TEAMS AND TEAMWORK

Becoming Family on the Journey

Scripture Focus

"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!" Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Quotes

"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. It is ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results." Andrew Carnegie

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." African Proverb

"Without forgiveness, there can be no real freedom to act within a group." Max DePree

"A team effort is a lot of people doing what I say." Michael Winner

Learning Objectives

As a result of the readings, discussion and activities in this session, the cross-cultural witness candidate should be able to:

- Understand the Biblical basis of teams and teamwork and be better able to apply Biblical principles of teamwork
- Identify different types of teams and their appropriateness for different contexts
- Better understand some of the challenges of operating as a cross-cultural team
- Be aware of some of the hazards of teams in missionary work

God and Teams

God himself operates as a team. Perhaps this is a somewhat strange way to view the Trinity — as a team, but an accurate view. God is our best example of team and teamwork. In His life on earth, Jesus also worked as a part of a team. If anybody could have ever accomplished everything by Himself, it would have been Jesus. Yet He chose to invest His life in several overlapping teams and the world was turned upside down.

As a cross-cultural witness, you will be a part of multiple teams. It is crucial that we have an understanding of how to form and work in teams and what we should and should not do as team members. In the following session, we will examine some of the dynamics of teams, particularly in the context of cross-cultural ministry.

It is important to study teams for two key reasons, one positive and one negative. The number one reason missionaries leave the field is conflict with other missionaries. So, learning how to operate as a good teammate is crucial for preserving your ministry and the ministry of others with whom you work. As a cross-cultural catalyst, your job is to work yourself out of a job. Only by reaching and empowering local believers can you accomplish your core purpose. Learning how to be a good teammate with a cross-cultural team is fundamental to being able to accomplish this.

Case Study: David and Julie

David and Julie, an American missionary couple, met and married while in college. After college, they went to seminary. After seminary, David was an associate pastor in Hope Church, and Julie worked in a large multinational corporation.

While in Hope church, they were part of a home group with several other young couples. As God began to work in David and Julie's hearts, they began to realize that God was calling them to cross-cultural missions. They shared this with their church leaders and their home group as well as with their families. To their excitement, two other couples in their home group were feeling a similar calling from God.

So, David and Julie, Roger and Yvonne, and Ian and Cindy began to talk about going overseas as a team. Both David and Julie had done several exercises in their corporate work environments related to teams, and these three couples began to focus on how they would relate and serve as a team. There was some concern that none of the three couples had significant training in missions, but they decided that seminary was not particularly relevant for cross-cultural mission training. In lieu of another option, they would rely on extensive reading and on-the-job training.

The three couples applied to the same mission-sending organization and were accepted. They prayed about it and felt that God was leading them to serve in the country of Barisal. After arriving on the mission field, they spent their first year in language study in the capital city of Ramel. There was some disagreement among the team about where they should locate at the end of language study. After extensive discussion, they decided the only way to settle the matter was to choose the preferred option of two of the three couples.

When they began their service in the district capital of Sintlan, they joined an existing team from the same mission organization. The three couples from Hope Church were asked to sign and support the team covenant and to submit to the leadership of the team leader.

The three Hope Church couples felt that teamwork was a very crucial part of their missions assignment. They met together every week for prayer and fellowship. David, Roger, and Ian also met together weekly for personal accountability as did Julie, Yvonne, and Cindy. They were part of a larger team meeting on a weekly basis as well. Every six months, the people from their mission organization in that country met together for a time of decision-making and fellowship. Both Hope Church and their mission organization sent leaders once or twice a year to meet with them and see how they were doing.

After a couple years on the field, Roger and the team leader had a serious conflict because Roger did not agree with the evangelistic methods prescribed by the team leader. Roger felt that they were not being bold enough, while the team leader felt that a more gradual approach would ensure longer tenure in the country for the mission team. The team leader ordered Roger to follow the approved method to avoid endangering the rest of the team.

David and Julie reluctantly supported the team leader despite their friendship with Roger because they felt they must submit to the team leader under the team covenant they signed. Ian and Cindy felt it was more important to show solidarity with Roger and Yvonne. The leaders from Hope Church felt that boldness was important and they supported the two couples and asked David and Julie to support them as well. The mission organizational leaders supported the team leader and asked the two

DAVID AND JULIE RELUCTANTLY SUPPORTED THE TEAM LEADER...

dissenting couples to follow his leadership or resign. After a long and complicated flurry of e-mails, phone calls, and face-to-face conversations, Roger reluctantly agreed to follow the directions of the team leader in this matter. All involved had an uneasy sense that loyalties and channels of authority were not clear. The other four couples on the larger team began to ask why the three Hope Church couples needed to meet separately every week.

The next year, another problem arose as David and Julie were confronted by the other two Hope Church couples and also the larger mission team for not placing enough priority on their team meetings. Julie felt that she could not bring their two young children to the team meetings without disrupting everyone else, so she had begun missing about half of the larger team meetings and some of the Hope team meetings. She did not want to leave her children in the care of a locally-hired babysitter because she heard stories about discipline for children in that culture that concerned her. The team leader's wife and other women with children left their children with babysitters and urged Julie to do this because she needed to attend all the team meetings.

David had also begun missing a few of the larger team meetings as well as the Hope Church meetings for the three couples because he had begun a fruitful partnership with two local believers. The best times for them to visit the local worship places often conflicted with the team meetings, particularly when they were traveling to outlying villages.

When David and Julie were confronted over this issue, Roger and Ian sided with the larger team partially due to their lingering resentment that David had not supported Roger in the

previous disagreement. David and Julie argued that the teams were trying to take priority over their family and their mission. The other team members argued that David and Julie should put their personal preferences after the importance of the teams' needs.

> **REFLECT #1**
> Obviously, this case study is a very short snapshot seeking to show some of the challenges and problems of ministry teams.
> 1. What were the positive things done in relation to teams?
> 2. What were the negative things done in relation to teams?
> 3. How would you write the rest of the story for an effective future for this team?

Why Teams?

Working in teams is the biblical example. Jesus modeled teams – the twelve disciples, the inner circle of Peter, James and John, the 72 sent out in teams of two, and the larger circle of perhaps 500 men and women. King David did amazing feats when he was a part of a larger cadre, and he fell into a crushing sin when he stayed home alone while his army went out to battle. Paul and Barnabas and the other early missionaries followed Jesus admonition to go out at least in pairs.

We are part of a team because God has made us for community. The overemphasis on individualism and achievement in the Western culture is a significant barrier to the growth of the kingdom. God is not only concerned about the "results" of our missionary work. He is also concerned about our growth of character and deepening family and interpersonal relations. Teams are not just about accomplishing tasks, they are also about encouragement and accountability to help each other become more Christ-like.

What is a Team?
"A team is a group of people working together towards a common goal."

"People working together in a committed way to achieve a common goal or mission. The work is interdependent and team members share responsibility and hold themselves accountable for attaining the results."

What is a Missionary Team?
The primary role of a missionary is to bring the Good News where it is news. Missionaries work across cultural, racial, and ethnic barriers. The missionary needs to follow the role of Paul, working in areas where there is no foundation of the Gospel (Romans 15), catalyzing new believers, starting indigenous churches and equipping the local people to do far more after the missionary has moved on.

By definition a cross-cultural missionary team focuses on two things: As outsiders, they seek to incarnate the body of Christ to those who do not know God. This is integrally related to their "mission" of catalyzing and equipping the new body of Christ who are insiders.

"The work requires a variety of coordinated gifts and skill sets. Seek variety and balance. The spiritual DNA that the team carries to reproduce the life of the mother church body on the field, in daughter church bodies, is best carried by a body—the team. Loners usually start weak

churches, deficient from birth, which lack certain vital ministries or spiritual virtues. This is because their genetic code is incomplete." Patterson and Currah

What are the Different Types of Teams?

By the definition above, you will be a part of multiple teams.

Marriage
If you are married, this is the most fundamental team for you. As missionaries, you are not just husband and wife and perhaps parents, but also co-employees, co-ministers. While in many ways this can be very fulfilling, it also will create some unique and potentially powerful stresses in your marriage.

Sending Church Team
Increasingly the local church which sends the missionary is viewing itself as a partner and therefore a fellow team member with the missionaries. How does this working relationship thrive when distance and experience are significant challenges? People find themselves sent out as part of a church-sent team but under the structure of a mission structure. Clear communication and expectations are crucial between the team, the church, and its mission structure or partner organization.

Receiving Church Team
Often you will also relate to a church in the receiving culture. Sometimes this church is at the forefront of partnering in the mission effort, but unfortunately, sometimes you will be trying to work with the local church and/or denomination which is not in agreement with your mission effort and methodology.

Mission Organization Team
The majority of missionaries find themselves part of a mission organization, most of which work in some sort of the team model. Being part of a formal team structure where people make decisions that have significant impact on your life is similar to becoming a full-fledged member of a family as an adult without knowing any of the other family members. This forced intimacy and authority is one reason that working with other missionaries can be such a challenge.

Great Commission Team
At the very root of the missionary task is your work with other Great Commission Christians committed to reaching the same group of people that you are. This includes international Christians and most importantly local Christians from this group you are reaching.

Other Teams
In today's world, you may often find yourself as part of a team with a wide variety of people. Examples would include:

- business partners and or fellow employees in a business venture in a creative access country
- people from governmental and nongovernmental agencies working together in the aftermath of a natural disaster
- a neighborhood organization working together for a specific purpose

Successful Teams

Successful teams have two major elements. First, there is a sense of **belonging**. The members feel that their needs are considered and consistently met through the team. They also feel that they can contribute to the team and have influence in the team's actions and decisions.

Secondly, there is a sense of **accomplishment**. When a team with a common vision works well together, they will have accomplishments that move them toward fulfillment of that vision. This sense of achievement is a self-reinforcing cycle that bonds the members even more closely together.

> REFLECT #2
> 1. What teams are you/will you be a part of in your mission efforts? What about them will challenge the team's effectiveness?
> 2. For you, what are the dividing lines between being a good teammate and being true to your own conscience?

Characteristics of Successful Cross-cultural Team Members

Sometimes we view the major missionary task as that of communicating the Gospel cross-culturally. As difficult as this is, it is that much more difficult to work and live as a team composed of people from different backgrounds and cultures.

Many missionaries never allow themselves to be in a truly cross-cultural partnership. Instead, they partner with those from their own background and work in a domineering role with those from the receiving culture. They end up using money or status to put those from the local culture in a subservient role.

As there are now people coming from all continents to serve cross-culturally in all continents, we can truly experience being part of a global body of Christ. Yet to do so we must be willing to do the hard work necessary to form and operate as a cross-cultural great commission team. A good team starts with you as a good teammate. From my many years of growing up in a missionary family and living cross-culturally as a missionary, the following are some characteristics that you will need to work on in order to be a good cross-cultural teammate.

Patience

You have to be patient to learn and understand the cultural and personal characteristics of your team members. You have to be patient when the complexities of the team seem to slow down or even stop progress toward your team's mission. You have to be patient with others and your team members have to be patient with you when there is misunderstanding and hurt feelings.

Open-mindedness

Cultural characteristics are merely a clue to another person. In any culture, there are personal differences between two people from the same culture which can be vastly different. We need to avoid stereotyping that minimizes the uniqueness of each individual.

One of my favorite examples of this is when people say all Asians are indirect in their communication. In the first place, it is quite ludicrous to describe several billion Asians as all

being alike. In the second place, they must not have met some of the Asians that I have who can be extremely direct in their communication.

Steadfastness
One of the most underrated characteristics for cross-cultural worker is steadfastness. This may not sound very spiritual but it is one of the key characteristics that you need to cultivate. As a member of the team, you have to be stubborn and be willing to work as hard and as long as it takes to fulfill the mission of the team. While it may be slower initially to work as a team, in the long run, your team will be much more effective and the results much more sustainable than if you work alone.

Sense of Humor
Humor is one of your main weapons in the fight to be an effective team. Being willing to laugh at yourself is the most important trait you need. A sense of humor can go a long way in dealing with difficulties. However, humor is one of the hardest elements to communicate cross-culturally. So be careful how you use it. Sometimes your humor can feel like teasing and can wound people. You'll need to learn how others in your team experience humor. A very simple example in this area is that people from some cultures laugh when they are nervous which can be totally misunderstood as humor by people from a different culture.

Ability to Live with Ambiguity and Failure
One danger in working as part of a cross-cultural team is the desire to please everybody. You will be working in an ambiguous situation where progress is often hard to measure. You will be working with people from different backgrounds who have different communication patterns and expectations. The team has to be willing to live with ambiguity, mistakes, and failures.

Willingness to Find the Middle Way
There can be great differences in preferred working styles of individuals. Westerners tend to be more individualistic and would thus break a larger task into separate individual tasks. Other cultures tend to work best in pairs or small groups. Some cultures would prefer that the whole team work on everything together. It is important to find a mix between the different cultural expectations of your group so that everybody will sometimes work in their preferred style, but often work in styles that better fit the rest of the group.

Conflict management can be even trickier, especially given the fact that some cultures have a higher tolerance for conflict than others. Clarifying a conflict management process will be important for your team, so when conflict arises (and it will often), you have already agreed on a process to openly discuss and handle it.

Willingness to Adjust the Style of Teamwork to Fit the Members and the Context
In a cross-cultural team, team roles and leadership styles will shift based on the members and the context.

A look at the world of sports gives us examples of many different types of teams. You have a tennis doubles team with two equal partners. You have a football team (soccer for Americans) where players other than the goalie may end up all over the field but each player has a certain predominant role and skill set. Basketball is similar but it also relies more heavily on substitutes. American football takes the role specialization even further and the quarterback

is the clear leader on offense, often receiving the most credit or blame. Volleyball has a clear leader as the setter while ensuring the success of the other players.

REFLECT #3
1. Describe the most outstanding team experience you have had. What made it great?
2. In what ways are you already a good team member? Write down specific examples.
3. In what ways do you need to improve as a team member?
4. What are some of your personal experiences with good and bad team members?

Potential Hazards of the Missionary Team

The missionary team is crucial to our success, yet it can also be the biggest barrier to our success. The following are some of the possible critical hazards for missionary teams.

The team becomes more important than the mission.
Of course, nobody would ever say this but if we examine reality there are often times when our focus is primarily on the means and not the end. The church is so focused on sending a missionary team that they fail to organize and prioritize the accomplishment of the mission. A mission organization ends up with meetings of local and national mission personnel who spend almost all their time on administrative matters while encouraging and fellowshipping with each other to the exclusion of time spent on strategy development and evaluation. While the results are in God's hands, there must be accountability for whether we are accomplishing our primary mission.

The team becomes dysfunctional.
There are many ways in which the team can become dysfunctional. There may be a few times when it is important to separate people and put them on different teams due to seemingly irreconcilable differences. However, it is far more likely that lack of personal skill, inadequate training in teamwork and/or leadership, and more fundamentally a lack of love are often at the root of dysfunctional teams.

The team becomes rigid.
Another danger to be aware of is when teams that have been effective in the past are no longer able or willing to adjust to the changing realities of the present and the future. They become fixed, increasingly in love with their old ways and eventually ineffective in their current challenges.

Overlapping teams and authorities create confusion and damage.
The idea that we will serve on one missionary team is never true. All cross-cultural witnesses exist as part of several simultaneous teams. These teams change, emerge and die over time. Differing views of authority and differing beliefs about loyalty can create significant team problems, especially when you are a member of several teams with diverse perspectives, values, and purposes.

Cross-cultural differences create misunderstanding which leads to lack of trust.
This is one area where missionary teams face greater challenges than most teams. Even people from the same country can have cross-cultural differences which affect the team. How much more likely are the differences between the sent team and the new believers?

Close personal relationships between sent team members (outsiders) block them from becoming a true body of Christ team with insiders.
I think this is the most damaging aspect of missionary teams that is often overlooked. Damaris Zehner eloquently addresses this issue:

> *Not long ago, many missionaries lived in mission compounds. ... Fewer missionaries today live in compounds. We've recognized that we cannot build relationships after we've built walls. We've also realized how insulted local people were by missionaries who implied that their way of life was better. But the modern mission compound is alive and well. Its walls aren't of stone or mud brick, but they are just as real. The distance between missionary and local is just as great, and the unintended insult is even greater. The modern mission compound is the team.* (Zehner 362)

Teams can become like compounds because they create an "us" versus "them" mentality. Team members look to the team for their major needs instead of the community, and they send the message that:

"Within our walls, we have friendship, conversation, accountability, mutual help, and understanding. We don't need you." If we don't need local people, our relationship with them can never be on equal terms. Yes, we need their food, their language skills and their permission to stay in their country, but we don't need them as unique individuals. (Zehner 363)

REFLECT #4
1. How do you think your sent missions team could be a danger to your personal well-being and accomplishing your (plural) mission?
2. What experiences with teams have you had that reflect any of the hazards of teams mentioned above?
3. How can you avoid having your outsider team become a barrier to forming true body of Christ bonds with local partners?

Biblical Examples of Teamwork

Of course, Jesus is always the best biblical example. He demonstrated the importance of teams and teamwork in many ways.

First, Jesus modeled BEING a team. Jesus began His ministry with all night prayer with His Father and chose twelve disciples.

What did He do with His disciples? They lived with Him. They were almost always with Him. He lived a transparent life before His disciples. He said, "You will be fishers of men", but first He invited them to "Come and follow me." Obviously, Jesus is in a different category from the rest of us, but He still modeled being a good teammate.

While He taught and gave to His teammates, He also asked for and received support and encouragement from them, such as the woman who supported Him and his band, the three who accompanied Him at the Mount of Transfiguration and the three in the Garden.

Jesus modeled working as a team. In almost every situation He had His teammates with Him. In Matthew 10, Luke 9 & 10 He sent out the 12 and the 72 in pairs and gave very specific instructions on how to accomplish His mission.

We also see teamwork modeled in the Antioch church. The whole church led by the five leaders listened to the Holy Spirit and came to consensus on how they were being led. The church sent out Paul and Barnabas to work as a team. Initially, Barnabas appears to be the team leader but he handed over leadership as Paul's capacity for leadership emerged. We see many more examples in Paul's ministry of how he worked as a part of a team. We also see his initial unwillingness to give John Mark a second chance, which led to the creation of two teams, both apparently doing good work. Later we see Paul accept John Mark as a trusted teammate and son. All throughout the book of Acts, we see examples of teams and shared leadership in churches.

REFLECT #5
Read the following scripture and document what they teach us about teams and teamwork.
1. Numbers 11:14-17
2. Nehemiah 4:4-6
3. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10
4. Acts 13:1-3
5. 1 Corinthians 3:6-9
6. 1 Corinthians 12:12-30

EXAMPLES TO FOLLOW

Only in heaven will we know all of the various instances of effective missionary teams. But I don't think it would be an overstatement to say that virtually all effective missionary efforts were the result of teamwork. Read through the following examples and make a list of principles you can learn from these various efforts.

One key note: There has been much discussion missiologically about sodalities and modalities. It is my conclusion that the most effective missionary teams follow a similar governance pattern to that of Paul and Barnabas: the team is sent out by the church (or denomination or organization) and the decision-making is done primarily by the field team, not by the sending church or organization.

Patrick and the Celts
The early Celtic *peregrini* left their homes and traveled with a team to new locations to form new communities of faith. They adapted culturally and infiltrated the existing pagan community. Their real growth came from winning and training local believers who then became equal partners in their Christian community. Celtic monasteries became mission bases from which the missionary teams were sent out to reach Scotland, England, and much of Europe. They balanced boldness and sacrifice with accountability and community and in a very real way reached Europe for Christ.

> *"In significant contrast to contemporary Christianity's well-known evangelism approaches of 'Lone Ranger' one-to-one evangelism, or confrontational evangelism, or the public preaching crusade, (and in stark contrast to contemporary Christianity's more dominant approach of not reaching out at all!), ... the Celtic Christians usually evangelized as a team – by relating to the people of a settlement; identifying with the people; engaging in friendship, conversation, ministry, and witness – with the goal of raising up a church in measurable time."* (Hunter, 47) Hunter III, George G. *The Celtic Way of Evangelism. How Christianity Can Reach the West... Again.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000.

"They reached one 'barbarian' civilization after another by welcoming seekers who were looking for the 'authentic sign' into close fellowship of their monastic communities, where seekers closely observed how the Christians lived, day after day. As seekers spent time with a Celtic Christian community, they typically found themselves believing what the Christians taught." (Hunter, 68)

See a synopsis of Hunter (https://kencastor.com/2007/04/09/celtic/).

The Moravians

John Hus is an often-overlooked hero of God's church. He was heavily influenced by John Wycliffe and sought to reform the church in Bohemia just as Wycliffe had done in England. Before he was martyred in 1415, he prophesied that within 100 years, God would raise up a man to shake Christianity. 102 years later Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses. Within 200 years, Hus' followers were led by John Amos Comenius to Moravia for seeking spiritual freedom. In the 1700s a group of Moravian refugees were granted shelter by Count Nikolaus Zinzendorf. Zinzendorf read a dying prophecy made 100 years earlier by Comenius that in 100 years, God would bring revival from the seed of truth hidden in the Moravians. That very night in 1727 they began a prayer meeting with 3 people praying every hour, 24 hours a day – and the prayer meeting lasted 110 years! These were truly the fathers and mothers of the modern missionary movement!

The Moravians were only 300 people, but they sent out 70 missionaries in the next 15 years. One of their mission teams going to America showed such faith during a storm in the Atlantic that their courageous witness lead to the conversion of a previously unsaved Anglican minister named John Wesley, who went on to have a huge influence in the global church and global missions.

In 1732, the Moravians sent out their first missionary team to St. Thomas in the Caribbean. Then, in rapid order, teams were sent in 1733 to Greenland, 1734 to the North American Indians, 1735 to Surinam, 1736 to South Africa, 1737 to the Arctic, 1740 to Algiers and Sri Lanka, 1742 to China, 1747 to Persia and in 1752 to Ethiopia. By 1792, this community had sent out 300 cross-cultural missionaries, more than all Protestants before them put together.

How did the Moravians do this? Here are eight principles, which fueled their effectiveness:

- They made no distinction between clergy and laity.
- They did everything together.
- They were gripped by an inner imperative that Christ be made known among all the peoples of the earth.
- They shared a heritage of sacrifice.
- They viewed God's global mission as the responsibility of the whole church.
- Business people developed business enterprises to facilitate the sending of more cross-cultural teams.
- Worship, not bitterness, was the outcome of their persecuted experience.
- They were committed to prayer.

The Serampore Trio

After William Carey published his work "Enquiry", a gathering of 14 people formed the "Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Heathen" (later this became the Baptist Missionary Society). The BMS was the first part of the team that helped birth the modern missions movement.

After Carey and his wife and son went to India in 1793, another group of missionaries came out in 1800. Carey joined with William Ward and Joshua Marshman to form a strong team which endured despite the deaths of various family members and other missionaries. Their influence in India and on the resulting flood of Western missionaries is amazing.

A negative side-note on this team is the apparent dysfunction between William and Dorothy Carey. She did not want to go to India with him but was apparently pressured to do so and went reluctantly, fearing that God would punish her if she did not go. After arriving there, family illness and death apparently pushed her into insanity.

While much more could be written about this team and its positive impact, let's examine their missionary covenant. The team agreed to this compact together (apart from their sending organization) and committed to live by its principles. The key points are:

- The Infinite Value of the Human Soul
- Importance of Research
- Avoid Unnecessary Offences
- Get Out with the People
- Make Christ Central
- Be Accessible, Patient and Fair
- Work Diligently with New Converts
- Promote Native Leadership
- Translate Scripture
- Importance of Prayer and Personal Devotion
- We Claim Nothing. We Belong to God

A Personal Word about Being Part of a Team

I have been fortunate to be a part of several highly effective missionary teams. I've also had the misfortune of being part of mediocre teams as well as dysfunctional teams. The bad teams definitely made me want to quit and go home. The good teams humbled me that they could be this effective in spite of my own personal weaknesses along with the human flaws of the other team members. They were truly examples of God's grace and power.

I have several thoughts about effective missionary teams that have only been reinforced by the research I did in writing this session.

- God wants us to work in community. As my good friend Beram says, becoming family on the journey is just as important to God is reaching the destination.
- The best teams are bonded together by a common vision and they're willing to subjugate their personal agendas to what they know is a God-given vision.

- Focus on the Vision. This seems completely obvious BUT I have been part of teams that focus more on personal desires or organizational priorities than they ever did on the main great commission purpose.
- If you're married make sure your spouse is your top priority after God. If you are a parent, make sure your children come only after God and your spouse. Don't sacrifice your spouse and children at the altar of achievement. You will only be doing that for yourself because God does not want that. However, this does not mean that God does not sometimes call us to sacrifice. Just make sure it is God and not your own agenda.
- Whatever situation you're in, you will be subject to authority. Either follow that authority or after serious consideration and counsel-seeking, leave the team and find another authority you can follow. If you are struggling and think you may need to leave the team, remember that you are often just changing one set of frustrations for another.
- Typically, decisions need to be made on a consensus model. For some teams, this means a wide-ranging discussion with everybody coming to an agreement. For other teams this means a leader or leaders guide the process and come to a conclusion that everyone can support.
- There is great wisdom in teams. Do not be too quick to think that you alone can discern God's will for your life. Your church and church leaders and team and organizational leaders will often be crucial in helping you hear and obey the voice of God.
- Be aware of the different roles that team members need to play. Use resources and assessments such as Strengths Finder, DiSC, Firo-B, and others to evaluate how you and your team interact together.
- Don't spend so much time relating to other people on your expatriate team that you miss out on opportunities for being part of a truly international team. The best teams I've been a part of have been a mixture of foreigners and locals that transcends racial and cultural differences and become brothers and sisters working in the "family" business.

REFLECT #6
As a result of this session content, stop and write out 4-5 of the most important truths about teams and teamwork that come to mind.
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
Discuss these with your current (and future) teammates. Where do you agree? What is different?

Self-Awareness, Survival, and Solution

The following are some suggestions for you and your team as you plan for your work now and in the future.

Know yourself.
When I took clinical pastoral education, at first I thought it was learning how to provide

pastoral care to people in crisis. But I soon realized that I needed to better understand myself; my own often subconscious agendas and how I was meeting my own needs through caring for the patients. The better you know yourself and are brutally honest about yourself and your motives, the more you can be focused on others in the team and your mission and less on yourself.

How are you working on this now? How will you work on it in the future?

Know your team members. Treat them as people.
It is crucial that we avoid treating other people as means to an end. Value your teammates for who they are and not for what they can accomplish or do for you. They will know the difference.

How are you working on this now? How will you work on it in the future?

Recognize, respect and utilize each person's unique gifts.
A good team has a variety of gifting, talents, and personalities. Allowing each person to express their personality and take the lead in their area of gifting is important for a good team.

How are you working on this now? How will you work on it in the future?

Working together as a team takes both willingness and skill.
Willingness without learned skill leads to confusion. Skill without willingness leads to individual efforts dominating group involvement.

How will you increase both your willingness and your skill?

Develop a team covenant (MOU).
One of the most helpful things you can do is develop a team covenant. This goes beyond rules and regulations and starts with the fundamental agreement of vision and then examines guidelines and principles that will help you reach that vision as a team. In reality, you may have several team covenants, with each unique team you are a part of, with local believers, your sending church, and various partners. When you have a variety of overlapping team relationships, it is important to clarify authority and inter-relationship between these teams.

How have you / will you address this need?

Evaluate, be accountable and change.
The absence of growth is death. The only certainty in your work (other than God) is change. It is important that you keep a process of accountability and evaluation and be willing to make the necessary changes as a team.

How have you / will you address this need?

Form catalytic teams.
If your purpose is to catalyze a gospel movement among a group of people, evidence from various church planting movements around the world suggests there is an optimal team make-up for church planting. The best teams seem to be 2-4 outsider leaders working with 5-10 insider leaders as well as working with partnering church(es) from other parts of the world.

Often these teams have one or two outside visionaries partnering with one or two inside visionaries alongside the larger team fulfilling various functions.

How might this approach affect your mission work in the future?

Stages of Team Growth

Teams don't just form and immediately start working together to accomplish great things. There are actually stages of team growth and teams must be given time to work through the stages and become effective. Based on extensive research on team process and team member behavior, here are the four stages of team growth.

Stage 1: Forming.
When a team is forming, members cautiously explore the boundaries of acceptable group behavior. They search for their position within the group and test the leader's guidance. It is normal for little team progress to occur during this stage. Anytime there is a significant change to the team, such as the addition or subtraction of a team member, or change to a new location, the team reverts back to this stage.

Stage 2: Storming.
Storming is probably the most difficult stage for the group. Members often become impatient about the lack of progress but are still inexperienced with working as a team. Members may argue about the actions they should take because they are faced with ideas that are unfamiliar to them and put them outside their comfort zones. Much of their energy is focused on each other instead of achieving the goal.

Stage 3. Norming.
During this stage team members accept the team and begin to reconcile differences. Emotional conflict is reduced as relationships become more cooperative. The team is able to concentrate more on their work and start to make significant progress.

Stage 4. Performing.
By this stage, the team members have discovered and accepted each other's strengths and weaknesses and learned what their roles are. Members are open and trusting. Many good ideas are produced because they are not afraid to offer ideas and suggestions. They are comfortable using decision-making tools to evaluate the ideas, prioritize tasks and solve problems. Much is accomplished and team satisfaction and loyalty are high.

Session Highlights

God desires that we work as part of His body. Under the headship of Christ, seeing the body work together as described in 1 Corinthians 12 brings great pleasure to the Father.

Cross-cultural teams have unique challenges but they also have unique potential reaching and equipping local believers. Different giftings and perspectives of team members from different

cultures can greatly strengthen the new church. Weaknesses, false assumptions and blind spots from one culture can be addressed by those of other cultures.

- We have good biblical examples of teams and teamwork. Don't just take your guidance for teams from popular literature. Study the Scriptures to glean and apply team principles.
- What can you learn from Moses about teamwork and delegation?
- What can you learn from Nehemiah about teamwork and leadership?
- What can you learn from Jesus about teamwork?
- We can you learn from Paul and the early church about teamwork and missionary strategy?
- What are other biblical lessons about teams and teamwork?

So What?

Here are some practical things you can do now:

- Make sure your current (and future) teams are in agreement on the unified vision.
- Write a Vision statement together.
- Write your (plural) own principles – for both your team and individual team members.
- Begin working on a written team Covenant(s) with your major team(s).
- Work as a team now and evaluate and improve your team's being and doing.
- Learn about other cultures to prepare for working with people of other cultures. A great start is Patty Lane's book: *A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World*
- Go as a team to interview successful team leaders and team members in education, sports, business, church, missions, etc. Seek to apply what you learn in these interviews.

Additional Resources for *Teams and Teamwork*

Guiding Principles: Multiplying Churches Among the Unreached (http://www.cpcoaches.com/pdf/cp/GUIDING%20PRINCIPLES.pdf)

This is an example of a type of team covenant process which incorporates strategy.

Lencioni, Patrick. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002.

Sending Churches and Missionary Teams (http://sendingchurch.blogspot.com/2008/06/sending-churches-and-missionary-teams.html)

Greenlee, Yong Joong Cho, and David. "Avoiding Pitfalls on Multinational Frontier Teams." *International Journal of Frontier Missions.* 12:4, 1995, 179-84.

Harris, Philip Robert. *Managing Cultural Differences*. Robert T. Moran, 2004.

Maxwell, John C. *The 17 Essential Qualities of a Team Player: Becoming the Kind of Person Every Team Wants*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006.

Saint, Steve. "Did They Have to Die." *Christianity Today*, September 16, 1996.

Peter Cameron Scott and the Team to Kenya (http://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1801-1900/mission-team-reached-mombasa-kenya-11630643.html)

AUTHOR

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