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Living and Sharing the Gospel

GC2 equipper

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Dear team player:

Our *Church Administration Manual* notes in section 4.9 that we aspire to church leadership that is “team-based in structure...where all the leadership gifts in the church are honored and used in ways that foster *interdependence* (Romans 12:4-8). Such shared leadership is consistent with the scriptural teachings concerning the ministry of all believers who are equipped for service through the multiple spiritual gifts imparted by the Holy Spirit.”



Team-based ministry

Team-based ministry isn’t easy, but it’s vital to the health and effectiveness of our congregations and ministries:

- It reflects God’s communal (triune) nature and the humanity we share with Jesus
- It expresses God’s design for the church to be one “body” made up of multiple, gifted parts that love and work together
- It expresses the ministry patterns of Jesus and his Apostles (they shared life and ministry in teams)
- It is a cultural imperative (we don’t chase the culture, but here’s one place that our culture has it right)

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In *Becoming a Healthy Team* (Baker, 2005), Stephen Macchia defines a ministry team as “a manageable group of diversely gifted people who lovingly hold one another accountable to serve joyfully together for the glory of God...”

- Sharing a common mission
- Embodying the message of Christ’s love
- Accomplishing a meaningful ministry
- Anticipating transformative results”

How can your ministry or entire congregation be team-based? In this issue we offer several ideas from Macchia and others.

If your district pastoral network or congregation would like coaching in forming and operating ministry teams, consider scheduling the MDT “Team-based Ministry” seminar.

One more item: we’ve posted ideas for celebrating Black History Month at <http://fly2.ws/9jAxuht> (or go to WCG.org, click on “GC2 equipper” and scroll to the bottom of the page).

-Ted Johnston

The value of team-based ministry

David Delk of Man-in-the-Mirror ministries notes that the journey of his organization to a team-based approach and structure brought many “growing pains.” But he sees the transition as vital and in keeping with obedience to the following biblical mandates:

1. **Encourage One Another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)** - Ministry teams share life and mutual accountability. Out of this comes mutual encouragement.
2. **Learn to Not Always Have to Get Your Way (1 Peter 3:8)** - Becoming a team player means considering others more important than yourself. God uses humble people in powerful ways.
3. **Grow Together (Romans 15:14)** - There is a synergy in a team that won't be found anywhere else. This can't be learned from a textbook—you learn it by living it.
4. **Love Others (Ephesians 4:2)** - When we work together on a calling from God, we learn to love people for their gifts and in spite of their shortcomings. We also learn that biblical friendship is a powerful force.



The role of a ministry team leader

In a ministry work group (see page 3 for a comparison of work groups and teams), the work group leader is the primary decision maker who then assigns work tasks to other group members.

In a team-based structure, the team leader still leads, but their role has a different focus including tone (ministry environment) and vision. Other ministry team leader tasks include those listed by Hudson Taylor, founder of China Inland Mission:

1. Improve the character of the work
2. Deepen the piety, devotion, and success of the workers
3. Remove stones of stumbling, if possible
4. Oil the wheels where they stick
5. Amend whatever is defective
6. Supplement what is lacking



Comparing work groups and ministry teams

According to Macchia, a key issue in developing team-based ministry is to understand the difference between a ministry “work group” (where one leader determines then delegates work tasks) and a ministry “team.” There are distinctive differences as shown in this comparison:

Work groups:

- Led by a clearly focused leader who delegates work tasks
- Individual accountability to the work group leader
- Purpose is defined and delegated from above
- Individual work products
- Efficient meetings

Teams:

- Led by a team leader who shares leadership roles with others
- Accountability to the team leader and to the other team members
- The team works together to both define and fulfill its purpose
- Collective work products
- Open-ended discussions and active problem-solving meetings



Ministry teams work well when...

According to Macchia, ministry teams function well when...

1. They are deeply grounded in...
 - **Mission** - a clear reason for being (vs. a ‘meandering band of happy cohorts’)
 - **Vision** - a compelling view of what it will look like when the mission is being accomplished
 - **Values** - shared, non-negotiable principles and standards (including love for one another and passion for the mission)
2. Team leaders provide **continuity** and **courage** in fulfilling the mission in the midst of inevitable change
3. There is **cooperation**:
 - Generously cheering others on to victory
 - Daily pursuing intimacy with Christ, producing cooperation as a supernatural by-product
 - Focusing on a shared mission: which first and foremost is intimacy with God, leading to identity and intimacy with one another, leading to serving others together (making disciples who make disciples)

