **They are evaluative.** Things get constantly analysed and assessed so that minor changes can be introduced.
- **They are dichotomists.** In order to understand complex situations, they are broken down into different component parts and each part is looked at separately.
- **They are task-oriented.** Accomplishment of a series of tasks each day/week/month etc. is largely what life is about.
- **They are achievement focussed**. Your status in life is a sum of what you yourself have achieved – academically, athletically etc. A key question they ask is, *"What do you do?"*
- In this culture it is commendable to **expose one's vulnerability**. You score points by openly sharing your weaknesses and failures.
- There is a high degree of **individualism** – a high emphasis on personal rights and freedoms and an acceptance of personal responsibility in failure.
- This culture enjoys **hot media**: i.e. lots of different sensations - audio/visual/touch – simultaneously. This is what you find in discos etc.
- This culture uses **linear logic**. This is typical of the way westerners argue. It is usually highly abstract based on axioms and presuppositions followed by a series of logically connected sequences.
- Finally this culture uses direct language - see 9.7

The Characteristics of Non-Closure Cultures

These are really the polar opposites of the characteristics of closure cultures.

- They are **event-**oriented. They have an orientation towards the basic value of the event and are concerned with the 'who', 'what', and 'how' of what is happening. The clock is not the focus but background is – lights, colours, movements, touching and sharing with others. Conversation is an event.

  These people deeply frustrate time–oriented people because life consists of unplanned events, non-rigid schedules and a "lets–see–what–happens" attitude. They appear to be unaware of the future. It is the here and now that is important. There appears to be no thought of future consequences for present actions! They can't easily learn from other people's experiences. They only trust their own experience. There is no empathy with another's experience unless the other person shares it in an emotionally meaningful way.

- They are **holistic**. This is a culture that tends to the basic value of focussing on the whole. Parts are only important as they relate to the whole. They are concerned with "the forest, not the trees". This means they are "field-dependent" – so do not easily recognise the parts. To closure cultures they seem vague, illogical and why is it they always tell stories? Non-closure cultures get very frustrated when the parts of the problem are dealt with without regard to the whole. They get deep satisfaction from integrating thought and life. They would hate this manual! They don't like being categorised!

- They are **non-crisis or selective**. They don't look to experts for advice and they like to select from various alternatives. They are frustrated when there are no choices. The choice they make depends on social factors, empathy and identifying with those around them. When encountering a similar situation later they may choose a completely different course of action. They like informal learning – lots of social integration.

- They are **people-oriented.** Accomplishment comes through relationships. Their goals are determined through interaction with others. Personal desires always give way to the group needs. Their top priority is to maintain harmony and good relationships. They will submit rather then be cut off. They will conform rather than stand out. They will die for the 'belonging group'. They allow themselves to be "used" by the team and they expect everyone else to do the same. Loyalty will override every value.

- They are a culture where **status is given** not worked for. A person's worth is based on birth/family/genetics. Credentials convey prestige. They will play the roles that their position demands in behaviour dress and mannerisms.

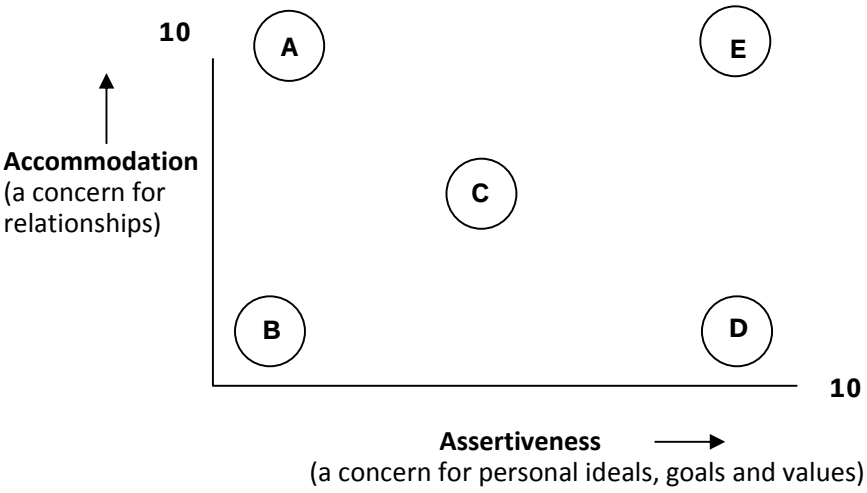
- The culture **conceals vulnerability**. They are careful to organize life so that error is avoided. If error does occur, it is covered in such a way that it is not recognised as error. They do this by withdrawal from the scene, by denial, by diverting attention and by projection – *"the devil made me do it* – etc. They don't like "to share".

This is enough to show the contrasts between the two cultures. What if you have people from both cultures in your teams? Conflict is inevitable!

Which of these cultures is more Biblical? The answer is that the Bible advocates for aspects of both cultures and judges aspects of both cultures! So should we.

11.5.2 Cultural styles of conflict management

Different cultures have different ways of resolving conflicts.

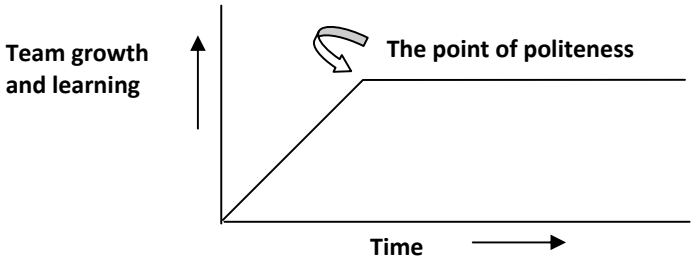


Different people will tend to use different styles of conflict management depending on their cultural background. Also there is the "40-100" rule. This says that if you behave 40% of the time in a particular way it will be judged that you **always** do that – i.e. 100% of the time. So leaders who often have to try and negotiate resolution in a conflict easily get "pegged" into one of these styles of conflict management.

Style A: "Give in": The leader tries to get one party to give in. He/she might maintain that team unity is **so** important and that the difference (the conflict) is driving the team apart because there are personal attacks. So conflict resolution involves sacrificing and yielding.

This sort of resolution makes sense when the issue is trivial and when the danger of confrontation is too great for team unity. It also makes sense if you are wrong! It is also a useful delaying tactic in situations where you need to "count to ten" and "cool off" so anger isn't clouding your judgement. It might help you to build credit for a future battle! It also makes sense if you are willing to let others learn by their mistakes. Sadly also it makes sense when you are in conflict with a person and you have no power to bring about change.

Style B: "Withdrawal/Avoidance": Here the leader's attitude is that **all** differences are bad. Politeness is very important and anyway differences are eternal, inevitable and unchangeable. This is OK only when the difference is extremely trivial. So often teams get to a point of politeness and then cease to grow and cease to learn. They get to this stage by withdrawal and avoidance of conflict.



Style C: Compromise: Here conflict must be seen in the light of the common good. Differences should be aired, discussed and then a 50:50 compromise should be worked out.

This makes sense in terms of conflict resolution when:

- Time is a major factor
- A permanent settlement is outside the mandate/brief of the team and it is a wider organisational issue - i.e. it is a way of delaying a decision until there has been wider consultation.
- The goals and principles are only moderately important.

Style: D "I win" style: Here the differences are black and white – I am right! The other party is wrong! I must win in a conflict. This dictatorial decision-making is possible:

- In a crisis when time is extremely important
- When the principle is vital and of crucial importance for the team – something like "the deity of Jesus Christ". You don't compromise in issues like this!

Style E: "Care fronting": Here everyone assumes that the differences and conflicts are natural and normal and they serve as an occasion to review the Biblical principles and allow for some creative problem solving. This is what Covey calls a **"win/win"** situation. In the majority of situations this is the **only** Biblical way to address the issues behind the conflict. The advantages of "care-fronting" are that:

- There is an equal commitment to principles, to values and to each other.
- Our humanness and learning about our differences is important and enriching to us all. This is because it will help us to think Biblically about our own cultures.

11.6 Notes on Negotiation

These are brief notes to read before you go into a conflict resolution situation. If it is not on the team, then it may be with other "authorities" – in particular with government officials etc.

1. Having a common aim is the key.

To negotiate is to explore the possibilities of agreement. It presupposes a common aim, or desire for agreement, to which each offers to contribute something needed by the other and from which both parties expect to gain something of value. Negotiations are an attempt to bring opposing viewpoints together to meet a common aim and purpose. You cannot know the possibilities of agreement apart from negotiating.

2. It is not dictating.

If one party insists on dictating terms, negotiation becomes impossible. Keep away from hard line polices and practises that have to be defended, unless they are deeply rooted in Biblical principles. You are negotiating an agreement acceptable to two equal partners.

3. Compromise is inherent in these solutions.

Compromise is part of the art of negotiation. Negotiation involves adjustments, compromise and a willingness to yield something to achieve basic requirements and aims. Probe for areas of agreement. Encourage adjustments. Offer adjustments that will help your counterpart. In return, request adjustments that will contribute to agreement. Remember, no agreement will provide all that either party requires. Negotiation requires compromise. Usually you are aiming at a compromise that satisfies neither party completely, but which offers both parties enough of their basic requirements that they shrink from refusing to accept merely because it doesn't provide all they wanted.

4. Look for common interest

Agreement is based on a meeting of common interests that are fundamental and vital to both parties. Keep before both parties the goals and aims of achieving agreement. Are these clear? In the very intractable Palestinian Issue, the goal is peace, justice, and prosperity for all.

5. Building personal relationships

Negotiation is a form of personal interaction. Success depends largely on the personal relationship between the negotiators. A wrong attitude and messed up procedures lead to failure or if not failure to disappointment and a great deal of hurt. Do your best never to offend a person's sense of honour. Work hard at the beginning in establishing mutual respect and confidence. Without these there will be no true communication. You simply won't be heard and your ideas won't receive any of the consideration they probably merit. You must be personally acceptable. Your sincerity must be clear and your motives above reproach if you are to win the esteem and respect of the other side. This is always the basis of successful negotiations.

6. Time and patience

Negotiations usually take much time, patience and good will. Early agreements are very rare. Usually the higher the degree of trust, the faster progress will be made. Grim impatient encounters produce nothing. Rather, they are counter-productive and set the whole timetable back. We must be cheerful listeners.

Usually each negotiating party is responsible to someone else. They are negotiating not on their own behalf, but on behalf of government, a Board etc. So each negotiator has to operate within certain limits. These should be respected. They will have to report to their superiors and great pressure may be put on them. Don't let the fact of pressure damage relationships between you and them. Frankly reveal your problems – the limitations imposed upon you – and try to understand those imposed on the other person.

7. Starting positions

They usually start far apart and the gap appears unbridgeable. Start with areas of agreement. Investigate each other's overall objectives and vision. Define broad purposes of agreement. Begin to understand the limitations being imposed on both sides. Search for understanding. **Then** agreements will slowly follow.

8. Areas of disagreement

These areas must be patiently looked at. Present your disagreement objectively in terms of purpose; not subjectively in terms that reflect adversely on those you are in negotiation with or their superiors. Don't create an atmosphere of conflict. Learn to disagree agreeably. Examine the other side's proposals. Can they be made to work to achieve your common purposes? Often counter proposals are valid on the other side's suppositions and premises.

9. Keep out of little puddles

Before getting into negotiations, understand and review clearly your aims, the essentials of your own position (the unmovables - i.e. principles over which you won't budge), your limitations etc. Make sure that you don't find yourself defending a minor position and failing to promote major objectives! Try and be as flexible, creative and positive as possible. Move forward to gain agreement step by step. Aim at achieving limited objectives and then progress forward until the goal of an 'acceptable–for–all-parties' agreement is reached.

Remember that the other party is also feeling constraints. Perhaps one of their hands is reaching out for development and progress while the other hand is clinging to the status quo. One hand is for risk-taking, the other feels all change is threatening. Change in attitudes and in understanding principles only comes about slowly. Our tendency, at least as westerners, is to be in a hurry to achieve results in a short time. Aim at the middle ground of mutual acceptance and steady progress.

10. Agreements/ Reconciliation

Understanding, respect, patience, co-operation, mutual trust – the things of the Spirit – are the foundation of friendships. Agreement reconciles **people** as will as **purposes**. We are called to a ministry of reconciliation. It is something we should be really good at!

11.7 Consultants as a resource for resolution of team problems

Team consultation is likely to be a growth area in our company in the 21st century. In the push to make **teams** the heart of the way we work, there will be many occasions when teams will splatter onto brick walls. What are you going to do then?

If you think of an organisation as a living body, then a good consultant is like Vitamin C – an outside catalyst for positive change! However, good consultants need to stay on the job for a longer period than the typical "team retreat" – a 72 hour enforced period! So often there is an extended let-down period that follows and ideas die. Extended multiple visits, where they monitor the progress of the "big idea", are often more useful. *[The "big idea" is the solution that the consultant is proposing]*

Eight suggestions when calling in a consultant to help the team

1. The first thing you must do with consultants is to establish with them that they are consultants and not "the boss" or leader.
2. Talk up the arrival of the consultant to the team before he/she arrives. Let the team know that this is an important issue that the consultant is coming to make practical suggestions. Publicize the value of the consultant. When the "big idea" is proposed, listen and encourage the team to interact with it – suggest improvements.
3. Summarize key points and post them conspicuously so the team gets used to the "big idea".
4. Plan follow-up meetings to discuss implementation. Have the team meet for an extended time after the consultant has left. Explain to the non-attendees:
   - What the problem was that necessitated the arrival of the consultant.
   - All about "the big idea" the consultant has proposed to solve the problem. Then:
   - Ask the team what are the implications of implementing the kinds of improvements the consultant has suggested?
   - Work out what will need to be changed for "the big idea" to succeed.
5. Be patient! Old teams **can** learn new tricks! But it takes a while. Allow for a few mistakes. Allow for some confusion. There will probably be a spectrum of expectations on the part of the team concerning the ability of "the big idea" to bring about improvement.
6. Invite the consultant back! Call him/her back for further clarification and to monitor progress. Hopefully he/she can show you where you went wrong and how to get back on track.
7. Anticipate resistance! On every team there are some people who will be relieved when fresh initiatives disintegrate! So often, for progress to be made, the inertia of negativism needs to be overcome. The challenge to the team is to use **positive attitudes** – to be open, transparent, explore new ideas etc. **and negative attitudes** – to analyse and critique them together and so move forward the vision of the team. Ideally teams need to cultivate an open-minded working atmosphere where new ideas from consultants (or any other source) are not dismissed out of hand and where ideas are given a chance to germinate. Heavy vetoing by one or two negative personalities on a team – effectively censoring – can be very destructive.

8. Maintain a balance. The “big idea” may be brilliant! But don’t be the small boy with a new drum who forgets all his others toys. If “the big idea” becomes on obsession, it is a danger! A balanced approach, that recognises the difficulties in implementing the “big idea” within the existing framework, has a good chance of success!

NOTES

[1] **Christianity Confronts Culture** by Marvin K, Mayers (1987) Grand Rapids, MI (Zondervan) ISBN: 0 310 28901 7

12. Mismatched Teams and Mismatched Needs

12.1 The Symptoms of the Problem

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12. Mismatched Teams and Mismatched Needs

12.1 The Symptoms of the Problem

Below are a few of the symptoms:

- **Team members with private agendas** that work at cross-purposes to the agenda of the team and the private agendas of other team members. The answer to this is to get all the hidden agendas out on the table as early as possible. Do this by asking each team member what he/she wants from the team and from his or her experience.
- **Lack of a Christian community**: This is very common on isolated teams where the team is the only "community". Team members feel claustrophobic. "The Team" has become an internally focussed sub-culture that is inescapable.
- **The demands of the ministry** to achieve the team goals leave no room for critical personal needs such as education of the children, sport and recreation, study time etc.
- **Different concepts of work ethic from different cultures on the team**
- **Criticism –** of my job, my team, the company, the "rules", my church etc. Team members give vent to thoughtless, unworthy criticism. They are quick to notice the faults of others. They easily slip into complaining.
- **A sense of inferiority:** This leads to worrying over things that are small rather than big. It leads to a restlessness of spirit, inner turmoil. It sometimes also leads to moodiness, resentment, self-pity, depression, touchiness and an inability to give out. Inferiority is often a cause of tension based on a failure to accept ourselves, our background and the place the Lord has for us. Inferiority leading to insecurity was behind the constant desire of the disciples to know whom Jesus thought was the most important among them.

12.2 Solutions: anticipating role changes

There are many solutions to the problem of mismatched teams and mismatched needs. I would like to focus on two. The first is the failure to realise that during the life of the team, different team members are going to have to transition from one role to another. This is never easy. Such role change is often inherent in the goals of the team. One example would be in the case of training nationals to take over the evangelism and church planting.

In the life of a team there are many role changes.

- **Learners**

All members start out as learners. This may involve language learning, practicing Biblical truths, studying the host culture, participating in cultural events etc. Learning should be a role that all team members retain while on the team. It might be learning to communicate the Gospel or learning how to disciple people. It might be training up trainers. Fast changing conditions will make continuous learning imperative.

- **Evangelists**

In a crosscultural situation this is how most of our team members start. They learn to ask penetrating questions about the worldviews of others. They learn to verbalize the Gospel in a culturally relevant way. Their goal is to see men and women come to faith.

- **Disciplers**

Once people start coming to faith there is a role change. Now, instead of **doing** evangelism you are **modelling** evangelism. In crosscultural ministry the reality is that local believers will always be more effective in winning their own people than expatriates could ever be. The team members need to learn to model a lifestyle of evangelism as they disciple the new believers. This must be evangelism the new believers feel comfortable with in their own culture.

So the activity of the team member changes to a much more **teaching** role. This means expanding his/her comfort zone in the area of teaching.

- **A coach – a leadership development role**

The discipling role then changes to a role of leadership development among the local believers. Much of this role involves being a **coach** on the sidelines while the national believers take a more prominent role. The goal of this role is to allow local believers to win or lose 'the game' on the basis of their own efforts. The coach is not allowed to enter the game and save it for them! When the team is winning, coaching is fun. When the team is losing it is much more difficult. A team member should never do what a local believer could do. The role of the coach is to provide advice and encouragement.

Local believers decide what to teach in the church, who evangelises where, who should be baptised etc. The team member (coach) must never control the game by manipulation.

- **An itinerant advisor – consultant**

The final role change is to a role of intermittent contact with the local believers. The team member might become involved in a different project much of the time.

So a team member is always a learner. He/she starts out as a learner, changes first to a teacher and then to a coach. He ends up as a consultant. These role changes on a team are not easy. Stress and conflict are a natural result.

Failure to make role changes always leads to mismatched teams because teams tend to like to do the same thing and have the same programme year after year. The fact of the matter is that, as ex-patriates, our public roles should get less and less.

So role change calls for the relinquishing of your own ministry role so that others are empowered to mature in character and in ministry skills. But role change comes at a high price! It is easy for teams that give birth to ministries to want to continue controlling them. If they insist on doing so, the development of others will be crippled!

12.3 Solutions: better selection of the team

Let me give an example: Jack and Jill were very glad to join a church planting team in the Muslim World. But after a few months they found their gifts and abilities didn't match their expected roles on the team. They were very frustrated but they refused to leave. Personal feelings of guilt compelled them to continue. According to their home office they were very well qualified and their church agreed. As the months went by the frustration they felt began to infect all the other team members. Conflict among the team members was now a common occurrence.

An outside leader visiting the team discovered how the energy of the whole team was focussed on this couple – trying to help them etc. This was actually causing many of the other problems of introspection on the team. Jack and Jill stayed for two years. They were involved in constant inter-team conflict until they finally decided to go home. They are still feeling pangs of guilt at their failure.

Why did Jack and Jill fail? Why did they become part of our attrition figures? At least part of the problem is our selection process. The selection process is inevitably generic and is deliberately intended to cover all teams in all Fields. There are basic entry requirements. It is the responsibility of the team (and of the Field) to state the requirements for the particular team over and above the generic requirements.

It is a sad fact that we have fairly high attrition on our teams in the Muslim World. Cutting down on attrition would help our teams enormously and **a major cause of attrition is mismatched teams.**

12.4 The Cost of Attrition

This includes:

- Lost people who are not reached with the Gospel
- Churches never planted
- Windows of opportunity that are lost
- People returning home with a sense of failure
- Families experiencing stress
- Money that has been wasted
- The team needing to spend time and energy to re-group

All this is too high a price for mismatched teams! Clearly it is very important to match the people (new recruits) to the team.

12.5 A Cause of Attrition: confusion of roles

We usually say that, at least for those going to the Muslim World, there are two basic requirements:

- Spiritual maturity
- Present ministry involvement- preferably among Muslims

These two criteria are applied to all personnel – office personnel, media people etc.! Clearly there is a failure to distinguish between the different roles people are going to play on the team. The requirements will be very different for different roles.

An Example: In talking to Koreans involved in church planting on our teams, nearly all of them initially expect their long-term role on the team to be as the pastor of the church planted! Local believers would be trained to help the pastor fulfil his role. It is a shock to them to begin to understand that they will never have the role of pastor. They begin to learn that the goal of the team is the training of local believers to pastor churches.

In reality, many team members are assigned inappropriately. Like Jack and Jill, they quickly become discouraged as they realise their gifts and abilities don't match the tasks required of them. This is obvious if you are looking for a computer specialist or a bookkeeper. The assumption is that anyone can be an evangelist or church planter!

12.6 Organising to cut down attrition levels caused by mismatched teams

Each team needs to list its own criteria based on its own situation. Avoid using **only** generic lists. Make sure that relevant criteria are not missed out. Here are some suggestions:

- A team mission statement is the place to begin. This will help to identify who is required to carry out the mission/vision of the team.

- The characteristics and qualities needed for each task should be identified.
- Isolate each task that each team member will have to perform regularly. For example:
    - Living and working in a different climate
    - Studying the language
    - Studying the culture
    - Working together with others as a team
    - Building mono and crosscultural relationships with those on the team
    - Building crosscultural relationships with local people
    - Training crossculturally
    - Teaching crossculturally
    - Leading crossculturally
    - Mediating conflict mono-culturally and crossculturally
    - Developing contextualised materials
    - Assessing demographics – doing surveys
    - Strategising – evaluating – reviewing
    - Maintaining an adequate support base
    - Maintaining personal spirituality
    - Building relationships with government and society
    - Learning to "be bold" when much ministry is seen as subversive by the host culture
    - Developing an effective tentmaking platform
    - The ability to change roles continually
    - The ability to upgrade vocational/tentmaking skills

12.7 Fourteen Criteria for Selection of a Church Planting Team

This is a very intimidating list. They are not prioritised. Few people, if any, would agree they were competent in all fourteen areas! It might be helpful to have a score of 1 (very low) to 5 (very high) for each area. Perhaps the area in greatest need of development is the area of **training for team work.**

1. Commitment to God's call

Each person needs to know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that God has called him or her to crosscultural ministry in the country where the team is operating. In the case of a couple, both husband and wife must have received this call individually. They have set their course to reach this goal and nothing is going to turn them aside. They have probably been gathering information on the people they hope to help evangelise. They have prepared themselves with adequate tentmaking skills. They have been praying and are gathering others to pray for these people.

Questions to ask

- Are you or your spouse anxious about God's call on your life?
- What preparation have you made as you move towards your goal?
- What would stop you from fulfilling your call?
- Do others on your church leadership confirm your call?
- Who are your heroes and why?

2. Spiritual Maturity

Spiritual maturity is hard to define and even harder to measure. It involves an unwavering confidence in a Sovereign God who is active in your own life and in the world. It is recognising what George Verwer calls 'the human factor' in us and our need for the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to work in our lives. Spiritual maturity is characterised by stability of character, discipline of life and a reliance on the Holy Spirit. The joy of the Lord **is** our daily strength. We stand in awe of God.

Questions to ask

- Are you anxious about joining the team?
- Are you consistent in Bible study and in personal prayer times?
- Which fruit of the Spirit are you seeing grow in your life? Have others noticed this?
- How do you expect God to speak to you?
- How do you react to your own sin?
- How often are you thankful?

3. Managing Family / Singleness

The families of team members are models of God at work in the midst of close relationships. This is a crucial model on a church planting team. It is very important that the husband consistently demonstrates love and caring for his wife in a culturally appropriate way and that the wife does the same for her husband. Parents need to discipline their children through love and correction, but they should not inhibit them by being overly protective. Children should respect their parents. People will then enjoy visiting their home and will feel the warmth of their hospitality. Because of this they will sense the peace of God in that home.

Single team members should see singleness as part of God's sovereign plan for this part of their lives, giving them maximum time for ministry. Their desire for 'a mate' shouldn't control their daily activities. They can give themselves to the growth and development of others.

Questions to ask

- Is the husband encouraging his wife's spiritual, emotional and intellectual growth as well as her development in the use of her spiritual gifts?
- Do the children fear either parent?
- Are the parents inhibiting or encouraging their children's development?
- Why do people like to visit this family? Do they have an "open home"? How good are their hospitality skills?
- How is the single person handling their singleness?
- Does the single person maintain an accountability relationship with anyone?

4. Emotional Maturity

An emotionally mature person realises their uniqueness as a person made by God for a special purpose. This enables them to use their spiritual gifts and natural abilities to the fullest extent for the glory of God. Such a person also acknowledges their weaknesses and is working on improving in those areas by the power of God at work in their lives. They rejoice in the forgiveness of sins and refuse to dwell on the past. They not only tolerate the behaviour of others but they have a deep empathetic capacity. They are able to encourage others in growth towards emotional maturity.

Questions to ask

- Do you focus on the past?
- Do you enjoy group activities?

- Are you a team player? Are you tolerant of the mistakes of others?
- Are you teachable? Defensive?
- Is competitiveness necessary for your sense of self worth?
- Do you experience large mood swings?
- Do you take assessed risks?

5. Evangelistic Experience

Team members on church planting teams look for opportunities to witness about Jesus as a habit. They constantly pray for opportunities to witness. They pray for those they are able to witness to. But witnessing is not the delivery of a formula. There must be a deep hunger to know how to communicate the Gospel in such a way that people are drawn to Jesus. It involves a drive to learn the language, adapt to the culture, learn the art of story telling etc. It involves contextualised evangelism and discipleship. Effective evangelism is usually built around a felt-needs approach.

Questions to ask

- How do you adapt your ways of witnessing to various sorts of people?
- Have you been involved in crosscultural evangelism? What were some of the problems you encountered?
- How easily do you make friends? What is your track record in winning friends to Jesus?
- Have you been involved in team evangelistic efforts? How was it?
- Have you helped to train others in culturally appropriate evangelism?
- How good are you at asking questions to discover the felt needs of a particular person?

6. Discipleship experience

Church planting is largely about the art of discipleship. Team members need to have a passion to see new believers growing in their faith to the point where they begin to lead their own families and friends to Jesus and then go on to disciple them.

Discipling usually involves helping people grow through a number of steps. Good disciplers know how to give loads of affirmation, encouragement and exhortation with the occasional gentle rebuke.

They adapt their approach to the culture and the needs of the disciple. They are team players. The goal is to form a community of disciples – a church. As the team member trains others, he is humble enough to release his disciples into roles he himself had. His goal is to work himself out of a job.

Questions to ask

- Who has discipled you? To whom do you look for spiritual encouragement?
- How good are you at discerning the spiritual need of someone?
- Have you discipled new believers through a team? If so, how did it go?
- Have you been able to reproduce yourself? – i.e. discipled others to the point where they are discipling others.

7. International Political Awareness

As team members go into a crosscultural situation, they need to know something of the history and current politics of the area they are going to. They need to understand the "politics of the street", the effects of globalisation, the legacy of past colonialism, the latent values of the people and how they see the world. We need to realise how very ethno-centric we all are. We need to aim at becoming internationally astute.

Questions to ask

- Did you vote in the last election?
- How do you keep current with world political affairs?
- From a Biblical perspective, what is your critique of capitalism?
- Realising that most nationals really do want to take control of their own destiny, how would you set about helping them to do this?

8. Communication / Contextualisation Skills

On a multi-national team the ability of the members to communicate effectively is crucial. One of the values of effective team members is the desire to understand cultures, languages, non-verbal communication etc. These team members want to learn about crosscultural conflict resolution, appropriate teaching styles etc. in different cultures. The role of leadership and how decisions are made varies greatly from one culture to another. The ability to adapt and change is very important and being judgemental about differences inhibits this. The goal is incarnational ministry where your lifestyle enhances ministry.

Questions to ask

- Have you taught children? How different was it from teaching adults?
- Do you learn languages easily?
- How flexible are you in adjusting to other cultures? other foods? different music?
- What problems came up when you were working on a crosscultural team?
- How good are you at observing non-verbal communication?
- What does 'incarnational ministry' mean to you?

9. Servant Leadership Skills

Others will see team members as leaders. Leadership is a gift of the Holy Spirit. It is not to further personal prestige! It is to serve the church of Jesus Christ. Team members are followers. They need to be willing to serve and willing to delegate to national believers.

At the same time, as a leader, each member must know his/her Bible really well and be able to apply Biblical principles to a wide range of issues.

Questions to ask

- Are you willing to be a follower and be mentored by others?
- Do people seek you out for spiritual and practical advice?
- How do you handle competition? Are you a team player?
- Do you easily delegate responsibilities to others?
- How do you handle conflict with leadership?
- How good are you at listening to others?
- Are you an insatiable learner?
- Are you willing to take a minor role so others can grow into leadership?

10. An Effective Action Planner – Initiative Taker

Many have vision and even strategic goals, but they lack the ability to make practical action plans in order to reach their goals. Good team members can see the 'big picture'. They have a vision for the whole, but then they can work out an action plan for step-by-step implementation to reach the goal. Not only can they do this themselves, but they can help others to plan in this way.

Questions to ask

- Do you see the 'big picture' in a situation or do you quickly get immersed in the details?
- Describe some of the action plans that you have carried out.
- Do people come to you to help them think out an action plan?

11. Flexibility and Adaptability

On our teams, team members who have a measure of tolerance for ambiguity often demonstrate success. They are not 'black and white' people. Do you see the following as irritants or as a challenge for growth?

- Appointments that are not kept
- Very imprecise instructions that cause you to get lost
- The breakdown of your vehicle
- Queue barging at a bus stop
- Disorganisation in government offices

Questions to ask

- Are you resilient?
- Are you socially mobile – able to make friends with people of a differing social status?
- Are you a perfectionist?
- Are you controlled by time? Privacy? Orderliness? Food preferences?
- Are you willing to give up your rights?

12. Professional skills for transformational workers

Team members often need to have a professional skill to have a credible identity. It really helps if this skill is seen by the community as beneficial to them – if it meets some of their felt needs.

Questions to ask

- How have you prepared to use your professional background for the benefit of the people?
- How would you describe holistic ministry?
- What do you think you can do to establish a positive identity among the people you will serve?

13. Physical Health

Good health is very important. Team members need to keep fit. They need adequate sleep and an appropriate diet. Each person needs to understand his/her own endurance limit and be ready to take breaks and holidays as necessary.

Questions to ask

- How often are you sick?
- Do you have any physical disabilities that might make it difficult for you to go where you hope to go?
- How often do you need to take a vacation?
- What do you do for physical recreation?
- Have you ever experienced severe stress or burnout?

14. Prayer and financial support maintenance skills

In faith, the team member is looking to God for prayer supporters and financial supporters. He/she is faithful in contacting family, friends and other interested supporters to give them an idea of the vision for his/her future ministry. This will be done in a number of different ways – personal visits, letters, e-mails, phone calls etc. The team member realises that a growing support base is necessary to offset inflation and to recruit more and more prayer partners.

Questions to ask

- Do you have a plan to maintain a good support base? Is the plan being put into action?
- How do you view 'living by faith'?
- Are you afraid to ask people for financial help?
- Are your supporters growing in their faith because of their partnership with you?

12.8 Conclusions

If team members are selected using these criteria, then I believe there will be less mismatching of needs, fewer mismatched teams and consequently less attrition.

There is great danger in placing unqualified people into teams in church planting situations. The result is nearly always sad. **These fourteen criteria may seem formidable, but they are realistic!**

13. The Wrong or Inadequate Tools

13.1 The Problem

13.2 Inadequate Human Resources

13.3 Inadequate Financial Resources

13. The Wrong or Inadequate Tools

13.1 The Problem

The cry of many military men in the World War II was, *"Give us the tools, and we will finish the task"*. The implication was that if they were motivated and capable, but without "the tools" (weapons etc.) they could accomplish little. Teams often go out into a "high-tech war" to do battle with only a slingshot! So part of the problem is **inadequate skills**.

The solution is simple – equip the team with **the right tools** for the task and allow the team the freedom to be creative. I want to look at two common areas of inadequate provision of "tools".

13.2 Inadequate Human Resources

13.2.1 Lack of adequate training

Team members are expected to be:

- Committed, disciplined disciples of Jesus
- Spiritual survivors
- On-going learners
- Accepted outsiders
- Christ-like models
- Competent communicators
- Accountable team members
- Compassionate servants
- Vigilant mentors
- Living a simple life-style
- Spiritual warriors
- Living physically healthy lifestyles
- Knowledgeable innovators
- Principle-based 'copers' (with the unknown – emergencies etc.)
- Disciplined networkers
- Experienced "professionals" (for transformational workers)

How can they fulfil all these and other roles without training?

Training is not a matter of steps or levels. It is more like a swirling pattern of interweaving threads. It is a **process** not a **product**.

On many teams there is poor training for the task assigned to the team. Recruiting for the team is crucial, but it is not sufficient. All teams need to have a training component.

I would like to make the following points.

- **Training must be taken seriously**

We are responsible to train our teams to adequately carry out the task assigned to them. Failure to do so leads to serious consequences:

- For the morale of the team
- For the ministry
- For relationships with the home church

It is irresponsible to send untrained personnel to do a task they are incapable of doing through lack of training.

- **Training must be varied**

Teams do different things at different times. There are different roles within a team. There are various academic and practical levels of experience that are required. The best training programmes are "custom made" - designed for that particular team.

- **Training must be contextualised**
  - The curriculum must arise from the context the team is operating in. What are the key theological, sociological and practical skills that are needed?
  - The teaching and the textbooks etc. must be related to the context – not just a presentation of abstract ideas.
  - The training should be **applied** to the context.
  - The training methods should be appropriate to the context. The team should learn together by discussing and by doing. Since we mainly live in aural preference learning cultures it is important to use stories, proverbs, songs etc. to teach.

- **Training must be geared to the task**

Train the team for the job they are going to do – whether it is language learning, evangelism or church planting.

- **Training must be holistic**

We are to train **the whole person** – in spiritual character qualities as well as in their emotional and social state. We must train teams together – not as a group of individuals.

- **Training needs the right trainers**

The key to successful training is not the curriculum, not the textbooks and other resources, but your team trainers. These trainers are probably external to your team. The trainers should be:
  - Godly
  - Easy to relate to
  - Good communicators
  - Experienced

13.2.2 Different Models of Training

- **The Academic Model**

This model puts great emphasis on the training of the **mind**. In the West this model has dominated education and training for eight centuries. Now this **is** important. We are to love the Lord our God with all of our mind. The use and understanding of Scripture, missiology, culture etc., not only provides us with a basis for our spiritual lives and a platform for spirituality, but it also helps us to understand the worldview and presuppositions of those we work among.

But this model has major flaws. It is usually highly conceptual, moving in the orbit of ideas and reason. Biblically, **knowing** is wider then rationality. It is more holistic and involves relationships and experience. So, as a model, this is inadequate for it strengthens only one factor – the mind.

Another flaw is that the trainer usually becomes a lecturer. This is a very poor model of a discipler. Still, at best it helps the trainee **to think**!

- **The Monastic Model**

In this model training is in a firmly structured community with the primary goal of **personal spiritual development**. This was the model of Celtic Christian monasteries in the 7th to 9th centuries. It is still the model of many Bible Schools. In some ways it is a reaction to the academic model. The early monastic model was bipolar. The aim was to produce both saints and scholars. Bible Schools aim at producing saints.

Hudson Taylor of the CIM launched the Bible School movement. Grattan Guinness started the **East London Institute for Home and Foreign Missions** in 1877. The Bible School has been a very adaptable and useful tool. The ethos on our ships in the area of training largely follows this model. The model has four major concerns.

- To train Christian workers without the "corrupting" influence of academia
- To prepare non-ordained workers
- To emphasize spiritual development as the key to equipping Christian workers
- To train lay people to witness in their own environment

So the centre of gravity is spiritual development not academic excellence. There is an atmosphere of prayer meetings, worship and warm fellowship that produces a receptive faith.

There are many advantages in this model. Community is a pattern of training that arises out of the community nature of the church. Those who have been through Bible School remember best the community nature of their training.

However, the reality is that although the **aim** is spiritual equipment, it is often wishful thinking! Pastoral care gets swamped by an academic timetable – essay writing etc. Also there is the problem that it is very hard to quantify progress in:

- Commitment to the Lord Jesus
- The task of loving each other
- Enjoyment and openness in fellowship
- Prayer

So the model is really artificial, with little correspondence to the world of service the trainees will enter. Still, as a model, it has some major good points.

- **The Professional Training Model**

This is training for a specific task – a profession. This is essentially the seminary model. Pastors need to be trained, so an institution is set up and a curriculum is designed to train them. Workers need training for life in the jungle, so something like an army training camp is designed with the emphasis on spiritual warfare, eating poor quality food, early morning runs, floor scrubbing etc. (all called "good training"). Our **IT** (intensive training) courses follow this model.

This model requires the identification of what is **really** needed. In missions this involves not only Biblical studies, but also missiology, cultural anthropology, sociology, management and computer skills etc.

Theology is taught in the context of ministry. Training is very practical with lots of practical assignments for the trainees. This is the model that is used to train doctors and mechanics. It provides a sense of purpose and reality for the trainees. The questions asked are real, practical questions that need pragmatic answers.

The problem with this model is that it focuses on technique. Methodology is more important than conviction. Relevance is more important than truth. Doing is more important than understanding.

So the **Academic Model** emphasises **the head**. The **Monastic Model** emphasises **the heart** and the **Professional Training Model** emphases **the hand**. There are two more models of training that are current - the Business Model and the Discipleship Model.

- **The Business Model**

The core concept of this model is that trainees need a skill and they are prepared to pay to learn this skill. This is the model of much adult education. The "course" is a tool produced by the trainers, not by the trainees. YWAM uses this model by running a number of "Schools" (post DTS). Our company has "Leadership Schools".

There are a number of advantages to this model. It reduces the cost. Institutional training is a very expensive way to train people. "Schools" may be mobile. Courses may be by extension etc.

The disadvantage is that the courses have to be marketed and the emphasis on **training the whole person** is lost. Economic viability is a good aim, but it often distorts training. There is pressure to develop a curriculum that can easily be "sold" because it meets a felt-need. **But what is wanted is not always what is needed!**

- **The Holistic Discipleship Model**

This is a non-Western approach to training. A Nigerian church leader wrote a little playlet about this approach modelled on the teaching methods of Jesus.

Student: I can't make an outline of what you say.
Teacher: Life and thought and conversation seldom conform to an outline.
Student: But that makes it very hard to prepare for exams!
Teacher: What exams?
Student: The one at the end of your course.
Teacher: You will be taking my exams the rest of your life.
Student: I don't understand a lot of what you are teaching us.
Teacher: You won't for three years.
Student: But that's the whole course!
Teacher: No, it's only the beginning of the course.
Student: Do you have any idea of what my grade is likely to be?
Teacher: You will fail the course along with all the rest of your fellow students. But then all of you, except one, will turn the world upside down!
Student: When we have finished, will we know as much as the Pharisees?
Teacher: No. You won't know as much, but you will be changed. Do you want to be changed?
Student: I think so. Is your teaching relevant?
Teacher: Is it true?
Student: You seem to throw questions back to me instead of answering them!
Teacher: That's because the answers are in you.
Student: Will we see you in class tomorrow?
Teacher: The class continues at supper and around the fire tonight. Do you think I only teach words?
Student: Is there an assignment?
Teacher: Yes, help me catch some fish for supper.

Communication theory suggests that the discipleship model is the most effective training method in all cultures. It relates learning to life and reality. It integrates learning with character development. It doesn't fit with Western culture because:

- The model is very time consuming
- The trainer often feels threatened by this model. It is easier to give a lecture on holiness than to live it. There is a vulnerability required.
- There are few people who are "Jack of all trades and master of them all." Specialisation is difficult with this model.

More on this model later.

➢ **A Synthesis of Models for Team Training**

Clearly any one model is inadequate. A balance of the best of all models is needed. Clearly a more integrative, holistic approach needs to become dominant in our company.

The goal of training is that the training must be directed towards forming the kind of person that is needed to move forward the task of the team.

We are to train people and a holistic approach requires:

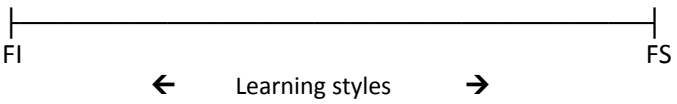
- **Trainers to be humble:**
  Good notes are not enough! Trainers can't control or even dispense the changing, anointing and equipping power of the Holy Spirit.
- **A unifying focus**
  The tendency in training is to be increasingly diverse leading to a fragmented task. We need to recapture unity in training. The centrality of the person in training is essential.
- **An ability to distinguish the means from the end**
  A fully equipped person is the end. Training is only one of the means to that end. Training is not the ultimate goal.

So a holistic training programme will give equal time to training of the head (academic), the heart (monastic) and the hand (professional-business) in a balanced integrative way. The team needs as much training as possible to help each member progress in each of these three areas.

13.2.3 Cultural Perceptions of what it means to think and learn

Thinking is something that we all do unconsciously. Most of us make the assumption that the way we think about any subject is the right way to think about it. Only those who work as trainers in a crosscultural context realize that the way we think is very different from the way other people think! There are, in fact, a huge variety of thinking patterns that are often culture-dependent.

The way we process information (i.e. the way we think) determines how we learn, how we make decisions, draw inferences, reflect, reason, etc. And, not surprisingly, the way we teach mirrors the way we were taught. There are two polar extremes on a continuum. These are called field-independent (FI) and, at the other end, field-sensitive (FS)



Non-western education is largely FI. And in parts of the world colonized by Europeans, FI styles of learning were imposed on those peoples.

A person's learning style is partly genetic and partly developmentally imposed. Usually by puberty it is set for life. How do you find out where you are on the continuum?

➢ **Field-sensitive (FS) people are:**

- Very sensitive to the judgement of others
- Responsive to social reinforcement
- Good with interpersonal relationships and these are very important to them
- Happiest being with people; groups are very important
- Obedient to authority - very important to them
- Committed to the importance of culturally determined gender roles
- Not analytical at problem solving
- Believe that **ex**trinsic motivation is very important
- Believe that autonomy is not as important as social acceptance.

This is an over-simplification, but westerners **tend** to be field-independent. Latins, Africans and Asians (but not Chinese, Japanese and Koreans) tend to be field-sensitive.

FI		**FS**
analytical	⟷	synthetical
dichotomistic	⟷	integrative (social beings)
cerebral	⟷	emphasis on feelings
see the significance of individual trees but miss the forest	⟷	only see the forest
emphasis on individuals	⟷	emphasis on community
encourage personal initiative	⟷	stifle personal initiative

The training methodology is going to be very different for the two ends of the continuum. Teaching style is usually a reflection on your value system regarding human nature as well as the type of environment that will enhance learning. Our natural way of training is to train others how we ourselves were trained.

FS people tend to have a **visual** - rather than an auditory - orientation. They perceive meaning very easily through touch, temperature, pain etc. They demonstrate a high level of self-knowledge and their preferred learning method is in groups.

On a multi-cultural team training methods need to be very diverse. Try and identify the preferred methods and strategies of learning of the various people on your team.

I am a **very** field-independent learner. However, I spent two years in Beirut and seven years in Saudi Arabia teaching Arabs - mainly Saudi medical students. For the most part they were predominantly field-sensitive. I had to considerably change the way I taught. Here are some of the things I learned.

Training Field-sensitive People

1. A course outline is essential. FS people need to see the plan of the whole course at one time. It helps them to be holistic.
2. An oral overview of the course needs to be given with visual aids (usually with OHP sheets). FS people need to know what they are expected to learn and why. So clearly written course objectives are needed.
3. Part of every period should be spent reviewing the past, stating the goals of that period and showing how it all fits together. This should be written down on an OHP.
4. Expertise should be provided in methods of note taking. Note taking is not a strength of FS people. They need to be taught how to do it.
5. Many opportunities for feedback are needed. Reinforcement in a group context is crucial.
6. Stories and illustrations are best when taken from life. So lots of case studies are helpful.
7. Small modules of work are easier to handle with FS people.
8. Role-playing is an excellent teaching method for a field-sensitive person (You can even do this in biochemistry).
9. Set short-term deadlines for students' work.
10. Give assigned tasks/reading rather than give essays and say, *"Read that book*".

11. Field-sensitive people are much more affected by praise and criticism of both peers and authority figures than FI people. FI trainers need to keep this in mind. Affirmation is very important.
12. Group work is preferred to individual work. So group projects and group discussion should be encouraged. FI people tend to criticise FS people for "cheating" – when it is really group learning.
13. FS students like structure and organisation while doing projects.
14. FS students are **very visual** learners, somewhat less **auditory** learners, and least of all **literary** learners. So notes need to be written **and** seen (i.e. OHPs, flip charts etc.). Visual aids are essential. (In biochemistry this means lots of models!)
15. FS people need **external** motivators – praise, grades, prizes, rewards etc. For FI people these things are only marginally useful.
16. FS people need **models**. They copy examples.
17. An FI person likes to figure out how to do something and then does it. FS people need to be told how to do something **by example**. For a trainer to say "*Do it any way you wish*" is very frustrating to an FS learner!

Along with these recommendations, learners need to be taught **coping strategies** of adapting to a style of teaching/training that they may be unfamiliar with.

Remember neither style – FI or FS – is superior to the other. They are not related to intelligence or ability. Trainees with both styles can have equal success **if** they are trained in ways that match their styles.

So when you train your team or call in a trainer, make sure that you know what training style the majority of your team prefer. Help the team members who are in a minority to cope with a different style.

13.2.4 Some Teaching Methods of Jesus

These methods should be used in evangelism and in discipleship particularly in an FS culture.

- **Teaching by discussion**

The majority of Jesus' teaching was in a conversational style with a relatively small group.

- Jesus paid attention to presenting a problem. He sorted out the heart of the issue and He set it out as a question, using the question to teach a new truth or to reinforce a known truth.
- Jesus gave those He was training the opportunity to discuss His "message" with Him after the main audience had left. He used the questions they initiated as further teaching opportunities.
- Jesus often responded to questions designed to challenge Him, trap Him or anger Him, by avoiding a direct response and by raising another question. He often told a story reflecting a dilemma that needed a judgement.
- Jesus often used a personal need that was presented to Him to teach a lesson. He would preface His response with a call to obedience on the part of the person making the request. In this way the person would learn from having the need met.
- Jesus travelled and lived with those He was training. He used "casual time" as a teaching opportunity. He often drew on culture, life situations and surrounding nature to create a discussion so He could teach them the things of God.
- Jesus often 'veiled' His answers or His teaching to create a more significant learning situation.

- Jesus often confronted hypocrisy. He used the reaction of those being confronted as a teaching opportunity, as an illustration to His followers and as an informative rebuke to those being confronted.

To teach in this way requires **great listening skills**! Jesus demonstrated these skills very well.

- He listened for deeper needs
- He listened with His eyes **and** His heart
- He listened for underlying issues
- He listened for unbelief
- He listened with questions
- He listened for cultural clues
- He listened for circumstantial clues
- He listened for inconsistencies
- He listened for non-verbal body language clues

➢ **How to lead discussions – the Jesus Method**

The heart of the method is learning the art of asking questions that give birth to ideas in the hearts and minds of the questioners.

- You should approach a discussion with two primary goals in mind:
  - ✧ **To bring out and clarify issues and ideas** in the area under discussion for the purpose of growing an understanding of the **heart of the issue**.
  - ✧ To make sure that what has been learned is really understood – i.e. **the implications are clear.**
- All your questions should fall into two groups:
  - ✧ **Foundational questions** designed to make sure the issue or idea has been understood accurately
  - ✧ **Exploring questions** designed to bring out basic ideas, presuppositions, axioms so that the group can explore together the truth and applicability of the idea.
- The best kinds of questions are those questions to which there is no simple answer.
- It is important to define the direction of the discussion at the beginning of the session by asking basic questions and limiting the boundaries of the discussion.
- It is often necessary to re-phrase the questions several times until everyone grasps the heart of the issue.
- Hypothetical questions and situations are helpful.
- Stories (parables) are very helpful to clarify issues.
- Stick to the issue at hand. Try and insist on **application** of truth.
- Try and avoid arguments. Challenge the indifferent and uncritical participant.
- Identify **key** words – define them. Don't allow these words to be used loosely or ambiguously.
- Usually a 2 or 3-hour session of group interaction comes out of one or two good initial questions.
- Avoid the temptation to get to other questions and issues without fully looking at the application of truth.

13.2.5 The Conduct of Training Seminars

It is helpful to set aside a two-hour session biweekly for a "discussion". This discussion is really a training session **to help the team to think in such a way that it gives birth to new ideas**. Announce the topic beforehand. Get people to read around the issue beforehand.

The team leader doesn't "teach". Usually the team leader doesn't know "the answers". He/she acts as the moderator of the discussion by asking a series of questions that define the discussion and give it direction. The purpose is not to let everyone have his or her say on a subject. That gets you nowhere! The leader should examine and query the answers. He/she tries to draw out the reasons why a person believes in a certain way or the implications of that belief.

Here are a few rules:

- Team members should never answer a question they don't understand.
- Everyone should listen carefully to the question. Get the person asking the question to re-phrase it in several different ways.
- Listen to the question with your mind as well as your ears.
- A good discussion leader is aware what questions are important as well as the range of answers that deserve consideration and further relevant questions.
- Usually just one or two questions are enough for a two-hour discussion. If there is more than one question, then the questions should be ordered so that the first opens up matters that can be further explored by the second.
- The best opening question is one everyone can be asked to answer in succession. Then the leader must always ask, *Why?"* or *"Is that all you think is involved? Who can add an essential point? Isn't that a bit overstated in the light of…? Is__the right word for__?"*
- Don't allow a key word to be used ambiguously or loosely. You can't legislate about how words should be used. But differences in meaning must be plainly recognised. Make an effort to get everyone to agree, at least for the time being, on how key words will be used.
- When conflicting answers to given questions begin to emerge, the leader should clarify the issue and explicitly make everyone aware of the issue being debated. Unless the conflict is clearly formulated and fully understood it is futile to carry on.
- It usually helps to have a flip chart and have the major questions or the major divergent issues, written there. Draw diagrams.
- Everyone should be patient and polite. Lots of smiles and laughter usually helps.
- Learning discussions like this usually develop with practice. Thinking through issues is a good habit that must be acquired through practice.

In summary, team leaders must set time aside for team discussions where a relevant topic is discussed in detail. In this way the team will learn from each other collectively. After a while, such sessions will yield some productive ideas with a lot of thought behind them. Many good projects and approaches have been birthed in such sessions.

Other helpful points

- Team leaders and trainers/consultants should:
  - **Project energy** by providing the discussion with excitement and motivation. Some leaders may be quiet and unassuming, others may be "raucous", but all need to be "can-do types" - models and catalysts for positive action.
  - **Be involved** without being obtrusive. They should help others think - nudging, assisting, helping, sharing information. They should actively promote team thinking.
  - **Embrace change** by guiding, cajoling and helping others see the path to opportunity and positive expectations.
  - **Facilitate** others in a steadfast pursuit of purpose.

- All teams are blocked in what they are attempting to do. The evil one ensures this happens. If what a team is attempting to do is not working, they shouldn't give up! But they shouldn't just repeat what they are doing. They shouldn't just hope things will get better. We believe in a God of 'breakthroughs'. [2 Sam. 5] He has the answers! He knows the way to overcome. Prayer and persistent experimentation will give answers. We must have a "can-do" attitude.
- So teams need to:
  - **Look beyond the obvious** in a reasoned analysis of a situation. The team needs to seek God's quality choice among alternatives and then move into action.
  - **Maintain perspective** and help each other sense "the big picture". Teams need to have a "systems view" to guide analysis and action.
  - **Promote learning** by stressing the need to understand options and explore other possibilities.

  The great tendency on teams is to become increasingly unfocussed over time. They get into a number of good things that never contribute to achieving the overall goal of the team. Functional divisions begin to occur (even "Turf Wars" start!). Cracks begin to appear and things fall between the cracks!

  So "discussions" should:

  - **Focus energy on the "main thing"** by helping people establish priorities so they can **all** focus on high-promise activities and outcomes.
  - **Eliminate the problem** of "too much opportunity and not enough direction."
  - **Help build linkages** (partnerships with others involved in the same tasks). They need to break out of the functional cages of organisation in order to get the greater task accomplished.
  - **Influence co-operative action** – turning fences into bridges both on the team and with others.
- Most teams don't have many geniuses that make heroic advances. In fact all our teams are made up of ordinary believers who generate improvements bit-by-bit – "eating the elephant one bite at a time."

  Teams that are like this have a culture/ethos of:

  - **Never being satisfied** with structures, processes, plans and outcomes as they are and always seeking to make them better. They think in terms of continuous process improvement. They work constantly at incremental change. They appear to be "tinkerers" unrelenting as they adjust, try out or test.
  - **Supporting creativity** by challenging each other to invest time and resources in the quest "to do it better." They highly value the insight that springs from careful analysis. They are terrifically excited by a creative approach or by a challenging opportunity.
  - **Taking the initiative** and turning the "what ifs" into action. With no fanfare, they size up a situation, involve others, come up with a plan and simply get on with it. They accept risks in the pursuit of improvement.
  - **Stressing a positive team environment** and challenging each other to remain motivated. They model caring interaction. They set themselves new standards of spirituality, boldness, prayer and performance.

13.2.6 Lack of adequate methodologies – e.g. church planting

Often our teams are ignorant or fail to learn from some extremely helpful missiological research on effective methodologies. I would just like to give a brief overview from the area of church planting as an example. Dr. David Garrison of the IMB of the Southern Baptists has done some

very helpful research on church planting movements in the Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, tribal and western world and has come up with a list of commonalties. Here are some of his conclusions.

A definition

> ***A church planting movement (CPM) is a rapid and multiplying increase of indigenous churches, planting other churches within a given people group or population segment.***

- **Ten Universal Elements found in all CPMs**

1. Prayer

- The first pillar in all CPM strategies
- A vital part in the personal life and the team life of the workers
- Evident to outsiders and the new believers as the source of power and effectiveness of the work/team

2. Abundant Gospel Sowing

- Often relying heavily on mass media evangelism
- Always includes personal evangelism as a way of life by the workers
- Witness unintimidated by government or societal forces.

3. Intentional Church Planting

- More than just evangelism and conversion
- A strategy in place of deliberate church planting

4. Scriptural Authority

- The Bible is in the heart language of the people - both orally (for aural preference learners) and in written form.
- The Bible's authority is unquestioned.
- The Bible is accepted as the source of doctrine, church life etc.

5. Local leadership

- Expatriate workers mentor church planters – they never do the job themselves.
- Workers model participative Bible studies with seekers. [see the Jesus Method [13:2.4]
- Expatriate workers don't lead the church, but **model** servant leadership.

6. Lay leaders

- Lay leadership is encouraged – bi-vocational, integrated, holistic ministry – avoid "clergy".
- The leaders are like the people they lead in education, outlook, job etc.
- There is no dependence on seminary-educated leaders.

7. Cell or House Churches

- House churches: small, reproducible cell churches of 10-30 members are emphasized.
- Buildings are not brought – at least not at high cost – "church architecture" is avoided.
- Cells meet together periodically for "celebration"

8. **Churches that have been planted rapidly start planting others**
    - New believers are taught that church planting is normal for all churches and that it is possible without external aids or finances.
    - Believers are planting churches within months, or a couple of years, of being birthed themselves.
9. **Rapid Reproduction**
    - There is a sense of urgency and importance concerning seekers coming to faith in Jesus Christ.
    - Churches expect to reproduce themselves rapidly.
10. **Healthy Churches are reproduced**

    Five core functions are in evidence:
    - Worship in the heart language of the people
    - Outreach
    - Education and discipleship
    - Ministry using spiritual gifts
    - Fellowship

➢ **Ten Very Common Factors found in nearly all CPMs**

1. **Worship is in the heart language of the people**
    - Workers have embraced that heart language
    - Worship (the prayers, songs, messages) are in the heart language
    - The music is local "folk" music

2. **Evangelism has communal implications**
    - Evangelism uses strong family and social connections.
    - New believers are urged to share the Gospel through the web of their family relations and down corridors of trust.
    - Cells may consist of family units.

3. **Rapid incorporation of believers into the churches**
    - Baptism is not delayed by lengthy discipleship requirements.
    - New believers are expected to become witnesses immediately – usually they are taught stories to tell.
    - New believers are directed to newly forming churches rather than added to the old fellowships.

4. **Passion and fearlessness**
    - Believers are characterised by a passion and a sense of urgency that attests to the importance of salvation and the necessity of turning to God.
    - New believers evidence boldness in the face of opposition.

5. **Becoming a follower of Jesus is costly**
    - Rapid church growth occurs when becoming a believer is **not** popular or socially advantageous.
    - Becoming a disciple often leads to persecution.

6. **There is a leadership crisis and/or a spiritual vacuum in society**
    - A void due to war, natural disaster, displacement of people, rapid urbanization or rapid industrialisation.
    - The loss of long-held symbols of stability and security.
    - Invasion of a counter-culture (usually "Western-values) threatening the value system of a people.

7. **On the job training for church leadership**
    - Leaders are trained in action, rather than in seminaries.
    - TEE, short-term training modules, on-going leadership training are in use.

8. **Leadership authority is decentralised**
    - Every cell or house church has the authority to be pro-active in evangelism, ministry and new church planting.
    - No hierarchy or levels of bureaucracy are evident.

9. **Expatriates/outsiders keep a low profile**
    - Workers keep a very low profile and mentor from behind the scenes.
    - "Foreignness" is minimized at all cost.
    - Ingenuity and experimentation are encouraged.

10. **Workers suffer**
    - Workers are seen to be suffering!
    - Workers are on their guard watching, fighting and praying.

➢ **Nine Obstacles to starting Church Planting Movements**

These are actions that obstruct, slow down or hinder CPMs:

1. **Extra-Biblical requirements for being a church**

   i.e. to be accepted as a church you must have: land, a building, a seminary-educated leader, paid clergy and a legal identify/registration – all non-Biblical requirements.

2. **Extra-Biblical requirements for leadership**

   As above that church leaders should exceed the New Testament requirements.

3. **Loss of valued cultural identity**

   To become believers they have to abandon valued cultural aspects of their identity and adopt an alien culture.

4. **Bad examples of "Christian culture"**
    - Older churches – culturally alien, worldly, immoral, having little passion for sharing their faith.
    - "Western values"

5. **Non-reproducible church models**
    - Workers use non-reproducible methods, solutions, materials etc. in church planting.
    - When workers want "their church" to grow bigger and bigger.

6. **Subsidies that create dependency in the church**
    - The use of money that creates dependency and blocks the church from being self-supporting.
    - Subsidies in the form of purchasing land, buildings, vehicles, materials, salaries of local leaders.

7. **Adherence to dualistic/linear thought and practice**
    - Dichotomistic western values vs. holism
    - Linear thinking that produces very prescriptive programmes

8. **Prescriptive Strategies**
    - Workers arriving with a pocketful of answers and with a list of formulae.
    - There is a great need for a humble dependence on God to reveal His way.

9. **Developing "Frog churches" rather than "Lizard churches"**

    "Frog churches" see themselves as having arrived at the end. They expect the lost to come to them – they sit and wait.

    "Lizard churches" are out looking for others – they chase them – they can change their colour if necessary to more effectively reach them (i.e. adaptable) – they can endure suffering (like loss of a tail) without loss of effectiveness (they grow back their tails!).

These are principles that are broad enough to allow quite a bit of diversity. The principles are Biblical and they work! Why do we then persist in using non-Biblical models that don't work? So often our teams don't have "the tools" (the principles) to do the job assigned to them.

13.2.7 Lack of Career Development: Finding God's Long-Range Purposes for Your Life

A. Introduction

If you had the magical power so that by waving a wand you could change yourself (and/or your team) into what you would really like to be … into what God has created you to be and called you to be … in the fullest possible sense, would you exercise that power? Of course you would! But, first you'd have to know what you want to be.

" ' For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, ' Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.' " [Jer. 29:11-13]

"*Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.' "* [Is. 30:21]

1. A Word of Caution – no quick fixes, no tricks!

"If I try to use human influence, strategies and tactics of how to get people to do what I want - to work better, to be more motivated, to like me and each other – while my character is fundamentally flawed, marked by duplicity and insincerity … then, in the long run, I cannot be successful. My duplicity will breed distrust, and everything I do will be perceived as manipulative."

"Each of us tends to think we see things as they are – that we are objective. But this is not the case. We see the world, not as it is, but as we are – or as we are conditioned to see it. When we open our mouths to describe what we see, we in effect describe ourselves, our perceptions, our paradigms."

"The more aware we are of our basic paradigms or assumptions, and the extent to which we have been influenced by our experience, the more we can take responsibility for those paradigms, examine them, test them against reality, listen to others and be open to their perceptions, thereby getting a larger picture and a far more objective view."

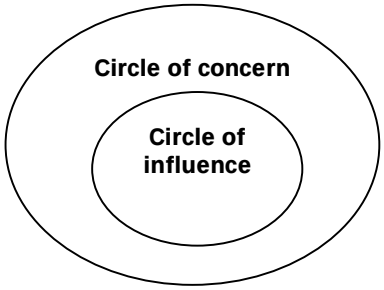
"In the words of Thoreau, 'For every thousand hacking at the leaves of evil, there is one striking at the root.' We can only achieve quantum improvements in our lives as we quit hacking at the leaves of attitude and behaviour and get to work on the root, the paradigms from which our attitudes and behaviour flow." [1]

2. Becoming proactive, not reactive

Being proactive *"Means more than merely taking the initiative. It means that as human beings, we are responsible for our own lives. Our behaviour is a function of our decisions, not our conditions. We can subordinate feelings for values. We have the initiative and the responsibility to make things happen."*

"Look at the word responsibility – "response-ability" – the ability to choose your response. Highly proactive people recognize that responsibility. They do not blame circumstances, conditions, or conditioning for their behaviour.

Their behaviour is a product of their own conscious choices, based on values, rather than a product of their conditions, based on feelings …. The ability to subordinate an impulse to a value is the essence of a proactive person." [2]



The focus of the proactive person's energy is concentrated on enlarging their circle of influence. The circle of influence is the set of all those things we can do something about. The circle of concern is the set of all those things we are concerned about but over which we have no real control.

The problems we face usually fall into one of three areas:

a. **Direct Control** – these are problems involving our own behaviour. Working on our habits solves these problems.

b. **Indirect Control** – these are problems involving other people's behaviour. Changing our methods of influence possibly solves these problems.

c. **No Control** – these are problems we can do nothing about. They may be in the past or they may be situational realities. Genuinely and peacefully accepting these problems and learning to live with them may solve these problems.

There are two ways to put ourselves in control of our lives immediately:

- ✧ We can make a promise – and keep it.
- ✧ We can set a goal – and work to achieve it.

B. Making an assessment of yourself

This should be constantly re-evaluated in the light of feedback. In a sense you have a chicken vs. egg problem. Sorting out cause and effect is often problematic.

1. Assessing where you are now

You need to carefully evaluate your assets and your current performance. Where do you stand now? What do you have to work with? How are you performing now?
This assessment takes lots of time and hard work.

On an individual level, evaluating your assets includes evaluating your:

a. Talents (general abilities) and skills (specific abilities)
b. Intelligence and aptitudes
c. Personality and motivation
d. Education and experience
e. Health and appearance
f. Relationship with family and friends
g. Spiritual gifts
h. Strengths and weaknesses

There are various books that can help you learn from these assessments [see bibliography at the end of the chapter].

- For evaluating your assets in general: **If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else** (p.42)
- For your talents and skills: **What Colour is your Parachute?** and/or **Where do I go from Here with my Life?**
- For personality and motivation: **Take Control of Your Life**
- For Spiritual gifts: **19 Gifts of the Spirit**
- For strengths and weaknesses: **Fighting for Time**

There are also various tests that may help you. A couple that are recommended are:

- The Myers-Briggs Temperament Test
- The Strong-Campbell Interest Test

The Myers-Briggs Temperament Test assesses you on various continuums:

Extrovert	**---**	***Introvert***
Sensing	**---**	***Intuitive***
Thinking	**---**	***Feeling***
Judging	**---**	***Perceiving***

The Strong-Campbell Interest Test tries to place you in one of six categories of occupations:

i. **Realistic** – would include specific skilled technical jobs
ii. **Investigative** – more in the line of research
iii. **Artistic** – creative jobs involving working with words, music, art, etc.
iv. **Social** – jobs working with people
v. **Enterprising** – jobs persuading other people to do something
vi. **Conventional** – office jobs working with organizations, files and regular schedules

The book on spiritual gifts divides the gifts in this way:

- ✧ **Speaking Gifts**: apostle, prophecy, evangelism, shepherding, teaching, exhortation, knowledge and wisdom
- ✧ **Serving Gifts**: helps, hospitality, giving, government, mercy, faith, discernment
- ✧ **Signifying Gifts:** miracles, healing, tongues, interpretation

Another helpful way of assessing yourself is to place yourself in one or more **skill clusters:**

- Machine or manual skills
- Athletic/outdoor/travelling skills
- Detail/follow-through skills
- Numerical/financial/accounting/money management skills
- Influence/persuading skills
- Performing (as on stage) skills
- Leadership skills
- Developing/planning/organizing/executing/supervising/management skills
- Language/reading/writing/speaking/communication skills
- Instructing/interpreting/guiding/educational skills
- Intuitional and innovating skills
- Artistic skills
- Observational/learning skills
- Research/investigating/analysing/systematizing/evaluating skills

In addition you will need to evaluate your performance in the following areas:

a. **Physical:** exercise, nutrition, stress management
b. **Social/emotional:** service, empathy, synergy, intrinsic security
c. **Spiritual:** value clarification and commitment to vision, study and the application to the various spiritual disciplines
d. **Mental:** reading, visualizing, planning, writing

Also you will need to evaluate your performance in your current or most recent task:

a. **Your team-mix skills** – team dynamics
b. **The nature of what you are doing currently**
c. **Your work performance** on current tasks
d. **Your communication style** – ability to resolve conflicts and your ability to synergise

2. Assessing Your Environment

When assessing your environment you are evaluating what or who is working in your favour around you – i.e. your supporters, and what or who is working against you – i.e. your opposition.

On an individual level, assessing your external environment will include:

a. The national and local economy of your home country (it has an impact on your support, home assignment, etc.)
b. The general outlook of your occupation – i.e. how easy would it be to get a job at home?
c. Family needs and demands
d. Any other factors significantly affecting your options
e. "The competition"

In terms of your "target field", assessing your environment includes assessing:

a. The national and local economy
b. Local customs and manners – hospitality demands
c. The political environment
d. Security precautions
e. Opportunities within our company
f. Known opportunities and leads in potential transformational ministry
g. Strategic supporters:
    - ✧ supporters at the home end
    - ✧ sending company office
    - ✧ field office
    - ✧ potential new friends
h. "The competition"
i. Any other factors significantly affecting your options

3. Defining your "Mission" - Values and Life Goals.

a. A Helpful Exercise

In your mind's eyes, see yourself going to the funeral of a dear friend. As you walk down to the front of the church and look inside the coffin, you suddenly come face to face with yourself! This is your funeral. There are four speakers at your funeral.

i. The first speaker is from your family
ii. The second speaker is one of your friends
iii. The third speaker is a leader from our company
iv. The fourth speaker is from your home church

Now think deeply. What would you like each of these speakers to say about you and your life? What character would you like them to have seen in you? What contributions and achievements would you like them to remember? This visualization will help you to get in touch with your deep, fundamental values.

Area of Activity	Character	Contributions	Achievements
Family			
Friends			
Team/company			
Church			

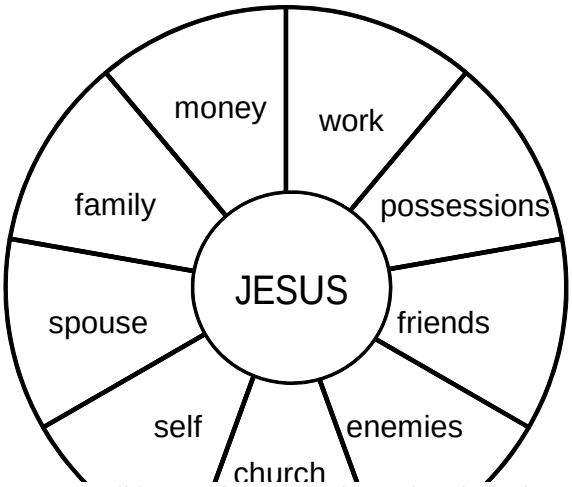
b. Defining your "Mission"

Begin today with the image, picture or paradigm of the end of your life as your frame of reference or the criterion by which everything else is examined. This is called "beginning with the end in mind" and is fundamental to all planning. The most effective way to "begin with the end in mind" is to develop a personal mission statement. A mission statement should focus on:

i. What do you want to **be** (character)?
ii. What do you want to **do** (contributions and achievements)?
iii. The values and principles on which being and doing are based.

In order to write a personal mission statement, you will have to start with the very centre of yourself. It is here that we deal with our vision and our values. Whatever is at the centre of your life will be the source of your security, your guidance, your wisdom and your spiritual power and

authority. These four factors are inter-dependant. Now clearly our centre needs to be the Lord Jesus Himself and the truth revealed in Scripture. Alternative centres that people in the world use are: spouse, family, money, work, possessions, pleasure, friends, enemies, church, self etc. If you choose one of these, your "centre of spin" will be off-centre and you will rapidly destabilize and topple over.



You may find that your mission statement will be much more balanced and much easier to work with, if you break it down into specific **role areas** of your life and the goals you want to accomplish in each area. Having written the mission statement, does it answer questions like:

What is my purpose?

What is the primary reason for my existence?

The key to the ability to change is a changeless sense of who you are, what you are about and what you value.

A mission statement is not something you write overnight. It takes deep introspection, careful analysis, thoughtful expression and often many rewrites to produce it in its final form.

To summarize: the Assessment Process involves:

i. Assessing where you are now

ii. Assessing your environment

iii. Defining and writing a Mission Statement

C. Defining where you want to be

1. A helpful exercise

In your imagination, picture yourself as 10 years older. Imagine what the world will be like in 2022: your house, your car, fashions, politics, world events, science, travel, economics etc.

Think intently about your own physical, mental, and spiritual well being on the basis that you are ten years older. Don't divert from that path of thought and concentrate!

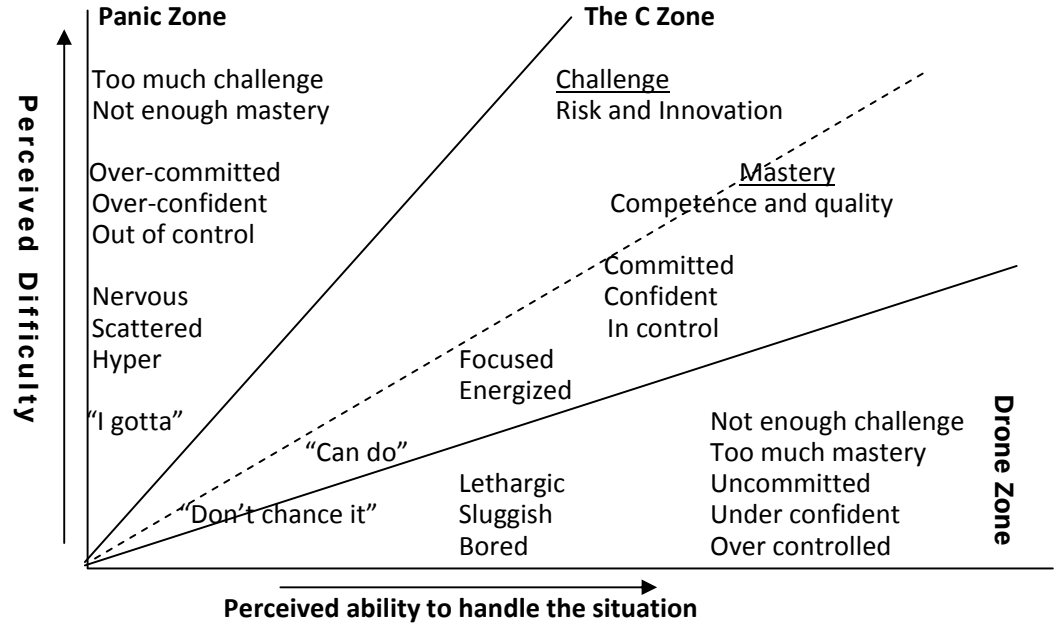
Think about all your imaginary achievements over the past ten years. Write down where you went and what you did and how you overcame all the difficulties. Detail how you developed your goals, what pinnacles you reached and what rewards were yours. Also how did those around you benefit? Do this with conviction and as much embellishment as you can. When you have finished, you are ready to write your ten-year goals on the basis of this experience.

2. Factors to consider when setting goals

a. Maintaining a P/PC Balance

Recall the story of the Goose and the Golden Egg. True effectiveness is a function of two things: **What is produced** (the golden eggs) and **the producing asset or capacity to produce** (the goose) Effectiveness lies in the balance – the P/PC balance. P stands for **production** of the desired results - the golden eggs. PC stands for **production capability** - the ability or asset that produces the golden eggs. To maintain the P/PC balance is a difficult judgement call, but it is the very essence of effectiveness. It balances short term with long term. P is accomplishing our ministry goals. PC is being able to stay the course, avoid burnout and keep producing.

b. Zones (Panic Zone, C Zone, Drone Zone)



We **should** all live in the "C Zone". Normally we gravitate either to the challenge or mastery part of that zone. Some people devote most of their energies to gaining skills or increasing competence in one area. They enjoy **mastery** and control. They become very competent at what they are doing, but if they never risk losing control by taking new steps, they will fall into the **Drone Zone**. Drone Zoners want to progress because they are bored and often hate what they are doing. But the fear of failing at the next level prevents them from taking risks.

Others are drawn more to the excitement of a challenge. They love to take risks and explore new territories. But, trying too hard to do too much in too little time can drive them into their **Panic Zone**.

They have no time to plan, to develop creative strategies, to problem solve effectively or to master any skill. The irony of being in your Panic Zone is that although you use achievement as a justification for this behaviour, you usually don't achieve nearly what you are capable of – see **Take Control of Your Life: A Complete Guide to Stress Relief,** pp. 12-20)

c. Your natural rhythms (tortoise, hare, thoroughbred)

HOMEWORK!

i. How do you normally respond to the rhythm of your life?

- ✧ I'm usually rushing ahead of my own rhythm
- ✧ I'm usually right in harmony with my own rhythm
- ✧ I'm usually lagging behind my natural rhythm

At this moment I'm _____ the rhythm of my life (ahead of/behind/right in step with)

ii. Use these questions to help identify your natural rhythm at this particular time in your life.

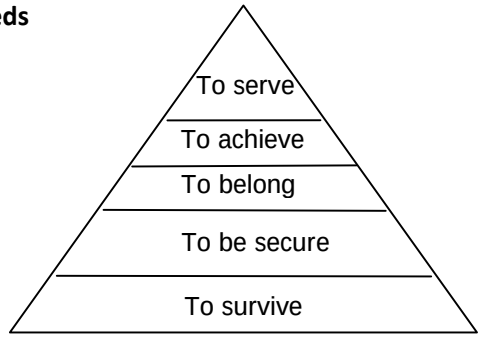
- ✧ Maybe I don't need to be/do _____ anymore (something you need to give up)
- ✧ Maybe I still need to be/do _____ some more (something you need to hang on to)
- ✧ Maybe I need to be/do _____ once again (a past resource or strength to revive)
- ✧ Maybe I need to be/do _____ sometimes (something inconsistent or tentative)

Now is the "right time" for you! But what is it the right time for? Look at your answers so far.

Now is the right time for me to _____

_____

d. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Where are you on the pyramid?

e. Planning

i. Planning is a matter of probabilities

ii. Your planning should cover different time spans:

- ✧ Long-range goals – overall style of life
- ✧ Medium-range goals – 5-10 years
- ✧ Short-range goals – one month to one year
- ✧ Mini-goals – one day to one month
- ✧ Micro-goals – less than one hour

iii. Plan for intensity in at least one area
iv. Plan some diversity in your life
v. Plan for gradual improvement

f. Remember Synergy

Two Harvard professors, Roger Fisher and William Ury, in their book **Getting to Yes,**[3] outline a whole new approach to negotiation. Instead of always having two opposing positions – *"I want that window open." "No, closed." "No, open."* – with occasional compromise (half-open, half the time) they saw the possibility of synergy. *"Why do you want it open?" "Well, I like the fresh air." "Why do you want it closed?" "I don't like the draft." "What can we do that would give the fresh air without the draft?"* Now two creative people who have respect for each other and who understand each other's needs might say, *"Let's open the window in the next room. Let's rearrange the furniture. Let's open the top part of the window. Let's turn on the air-conditioning."* They seek new alternatives because they are not defending positions.

g. Finally – No puny dreams!

3. Translating your "Mission Statement" into specific objectives

Each aspect of your personal mission or life goals needs to be translated into corresponding, specific medium and short-range goals or objectives. Goals have the following characteristics:

- Written down
- Accomplishable
- Precise
- Time factor restriction
- Desirable
- Specific
- Measurable
- Capable of review

All goals face both opportunity and opposition.

4. Establishing priorities

Critical – Important – Nice.

5. Identifying areas of planned abandonment

Let go of old goals.

D. How to get to where you're going

1. Identifying necessary support and information

What do I need and from whom to make the new reality come true?

Learning to make effective decisions means involving those with a vested interest up front and building support for the outcome in advance!

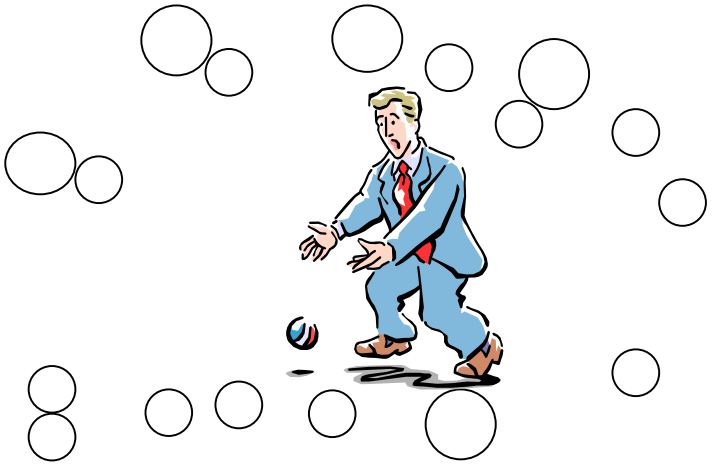
2. Writing your strategic plan

The outline to follow for a sample strategic plan includes:

- Assessment of yourself
- Assessment of your environment
- Definition of your "Mission"
- Definition of where you want to be at various time horizons.
- Steps for making your objectives and goals come true
- Identification of areas of planned abandonment.
- Identification of necessary support and information development of a time line.

3. Living out your priorities

A helpful exercise – juggling



a. Label the balls with the various factors and roles in your life.

b. How do you feel about the number of balls you're juggling?

c. What about the balls on the ground? Did you choose to let them fall or did they just drop by default?

d. Look at each ball separately. How do you feel about it? Is something you want to continue to keep in the air or is it going to be dropped in planned abandonment?

e. How does your body feel when under stress?

f. What parts of your body signal stress and tension? Indicate where you feel tension by drawing it on the figure.

g. How does your stress level impact you and the people and situations around you? How does it affect your attitudes? Your feelings? Your relationships? Your interactions at work? Your creativity and productivity?

4. Managing your personal productivity/time management

There is so much written on this subject! I won't attempt to cover it. Remember to review your progress regularly. It is good to do this daily, weekly, monthly and yearly. It sometimes helps to put events into the Time Management Matrix.

The Time Management Matrix

There are four quadrants in which to place the event.

I. The important/urgent

II. The important/non-urgent

III. The not important/urgent

IV. The not important/non-urgent

	Urgent	Not Urgent
IMPORTANT	I Typical Activities Crises Pressing Problems Deadline-driven projects	II Activities Prevention, PC activities Relationship building Recognizing new opportunities Planning, recreation
NOT IMPORTANT	III Activities Interruptions, some phone calls Some mail, some reports Some meetings Proximate, pressing matters Popular activities	IV Activities Trivia, busy work Some mail Some phone calls Time wasters & black holes Pleasant activities

5. Managing Stress

Work on your personal "drainers" and "energizers".
Work on your stress buffer shield.

6. Total Quality Management (TQM)

Continuous process improvement [**Principle Centred Leadership**, p.263]

PERSONAL ENERGIZERS

Visualize your day. List places/activities/conditions/people that renew your energy.

Activities/conditions/places/people that:	AT HOME	AT WORK
EXCITE YOU		
CALM YOU		
FREE YOU		
BRING YOU JOY		
SUPPORT/NURTURE YOU		
STIMULATE/CHALLENGE YOU		
GIVE YOU MEANING		
MAKE YOU LAUGH		
ENERGIZE YOU		

PERSONAL DRAINERS

Visualize your day. Then list the draining aspects of your day - those places/activities/ conditions/people that diminish your energy:

Activities/conditions/places/people that…	AT HOME	AT WORK
ANNOY YOU		
ANGER YOU		
DISTRACT YOU		
DEPRESS YOU		
WORRY YOU		
WEAR YOU OUT		
BORE YOU		
FRUSTRATE YOU		
PLAGUE YOU		

Stress Buffer Chart

Life Experiences that have strengthened me and taught me to manage	**My Support Networks** people who nurture and console me
Attitudes/Beliefs that help me to view it differently	**Physical Self-Care Habits** that prepare me or help me release tension
Action Skills (I can use to change the situation)	

E. Conclusions

Be prepared to spend prime time completing the task of defining your goals - your life goals, your major supportive goals and your minor goals. In one form or another you are going to trade your life for them! It you can't believe your dreams, then you should consider either smaller dreams or better, bigger commitments.

Time is life. It is irreversible and irreplaceable. To waste your time is to waste your life, but to master your time is to master your life and make the most of it!

We all want to hear our beloved Master say, ***"Well done, you have been a good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord."*** [Mt. 25:21]

"Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." [Phil. 1:6]

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight." [Eph. 1:3-4]

"***Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight."*** [Prov. 3:5-6]

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize." [I Cor. 9:24]

"The race is not to the swift… but to those who keep on running!" [Eccl. 9:11]

F. A Synopsis

This section shows you how to do strategic planning in your personal life and ministry. It shows how to do an assessment of yourself in such things as personality type, spiritual gifts, aptitudes, skills, past experience, relationships, current progress and performance, etc. It also shows how to do an assessment of your environment in areas such as your family, political and economic factors, the "competition", the views of your personal "stakeholders" etc.

Then, it shows how to develop your mission, values and goals and how to translate these into specific objectives, how to establish and live out priorities, how to make effective decisions to make goals and how to maintain a balance between "production" (i.e. accomplishing goals such as church-planting) and "production capability" (i.e. being able to stay the course, avoid burnout and keep producing).

A bibliography is included to help with further reading.

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13.2.8 The Lack of Adequate Pastoral Care

- **Emotional problems faced by team members**

There is a curious sense of stoicism on many of our teams. This hinders the recognition that many team members have emotional problems. Hindrances come from:

- The team member himself
- Fellow team members
- The leader of the team

Often team members are told to pray harder and all will be solved. This is a denial of the complexity of being a human being. We are spiritual, emotional and social beings in physical bodies.

- **Emotional problems present themselves in various forms**

What the team member **says** is the chief problem, may not be (and usually is not) the real heart of the problem. Below are ten very common problems on our teams.

1. Depression: This is very common. It usually starts with discouragement. Most often it isn't the basic problem, but a symptom.
2. Difficulty in getting along with other people – again usually only a symptom
3. Anxieties, fears and phobias
4. Marriage difficulties both for the married and unmarried. Marriage is a life experience and not a treatment for emotional disturbance. Getting married almost never solves an unmarried person's problems! Problems in married life usually fall into six categories:
   - Money
   - Sex
   - Children
   - In-laws and relatives
   - Social life
   - Legalistic beliefs
5. The difficulty of children's adjustment to crosscultural living – especially schooling
6. Guilt – this may be real but frequently it is false guilt. It may or may not be associated with depression.
7. Psychosomatic complaints: be careful when team members talk about "my amoeba" or "my dysentery".
8. Dissatisfaction with team life, *"The others are hindering me in fulfilling my goals".*
9. Disillusionment with team, our company, the church etc.
10. Loss of faith or contact with God. No devotions or devotions have become meaningless.

Sadly, many team members end up with a punitive, demanding, revengeful God, rather than a God of love.

- **Some of the basic problems causing these symptoms**

1. Unresolved hatred, resentments, bitterness and grudges

Often the root of the problem goes back to childhood and is deeply buried in the sub-conscious. But the problem surfaces again – especially during culture shock – as people struggle with the creation of a new identity. Usually we deny this bitterness at first. When we become aware of these deep-seated hatreds, the revelation may be accompanied by self-destructive urges. Seeing this is the case may not be enough to bring freedom. It may take a long time to get free.

How to get rid of these things:

- Consciously recognize them and the harm they are doing to you and to others.
- Have hope that you can be helped and set free.
- Forgive the other person (hard to do) and seek to understand and stand in the shoes of the other person. If the hated person is dead, there is still a need to deal with it.

This is a work of God's transforming power alone. Usually we need help to work through the issues.

2. Sex

Team members are no different from others. Many problems stem from a wrong concept of sex. There needs to be clear **Biblical** (rather than Christian sub-culture) teaching on this.

3. Dishonesty

Cheating, deceiving others, lying – again it needs others to help us discern **why** we have got into the habit of deception.

4. Unresolved guilt (false or real)

Some false guilt is based on covering up real guilt. Real guilt is not resolved by just talking about it. It needs God's forgiveness. Guilt may lead to suspicion of the motives of others. There must be teaching on "the conscience". Some guilt resists treatment or total healing because it is associated with other emotional difficulties.

5. Selfishness
You hear people say, *"I can't forgive myself"*. This is putting self above God.

6. Childhood experiences
Broken homes, divorced parents, physical, emotional, sexual abuse etc.

7. Lack of any on-going spiritual experience

- **Marjorie Foyle has six suggestions for single team members**

She identifies three major problems.

1. Loneliness
2. Sexual problems
3. Inter-personal relationships

Six Suggestions:

1. Use discernment in working alongside others on a team.
   (applies to longtermers in our company)
2. Pray for and with other team members.
3. Apologize sincerely.
4. Take regular holidays away from the team.
5. Check the real causes of resentment.
6. Seek counselling as soon as needed.

- **Four levels of Member Care**

First Level

Being Shepherded by God Himself

Our "Good Shepherd" will lead us into rest. He will renew us, feed us, protect us from our enemies and lead us in "paths of righteousness". We must learn never to under estimate His wonderful pastoral care of us. He is our "Wonderful Counsellor".

There are three areas of "training" that are of the first importance and should be sought diligently throughout our lives. They will bring out the importance of this first and greatest pastoral care level.

1. Obedience to the Holy Spirit

The place the Holy Spirit should have in our lives cannot be too strongly emphasized. No "training" is possible without help and the trainee who aims at being his best for God will do well to study the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We need to study His ministry in justification, sanctification and setting us apart for the work He has called us to do, but we also need to understand about Him being a personal heavenly tutor. We need to learn and experience:

- The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit – our Comforter
- His empowering for service and intercession
- His constant uplifting of Jesus Christ in our lives and through us
- His guidance into all truth
- His unique ministry in convincing people of their need of salvation
- His wooing of the sinner in repentance

In the lives of our team-members, Pentecost must be more than a historical event. It complements the Cross and the Resurrection. It marks for us the place where the disciples were given authority and power for service.

Spiritual extremes and counterfeits can be associated with "Pentecost". But rightly understood and experienced, Pentecost speaks of spiritual efficiency, balance, sanctity, and the bringing forth of the fruit of the Spirit:

Love – the great motivating principle of service

Joy – the unfailing radiance of heart satisfaction

Peace – the quiet mind through the blood of the cross

Longsuffering – the pre-requisite of endurance and the antidote for attrition

Gentleness – the grace of forbearance

Goodness – the outward expression of an indwelling Christ

Faith – The unswerving loyalty of discipleship

Meekness – the approachability of humility

Temperance – the balanced rightness of godly self-control

2. Feeding oneself with the Word of God

Many problems in pastoral care arise because team members are spiritually starved and they haven't learned to feed themselves from the Word of God.

So training needs to be given on:

- Reading through the Bible once a year
- A slower reading plan – giving titles for different sections and summarizing themes
- A systematic scheme of Bible markings
- How to do detailed book studies, biographical studies etc.

3. Prayer Fellowship with God

"No missionary can do a great or enduring work for God who is not a man of prayer."
So said F. M. Bounds. He also said, *"When we pray, we bring God into the work."*

We must train our team members in the **habit of prayer** until prayer is not an act, but an attitude. Developing a habit of prayer is foundational for newer team-members **before** they get too busy and yield to the ever-increasing temptation to let the work encroach on their quiet times with God.

Prayer – secret, fervent, believing prayer – lies at the root of all personal goodness, all effective ministry and all service that is acceptable to the Lord Jesus.

Second Level: Self and Mutual Care on the Team

Self Care: the responsibility of individual team members to provide wisely for their own well being

Mutual Care: the support, encouragement, correction and accountability that we give each other and the team.

There are many "one another" verses in Scripture that help us think through this. This is the backbone of member care.

Third Level: Sender Care

This is the care from sending groups, churches and an agency working together. There should be "sustainers" of member care both in the home supporting churches and in our company. Care should include children, family for the "primary service providers" – the church planters. These "sustainers" need to be particularly active at times of transition.

Fourth Level: Specialist Care

Teams need eight areas of care by specialists.

- **Pastoral/spiritual care** – usually in retreats, devotionals etc.
- **Physical/medical care** – usually advice and help with nutrition, water purity, disease-prevention etc.
- **Training/career**: continuing education – job placement
- **Team building/interpersonal**: group dynamics – conflict resolution etc.
- **Family and children**: marital support – MK education etc.
- **Financial**: retirement, pensions, health insurance etc. – includes financial support maintenance
- **Crisis management/contingency planning:** evacuation plans etc.
- **Counselling/psychological care**: screening, debrief therapy etc.

Member Care is needed for a team in all eight of these areas by outside "consultants" - probably several consultants rather than one or two.

But it also needs to be said that God is Sovereign over our lives and His purposes for us take precedence over our own personal desires for stability and order in our lives (Jer. 45:15). So for a team member hardship, disappointment and suffering are part of the job description.

13.3 Inadequate Financial Resources

13.3.1 Some fundamental principles about finances

The right to amass capital and the power that goes along with that has been maintained and practiced by many western Protestants over the past few centuries. It is not without cause that Karl Marx associated Christianity with capitalism. This is still how much of the Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist worlds see the Christian West – promoting capitalism in the form of globalisation!

Is this a world picture we should accept? Do we simply seek to reform capitalism – to give it a human face? Or does the Bible present a very radical alternative against which our present efforts must be judged and towards which we evangelicals must strive – particularly in the area of missions?

The answer to this question lies in a Scriptural analysis of what it means to be the "People of God". As believers we are often referred to as 'God's People'. This title is applied to us (along with others) in 1 Peter 2:9. The roots of this title lie in the Old Testament. It was a title that was applied to the People of Israel before it was applied to all believers. The Old Testament begins to give us a perspective of the relationship between finances and being the "People of God". There are two basic propositions:

- ✧ The People of God are a theocracy and God alone owns their economic resources.
- ✧ God champions the cause of the poor.

The First Proposition

The basic Old Testament model of the People of God is that of a theocracy. The ideal expression of the People of God in an alien culture is found under Moses' leadership in the desert and when Joshua entered the Promised Land. It didn't last long but soon degenerated into the period of the Judges. In Joshua's day the land was distributed, by lot, to the tribes. The tribes parcelled the land by lot to families. The title to the land always belonged to the Lord. So God alone owned the only major economic resource – the land.

As sole owner of the land, God made **three major rules** for the people:

i. A percentage (3.4%) of the produce must be given directly to the poor. [Deut. 14:28,29]

ii. The produce of every seventh year must all be given to the poor! [Ex. 23:11]

iii. The land was inalienable and every 50 years it must revert to the family that originally possessed it. [Lev. 25] So there would be no land sales except in cities. Land could only change hands for a few years. This means there could be no accumulation of capital.

In addition there was a set of laws that required debts to be forgiven every seven years. There were laws relating to gleaning and laws relating to the prohibition of interest.

This economic system was based on a theology: **God is a God who loves and cares for the poor and the oppressed**. [Deut. 10:12-22] God's People were to copy God in caring for the poor. The goal was the total elimination of poverty. [Deut. 15:4]

This wasn't a perfect system for two reasons:

a) It was only rarely that the People of God **practised** God's rules.

b) Poverty was only to be excluded from **within** the land. Foreigners could be charged interest. Foreigners could be taken as slaves.

But there is abundant archaeological evidence that it did make a huge difference. Excavations of Palestinian villages of the 12^{th} - 10^{th} centuries BC show that all the houses were of the same size and arrangement. So every family was living in the same way as their neighbours. In other words, there was **social equality**!

The Second Proposition

The Old Testament Model

The monarchical system radically changed the economic system. God said the rejection of divine leadership would bring with it economic and social oppression. [I Sam. 8] This proved true!

Strong central government led to urbanization and a levying of taxes. The land of those who couldn't pay was sold. Government officials, civil servants and professional soldiers used these taxes. The rise of cities created a need for commerce. Effectively central government (the king) replaced God as the centre of allegiance. As a result, care of the poor and oppressed died.

But God remained the God of the poor and He sent prophets to remind His people of this fact. Amos thundered at, "***Those who sell the righteous for money and the needy for a pair of sandals!"*** [Amos 2:6] Amos also speaks about, ***"You cows of Bashan on the Mount Samaria, you women who oppress the poor and crush the needy."*** [Amos 4:1] Jeremiah explicitly attacks those who broke God's rules that were designed to protect the poor. [Jer. 34:8-22]

So the rejection of the rule of God for some sort of centralised system brought about a failure of what it means to be the People of God. To reject the poor is to reject God Himself!

The New Testament Model

In the Old Testament the People of God were a distinct national community with a clearly defined economy. But the new covenant People of God are an international people scattered throughout the world. Jesus preached that all people should enter the Kingdom of God. To do this was to become His disciple. Discipleship has specific economic commitments.

Discipleship involves a new attitude to money, to wealth and to finances:

- ✧ The possession of wealth was considered extremely dangerous to faith because the demands wealth makes are irreconcilable with total commitment to God. See for example:
  - ***"How hard it will be for the wealthy to enter the Kingdom of God!"*** [Mk. 10:23]
  - ***"You cannot serve God and money!"*** [Matt. 6:24]
  - ***"So too, none of you can be a disciple without parting with all his possessions."*** [Lk. 14:33]
- ✧ This new attitude was not so much the rejection of the use of property (for this is asceticism), but a rejection of dependency on property and the gathering of things to give security. It was based on the assurance that all property belongs to God. Because God loves people, He will supply all their needs.

Jesus also taught positively about the use of wealth. If believers detach themselves from wealth, then **they are free to use it to help others**. Luke 14 speaks of the poor as recipients of our generosity – inviting them to meals. Jesus used a well-known Jewish metaphor for 'charity' – ***"Storing up treasure in heaven"***. [Matt. 6:19-21] The rich young ruler was challenged to give his wealth to the poor. Scripture presents Jesus as giving a general instruction to all believers, ***"Sell your possessions and give to the poor."*** [Matt. 19:21] This was in line with John the Baptist's teaching. ***"The man with two shirts must share with the person who has none and anyone who has food must do the same."*** [Lk. 3:11]

What is the implication of this teaching? As part of their commitment to Jesus, His disciples must leave this world's economic system where their concern is their own welfare and wealth. The economic system of God's Kingdom is **to care for others first**!

So we must forsake "wealth for ourselves" – either literally or potentially. But Luke also presents some wealthy disciples who are in the process of sharing their wealth with others:

- ✧ Some women with wealthy husbands followed Jesus to care for His material needs and those of His disciples out of their own wealth.
- ✧ Zacchaeus responded to Jesus by not only restoring what he had taken unjustly, but also by distributing half of his goods to the poor.

In principle then: **disciples are a transformed group of people who formerly cared only for themselves, but who now care for others**.

Here we see the continuity between the Old Testament and the teaching of Jesus. In the Old Testament all the land belonged to God and its produce was God's gift. In the New Testament the de-nationalised 'People of God' recognise that all their wealth belongs to God and that He gives to them what they need. In the Old Testament God is concerned with the poor and the weak in the land. He established a political/legal system that periodically redistributed wealth. Jesus provided for an even more thorough distribution of wealth and a caring for the poor.

Why was Jesus so concerned about the poor?

There are many reasons! I will just give two:

1. **The poor were God's special concern in the Old Testament**. A person who is poor is usually powerless as well. God is the defender of the powerless and the poor.
2. **The nature of the radical demands of the Gospel**: The Gospel demands that we forsake everything for total commitment to Jesus.

It is the rich who are most involved in the world's economic system and who are benefiting most from the system. Because of this, the rich find a call to discipleship extremely difficult. Jesus recognised that it was only by a miracle of God that a rich man – such as Zacchaeus – could enter the Kingdom of God. So it was the poorer classes who listened gladly to the preaching of Jesus.

The new People of God must be characterised by a detachment from wealth and a concern for the weak and the dispossessed.

The principle worked out in the early church

Evidently not everything went smoothly in the early church! James speaks very strongly about members in the Christian community who professed a commitment to Jesus and yet were motivated by a desire to return to their former position in the world's system. He calls them to give freely and to turn their backs on the world's economic system. He says they are ***"lovers of this world"*** and that makes them ***"enemies of God"***. [James 4:4]

The New Testament People of God can't serve both God and money any more than the Old Testament People of God could serve God and the idols of Canaan!

James has a single word for those who compromise their faith by seeking power and economic advantage – ***"Repent!"***

Luke shows the positive side of the early church in Jerusalem in Acts 2:44-45. [see also Acts 4:32-37]

"All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people."

This does **not** imply that all the believers renounced private property and only the church as a whole owned anything. The Greek words imply that whenever there was a need of money for the poor in the church, one of the property owners would sell a piece of land or some valuables and the proceeds were given to the poor. An example of this process was the action of Barnabas.

Luke gives us a simple message: when the Holy Spirit is truly at work in the hearts of God's people, then they listen to the words of Jesus and give up their possessions to help brothers and sisters in need. The ideal of Deut. 15:5 is made a reality! The church is not enforcing a legalistic system. It is rather demonstrating the new life that is being produced by the work of the Holy Spirit. He frees God's people from the world's economic order and introduces them to the new order – ***"It is better to give than to receive!"***

Paul's collections for the Jerusalem Church

In the 40s and 50s Palestine suffered famine. One group who suffered the most was the Jewish believers. The New Testament records two collections made during this time to help the brothers and sisters in Jerusalem.

- ✧ Acts 11:27-30: The Antioch church came to their help.
- ✧ 2 Cor. 8 and 9: The churches around the Aegean Sea raised funds to help the poor in Jerusalem.

Paul was involved in both of these gifts. In 2 Cor. 8:13-15 he gives us the basic principle behind these collections:

"Our desire is not that others should be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need. So that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality. As it is written, 'He who gathered much did not have too much and he who gathered little did not have too little.' "

Paul's point is simple: **No believer should prosper while others suffer!**

There should be a free flow of surpluses from one church to another so that, ideally, all believers everywhere have enough to live a dignified life.

Conclusions

- **God's command to His people in the Old Testament is, in principle, the same as that to His people in the New Testament**. The difference is that in the New Testament we have the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit given through our commitment to Jesus. But **we are now an international, landless group committed to live for others**, instead of a national group anchored in a land.
- **The desire to gain and retain wealth is always a danger to God's people**. Believers must retain Jesus' distrust of wealth and must avoid reducing the radical commands of Jesus into mere spiritual platitudes.
- **The People of God must recognise that all wealth belongs to God**. This is not simply a spiritual truth. It is a principle that rebukes any use of wealth for security or any attempt to gain wealth for oneself. It demands a radically different lifestyle from that of those who are not God's people.
- **The People of God are committed to the re-distribution of wealth in line with the teaching of Scripture and the commands of Jesus.** This begins with the voluntary sharing of wealth within our fellowships. We share what we have. No economic distinctions should divide us. But the redistribution goes beyond the confines of the individual community/fellowships. We support each other across nations and continents. This is not a sharing out of law or compulsion, but a sharing out of love and obedience.
- **The People of God are committed to help the poor and defenceless of the earth by the example of their God and Lord.** History shows that this is a powerful form of witness, but we are not to be concerned about the effects of our efforts. We are to be concerned about following the example of Jesus. This is no optional extra. It is part of the mainstream of the command of God.

13.3.2 Support for Team Members

Many of our teams have under-supported members. Other teams are really short of personnel. They may have people who believe God has called them to join that team but so far they haven't received sufficient support from their home country to be able to go. Some struggle to raise support for months or years. They take meetings. They travel widely in unsuccessful attempts to raise support. Many develop a desperation bordering on bitterness!

Our company requires new recruits to raise their support. This seems necessary as it is a test of faith. But even in one country, not all are in the same type of church and there is a vast difference in the faith levels needed to raise support. Potential recruits are faced with difficult problems:

- They must contact any churches willing to hear them.
- They must pay their own travel expenses.
- They must pay their living costs.
- They can't talk about where they hope to go with authority as they haven't yet been there.
- They can only talk about what they hope to do or what others have done.
- Then they have to ask for some sort of support to be underwritten and common modesty makes this a very trying ordeal for most potential recruits.

The results are often very disappointing.

The same can be said for a team member who has completed a two-year programme on a team and now wants to return to their field of service as a longtermer. He/she must now move on to a 'reality budget' – i.e. must see all the money come in to cover whatever he/she costs. This will probably be much higher than what was previously required. This person may have done very well and been highly recommended by the leader for longterm service. They

may have gone home to report to their supporters armed with DVDs of their work. Even these people often fail to raise the support needed to return to their field.

Methods to Increase Support

Prayer, faith and obedience are, of course, basic in any life committed to Jesus for world evangelisation. I don't want to focus here on these, but rather on some generic methods. Good methods are channels through which God is pleased to move.

1. Show the churches models of how they should get involved in missions

The models themselves may be culture-bound. Find out in your own home culture examples of churches that do support overseas workers. Show how these churches are being enriched and blessed by doing this.

In England there is a book called, **Ten Sending Churches** [4] that gives some excellent models. In the USA there is a book called, **Triumphant Missionary Ministry in the Local Church** [5] – again a very helpful book. It describes the Faith–Promise Plan. It tells what has been done in many churches and shows how similar results could be obtained in most churches.

In England over 90% of evangelical churches haven't sent out a fully-supported overseas Christian worker in the last 20 years. So never assume that churches and their leaders know what to do. They need to be shown some working models.

So often the worker speaks, a collection is taken and the worker only receives that single offering. The people go home feeling they have done their bit for world evangelisation. The potential of the meeting is largely lost. Usually it is better not to go to single meetings. Try for extended contact over a weekend or even a week. The longer the contact, the more useful the time spent with the church.

2. Home offices should train potential recruits for this work

Capable Home Office personnel and their team leaders should train team members in proven models. They should be able to provide plenty of resources – power point presentations etc. to help the fundraiser to do an effective presentation.

Should the team member be raising his/her own support? In many cultures a recruit faces an impossible barrier when he/she is compelled to ask a congregation for financial help. In many cases he/she would be too embarrassed to state the need bluntly. In many cultures such bluntness would seriously offend the church! So what is to be done?

3. A third party advocate

The solution to the problem is probably a third party advocate. The (potential) recruit presents the needs of the Field and someone from the Home Office explains the company financial support system to the pastor or the missions committee or any leader in the church who is willing to be the spokesperson to the whole church. This can be done either privately (better) or publicly. In most cultures a third party advocate is essential in bluntly sharing about the cost of sending a worker to the unreached.

4. Build up strong relationships with a few churches

A team member on home leave should spend considerable time in the two or three churches that provide his/her financial support. If his/her family can be located near one of these churches then that is ideal. The team member should put him/herself at the disposal of the pastor and church leaders for visiting, teaching etc. Solid bonds of affection based on practical in-depth fellowship will then unite him/her to the members of the church.

In planning ministry beyond his/her supporting churches, priority should always be given to the churches that understand his/her need for support. He/she should serve all churches visited in spirit and in truth. Unselfish service will sink deep roots of fellowship.

So "curiosity meetings" – where the church just wants a different experience for the sake of curiosity – should never hinder permanent relationship building. 'One off' meetings do have

value – especially with student groups. However, the wear and tear of travel, plus attempting to do too much in too short a time, may outweigh the potential benefits!

Certainly we must learn to bridge the gap between needed support and raising up churches who are committed to world evangelism.

5. On-going communication from the Field

This is essential. It has been made much easier in the last decade by e-mail, digital cameras etc. Regular (probably monthly) informative news back to supporters is extremely important.

13.3.3 The Administration of Funds

"For we are taking pains to do what is right not only in the eyes of the Lord, but also in the eyes of men." [2 Cor. 8:21]

This is how Paul states his principle in the handling of money. Every team needs to follow this example diligently. It is vital to maintain careful accounts to fulfil tax requirements, to administer team finances conscientiously and to practice economy in all team operations. Attempts should be made to keep administrative overheads low.

13.3.4 Faith and Lifestyles

One of the major reasons European churches are seeing a reduction in the number of workers sent out is that people are reluctant to accept the simple lifestyle that is demanded of those going to the third world.

I Tim. 6:5, 9-10 is written first to Christian workers!

v.5 is a warning against those who think, ***"Godliness is a means of gain"***

v.9 - ***"But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil and some, by longing to have it, have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many a pang."***

Traditional Christian workers have been poorly paid and those who go to the unreached are often more poorly paid than most Christian workers at home. You have to face up to this so you won't have unpleasant surprises. There are many advantages to a simple lifestyle if you are working in a crosscultural situation.

Two things have gone wrong

a) Abuse of the Faith Principle

The Faith Principle describes the **recipient's** humble dependence directly on God, but it can be abused when:

- The **givers** abuse this as a way of shirking responsibility
- There is bad administration by intermediary officers of the agency

b) Recent increases in raising financial support by direct appeal in some churches have given rise to super-paid Christian workers at home and overseas.

Why overseas Christian workers should not be paid too much money

1. There is great spiritual blessing in learning to live in humble acceptance of support from God Himself – in an attitude of dependent faith without grumbling and anxiety.
2. A simple lifestyle was taught and demonstrated by the Lord Jesus. A true disciple of His is not to worry about food, drink and clothes, but is to trust God to provide. [Mt. 6:33]
3. Paul modelled this type of lifestyle, ***"I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."*** [Phil. 4:12] ***"If we have food and clothing we will be content with that."*** [I Tim. 6:8]

4. In many countries where there are unreached people the masses of the people are poor and even a poorly paid worker (by the standards of his home country) can seem rich! If we are to identify with ordinary people, then we should try to accept a similar standard of living.
5. Non-Christians can be cynical if they feel people are preaching for money. It is a hindrance to the Gospel and raises questions of credibility.

Count the cost! If you are going to serve God in the Middle East, or anywhere else, you will have to make financial sacrifices. In your training it is important that you face up to this and discipline yourself to make sacrifices. Accept them gladly!! It is an exciting and adventurous way to live as you see the goodness of God. If you don't count the cost in the beginning, it will be a life of misery as you moan and groan complaining and spreading gloom among others!

How are overseas workers supported? Is there a Biblical way?

- They are usually supported by the gifts of churches and individual Christians who give sacrificially to keep them going.
- It is not easy to switch from earning your own living to being supported by people you know have limited resources.
- It is not easy to feel that you are living off "charity".
- It isn't easy to be dependent on God to move peoples' hearts to give in answer to prayer.
- Allowances (salaries) are often low compared to the equivalent in the secular world.
- Sometimes people are insensitive in the way the money is conveyed to us so we feel humiliated and demeaned.
- It is important to see that the Lord Jesus is the real source of all gifts in money or in kind.
- It is also important to show appreciation to those whose sensitive stewardship of the money God has entrusted to them has made them agents of God's giving to you. We need the grace to be able to thank people graciously for helping us.

What The Bible teaches about support for overseas workers

1. Paul refuses to be supported by those to whom he is preaching the Gospel. However, he does give a number of general reasons why Christian workers ought to be supported.

1 Corinthians chapter 9 is the most helpful passage on this topic.

Four reasons are given why Christian workers should be supported:

- **v. 7** People are normally paid for the work they do – soldiers, farm workers etc.
- **v. 9** In [Deut. 25:4] we read: ***"Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain".***

There is a kind and merciful provision for animals. When we apply this to humans we get a ***"how much more..."*** argument.

- **v. 13** In the Old Testament the Levites in the temple got support for the work they did.
- **v. 14** The teaching of Jesus – as in Mt. 10:10 ***"The worker is worth his keep."***

So although it was Paul's right to charge, he did not do so. Why?

2. Paul would rather work with his own hands. He did this for four reasons:

- ✧ credibility
- ✧ identification
- ✧ modelling
- ✧ starting a church-planting movement

3. Paul accepted gifts for himself and his work from churches that gave to him. [Phil. 1:5; 4:10-19]

4. Paul promised the apostles in Jerusalem that he would, ***"Continue to remember the poor"*** [Gal. 2:10] and he appears to have had no scruples or misgivings about appealing for money for others - e.g. 2 Cor. 8:14.

He was involved in taking a collection to Jerusalem [Acts 11:30] and another collection was also taken. [2 Cor. 8:1-9:15]

He urged Christians to give generously - even inspiring competitive giving! [2 Cor. 9:2]

In Summary

- ✧ Paul would work with his hands rather than charge his hearers.
- ✧ Paul didn't ask for money to supply his own needs, but gratefully accepted gifts from churches such as Philippi.
- ✧ Paul had no hesitation in asking for the needs of others to be met as long as he himself was not going to benefit.

Which is better – receiving a salary from an agency or 'living by faith'?

'Faith' means the confidence of the worker in God to supply all his/her financial needs. Therefore the choice above is not mutually exclusive. Disasters happen even to those workers who receive a fixed income from their church. Possible causes include:

- ✧ loss of income due to a split in the church
- ✧ currency devaluation
- ✧ change of leadership in the home church resulting in a drop in workers' support

Most overseas workers find that their support peaks when they first go overseas or return after home leave. The longer they are away and out of sight the more it steadily diminishes. **All** workers should have a bright confidence in the Lord's provision.

The Faith Principle should not cause a church to escape its responsibilities by saying: *"Trust in the Lord, brother! Be warmed and be filled!"* This is forbidden in Scripture. [James 2:15-16]

While the recipient should exercise faith, the supporters should be responsible! Responsibility implies realism. Churches should ask questions such as:

- ✧ How much does it cost to get there?
- ✧ How much does it cost to live there?
- ✧ Do any children need education?
- ✧ Are there aging parents to be cared for? (It is right and proper for Christian workers to help their parents.)

Home churches should establish some regular kind of financial support structure for which they feel responsible. They should pray for it and provide it.

At what level ought workers to be supported?

Agencies differ greatly in the amount of support they give to their workers.

Generalisations

- ***Denominational Groups*** - generous support
  - agreed salary on a regular basis
- ***Faith Groups*** - no promises of regular salary
  - refuse to go into debt
  - share out what has been given
  - sometimes can pay only a percentage
  - often live at a lower standard

Note: The smaller the agency the larger its overheads as a percentage of the total budget.

- American, German, Swiss and Korean workers are usually very well supported.
- Too much support is a bad thing – see later. It tends to attract parasitic people who sponge off workers. It creates dependency – "Rice Christians". Rather than encouraging dependence on handouts from wealthy workers, we should promote the **Three Self Principles** [sometimes called the Venn Principles]
  - ✧ self-governing
  - ✧ self-supporting
  - ✧ self-propagating
- Our company generally operates a "modified pool" system approximately as follows:
  - ✧ all are equally remunerated
  - ✧ men get the same as women
  - ✧ wives get the same at husbands with extra allowance for children
  - ✧ the amount relates to the relative cost of living in the country and so varies from country to country
  - ✧ no extra pay for seniority
  - ✧ all nationalities receive the same

  FACT: It takes more Christians in a poor country to support one overseas Christian worker. If the average Christian gave l0% of his salary to support one worker it would take:

  6 Swiss
  8 Americans
  12 British
  300 Filipinos!!

  How can we get around this? Options:

  a. Only send missionaries from wealthy countries – ridiculous!!

  b. Support workers from poorer countries with money from richer countries – possible – not always ideal – may create dependency.

  c. Allow workers to be supported at different levels depending on the wealth of their home churches and countries – a poor witness and far from ideal.

  d. Recognise that a poorer sending country requires a larger sending base than a wealthy sending country.

  e. Pool resources between all workers in a particular area with a similar cost of living. Do this whatever their nationalities. My company does this (mostly) and so do many others.

  Option (e) can work well! It builds a sense of team. The team/family still needs mutual concern for each other because of extra expenses – birth of a child / hospitalisation / burglary / car accident etc. All need to learn to exercise generosity to the team/family.

- Most Christian workers don't regret times of hardship and belt tightening. These things help them learn to be more dependent on God. They learn, ***"To be abased and to abound, to suffer want and to enjoy abundance and in either state to be content."*** [Phil. 4:11-13]

The Problems of seeming to be too rich

In many poor countries the ex-patriate community appears to live in paradise! They live in large houses, drive big cars and live an expensive "jet set" social life.

Military bases, because of their free spending, develop a circle of parasitic industries around them.

A Christian worker – even if he thinks he has a simple life-style compared to that in his home country – can seem to be very rich! This is especially so if:

- ✧ He has a car (even a beat-up one!)
- ✧ He has a maid to help wash the floors
- ✧ He has a teacher to help him learn the language

Such a worker attracts the wrong sort of person. Embryo church plants are often aborted because people attending meetings all want employment, a visa to USA etc.

In some cases agencies have been in a place for decades and still no healthy church has started. Why? As you look closely you will observe that the agency institution employs all the leaders of the church. They are language helpers, bookshop managers, gardeners, secretaries, drivers and so on. This means that the church is totally dependent on foreign money and foreign control! It is an established fact that the unwise use of money slows down church planting! The emphasis today is on **Incarnational Ministry**.

The EMQ (Evangelical Missions Quarterly) has a number of good articles relating to this:
[www.billygrahamcenter.org/emis]

How to be Downwardly Mobile – Ron Ornsby p.392 (1993)

Lifting the Fog on Incarnational Ministry – Harriet Hill p.262 (1993)

It is time to get serious about the cycle of dependence in Africa – Glen Schwartz p.126 (1993)

Don't give up the Incarnational Model – Kenneth McElhannon p.390 (1991)

What has our western money and western Gospel wrought? – William Kornfield p.230 (1991)

Incarnational Ministry : A Critical Examination – Harriet Hill p.196 (1990)

The seminal work is by the Brewsters : **Bonding and the Missionary Task [6].**

A generalisation for beginners

If you arrive in a city or country and you have no idea where to begin in adopting an appropriate lifestyle, take a secondary school teacher as your model. What is their salary level? What sort of homes do they have? Where do they live? Start at this level. You may need to be **downwardly mobile** later – i.e. after language learning and cultural adaptation.

Problems of seeming too poor at home!

Often returning workers have a great struggle on home leave.

- ➢ Old friends and contemporaries who were poor students with you when you moved overseas have become prosperous and settled.
- ➢ Envy is a temptation – this leads to self-pity, *"Look what I missed by joining an agency!"* There is often disorientation – a kind of reverse culture shock. The bulk of your possessions are far away and there is uncertainty about your role during home leave.
- ➢ Clothes are old and out of fashion. Children need new outfits as they have nothing from the past that fits. Funds are very limited.
- ➢ It is hard to feel poor/unsettled with no permanent home while everyone else is well established.
- ➢ Many testify that it is not a problem to live at a low standard of living in a third world country. The problem (spiritually) comes when they return home.

The Problem of Pensions and Retirement

If you are just thinking about going out, it seems strange to think about retirement! It is sensible to be realistic. Agencies struggle with shortage of funds. Funds received are often designated for a special need and there is a reluctance to set aside large sums for a distant and uncertain future.

Two options are:

1. Keep up payments in the state social security scheme while you are abroad. Your home office can do this for you.
2. The agency itself may act as its own insurance company. Funds coming in may be shared, not only with the current workers, but also with those who have retired.

Usually workers are selected on a number of issues. One is health. Those with poor health are often refused. This means that, in proportion to the general public, overseas workers are healthier and live longer! So option 1 is much the better option as it is much more cost effective.

Housing on retirement is a very difficult issue. Few workers can save enough to buy their own home. Some are able to make a start before they join a mission agency and then have tenants paying the mortgage while they are abroad. Some have prosperous families and their retirement coincides with inheritance and legacies from the death of the parental generation. Some churches are becoming realistic about the problem and providing flats for retired workers.

We must trust God in these issues as in all others. He will provide and we will find **He never disappoints** us. In issues of finances and lifestyle we need to remember we depend on God **for** everything and **in** everything.

13.3.5 Some Practicalities of Team Finances

Management of team finances needs skill, planning and control. Careless management produces stress, debt and a possible 'blow up' on the team. Lack of planning can lead to:

- Impulsive spending
- Leaving it all to the treasurer
- Trying an inferior system of planning that doesn't work
- Establishing plans that are not followed
- Buying now and paying later with interest (poor stewardship|)

It has been said, *"When we make things happen by careful planning, they are usually good things. When we let things happen to us, they are usually bad things!"*

When our budget won't balance, the immediate thought is to generate **more** income rather than to reduce overheads or learn to live within the income that God provides. Prov. 23:4-5 says, ***"Be wise enough not to wear yourself out trying to get rich…. Your money can be gone in a flash as if it had grown wings and flown away like an eagle."***

We need to develop a sequence of planning steps.

1. **Evaluate the present**

   Divide annual expenditure into monthly amounts. These are divided by the agency book-keeping system into allowances. Look at these over several months to see if there is any 'fat'. Make sure you have adequate funds for emergencies.

2. **Do some financial modelling**

   Examine each item for:
   - Its priority
   - Its potential for pruning

   Money can be frittered away on small items so there is no surplus to be saved for larger items.

3. **Plan giving**

   Plan all known expenses. Put into your budget planned projects and gifts. Plan your giving. If you don't plan, each request creates a "can we – can't we" situation. We **respond** rather than initiate. In 2 Cor. 9:11 we read, ***"God will always make you rich enough to be generous at all times so that many will thank God for your gifts."***

4. **Set up a workable system**
   On a team it is **the system** that counts. Separate the variables or contingencies from committed payments.
5. **Have shared responsibility**
   Too often it is only the leader and the bookkeeper who shoulder the responsibility while all the other team members wonder where all the money has gone! If the right system is set up, it is a simple matter to share responsibility.
6. **Carefully watch expenditure on overheads**
   It is amazing what can be wasted on non-essentials. A good system will develop self-imposed discipline.
7. **If in debt, determine to get out as quickly as possible**
   Debt exists when one of the following obtains:
   - Payment owed to others for money, goods or services is overdue
   - There would be a deficit if we had to cash up
   - Basic needs of the team can't be met because of past spending practices
8. **Prepare for emergencies**
9. **Stick to your annual financial plan. Revise it if necessary.**

NOTES

[1] **The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People** by Stephen Covey, p. 21

[2] Ibid p. 71-93

[3] **Getting to Yes** by Roger Fisher and William Ury, Random House (1999)

[4] **Ten Sending Churches** by Michael Griffiths (1986) MARC EUROPE, ISBN 0950839671

[5] **Triumphant Missionary Ministry in the Local Church** by Norman Lewis (1960) Back to the Bible Publishers

[6] **Bonding and the Missionary Task** – article by E. Thomas and Elizabeth Brewster in Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, (1999) William Carey Library, 1705 N Sierra Bonita Ave., Pasadena, CA 91104, USA ISBN 0 85364 999 5

14. Team Myths

14.1 The Myth of Personality Type

14.2 The Myth that Big Teams are Better Teams

14.3 The Myth that People like Working in Teams

14.4 The Myth that technology will solve everything - Virtual Teams

14.5 The Myth that “team-building” games improve performance

14. Team Myths

14.1 The myth of personality type

Our team members often do the Myers Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI). They usually get new insights into themselves and a new set of initials (ENTP, ISTJ etc.) that explain what kind of person they are. This is fun and interesting. It is also dangerous when it becomes an organizing principle of their lives.

This typology is based on the insight that there are many "archetypes" of people and those types can be defined and tested. The assumption is made that knowing what type you are relates directly to issues like leadership development, career decisions and team building.

The psychoanalyst C.G. Jung pioneered this insight into types about 50 years ago. The original research is now largely discredited. Jung divided people into two categories of input groups and two categories of output groups:

Input (or perceiving) groups → sensors
                              → intuitors

Output (or processors) groups → thinkers
                              → feelers

Jung said that people are different in the different ways they encounter the world. Broadly speaking there are **intuitive** people who grasp the truth of a situation in a flash. They are the sort of people who never take notes in class, who guess for success…futuristic and imaginative.

Conversely, **sensing** people work their way systematically towards understanding in a step-by-step concrete way.

In terms of output – how they decide – people who are quick to judge a situation are called **feelers**. Emotion is their strong factor. Those who only judge slowly are called **thinkers**. Their strong factor is logic and method.

Overlaying these personality traits are the categories of **Introverts and Extroverts**. The total result is a set of sixteen separate personality types. The type you are leads to assumptions about the character qualities you are prone to reveal to others. According to the theory, all of us have two strong sides and two recessive sides.

In fact 16 categories are not enough and 'type-theory' has many other categories and sub-divisions all trying to describe the huge complexity and variety of human personalities.

The myth in personality typology is that it has almost nothing to do with how **teams** function. The important factor on a team is how team members behave towards each other. So we can get insight from behaviour patterns, but never from typology! The problem is that the MBTI personality types do not reliably and consistently predict outside behaviour – behaviour demonstrated to others. We modify how we behave!

What is important on a team is how others perceive you. If someone calls you a horse – well its just one person. If two people call you a horse, well – there is probably a conspiracy to call you a horse. But if the whole team calls you a horse, you'd better invest in a saddle! You determine what kind of horse you are by getting behavioural feedback **from team members**. This will be much more accurate them an MBTI questionnaire.

In terms of team, Honey and Mumford's Learning Styles Questionnaire (1986) is much more useful. This divides people up into four categories:

- Activists
- Reflectors
- Theorists
- Pragmatists

Knowing and sharing which categories each team member is in will help a team to develop a better learning strategy.

Another questionnaire, more helpful in terms of teams, is that developed by Meredith Belbin of the Cambridge Industrial Training Research Unit. Dr. Belbin tries to identify the individual roles that are crucial to a successful team. This is based on the perception that although individuals may have formal job titles – designer, accountant, marketing man etc., they also perform other roles on the team. Like Honey and Mumford there are psychometric tests that identify which category each person falls into. It is interesting that these vary with time! The 80s was a time for rugged individualism and the 90s was a time for team players. The perfect team (i.e. ideal team dynamics) according to Dr Belbin is made up of:

- A plant
- A co-ordinator
- A resources investigator
- A shaper
- A monitor – evaluator
- One or more team workers
- An implementer
- A completer – finisher
- A specialist

To me the most useful of these "types" is that based on **communication styles**. This was originally developed by Pierre Casse in **Training for the Crosscultural Mind [1].** It was further developed by Duane H. Elmer at Trinity University, Deerfield. It is more helpful because:

- It is not culture-bound. It has been tested in different cultures unlike previous typologies.
- It deals with communication style which is crucial to team effectiveness.

It has **five** categories that he tends to focus on:

- Action style
- Process
- People focussed
- Idea focussed
- A blend of the above four

A high score in one area means a greater commitment to using that style in team life. The lower the score the less comfort in using that style. It is also an indication of which areas you are likely to avoid. If you do have to work in an area of low score, it will indicate an emotional energy drain. Duane Elmer thinks that it takes twice as long to recover from an emotional energy drain as it does from a physical energy drain. Under stress, people tend to revert to their primary style.

On a typical team about:

16-17%	are action people
16-17%	are process people
～30%	are people people
25-30%	are blend people
10%	are ideas people

It is interesting that when people on a team choose a leader, they nearly always choose a blend person. Everyone can identify with a blend-person! But blend people rarely make good leaders. Good leaders are more likely to be action people and ideas people! It is better to let God choose!

The key in all this is: **learn about yourselves together as a team**. Different questionnaires give different results. They should be taken together as a composite picture. **But they are no substitute for a team having a common vision and a common ethos.**

14.2 The myth that big teams are better teams

There is a myth that the larger the team, the better the team. There is a tendency to think of an entire Field as a team. This is not usually helpful unless the Field is very small. Teams by their very nature can't be big – the bigger they become the more like mobs they become.

Team size is important. Smaller is much better than larger. Teams should rarely tackle **strategic issues**. They work much better at **tactical issues**. Several teams working in co-ordination can tackle the big strategic issues. A Field should normally be a self-contained network of teams.

Our Fields usually have:

- Core members of a specific team – the actual teams – each person is 100% dedicated to the team's vision.
- Support people – people that help the core teams get things done – like the bookkeeper.
- A resource person – often the Regional Leader or an IT person.
- Facilitators etc.

These people are adjuncts to the team. It is wise not to include these people on "the team" (they can form their own support team).

14.3 The myth that people like working in teams

With all the excellent reasons why it is Biblical to work in teams, you might think that all our people would look forward to working on a team and enjoy the enormous potential of team.

The reality is that most of them - especially longtermers – find tight team situations rather difficult. They feel that they have been shackled to one another at the ankle as on a chain gang. People like their space – space to feel calm and safe.

Some of the most successful team environments don't feel all that "teamy" – people working in seclusion. So don't expect that a team will always crave instant contact. Honour their reluctance to lose their individual identity to the team.

There is a Caser for "balance"! The team needs to have instantaneous access to one another. There must be no communication snags anywhere. But it is important to realise that people need privacy and space.

The team environment really does matter. Find out through discussion and trial-and-error what will work best.

Be aware that for some tasks an individual is better than team! If one person alone has sufficient information and skill to complete a task, don't assign it to a team! Then there will be no personality conflicts, no conflicting cultures and no "Turf Wars".

14.4 The myth that technology will solve everything - Virtual Teams

In the old days of thirty years ago our teams were simple. People worked together, met together and virtually lived together. The teams were fairly mono-cultural with most people coming from the western world.

This is no longer the case! Globalisation has diversified greatly diversified our company. Telecommuting has undermined the sense of home office solidarity. The move towards work place diversity has further confused issues. The most obvious victim of the mix-up is the Monday morning meeting. For now "the team" may be scattered across the globe. English is not the first language of most of the team. People on the team have different assumptions. Can "virtual teams" like this work?

There are a lot of "group ware" software programmes available. These state that they can produce "team". Even with good software it rarely happens. There may be a group; there may

be good communication, but to be a team there needs to be **continuous added value to one another's efforts**.

The PC network is very good at sharing information and it empowers many. Those thinking of virtual teams need to ask themselves the following questions:

- Is the team really going to be more productive or are they just going to appear busier?
- Are security concerns undoing the benefits of your network? [Remember teams thrive on trust – too many passwords and too many code words effectively lock people out.]
- Are your team members trained? [Research has indicated that effective virtual teams have been trained and not just 'on-the job']
- Are improved communications messing people up? [You can have too much of a good thing. You can be overwhelmed by a torrent of messages.]
- Has freedom led to chaos? [How do you keep people who never eat together or laugh together in touch with the team's goals? How do you stop all the lone rangers from galloping off in different directions?]
- Is your "virtual team" a substitute for real change?

Whatever technology you import to help your team, it must build upon and improve:

- Team clarity
- Team communication
- Team trust

Remember technology can only do a few things for teams. It can speed up communication and maintain a cleaner paper trail. But a computer will not impose clarity on a fuzzy, ill-thought-through idea. The team is still a team – prone to the human frailties we are all prone to.

14.5 The myth that "team-building" games improve performance

There are really two types of games that are supposed to enhance team performance.

- **The team adventure**!
  The team is put through a challenging series of physical and mental tasks. These often take place out doors. If they are expensive, then they are usually in some idyllic setting in a retreat place in the mountains. They are facilitator-led and are built on psychological lessons learned in the 60s in encounter groups for normal people. The research found that people would do extraordinary things if the rest of the team supported them.

  An example of this is a "Trust Fall". An individual stands blindfolded on a table and then falls backwards off the table trusting the team will catch the falling individual. There are lots of variations on this basic theme.

  Adventure team building often involves climbing, crossing rope bridges – all with some actual physical danger that you experience if your team members fail.

- **Mental games**
  These can be held in a room. They may be physical – e.g. crossing an imaginary stream (chalk lines on the floor). The team has ten blocks and three or four 4x4 planks. Using the planks they can make a bridge from block to block. But there are not enough planks to get across the stream. The whole team has to make the crossing by carefully moving the planks back and forth.

  Sometimes the game is a mental exercise done on a table.

Are these 'games' good at team building?

1. Advantages:

- They are usually fun to play. Most new teams are stiff and formal and they are good icebreakers.
- Often at an individual level people can learn to overcome some of their fears and distrust.
- Usually after one of these sessions people are very enthusiastic even ecstatic!

2. Disadvantages:

Are the team helped to succeed in fulfilling their vision? All the evidence indicates that this is not so! The people on the team may be friendlier. They may have stronger intentions of loving and caring for each other. But teamwork does not necessarily improve.

Adventure-learning and outward-bound models were developed to improve various dimensions of **personal** development. They are very good at improving **personal attitudes**. Our Intensive Training Courses are modelled on this type of personal learning.

Teams fail not because of broad generic lack of trust in people, but because team members are confused as to what their roles are, what their mission is, whether they have the authority to do whatever needs to be done etc. Team building games don't address these issues.

NOTES

[1] **Training for the Cross Cultural Mind** by Pierre Casse; International Society for Intercultural Education, ISBN 0 933934 06 8

15. The Healthy Effective Team

15.1 Four Stages of Team Development

15.2 The Discipline of Automatic Refocusing

15.3 Facilitators to Team Life

15.4 Creating a Learning Ethos on a Team

15.5 Conclusions

15. The Healthy Effective Team

15.1 Four Stages of Team Development

In the 1970s, a psychologist called Tuckman identified four stages of team development that he thought every team had to pass through in order to became effective and efficient.

They are:

- **Forming**: When team members are just starting to learn to deal with one another. During this time minimal work gets accomplished
- **Storming**: A time of stressful negotiation of the terms under which the team will work together – often a trial by fire
- **Norming:** A time in which roles are accepted, team feeling and solidarity develops and information is freely shared
- **Performing**: This is when optimal levels are finally realised in terms of productivity, effectiveness, quality, good decision–making, efficient allocation of resources and interpersonal interdependence

Usually there are many problems, confusions and misconceptions that can keep a team from reaching the performing stage. But all good teams go through the three preliminary stages before they reach "performing".

Factors that slow down this process include:

- A high turn over of team members
- The introduction of too many new team members too quickly
- Poor understanding of the process itself

The struggle and adaptation of the "storming" and "norming" stages is vital but difficult. A team needs to be aware of **the pathway** towards effectiveness so they can move on to the next stage with minimal resistance or shock.

➢ Keys to the Forming Stage

In this stage the team is just getting together and is only a team in the loosest sense of the word. In our company this sometimes happens at conferences or when moving into new cities. The talented people are all there – but as individuals.

There are usually two conflicting emotions in these individuals. Firstly, there is a hope that all the other strangers on the team will accept them. They know that each individual life will be made much better for the foreseeable future when everyone likes that person.

However, this overwhelming need to fit in is met with a second emotion – a certain opposition to adapting for fear of losing personal identity. So we all want to remain ourselves even while we fit into the team.

The result is that we want **more information**. We want to know who is in charge and what is required of us. We ache to plunge in, but first we need to know how cold the water is!

So characteristics of the forming stage are:

- An ambivalent mindset
- Politeness – a bending over backwards to be pleasant – an eagerness to appear non-threatening!
- Many questions – including many unasked questions such as, *"Who has power? Are they willing to share it and with whom?"*
- Doubts about one's own abilities and calling and doubts about the others on the team.

The response to nervousness and anxiety is often to form a temporary alliance (a clique) with one or two others (usually of the same nationality). These cliques give feelings of safety in the larger team.

The challenge of the forming stage is to get these largely inert groups of individuals who don't know each other into the process without going through too much pain. They must agree on the team vision and purpose and they have to identify their resources and skills. They have to begin to bond (i.e. the cliques have to disband), build up trust levels and communicate personal needs.

The information hunger must be met by answering questions such as:

- What is the purpose of this team?
- Whose idea was the formation of this team?
- Who are the other members and what are their strengths and weaknesses?
- How am I going to find out what they are good at and how can I let them know my abilities and characteristics?
- How and when are we going to bring all the needed resources (finances, advice, materials such as books etc.) to the team?

Crucial to this period is a good, thorough time of orientation and a good **Team Handbook** that contains guidelines, procedures and policies for the team.

Team members who are new to each other usually try and find a topic they can all discuss. A good team leader needs to signal that it is OK to poke fun at our company and our many rather weird practices. A team will then rapidly fashion a company caricature! It is an easy, fun way to gain a preliminary consensus and it can act as a safety valve for tension in the forming team.

Forming is a time of great danger. First impressions are quickly made and then set in concrete. Team members with aggressive personalities tend to quickly establish dominance. Alliances are formed and signals are flashed back and forth. These are frequently misread. Most of the team will remain silent about their frustrations.

Another key issue is: **Who <u>owns</u> the team?** By ownership, I mean who is really committed to this team. In the forming stage the individuals on the team usually have a very weak sense of purpose and so have a hard time feeling a sense of ownership. In the "forming stage" the Field effectively owns the team. But by the "performing" stage the team should own the team vision with such a strong bond of commitment to seeing that vision accomplished, that the Field leadership might feel "the tail is wagging the dog". The team must eventually belong to the team and not to the field.

The biggest mistake a leader can make in this regard is to say to a team deeply involved in problem solving, *"Never mind about this problem. We will solve it at leadership level."* This sounds responsible. It buys time. But it is not how effective teams operate. It disempowers team. Teams need the authority to make judgements on their own.

What should happen if, in the forming stage, a team member is really struggling being part of the team? Perhaps they realise they made the wrong choice or – as in many cases – it is not their fault; they somehow landed on the team. They are afraid to "drop out" lest they experience dire repercussions. In reality they would rather be vacuuming the Sahara desert than being part of the team.

The Field Leadership must be very honest at the end of orientation or after an initial time of "probation". They need to say, *"No one needs to stay on this team if they don't want to. There are alternatives. There will be no recriminations, no ramifications and no blacklists. You have our permission to leave or change teams."*

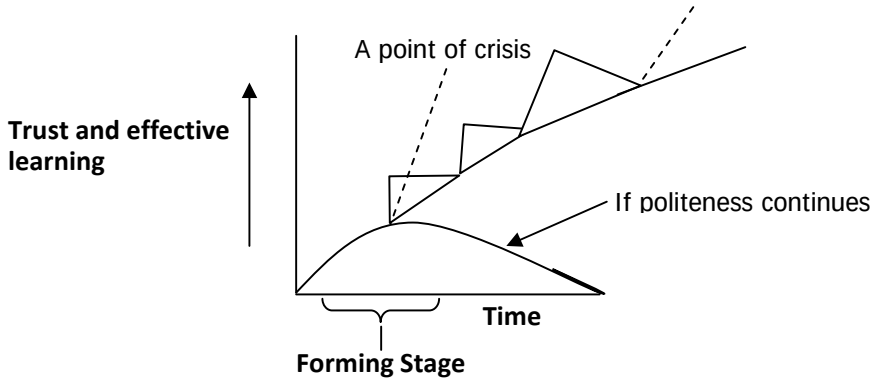
This is still not perfect. Some team members will walk away cheerfully but many will suffer from a bad conscience and they will need help and counsel. But at the end of the forming stage the team members need some degree of ownership of the team vision.

The hope of most team-members **now**, at the end of the forming stage, is to jump straight into the "performing stage" without going through "storming" and "norming". They want to get into ministry – see the lost saved and be effective. **In fact the most important task for the team is to orientate itself to itself.**

- **Keys to the Storming Stage**

This stage is tough. The best that can be said of it is that it is necessary. It is the path to effective team building. Whatever a team fails to settle during the "storming stage" will return to haunt it at a later date.

There has never been an effective team that hasn't been through the storming stage. It usually comes as a surprise no matter how well one prepares for it. The best that can be hoped for is that it doesn't drag on. It starts when teams pass beyond being polite with each other and start honestly expressing their thoughts and feelings.



Leadership is of paramount importance during this period. If the leader of the team just leaves the team to sort out their conflicts, then he/she ought to be ashamed! The leader needs to step in and explain the Biblical limits to saying what you feel. Offering suggestions must be encouraged, but the leader needs to keep the lid on the inevitable anarchy. Team members can say just about anything, but all personal destructiveness is forbidden. Sniping, blaming and belittling remarks are pure poison to the team and destroy any sense of trust. "Storming" should not lead to a riot!

The leader needs to be directive at this stage heading the group in the right direction. He/she is not only the leader, but also the coach who must tell the team what to do and help each person with suggestions on how to do it. Coaching is critical, because in "storming" the team works out **together** its goals, its roles and its relationships. It identifies likely barriers and the infrastructure support mechanisms necessary to sustain long-term team health. Hopefully the vision, values, goals etc. are **the same** as those of the Field leadership. Field leadership has paper vision and values. In the "storming" period actual real vision and values are created by the team.

The leader is there to help and not to interfere or dictate. It is a delicate job because morale on the team is often low. A leader needs to sense when a person is about to burst and call 'time out' to discuss things as a team. Don't allow the tormenting of one another on the team!

During the "storming stage" the team needs to answer some questions in order to make progress.

- What are we supposed to accomplish as a team?
- What are each of our roles/responsibilities as they relate to accomplishing the goal?
- Who does each of us need to get information from and to whom does our information have to go in order to complete our goal?
- If we get into trouble, whom can we get to rescue us?
- Who is in charge? How will we adapt to changing leadership?
- How will we arrive at decisions?

- When will we know we have done what?
- What happens when we fight? How do we resolve disagreements over goals or procedures?
- How do we increase our ability to take risks till we get to a creative level?
- What strengths does each of us bring to bear on accomplishing our goals?
- How can we focus our strengths to influence activities outside our own team?
- When will we meet, and how?
- How are we going to make ourselves more accessible to one another in order to complete our goals in a timely manner?
- What are our major stumbling blocks?

The team that manages to answer these questions quickly will pass through the "storming" process easily. It usually takes time for all the issues to be resolved. This is made more difficult if there are language difficulties and different cultures on the team.

Another complication is often "culture shock". The "forming" period is parallel to the "honeymoon" period. This means that the "storming" process is made more complicated as it falls into the "pit" of culture shock.

Leaders need to run a periodic check on their own leadership. Are they **only** the official leader and, in reality, a quiet coup has already occurred and the team has appointed an informal leader? If so, you may continue as a conduit of information to the senior leadership, but that is all. The only really wrong reaction a leader can have is to be defensive. "Storming" is hope mingled with a large dose of fear. Some team members will be over-zealous in trying to earn respect. Some will be intimidated by it all. Sleep will be lost. Relationships will be stressed. Some will long to be "team" while others will resist "team" as a compromise of their individuality. This will largely depend on the culture they come from.

Leaders will have to remember that part of the price of leadership is that during the "storming" process the team has a tendency to trash the leader! He/she is the reason the team does not function well! He/she is the reason why each team member feels unfulfilled, misunderstood, and deadened. *"You weren't there when we needed you"* is a common refrain. This is a painful ordeal for the leader, but there is no alternative to riding out the storm. Often people say, *"I have a personality conflict with my leader."* It is nothing of the sort. It is about "storming" – about the process of team formation and very superficially it may be about personalities.

There are two problems of the "storming" stage:

(i) What if you want to add a new person to the team?

(ii) What if the whole team is ready to move into the "norming" stage except one?

Part of the answer to problem (i) is keeping a record of what happened in the "storming" process. Much of Exodus and Numbers is a record of the People of God going through the "storming" process of being turned from a rabble of escaped slaves into a disciplined army capable of taking the Land of Promise.

If a new team member is added to a team in the final processes of the "storming" phase, they are likely to say things like, *"But that isn't how it was done on xxxxx",* and *"We need to talk about some of these procedures right from the start, for I don't think they will work."* It is usual that new team members are welcomed and made to feel that they are important to the team. But their welcome is soured if they earnestly suggest that the whole game should return to 'Go' and start over again! So the best thing for new team members is to take them aside for a lengthy period and bring them up to speed with **the history** of the team as well as **the decisions** and **the commitments** it has made. They need to see the reasons why it is perilous to drag everyone back to 'Go' in order to help orientate one new member. This process may be time consuming but if the newcomer is left with a head full of questions, he/she is likely to become a loose cannon and blow a hole through the deck!

If several new team members join the team, then it may be necessary for the team to decide to have a period called "a modified limited backslide" into the "storming" process. This "backslide" is in order to help new team members bond into the team and to give an opportunity for their input and fresh insights. The "backslide" into the "storming" process needs a clear conclusion with a pre-set deadline. The **whole** team needs to agree to this retreat into re-negotiation.

The second problem is when one or two team members want to stay in the "storming" process, while the rest of the team want to move on. For such a team member there are only two sensible suggestions: get with the team – or get out. But for the sake of the team, be gracious and give them a second and a third chance.

Someone has said of the "storming" process that it is like the process of internal combustion. A teaspoon of petrol poured out on the ground is more or less harmless and quickly evaporates. The same amount of petrol compressed into an engine cylinder causes the petrol molecules to vaporise and they begin to bounce into one another at supersonic speeds. The spark forms a controlled explosion. This pushes the piston down and a vehicle many thousands of times the weight and size of the teaspoonful of petrol begins to move.

The compression is the "storming" process. When the team begins to move roles get clarified, team style begins to materialise and the team functions in synergy. This is when progress is being made. The "storming" process is over and the "norming" stage begins.

- **The Norming Stage**

The "norming" stage comes when there is an acceptance of roles within a team and then there is an alignment of personal goals with the overall vision of the team. The team becomes stronger as the individual members let down their defences, acknowledge their weaknesses and ask for help from people with compensating strengths.

Relationships have had the opportunity to deepen during the process of "storming". In the "norming" stage one can observe real affection between individual members and lots of banter and repartee. Tensions have gone. What has happened is that the hidden agendas individual team members were covertly advancing have dramatically diminished in importance.

As the group becomes less threatening, individual team members attack the team much less often. Individuals may be in conflict over ideas, but they keep the conflict from bubbling over into spoilt relationships. People are protective of their hard-won feeling of "teamhood". So the team is gaining in focus and unanimity. Information is freely shared and the team conducts periodic agenda checks to remind itself of its goals. They take notes and celebrate their progress.

During the "forming" stage a directive team leader was vital. During the "storming" stage the team leader was often the sacrificial victim as the team struggled to achieve consensus. During the "norming" stage formal leadership begins to fade in importance as information is no longer exclusive to the leader.

As the team begins to be a learning unit, mutual interdependence becomes the norm. So finally the team is a unit. It is now moving in a single direction!

- **The Performing Stage**

Hamlet said in one of his reveries, "*'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished".* We have many teams that never really reach this phase. "Performing" involves every team member admitting they can't do the job all by themselves. There is a level of genuine, deep, heart-felt commitment to the vision and objectives of the team. They are good at problem-solving together. They are sufficiently in touch with each other's needs and requirements that they organise their time so team projects progress optimally.

"Performing" is a time of great personal growth among team members. They share experiences, feelings and ideas with each other. This generates a fierce loyalty and a willingness to find a way neatly through all challenges that come up. As each team member observes things, the team can see issues with many eyes and from many perspectives. The result is a reduction in blind spots!

"Performing" means intimacy. In turn intimacy acknowledges the seriousness of the needs of individual team members. There is a "pooling" together to help ensure that every team member succeeds with the help of every other member. Conflict is there. Disagreements happen as frequently as during the "storming" phase. But the conflict is 'out on the table'. Disagreements are confronted, discussed, considered and adjudicated in a non-destructive way – actually in a very positive way.

Best of all there is the sense that the team is making breakthroughs for the Kingdom of God and that God is being glorified. They are doing what is right and God is pleased.

15.2 The Discipline of Automatic Refocusing

Having reached the "performing" phase, you need to find ways to keep the team at this stage and not to allow it to backslide. Using a sporting cliché: as hard as it is to win once, it's a lot harder to keep winning year in and year out!

The aim is **continuous learning and continuous clarity of vision**. The reason for this is that **things change**. The danger is that as conditions change, the team doesn't! So continuous clarity of vision means constantly re-clarifying the clarity you first achieved.

It is not enough for the team to have absolute clarity of vision and commitment to values on Wednesday 13th April, 2011. They need to keep getting that fresh, clear understanding the next day, the next year and all the time. So there must be automatic refocusing by the team on:

- Its high priority strategic objectives and their associated tactical goals
- Its accountabilities (who is responsible, for what, when etc.)
- Barriers and strategies around the barriers
- Any interpersonal issues needing addressing
- Any needed modifications of leadership strategy
- Suggestions for improving inter/intra team communication

Automatic refocusing means learning what leads to team effectiveness, efficiency and relevance and maintaining those things. It is knowing what resources are needed and getting them.

15.3 Facilitators to Team Life

Every team, if it is to keep performing at a high level, needs various people outside the team to help it keep going. These people may be inside or outside the company. If they are inside, they may be at field or area level. So every team needs:

- **A team angel**: a person who 'runs interference' for the team. Usually this person is the senior leader. The key is information. Does your 'angel' know what you are doing and what your problems are? Have they everything they need to save your bacon?
- **A team champion**: an individual whose idea backed the forming of your team and who has a fair degree of clout in the company. Is he/she still your friend? What do they need to know to continue serving you? This person is probably an area co-ordinator or senior leader.
- **Consultants**: Every team must adopt an ongoing diagnostic attitude about itself. Remember the purpose of these chapters! Consultants are a diagnostic tool in self-assessment. They show the ways teams go bad and propose some solutions.

  As your team strives to maintain continuous clarity of vision and values, you might need an outside on-line management consultant. This person needs objective eyes to help you see what the team cannot see. Consultants are usually essential in the area of self-assessment.

  The consultant needs to have a knack for the kind of circumspect, 'see-round-the-corner' thinking that diagnosis requires. He/she should be someone who sees the big picture, but is also able to identify the minutiae of the variations of team life that are leading it astray.

- **Teachers**: These are people who, because of their role of visiting other teams, act in the same way as bees in the cross-pollination of flowers. They pick-up and transfer knowledge and experience from one place to another. Every team needs external teachers.

15.4 Creating a Learning Ethos on a Team

"Performing" teams use all the collective knowledge and intelligence of the members of the team. But this knowledge and experience has to grow, cross-pollinate and multiply. This is what learning is. It is not easy to create a continuous learning ethos on a team, but it is **essential** on an effective team.

An educational psychologist, Peter Senge, has identified five dimensions of learning that are vital to developing an ethos of learning on a team.

- **Each individual must build up mastery in their area of gifting**

  Teams are groups of individuals performing as individuals most of the time. Each of us has been gifted with spiritual gifts and natural abilities. When each of us learns, we expand our ability to see, to communicate and to understand in the area where we are functioning and the performance of the whole team is enhanced.

- **Learn the art of surfacing mental models**

  In order to learn, our minds must first be freed of the clutter of false assumptions and old paradigms that bog us down and make us repeat the same old errors. We need to allow a Biblical worldview to grip our thinking, creating mental models of what the Kingdom of God should look like. These mental models need to surface in the team so the team can critique them and possibly replace them with a truer model. Sometimes this is called green lighting or brainstorming but it is much more! Thoughts need to be rooted in Biblical thinking and the model fleshed out and open to critiquing.

- **Building shared vision**

  Vision needs to grow and become more clarified in its detail. The entire team needs to take part in fashioning the vision of **what they want to create** together as a team. It is a **shared picture** of the future – a fusion of vision has explosive power.

- **Team learning – collective learning**

  Individual personal mastery is good, but collective team learning to the point of mastery is the goal. Learning alone is important, but learning **together** as a team is even more important. Recording what has been learned and rehearsing it periodically is vital in "performing" teams. Our skills of talking and listening and thinking must all be ratcheted up until true **group intelligence** is created. There is no necessary correlation between information and wisdom. The world is overflowing with information, data, facts, words, bytes etc. The team needs to learn wisdom. Wisdom is a theory that shapes information, organises it, gives it meaning and uses it.

- **Systems thinking**

  Systems thinking sees "the big picture". It takes us beyond absorbing the raw data, beyond syllogisms until we can see ideas as "stories" – the drama of **what we know** and **where we intend to go**. It is seeing the interconnection between cause and effect and seeing how the many parts interlock. It is discerning the patterns in a system. All this is vital for the effectiveness of a team.

15.5 Conclusions

Teams are Biblical. They are better than hierarchy and multiple supervisory levels of organisation. It is not easy for a team to function at a high level of performance. Why is this? It is because teams are made up from people and people are sinners!

In 'the world' people see that teams are the only way to get rid of the 'goblins' of:

- Inefficiency
- Low productivity
- Befuddled vision
- High cost
- A bloated workforce
- Poor morale
- A poor return on investment

Our reason for working in teams includes all of the above. But more important than this is the fact that **this is the way Jesus taught us to work**.

Teams work when there is:

- Far-sighted vision
- Sincerity/integrity
- Commitment to the team
- High levels of caring

At the heart of team lies love and a passion to see the Kingdom of God come in greater measure. The key to success in teamwork is death to self. Jesus said:

"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." [Jn. 12:24]

There is loneliness in the life that refuses to die.