



INREACH MANUAL

Member Caring, Encouraging & Linking

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Anastasia Thomas & Members of the Global Body of Christ

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Thank you Lord for giving us a wonderful family, friends, brothers and sisters in Christ around the world who really contributed to make this manual possible. Thank you also for all the experiences and challenges you gave us and the opportunity to go through in order to grow.

The illustration above (entitled 'Inreach resource servants' functions') and the manual are dedicated to all Inreach resource servants worldwide who devoted themselves to care for, encourage and link the Body of Christ.

"A remarkable and wonderful book! Content is wide-ranging and well documented. The format is inviting and accessible. It is something discipleship groups could use as a core curriculum."

Phill Butler, Senior Advisor – VisionSynergy

"I can tell you have poured your life and learning into it. There is so much in it."

Kelly O'Donnell – Member care Associates

"A very thorough and well-rounded manual and program. We are thrilled to see how God is leading His saints around the world to care for His family especially in hostile areas."

Dr Anna & Neal Hampton – Risk Assessment and Management (RAM) Training

This manual is a cross-cultural collection of various reflections, tools and models developed by amazing servants around the world. Feel free to use what is applicable to your context and culture as YOU are the expert!

If you are willing to develop Member Caring & Linking within your community, we encourage you to have a look at the **1st Year Program** proposal on daybreak-academy.org/resources/ .

This manual is also the 'resource book' to facilitate this program.

Biblical texts used in this manual are from the New International Version (NIV)

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The Vision

Dream with us... envision a future where nobody lacks anything and where Love & Unity among Christians is so tangible that everyday new believers are joining Christian communities around the world. Would it not sound like heaven on earth? Is it not what Jesus told us to pray for and to share with others? The Good News? That the Kingdom of heaven is already here on earth?

A good friend once shared with us that: "The reason for division is in the word 'division' itself... 'Di-vision'... 'Divided vision'."

Thus it is important that we connect people with the same function, vision or objective to be able to be ONE as Christ wants us to be (John 17).

Part of clearly defining our vision is defining what 'vision' means in the first place. When we talk about 'vision', it is not about our church/ organisation's 'mission'. The mission is what is already grounded in the day to day and is not as forward thinking as the vision. The mission encompasses all the concrete goals that have been laid out, which every member of the Body of Christ should already be working to meet, and it is the sum of those parts. The vision extrapolates from the mission. It gives the church/ organisation a grand idea of where we might go as an extension of where we already are. Vision also is not strategy. Vision is about 'where' and 'what', while strategy is about 'how'. Strategy explains which achievements (goals) drive us toward our vision. It is the gears and mechanisms that make a vehicle move, as well as the physics behind those. Vision is how the car will look like, and the destination towards which you drive it.

When we climb a mountain together, the 'vision' is what we will see when we reach the peak together. The 'mission' is to climb the mountain. And the 'strategy' is the goals we need to achieve, step by step, in order to fulfil our mission so that our common vision becomes a reality.

All three – mission, strategy, and vision – are indispensable. Missing any one piece leaves you without complete direction and ability to manage. So how do we define the Global Church's vision and communicate it to every believer? The answer is: by using a vision statement.



A vision statement is a declaration of the objectives of an organisation, intended to guide its internal decision-making. A vision statement is not limited to business organisations, non-profit or governmental entities but it has been used by our Master Jesus Christ Himself.

We often talk about the **Great commandment (common strategy)** in Mark 12: 29-31:

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

and about the **Great commission (common mission)** in Mathew 28: 19-20:

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

but what about the **Great Common vision** which should unite all of us as we are serving Jesus? Should it not be the vision He has already given us and even taught us to pray for?

In Mathew 6: 9-13, our Lord taught us to pray for this Great Common vision:

"This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one."

We believe that this is what we want to see:

- The name of our Father may be greatly revered and honoured throughout the world,
- The Kingdom of Jesus Christ comes and
- God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Do we want to see 'heaven on earth'? I believe people should be able to taste a glimpse of heaven only through tangible **Love & Unity** within the Global Body of Christ; don't you? How do you personally envision heaven? Is it, probably, a place where nobody lacks anything spiritually, physically and emotionally? Is it a place where there is tangible Joy, Love & Unity (complete peace)? Is it a place where we are all constantly worshipping our God through everything we do? Is it a place where people no more own anything because we would all know that everything is for the King and His Kingdom and that we are all only stewards

honouring our Lord in everything we do? Is this only a dream or should this be a reality?

The Good news is that God has already given everything (people, knowledge, money, facilities and resources) to the Global Body of Christ to take care of the whole world and reach out to every human being on earth. But the problem is that either we don't share or we don't even know what God has put in our hands. It is time that this situation changes. Don't you think so?

Envision a world where nobody lacks anything because everybody would understand and live interdependently while sharing our God-given resources just like the primitive/ original Church was doing in Acts 4: 32-37:

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

God was providing and **nobody was in need** (which does not mean that they were living always 'comfortably/ having everything they wanted' but that they did not lack anything physically, spiritually, emotionally, relationally and intellectually) because they all understood what the Word tells us in 2 Corinthians 8: 13-15:

Our desire is not that others might 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. The goal is equality, as it is written: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."

Are you sharing the same dream? Do you feel connected with what the apostle Paul said in Colossians 2: 2?

"My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ"

This mystery which Paul defines in Ephesians 3: 4-6:

In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

As **Inreach resource servants** (in this manual we will use this term, but this 'function' is also known as servants, care-givers, administrators, coordinators, people helpers, assistants, facilitators, mediators, communication officers, ambassadors, delegates, champions, etc.), we also want to see tangible Love & Unity within the Church. The only organisation that we are serving is the Global Body of Christ across denominations (even if we are also active members within our local churches/ communities). We are members within the Church who feel called to intentionally care for, encourage and link the other members within the Body of Christ so that we may be ONE as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit wants us to be so that the world may believe in Christ and know Him (John 17).

In 2009, God gave me (Jeremy) a vision to develop a tool that all Christian communities could use to care for, encourage and link Christians across the world so that Love & Unity within the Body of Christ may be tangible for the world to believe in Jesus. And this is how Daybreak Academy was created and developed in 2011 with a group of Christians from various churches and denominations.



As Inreach resource servants, we will often share about Daybreak or our personal experiences in this manual. But we are disciples of Christ and the ONLY organisation we serve is the Body of Christ, the Global Church which includes all disciples of Jesus worldwide. Our local church is only one branch of the Church, and Daybreak Academy is a neutral tool God gave us to serve him to connect with the different branches. If

one day, Daybreak or even our denomination (local church) disappears, we will be fine but what we are really concerned about is God's Kingdom and nothing else.

If you want to know more about us, you can go on this link daybreak-academy.org/about-us/ but, briefly; Daybreak Academy is an Inreach Resource Centre ministering for the Love & Unity within the Global Church by developing Member care and facilitating ministry collaboration for the well-being of Christians involved in ministry, missions, and clergy. Our main actions are to:

1. Provide Member care to Christians involved in ministry, missions, and clergy
2. Facilitate tools & training to develop Member Caring & Linking in Christian communities
3. Facilitate Inner healing & reconciliation workshops
4. Facilitate ministry collaboration between Christians, churches and organisations
5. Share about Love & Unity (Kingdom Collaboration) within the Global Body of Christ

Member Caring & Linking centre/ ministry is not something 'new'. In the Old Testament, there is a book which specially talks about this ministry... the book of Numbers. God asked people to make the census of everybody so as to be well aware of the needs but also of the resources (gifts and talents) that people have/ are in order to be more strategic in everything they do. And it is only in 2019 that we discovered, through a Jewish friend (who later



became a Christian) that the way Jewish nation cater for the needs of Jews worldwide is through *Resource centres* (Member Caring & Linking centres). For example, if a Jew wants to study but does not have needed funds, he/ she can contact the Resource centre of their region who will do their best to link them with appropriate resources/ people so that the studies will be fully paid wherever he/ she wants to study. If the person works hard and gets the best certificates, he/ she will get a good job (that the resource centre can help to find). Afterwards, this person can be contacted to support another young Jew who needs support to continue his/ her studies. Another example is if a Jewish family needs help to build their house, they can contact the Resource centre who will make the link between the needs and the appropriate resources or volunteers who can help this family and, again, when this family is fine, they will be contacted in the future to help those who have other needs. To be able to have a good coordination between the needs and the resources, Resource centres are continuously updating their global networks of people and resources to ensure, as far as possible, that nobody in their worldwide community lacks anything.

However, you will hardly be able to know about this Jewish system through the internet as it exists for ages and is kept among themselves. Everybody knows that Jews don't do 'Outreach' but they are very good at 'Inreach', as they consider every Jew as a member of the 'Jewish nation' by ensuring that nobody lacks anything and that they are well cared for. This is why Jews are known to be prosperous worldwide. As they support one another worldwide. We (Christians) should learn from them and support one another as members of the 'Holy Nation'. The Church needs to be a *symbol* of **Hope, Peace & Justice** for everybody to know that God is providing for all their physical, spiritual and emotional needs through His servants who are doing their best to make the link between the resources and the needs.

You can have a better understanding of these words through these videos by Bible Project (bibleproject.com/):

Hope (Yakhal) - youtube.com/watch?v=4WYNBjJSYvE

Peace (Shalom) - youtube.com/watch?v=oLYORLZOaZE

Justice - youtube.com/watch?v=A14THPoc4-4&t=7s

In the same wisdom from the book of Numbers, Jesus told us in Luke 14: 28-33:

“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, ‘This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.’

“Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won’t he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

To be Jesus’ disciples, is to give up everything we have but to be able to do so, we need to assess what we have BOTH individually and collectively. We need to be aware of our God-given gifts just like Himself asked Moses what he had in his hand (Exodus 4:2). When Jesus asked his disciples what they had (Mark 6:38), they had to investigate to know what they had collectively so that they bring these 5 loaves and 2 fish to Christ for the latter to feed the crowd. These remind us of the importance to be well aware of what God has ALREADY given to us as a local but also global community to be able to accomplish what God has asked us to do individually and collectively. It is thus important to assess (make the census) of our community’s members’ needs and resources but also to research (assess & investigate) about our local community’s history, vision, mission, values, structure, policies and guidelines already available to be more efficient in caring for, encouraging and linking our members while respecting what our forefathers did before.

We usually use the term 'Member Caring & Linking' (Inreach) to imply that it is not only an 'activity' or 'program' but an on-going/ continuous process which was, is and will always be happening at different levels for and by the members of the community. But every community is free to call this ministry how (and in the language) they want according to their particular structure and context (i.e. what is most suitable and understandable by their members).

Our vision is clear: to have an efficient Inreach ministry in every Christian community globally according to our respective contexts. What is an Inreach ministry? Simply servants who are intentionally listening to their members, especially those involved in ministry, mission, and clergy, so they can be aware of their individual and collective needs, and respond to them by caring, encouraging and linking them with the needed resources. Every community has their own way to care for, encourage and link their members and we should really value and respect this diversity and even learn from one another to be more efficient in our Member Caring & Linking.



Member Caring & Linking cycle

To be efficient, we need to be intentional and strategic in everything we do, even in caring for others. This is why we encourage every Christian community to appoint at least one or two Inreach resource servants (or, if possible, at least one per active small groups/ teams) who will be properly empowered to intentionally and continuously care for, encourage, link

and love the members while always keeping God at the centre of everything we do (keeping in mind that all we do is for Him and His kingdom). It is recommended to have our pastor or at least one of our church leader/ elder to be involved or oversee this ministry. Then, it is important to define specific phases/ periods of time across the year when you will be:

- RESEARCHING – such as reviewing your community's *history* (when it started? Where? By whom? Growth phase/ major developmental phases? Critical incidents? Etc.), *structure* (who is who? Leadership? Accountability & reporting? Etc.), *policies/ guidelines* (Employment/ labour contract? Agreements/ MOUs? Communication guidelines? Reporting guidelines? Annual review/ annual appraisals/ debriefing guidelines? Statement of faith? Confidentiality agreement? Conflict & grievance guidelines? Child protection guidelines? Data protection registered? Risk/ Crisis management guidelines? Etc.), *demographics* (how many members? Where? How many singles/ single women/ single men/ couples/ kids/ nationalities? How many active groups/ teams? Etc.) , *purpose, vision, mission & objectives* (why do we exist? Ministry focus areas? Geographical focus areas? Etc.) (Proposed tool: Ekklesia journey - daybreak-academy.org/ekklesia-journey/), helping members to assess their gifts, talents & callings (Proposed tool: S.H.A.P.E. Assessment - daybreak-academy.org/shape-assessment/) , make the census of members, the needs and our collective God-given resources (Proposed tool: Member care forms - daybreak-academy.org/member-care-forms/). It is difficult to care for and develop people or resources if we are not well aware of what God has put within our hands to steward. This is why we need to be intentional about doing a community assessment/ census to understand well our actual situation/ context.
- RESTORING – knowing that God has already given to us collectively everything we need to fulfil His plans for us (1 Peter 1:3), we need to restore what the thief has stolen from us (John 10:10) by caring, encouraging & loving our members within the community and by making the link between the resources and the needs to ensure that nobody lacks anything (2 Corinthians 8-9). Every context and community is different so we have to see what are the priorities/ felt needs within our communities and see what we can do about it by defining S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) objectives (mindtools.com/pages/article/smart-goals.htm).

- **RESTING** – To love our neighbour as ourselves implies that we are also intentionally loving and caring for ourselves too. Caring for the spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and relational needs of the



members within the community can be very exhausting. Just like the fourth commandment about rest (Sabbath) starts with 'Remember', we need to remember to set a specific time to rest, care for ourselves, have fun activities or just do nothing but being in God's restful presence. It is essential that we do not fall into the trap of 'there is always more I can do' or also called 'spiritual performance' (performing/ doing things to be 'good' in front of God) as Christian life is not about *doing* but about *being*. Let's keep in mind the story of the nineteenth-century preacher Robert Murray McCheyne who, after graduating from Edinburgh University at age fourteen in 1827 and leading a Presbyterian congregation of over a thousand at age twenty-three, he worked so hard that his health finally broke. Before dying at age twenty-nine he wrote, "God gave me a message to deliver and a horse to ride. Alas, I have killed the horse and now I cannot deliver the message." Devoting time to intentionally rest is not a luxury but a necessity; and especially for those who are caring for others. And then, you can continue the cycle of researching, restoring & resting.

It is important that we all are involved in **Upreach** (connecting with God), **Outreach** (reaching to unbelievers and praying for them by name) and **Inreach** (caring, supporting and encouraging one another to make each other grow and multiply). We need to BE INTENTIONAL as relationships are like plants that we have to invest in and cultivate (especially with God, family and friends) so that these relationships can grow and bear fruits.

We know that every Christian community is doing their best to care for God's children and we are very thankful for all that God is already doing through each one of us. We acknowledge that all those who are sincerely seeking to honour

Jesus are branches of this beautiful worldwide vine called the Body of Christ and all belong to God (Romans 11:16). We value all the community structures which were developed along the years to care for God's children. We also believe that if every community would have people appointed to intentionally care for the spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and relational needs of the community, Love & Unity would be so tangible that new believers would be joining Christian communities every day. And for this to become reality, we need one another. We need people (Inreach resource servants) who feel called by God to commit themselves to serve Christians so that they can become better witnesses of Jesus Christ to the world. To care for them, to encourage them and to link them intentionally so that each member of the Body of Christ can accomplish their God-given callings in fulfilling the Great commission.

We encountered several cross-cultural missionaries who shared with us that they were grateful that their local community back home was sending them money but they would really prefer that they care for them not only financially. But how can a community well care for those who are abroad when they have difficulties caring for their members who are in the same locality? It is why developing Member Caring & Linking within every Christian community will equip us to care for our local and international members/ missionaries better. Knowing that people remember/ understand better when they experience/ do it, our objective is to give the opportunity to every member within our communities to practice Inreach towards one another to develop a *culture* of caring, encouraging and linking one another to be the Church Christ wants us to be.

Points to remember

- **Key idea:** Our God-given vision is for the whole world to see heaven on earth (tangible Love & Unity) for God's glory.
- **Key verse:** Colossians 2: 2
- **Reflection:** Have I, as a Christian, realised that Jesus gave us our Great common vision? With whom can I share about it? How is the Member Caring & Linking ministry within my community?

Inreach resource servants

Through our experience, we prefer to describe those providing Member Caring & Linking as *Inreach resource servants* to be more inclusive as this function is also known in different contexts as servants, care-givers, facilitators, administrators, coordinators, people helpers, assistants, mediators, communication officers, ambassadors, delegates, champions, etc. To simplify, an Inreach resource servant is someone actively caring for, encouraging and listening to the members while making his/ her best to make the link between the resources and the individual needs.

Usually the term 'Member care' is associated mainly with caring for cross-cultural/ global missionaries. This is why we prefer to use the term 'Inreach' to be more inclusive of the care provided for all types of missionaries, ministers, and clergy. To simplify, **Outreach** is to care for all the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those outside the Christian community whereas **Inreach** is to care for all the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those who are active inside the Christian community.

Researches show that one of the main reasons why people leave the Church and why missionaries and ministers leave the field is because of 'broken relationships' due to a lack of caring and of strong links (cohesion) among the members of the Body of Christ. Can you envision a Church, the Body of Christ, where there are no denominational barriers like in Acts chapter 4, everyone is united and everybody is able and willing to care for one another and share everything they have with those in need as they know that nothing belongs to them?

When organisations are assessed to investigate the main issues or challenges that they face, most of the time, the problem that is found is communication and, often, there is no team which is assigned to deal specifically with this issue.

Many people think that communication is only about the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other media, but the word 'communication' comes from the Latin word 'communicare' which means 'to share'. Real communication is all about *sharing*. With the rise of technology, there are so many means of communication that there is less and less of *real* communication. Many people think that the best way to communicate is through phones, mails, messages, and media; but since the beginning of humanity, God has given us the best way to do it which is through people! Soul to soul communication!

In the past, when someone was not able to go somewhere in person to share something, he/ she was sending a mediator/ delegate/ ambassador (third person), who would convey the message on his/ her behalf. Since the beginning of wars, Generals were sending delegates or scouts forward to help the army be well in-context and more strategic in their fight. In the Bible, the leaders were also sending people forward to bring the light on certain issues. Moses sent the spies (among whom Joshua) to investigate the Promised Land to know if they should enter or not. When there was the problem of circumcision in Antioch, Barnabas and Paul were sent to the church of Jerusalem to share with the apostles about the issue. After coming to a common agreement, they sent two more delegates, Barsabbas and Silas, with their letter to share about their decision with the community of Antioch. There are many other examples where servants were sent to bring the light on various issues and also to make the link between the necessary resources and the needs out of caring for other members. We use the term Inreach resource servant to describe this function as they are serving for the well-being of members within the church.

Other good biblical examples of Inreach resource servant are Tychicus, Onesimus, Titus, Silas, Epaphras, and some other co-workers of Paul. Paul's goal was that the hearts of Christians be encouraged, that they may be united in love and that they may know Jesus more deeply (Colossians 2: 2). This is what he encouraged his co-workers to do also.

Jesus himself had Inreach resource servants, namely Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James and Salome who followed him and cared for his needs (Mark 17: 41). But unfortunately, many Christians involved in ministry, missions, and

clergy don't have any Inreach resource servant to turn to in their times of needs. Why? Because often no one is appointed as *servants of the servants*.

In Acts 4, Barnabas was known as one of those who generously shared his possessions (what God had put in his hands) with those who were in need to ensure that their needs were met, and that 'there were no needy persons among them' (Acts 4:34). In Acts 11, when Barnabas was sent to Antioch, it was not to evangelise people there (as the Gospel had already been brought to them). There was a division because of prejudices and culture differences between the Jews who became Christians and the Greek who became Christians. Barnabas was sent to make the link between them and to encourage them to persevere in their faith. It is then that he also encouraged and gave the opportunity to Paul to serve with him in caring for the Christians of Antioch.

In Acts 6, the church leaders were overwhelmed with having to lead the community and, at the same time, managing/ sharing the resources (meals). This is why they delegated this task to helpers/ servants so that they could be more focused on studying the Word and prayer to provide proper Pastoral care while these Inreach resource servants were helping in Member Caring & Linking.

In Ephesians 6 and Colossians 4, Paul talks about his beloved co-worker, Tychicus, whom he had sent to encourage them and to make the link between him and the other communities. Just think about it – at that time, they didn't have phones, internet or cars but they were much more connected locally than we are today. Why? Because they had Inreach resource servants (people) who were intentionally sent to be the eyes and ears of the communities. Paul was not in Ephesus when he wrote them this wonderful letter which we have today in the Bible, but because Tichycus was his eyes and ears, he was able to make Paul aware of the situation there. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians asking his Inreach resource servant to share it with the various communities in Ephesus.

In 2 Timothy 1: 16-18, Paul talks about Onesiphorus who refreshed him, made him feel that he was not ashamed of Paul's situation/ difficulties and even searched hard for him to encourage and support him. He was among Paul's care-givers who helped him in many ways to accomplish his God-given mission.



In 1 Corinthians 16: 17-18, Paul shared how much he was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they had supplied what was lacking from the Corinthians. They refreshed his spirit and, for their service, such men deserve recognition (more about Stephanas' Inreach ministry on ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/12_4_PDFs/02_Ellis.pdf). Just like Paul, when we were in need, we would never forget someone who came to us bringing light in our dark situation to refresh our spirit. This is why Paul really valued the Inreach resource servants who were caring for, encouraging and linking him with the appropriate resources to help him fulfil his God-given calling.

In 2 Corinthians 8-9, Paul talks about supporting the church of Jerusalem by asking the Corinthians to share their God-given resources with one another to ensure that nobody lacked anything. And again, he was sending Inreach resource servants with the gifts from Corinth to make the link between the resources and the needs by bringing the light on the various needs and resources within the Global Body of Christ. He was even valuing one Inreach resource servant as someone who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel and as someone chosen by the churches to accompany them as they carried the offering, which they administered in order to honour the Lord himself and to show their eagerness to help (2 Corinthians 8: 16-20). Paul even shared in 1 Corinthians 16: 1-4 about giving letters of introduction to the men the Corinthians have approved and sent, thus showing that these Inreach resource servants were *appointed* and *accountable* for the service of sharing resources within the Body of Christ.

So here are some potential **functions of Inreach resource servants**:

- We encourage and make the link (Ephesians 6) and share resources to ensure that nobody lacks anything (2 Corinthians 8-9) just like the Apostle Paul and his co-workers.
- We are **appointed** by our leaders and submitted to them.
- We help church members to **assess** their gifts and talents and functions within Christ's Body.

- We help our leaders to **know the members better** by taking a census of their various gifts, talents, callings, needs, interests and functions within the Body of Christ.
- We **link members** who have the same callings and **encourage Christians to share** the God-given resources.
- We make the **link between resources and the needs** within the Global Church.
- **We build bridges** (establish links) within the Global Body of Christ through Inreach resource servants from other churches and Christian organisations.
- We help the leaders to support and care for church members **physically, spiritually and emotionally** through personal visits/ interactive meetings, thus ensuring that nobody lacks anything.
- And we also do our best to **encourage** the churches to realise that we are members of a global Church called 'Christ's Bride' where everybody needs to be first of all DISCIPLES of Christ so that we can respond to God's calling upon our individual lives and produce the fruits we are called to produce together.



To resume, Inreach resource servants can be defined as valuable **C.E.L.L.S** (Care-givers, Encouragers, Linkers and Loving Servants - even servants of servants) within the Body of Christ *glocally* (globally & locally).

Differences

Every Christian community/ organisation has its particular history and structure and this is why it is also necessary to make the difference between Pastor/ community leadership, Therapist/ Counsellor and Inreach Resource Servant roles (which can be different according to our community's structure). Here are potential responsibilities for each role (inspired from Cindy Langermann & Dick Gardner "Differences between Personnel and Member Care Roles"):

Pastors and Community Leaders

- Preaching and teaching
- Praying for others
- Providing guidance and direction for the development of members in the community
- Holding services, Bible studies, and community devotional programs
- Overseeing administrative functions and ministries within the community
- Providing pastoral counseling and listening
- Extending care and debriefing in crisis situations
- Mentoring people in ministry, marriage, and parenting

Therapists and Counselors (who may be from outside a community if no one is certified locally)

- Offering therapeutic intervention in emotional and psychological crises
- Providing professional counseling services for members on personal and family issues
- Providing conflict mediation, trauma care, and debriefing for members
- Consulting with leadership regarding members' issues and policymaking
- Offering training in interpersonal skills, debriefing, or stress management
- Developing and maintaining a referral network

Inreach Resource Servant

- Identifying member care needs within the community, coordinating and mobilizing resources to meet these needs, and working to establish a supportive community
- Networking with local, national, and international member care colleagues and other communities' Inreach resource servants
- Offering training in Member Caring & Linking ministry and in self-care skills
- Recommending programs or plans of action to respond to members' needs
- Attending to the specific concerns of families, singles, new members, transitioning members, and aging members; facilitating dialogue and conflict resolution
- Orienting new members regarding member care and personal development
- Consulting with leadership and members on needs, policies, and resources; helping leadership coordinate activities and programs within the community; and liaising between members and leadership

Our vision is to see Love & Unity within the Body of Christ by having an interdependent Member Caring & Linking ministry/ centre (with at least one Inreach resource servant) per Christian community around the world. Our goal is that, through this ministry, the world will see the Global Body of Christ as ONE by 2030. And this NOT by having everybody under ONE denomination, but by linking all those who have the same functions within the Body to work together.

Why to minister for Love & Unity?

First of all, it is because of Jesus who prayed that all His disciples may be one SO THAT the world may KNOW Him. As Disciples of Christ, the will and prayer of our Master should be our will and prayer too. And secondly, we believe that the basic structure of the Church is the structure established by God, that is, the Family: called to care and



support each member because we love one another. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, members of the same worldwide family, because we all have the same Father (Galatians 4:6). And if all Christians were good witnesses of Jesus by moving as one body in tangible Love & Unity, every unbeliever would believe in Christ, repent and we would live together for eternity in heaven.

If all Christians are really united in serving our Lord for His glory, nothing can stop us! Alone we can go faster but together, we can go further. Love & Unity is the key to real prosperity where nobody lacks anything as we will be supporting one another for God's glory.

In Ephesians 6, Paul talks about Tychicus by saying "I am sending Tychicus so that he can make the link between you and me and to encourage you". So, if every church and Christian organisation had at least one Inreach resource servant (appointed by their leader) to help them to know and take care of their members better, to link the whole Body of Christ by building relationships through a network of Inreach resource servants and to encourage members to support one another (while respecting church leadership); very soon, we will be able to talk about THE GLOBAL BODY of CHRIST.

Our proposal

As we are developing Member Caring & Linking ministry within our local communities, we (Inreach resource servants) could be sent by our respective leaders towards every Christian leader of churches/ organisations in our locality. We can arrange a meeting with these leaders to get to know them personally by listening to their vision, challenges and proposals, share with them about Love & Unity (Interdependency) and propose to them to appoint at least one Inreach resource servant in their community/ organisation to develop Member Caring & Linking. If they want, they can use the Daybreak tools to care, encourage and link.

There are **Christian organisations/ tools' Inreach resource servants** who are acting as facilitators to keep information and event calendar about their organisation/ tool up-to-date on online platforms. These platforms can help Inreach resource servants to be aware of the various resources and needs within the Body of Christ and to make the link among them. They can also help develop

Member Caring & Linking (internal and external) and facilitate partnerships with other Christians, churches and organisations.

And there are **Churches' Inreach resource servants** who help their leaders to develop their own Member Caring & Linking centre to know their members better by making a census of their various gifts, talents and callings (i.e. their functions within Christ's body). When this has been done, we propose them to fill in the church's **Individual forms** (which will be kept in the local church). If people have any difficulty in filling in these forms, we encourage them to do the S.H.A.P.E. Assessment (to discover their Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality and Experiences) that can be facilitated either in a session of four to five hours or two sessions of two hours. This tool is available on our website in various languages and has already helped many Christians to know better who they are in Christ and to get more members involved in various ministries. Inreach resource servants help church members to fill their details in an Individual form to record their gifts, talents, needs and resources so afterwards that information can be inserted within a **local church database** (we can provide a simple excel document or other church apps to help you with that). Through this census, a local church can create its own Member Caring & Linking centre which will help them make links between the resources and the needs within their locality/ community and with other communities too. Local church Inreach resource servants act as 'linking persons' for church members of that community. If any other Inreach resource servant from a different community needs some resources that other brothers and sisters in Christ might have or *are*, they formulate a request and share it on their local Inreach resource servants network. If someone on the network sees that they/ their communities have appropriate resources to help, they can share about this opportunity with their leaders. A leader certainly has a right to approve or not, but if they decide to send a member of their church to help another community, they can do so. This potential **missionary** is thus protected; as private information is kept within a local church's Member Caring & Linking centre.

We've purposely used the term 'missionary' as we believe that a missionary is any volunteer who is sent with a mission. A member within our local church who is sent to help another community to repair their toilets is thus a missionary too. Every mission/ function within the Body of Christ should be equally valued but every member needs different types of Member Caring & Linking.

Inreach resource servants are people who feel called by God to be involved in Member Caring & Linking ministry. It would be good that they are appointed by their church leaders and that they register themselves on the **Inreach resource servant Network** (forms.gle/t1txzGPh28we4bid6) to get access to contacts and information of other Inreach resource servants locally and internationally. It is better that they don't contact church members from other communities directly but rather the Inreach resource servant attached to them. This way of communication creates transparency between the local churches (and even the Christian organisations) and gives the freedom to the church leaders to decide if they want to share the message to the people in their church or not. Through this network, they will be able to link members who have the same callings and to share God-given resources. This will help to encourage and co-ordinate the involvement of the brothers and sisters in Christ in fulfilling the **Great Commission of the Global Church** which is to go and make disciples of all nations.

Being an 'Inreach resource servant' is not a title but a '**service**' to help Church leaders provide Member care for their church members and also to be a link between different churches and organisations (tools) to support one another as ONE body in Christ in a better way, and also to share resources among all Christians to ensure that nobody lacks anything. As Inreach resource servants, we should be accountable to our church leaders. It is recommended to have the support and endorsement of our leadership as, first of all, it needs to be clear for them so that the community can benefit fully from this ministry. It is also good to be appointed as an Inreach resource servant in our community to be valued and seen as such; to be able to provide caring and linking to our members and for them to properly receive what we provide. **Accountability** builds trust which is needed when we are assessing resources (gifts and talents) that God has already given to our church. Trust helps us to be more efficient in our duties. And a census is also an opportunity to ask church members how they are involved and which callings God has upon their lives, to ensure that a church is **listening** to them and also caring, empowering and equipping them well to fulfil their functions within Christ's Body.

Inreach resource servants are first of all serving within their church or Christian organisation but they are encouraged to have one informal **local gathering** per

month (if possible with their leaders too) so that they can meet, have fellowship together and know what is going on in their localities to support one another better (1 Thessalonians 5: 11). They are also encouraged to have three **regional gatherings** and one **national gathering** per year. During those gatherings, they will have the opportunity to share about the new tools and resources God has given them and about activities they are planning to do. If they have an opportunity to have common activities or to share resources among them, they will talk about it with their leaders who will see what can be done or not since Inreach resource servants are usually '**Facilitators**' and **not** '**Decision-makers**'. They are links between churches and Christian organisations to encourage on-going projects that they can do together in the long-run and share God-given resources. It is always good that the leaders are also present during these gatherings, if they are available.

For example, if a church member has a calling for a ministry which is not actually present in his/ her local church/ community, Inreach resource servants can bring the light about this issue to their leaders and tell them about some organisations or other churches who are already involved in such ministry. Then, they can discern together if they can send this *human resource* to one of these places. This will help a particular church member to fulfil his/ her God-given calling with the support of the church. If every church does that, the world will see only 'The Church' moving and working together. Would it not be a wonderful testimony for the non-believers? And as the Word says in 1 John 3: 18:

“Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.”

Is it not the time to share our God-given resources and grow together?

This is actually what happened within the **Church of Beau-Bassin**, Mauritius, in 2016. St Thomas Anglican church contacted its Inreach resource servants to connect with all surrounding churches to seek who were ministering to homeless and needy people in the locality. We have visited various churches and connected with churches from different denominations who were involved in this ministry. Since then, they have been working together to take care and empower those needy people through the '**Compassion Ministry**'. We can even say that it is 'The Church of Beau-Bassin' who is taking care of the needy of this locality. This was possible with the help of Inreach resource servants who

connected those churches (Linking Ministry). Now, this partnership has even evolved into an '**Empowerment partnership**' (for community development) with various Christians, churches and organisations in the country who are serving together to see an empowered nation.

Going to a battle, any army needs to ensure that as their soldiers will get tired and hurt, they will have proper nourishment and medical care. Inreach resource servants are like nurses (soldiers' care-givers) on the battlefield who take care of soldiers' needs. If someone needs a tool, training or resource, they



will be able to seek those resources and empower soldiers, because they are in contact with other soldiers. In a similar way, Inreach resource servants can have, as duty, to make members of their community fill in an '**Individual form**' and to have an up-to-date **calendar** of their church/ organisation/ community actions. Through these, they will be able to know resources available and which activities (where and when) are going on to avoid as far as possible clashes with other communities or organisations. We believe this can encourage churches and Christian organisations to organize activities together and share resources. For transparency, all requests will be sent to Inreach resource servants who, together with their leaders, will see if the information can be passed on to those who might be interested, as it is our duty to know the needs, interests and callings of our church members. Christians will be well informed about inter-denominational events and training and resources/ help needed (by churches, organisations and individuals).



I am always amazed when I cross a bridge because, thanks to those who built them, we are able to easily make two towns or villages into one big town or village through this means of communication.

Facilitating partnerships and being the link between people can sometimes be difficult as we need to be ready to support

and let those we are serving 'walk on us' to move on, but we always need to remember that, as Inreach resource servants, we are always doing it for God's kingdom and nobody else. Being a bridge linking people, Inreach resource servants need to keep in mind that in every war, the first objectives enemies target are bridges so we need to be ready to face challenges any time.

Types of Inreach resource servants

If a church community doesn't have an established Member Caring & Linking ministry or an Inreach team looking after its missionaries, ministers, and clergy, then you should look around and get to know the people God has already placed in this community. There might be a *resource person* to whom people feel comfortable coming with questions and challenges, and who can link them with needed resources inside or outside a community. Or a *welcoming and caring person* who is always ready to listen, encourage, and pray. Or a person with strong *administrative* skills who often volunteers for logistical aspects of the work. If you can identify at least two such people, then you may already have the beginnings of your Inreach team!

Even if the function of Member Caring & Linking ministry within a community is to care for, encourage and link the members, not every Inreach resource servant is called to do everything. Here are the four types of Inreach resource servants (inspired by Gardner, Laura Mae. "Healthy, Resilient, & Effective in Cross-Cultural Ministry") which we encourage you to consider to discern which type (or combined types) of Inreach resource servants you perhaps already have within your community, that you need or even that you feel called to be:

Champion

- Influencer – promotes or recommends Member Caring & Linking through interaction with people or on social media.
- Advocate – publicly supports or recommends Member Caring & Linking.
- Write articles – to give the opportunity to people to understand the importance of Caring & Linking members



- Bible studies – prepare Biblical studies to make people realise the importance of supporting one another
- Speaks to leaders & elders – on behalf of members or to investigate/deal with specific issues.

Coordinator

- Contact person – for Member Caring & Linking requests (from members) or for Questions & Answers
- Coordination – between the resources and the needs
- Networker – looks for resources and specialists



Facilitator

- Actively makes plans and programs – about Member Caring & Linking
- Prepare necessary structure – to walk alongside people as soon as they become members until they leave the community.
- Own teaching & coaching skills – to equip members accordingly
- Networker – looks for external resources according to the needs of the community



Provider

- Provide Member Caring & Linking – towards members of the community where they are (one on one or in small groups)
- Follow-up – ensuring that the members are well physically, emotionally, spiritually, relationally and intellectually





To help you to discern which type(s) of Inreach resource servant would fit you better, we encourage you to do either the *16 personality test* (16personalities.com/free-personality-test) or the *S.H.A.P.E. assessment* (daybreak-academy.org/shape-assessment/).

We also encourage you to share about which type of personality you are with your team to serve together better. It is always better to *know/ understand* those with whom we serve to *respect* them when they do things differently from us but also to be able to accommodate ourselves to one another for the well-being of the community.

It is important to give Inreach resource servants an opportunity to serve and to help communities to do census of gifts and talents within local churches. Why? As Ephesians 4: 12-13 tell us;

“Christ gave those gifts to prepare God’s holy people for the work of serving. He gave those gifts to build the Body of Christ. This work must continue until we are all joined together in the same faith and in the same knowledge about the Son of God. We must become like a mature person— we must grow until we become like Christ and have all his perfection.”

Each Christian will be at his/ her right place and will be able to accomplish their work of serving to build the Body of Christ if they are given an opportunity to know their God-given gifts and are encouraged to do what the Lord has planned for them. Let us walk together and be the Church God wants us to be. Keep in mind what the Word tells us in Amos 3: 3:

Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?

And in Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12:

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour:
If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.
But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Therefore, let us do our best to bring together all those who have the same functions or who face the same challenge(s) and let us encourage one another to work as ONE Body for the perfection of the saints (Christians). This is possible through starting to see and value all the Inreach resource servants that God has already placed within our Christian communities.

Points to remember

- **Key idea:** Inreach resource servants are those who intentionally care for, encourage and link the Body of Christ.
- **Key verse:** Ephesians 6: 21-22
- **Reflection:** Are our leaders sometimes overwhelmed in both leading and managing communities? Do we need to have Inreach resource servants within my community to develop Member Caring & Linking? If Inreach resource servants are present in a community, are they seen and valued as such? Can we do something in our communities to improve this situation? With whom can I share about it and when?

Growth

Just like a body is constantly renewing itself to ensure that it remains in good health, as soon as we start to be an 'active cell/ member', we need to think about who will take our place after us. For a little plant to grow and become a tree, it needs to have constantly new



leaves while the elder leaves accept to leave. We encourage you, that as soon as you start to develop Member Caring & Linking within your community, to already start to think about the new Inreach resource servants who will be coming after you and be ready that they will minister differently. For any ministry to grow, we need to ensure that those coming after us are properly empowered to do so and we need to be intentional about it.

Jesus was not asking for 'volunteers', He was going towards people and proposed them to be active in God's Kingdom. We need to keep in mind that none of us will be here forever so we need to ensure our legacy by **mentoring** those who feel called to have the same function within the Body of Christ like us. As said previously, as minutes pass, there are cells in our body which are dying and new ones are replacing them, we always need to keep our eyes open on who are those who can take our place and even do better than us. Their successes will be OUR successes. As soon as people accept to be your mentee (to be empowered for this ministry), they should be aware of the *five stages of mentoring*.

1. **I do, you look** – You show the mentee what you are actually doing in your ministry by letting them accompany you as much as possible while they are intentionally observing you and the other Inreach resource servants to learn.

2. **I do, you help** – As soon as they feel ready to help you, even for some practical little things, get them involved. Even when you are giving sessions or meeting people, propose to them to do specific parts. Little by little, get them involved so that you do half and they do the other half. No need to rush, this can take much time. Give them the freedom to suggest new ideas and other ways to develop the ministry.
3. **You do, I help** – When you feel that they are ready, propose them to lead/ facilitate the sessions/ meetings and you will do the minimum. Knowing that if they struggle with anything, you are there to step in and help.
4. **You do, I look** – When you see that they feel more confident, propose them to lead the sessions/ meetings/ ministry and you will be there just to observe them. You will thus not step in, even if they do things differently, but point out that it is because you really trust them and their potential.
5. **I go, you mentor** – One of the most difficult steps is to 'multiply'. Your mentee already knew that this step would happen and it is why as from stage four, they should start to see potential people they could mentor themselves. It is thus the time for you to split the teams so that they can now mentor others. It is even harder for the mentee as they know they will have to become mentors themselves and lead others. This is an important moment for their personal growth. When we split, it is either you or your mentee who will serve another community (even in your locality).

These mentoring steps are applicable for anyone (even your children) as you commit yourself to mentor (train and equip) in any field. To be a healthy Body of Christ, we must not own any 'position' or 'function' that God has put in our hands but actually ensure that the future generations will embrace these responsibilities and even do better than us (possibly in different ways). As mentors, we need to care for them by listening, valuing and investing in them but at the same time, trusting that the Lord can use them in amazing ways (even if they are different from what we taught them). This is unity in diversity. One interesting tool which can be used for mentors (or Inreach resource servants) to walk alongside those who want to develop themselves to fulfil their God-given

part to fulfil the great Commission by defining with them their personal objectives and then following up with them on their progress is the **M.A.P.** (Ministry Action Plan) which is available here: daybreak-academy.org/member-care-forms/

We need to constantly renew ourselves, develop our skills and grow in becoming better Inreach resource servants for those coming after us to look at us and learn/ be inspired from us. How can we become better Inreach resource servants? It would be good for an Inreach resource servant to develop the following characteristics which can be summarised by the acronyms:

G.O.O.D & F.A.I.T.H. F.U.L.L. servant of servants

Godly – conforming to the laws and wishes of God; devoutness and moral uprightness. To be wise is to live in godliness, reflecting the nature of the kingdom of God in the course of everyday life. As the Word tells us to live holy and godly lives (2 Peter 3: 11-13), we must never think that our actions are not important to God. It is through the response of His people that God typically accomplishes His purposes. Therefore, we must take the call to live holy lives seriously lest we are unprepared for the end of this present evil age.

Obedient – disciplined person willing to follow rules and guidance by God or other authorities (such as our parents or our leaders). In simple terms, obedience is compliance with an order, request, law or submission to another's authority. In our daily life, we know that obedience is a very essential habit one should abide by in our homes, workplaces and in the communities in which we live. Children are asked to obey their parents in Ephesians 6:1 as this is the right way to behave as a child in a family and Mathew 16:24 teaches us that as Christians, the fact that we deny ourselves from many worldly desires and choose to follow Christ, that is obedience. The book of John 14:15, reminds us that through obeying the 10 commandments, we show our love for Jesus.

Observing –to watch carefully the way something happens or the way someone does something especially in order to learn more about it. It is important that we develop this ability to pay attention to what is happening around us to see the needs and also the potential resources God is providing.

Daring – being adventurous or audaciously bold is often very useful in being the prophet (speaking on God’s behalf) or pioneer (starting new projects/ministries) God calls us to be. It can often happen that we will have to dare to stand firm and even correct our leaders or those we are serving but we must try our best not to do it out of stubbornness but out of our strong desire for God’s will to be done on earth as in heaven. We can be inspired by Titus (in 2 Corinthians 8: 16-17) who, inspired by God, dared to take initiative:

Thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you. For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative.

Flexible – ready and able to change so as to adapt to different circumstances. We are constantly dealing with Christians who think differently and who are always busy with various responsibilities or activities. Being flexible is essential for us to be able to adapt to them and have mercy too. Keep in mind what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9: 19-23:

Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the Gospel that I may share in its blessings.

Sometimes, the ‘weak’ can be our brothers and sisters in Christ or even leaders who think they are strong; but we need to do our best to remain flexible to reach them and connect with them wherever they are, so that afterwards we can walk together better. Remember that we cannot have dominion or rule on anyone’s faith or thoughts. Only God can change people. This is why we need to keep in mind this *wisdom* from 2 Corinthians 1: 24:

Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.

Available – We are all ‘busy’, but amazingly, the busiest people always find time for what they consider as priorities. We need to be able to do our best to organise our time in order to meet or support others, out of care for them. We need to keep in mind that we will often have to choose between the *best* and the *good* and also sometimes between the *good* and the *good*. Our personal time and resources are limited and this is why, I recommend that you do not get involved in additional responsibilities before ensuring that other duties are properly handed over to other people, who have the right heart to be committed for the tasks (especially when you are facilitating partnerships).

Integrity – being honest and having strong moral principles. Being whole and undivided within ourselves. We need to be who we are, wherever we are and not wear masks. We need to constantly work on our integrity to be impeccable. Not that we can’t make mistakes but, at least, when we make them, we need to accept our failures and learn from them. People need to see the same person regardless of the context they are in. Keep in mind that to be able to connect with and be a link among Christians, churches and organisations, we need to do everything possible to be *impeccable* with the help of the Holy Spirit. I had dreadlocks and I was wearing many bracelets before, but when God made me understand my function within His Body, I had to review my dress code for the sake of the Kingdom. A little sacrifice which actually opened many doors afterwards. It is thus good to review our habits and ask the Lord to remove from us what could affect our mission. You can read more about integrity on lausanne.org/content/lga/2018-03/summons-global-integrity-movement.

Teachable – able to learn by being taught. We need to be ‘curious’ and willing to learn from one another to be able to move from prejudice to curiosity, from curiosity to connection and from connection to caring for people we encounter. If we are not willing to learn, we will never know what we don’t know. By staying open to review and renew what we ‘know’, God is usually more able to work in our lives and also to work through us.

Humble / Holy Spirit driven – the quality of having a modest or low view of one’s importance. If we are really Holy Spirit driven, humility is usually part of the package. In Philippians 2, we are asked to consider others better than ourselves and if we don’t do it, it will be difficult to make necessary sacrifices for others as we will see our advantage before others. But, as Jesus said, Love is

about making sacrifices for others (1 John 3: 16). Following Christ implies to be like him and to follow his example, even in giving our lives for others. We can also be inspired by 2 Corinthians 4: 5-6 to keep in mind that we are servants bringing God's light and that it is not for our own sake/ glory.

Forgiving – caring for, encouraging and linking Christians imply that we are dealing with people who are different from us and who react accordingly. We can *feel* hurt by their reactions and when they don't care about us and about what we are sharing with them. Remember that we are called to bear with one another (Colossians 3: 13) and to forgive those who have hurt us (Mathew 6: 12). Lewis B. Smedes said: "To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you." Forgiveness cannot change the past but can change our future by setting us and others free.

United – we can't invest our time, talents and treasures in something we don't value or believe in. This is why it is important for an Inreach resource servant to believe in, value and know the importance of real fellowship and unity (Kingdom collaboration) among Christians.

Loyal – giving or showing firm and constant support or allegiance to a person or institution. Because of our loyalty, our leaders will be able to trust us. But trust is not only given, it needs to be built little by little just like the parable of the talent that the one who was given more and developed his talent was given even more. Please keep in mind that we also need to be loyal to our family as if we

are serving the church and not caring enough for our own families, we will be accountable before our Lord on judgment day. For people (especially our family) to trust us, it is important for them to see our benevolence, our abilities and our integrity. Keep in mind that actions speak louder than words!



Loving – feeling or showing love or great care. If we consider that we are serving Jesus in Love & Unity and we don't renew ourselves every day to be more loving and caring, our ministry as witnesses of Christ can be highly affected. We need to make the necessary sacrifices to show the people around us God's love.

And being **servants of servants** implies recognizing our role to care for, encourage and link those who are already serving the Lord through their individual lives and helping them to accomplish their God-given callings in fulfilling the Great commission.

That great passage in Philippians 2: 6–7 summarizes the model for this servant role:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

Was Jesus considered a prophet? Did he have a clear vision? Did he provide extraordinary leadership? Of course! But here we see him characterized as the model *servant*. Does this mean you are passive in your servant role as an Inreach resource servant? Hardly. Commitment to this vision takes time, prayer, work, connections, and *initiative*. You listen, you learn, you help, but the servant never loses the clarity of his or her vision. That prophetic vision is always there in the background like your North Star guiding all you do.

In your *role as a servant*, some of your key roles are to:

- Help individual ministries and ministers see where they can or do fit into the bigger picture.
- Help ministries (and also individuals) find points in common they never knew they had.
- Help ministries integrate their work—finding ways to link with others when they have never done it before.

As a servant you also:

- Help fellow believers build and strengthen relationships.

- Help the community, partnership or network work well—and keep working—through effective communications, meetings, productive task forces, etc.
- Help the group or individuals monitor and evaluate progress—providing encouragement, course correction, and reports to others.

As servants, it would be good for us to embrace our function and to be ready even to suffer for the Church. Just like Paul said in Colossians 1: 24:

Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

As servants, we can also be inspired by 2 Timothy 2: 8-13:

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the chosen ones that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. Here is a trustworthy saying:

If we died with him, we will also live with him;

if we endure, we will also reign with him.

If we disown him, he will also disown us;

if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

And for sure, as the acronyms suggest, we need to do our best to be **good and faithful servants of servants**. We don't have to impress anybody but only please our Lord and Saviour in the hope that He will call us 'good and faithful servant'. There are Inreach resource servants such as Tychicus, Onesimus and Epaphras who are described as *faithful servants* in the New Testament (Ephesians 6, Colossians 1:7 & 4). They were servants of servants actively caring for, encouraging and linking Christians despite having to face various difficulties and challenges – such as Epaphroditus risking his life to care for Paul (Philippians 2: 25-30). But we need to be wise and good servant stewards by limiting/ balancing the time, talent & treasures we invest in ministry so that our God may be

honoured but also so that our family do not also have to 'pay' (such as children not having enough time with their parents because of ministry).

Prophet

Another function which can describe an Inreach resource servant is to be a prophet. You may say, "I certainly don't feel like a prophet, and I'm not sure I want to be one!" The very word may bring to mind unsettling images: Jeremiah thrown down an empty well and sinking into the mud to die (Jeremiah 38: 5–6); Elijah's life-or-death confrontation with the priests of Baal (1 Kings 18: 18–40); or John the Baptist dressed in animal skins, eating locusts and wild honey (Mark 1: 6).

But consider some of the roles of prophets. They help people see and think about what they don't *usually* see or think about—or don't *want* to see or think about! They call people back to their core values, like, "God's people really *ought* to be working together." They remind people of their commitments. They remind people of their priorities. They frequently help renew or focus the vision, and with that vision comes new hope. In short, they are communicators with commitment. If God has really placed a vision in your heart, a dream of something you know is consistent with his character and the needs you see, are you willing to communicate that commitment? And communicate it again? And again? And again?

In your *role as a prophet* you hold out to people, individually and collectively:

- The vision of what can be if they work together.
- A vision for a new way of doing ministry—how the vision can be realised.
- New hope—for achieving greater effectiveness and touching more people by Christ's love and power.

In your role as a prophet you:

- Serve as an advocate, an ambassador for the vision of working together (Interdependency within the Global Body of Christ).

- Hold out the vision that it is possible to work together, that others are doing it, and that it really can make a difference.
- Encourage the group by helping them see what they've accomplished or the progress they've made.

You play your prophetic role in all kinds of settings: one-on-one appointments, small group sessions, and public meetings. You are bold and persevering enough to reach out to Christians and leaders! People can be not willing to listen to you until they realise that all what you are doing is because you sincerely care for them and for God's Kingdom. I have a friend who once thanked me for persevering in reaching out to him despite his negative attitude towards me because he realised that I sincerely cared for him. One of my mentors, who inspired my wife and myself to be involved in Member Caring & Linking ministry, also thanked me for reaching out to him despite the distance (as he lives in another country). These experiences really encouraged me to persevere in persevering and standing firm for what I believe in while doing my best to respect others as much as I would like them to respect me.

To be a prophet, it is good to have **credibility**. The factors below can be useful to strengthen it:

- You demonstrate you have a heart and spirit of maturity, clearly committed to Christ and his Kingdom.
- You demonstrate a sense of urgency about the vision in your heart—whether it is a neighbourhood, a special sector of people in your city, or an unreached people group in a distant location.
- You demonstrate knowledge about what's involved in successful collaboration.
- Your organisation/ church, if you are attached to one, has a good reputation.
- You remain neutral and committed to everyone's success, together, rather than to a private, one-person or one-organisation agenda.
- You show genuine interest in others and their vision.
- You are consistent in what you say and how you act.
- You handle confidential or sensitive information responsibly—both what you say and don't say about other ministries and their leaders is important.

- You keep your promises. You do what you say you'll do, when you say you'll do it. If you find you can't keep the promises, be honest and indicate realistically what you are going to do.

(The text above about *servant*, *prophet* and *credibility* is inspired from Phil Butler's book 'Well-Connected')

Identity and resilience



The key to standing strong (persevering) through adversity is to know who you truly are as a child of God; your identity in Christ. I encourage you not to be 'people-pleaser' but seek only to please God and Him alone! You are not a sick person fighting to be well;

you are a well person fighting sickness. You are not an addict fighting to be free; you are a free person fighting addiction. You are not a defeated person fighting for victory; you are a victorious person fighting defeat. We know *who* we are because we know *whose* we are! Everything depends on whose hands it is! Either a good musician plays on a cheap instrument or on a very expensive one both can sound amazing but if you put an expensive instrument aside or in the hands of a bad musician, what is its value? Here is a nice short video to reflect on this: youtube.com/watch?v=AK62D9nrP_Q . It is thus important for us to trust in the Lord and have enough faith to persevere in the various roadblocks and challenges we will have to face but always keeping in mind that our God already has won the victory.

There is a famous song by Casting Crowns (youtube.com/watch?v=0tzWbsiMx9w) which says:

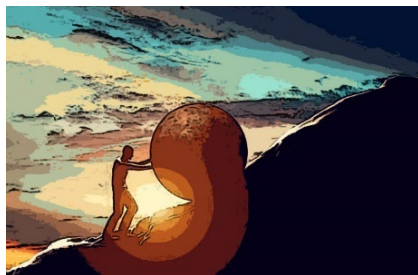
Cause when I'm weak, You make me strong
 When I'm blind, You shine Your light on me
 Cause I'll never get by living on my own ability
 How refreshing to know You don't need me
 How amazing to find that You want me

So I'll stand on Your truth and I'll fight with Your strength
Until You bring the victory, by the power of Christ in me

It is by His power in us that we are already victorious (even in difficult times)
and 2 Corinthians 3: 5 reminds us:

Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but
our competence comes from God.

To stay resilient (have the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties/ able to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change/ toughness) despite all the various challenges we *will* face, we need to have clear, right goals. We often hear people say that their objective in life is to be 'happy' which is fine, but I would like to encourage you to seek to be rather 'fulfilled'. I feel fulfilled not when I am centered on myself but when I feel useful. Let's not have as objective not only to be happy (which is a feeling) but also fulfilled (which is a status)! To develop your resilience, we recommend you to:



- stay flexible and open-minded,
- practice patience and kindness (on others but also on yourself),
- stay as much positive as possible,
- live in the present (and not constantly in the past),
- value and build good relationships,
- know and consider your limits,
- know how to handle rejection and
- enjoy spending time alone

(you can discover more about these proposals with this video:
youtube.com/watch?v=RJKbr8VvbyY)

Steadfast

In his letter to the Galatians 5: 13-26, Apostle Paul tells us:

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, **serve one another humbly in love**. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: **"Love your neighbour as yourself."** If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The acts of the flesh are obvious: **sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like**. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control**. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Look here at the acts of the flesh... Can we say today that all Christians around us are free from the flesh? I don't think so and I am the first to realise that I am affected by the flesh. That is why it is always important to renew ourselves and seek constantly to be mature Christians developing the fruit of the Spirit within us to be full of the Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6: 3). We need to develop especially *faithfulness* (which is defined as 'remaining loyal and steadfast'). Being steadfast is to be resolutely or dutifully firm and unwavering. We need, as Inreach resource servants, to remain loyal to God and also to the members of the Body of Christ (people who have realised that they are sinners and that is why they need a Saviour, Jesus-Christ, their Lord and King) and to remember that we are not better than anybody else. It is important to consider others better than ourselves. Just like in Philippians 2: 3-4:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

We often have the tendency to compare ourselves to others and even sometimes, *envy* their blessings. St Cyprian said that “Envy is listed among the deadly sins for a good reason. It keeps just gnawing at us unless we get rid of it. There will always be people who have more than we have, we need to learn to rejoice with them rather than envy them. The way we do that is by turning to Christ.” We need to be sincere towards ourselves and always seek God’s guidance in everything we do. As it is said in Galatians 6: 1-5, 9-10:

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load.

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who **belong to the family of believers**.

Christians are often very willing to go to prisoners and tell them that whatever they have done, God can forgive them and set them free, but we are often without mercy towards those who are considered ‘Christians’. We compare ourselves to others and think that we are better than them and even sow division by simply telling other Christians not to walk alongside those who are ‘weaker’. And what do we reap? More division which is the work of the flesh (Galatians 5).

It is true that sound doctrine is important and I’m not, at all, telling anybody to compromise but rather to walk alongside other Christians from other denominations and build relationships with them just like we would have done with non-believers to lead them closer to God. If we could move from prejudice

to curiosity, then from curiosity to relationships and then from relationships to caring for one another, don't you believe God would be pleased and honoured?



I have seen denominations and churches grow because they were humble enough to realise that they needed help and tools from other churches to develop their strategies for evangelism and even caring for one another. But because of our humanity, we are not often strong enough to admit that we are weak and that we need one another to grow together and be

the Glorious Holy Nation (of heaven) that Christ wants us to be. If we all realised and admit that we are first of all disciples of Jesus and *citizens of heaven* (Philippians 3: 20) even before telling about our denomination and nationality, I believe the Body of Christ could really move as ONE as we would no more think with a denominational or national mindset but as a Holy Nation who wants everybody on Earth to taste a glimpse of heaven! This mindset and culture can only be imparted to others, if we intentionally do our best, as Inreach resource servants, to live it and to actively care for, encourage and link those who belong to the family of believers (Galatians 6:10), Jesus' disciples, through **C.A.R.E.D.**

actions:

- **Compassionate** – feeling or showing sympathy and concern for others
- **Attentive** – paying close attention to what is happening
- **Respectful** – showing consideration and regard for others
- **Efficient** – working in a well-organized and competent way
- **Disciplined** – showing a controlled form of behaviour or way of working

While we are sharing about 'disciples'; when the Lord called me to work for Love & Unity during a personal retreat, I asked Him, "What will I say to all these Christians, priests and pastors? I'm no one!" And there, in silence, I felt the Lord answering me and saying: "You have nothing to say and nothing to do because you can do nothing. It's I who can transform and change people's hearts. But the only thing you could possibly do is to *remind them* that they are not called

to be men's disciples but to be MY disciples. Because if they are ready to review everything and to renew themselves every day to follow me and not men, to do MY will and NOT the will of men, I will work in each of their hearts". How comforting it is to know that we have just to let the Lord do His work in each of our hearts so that He can use us, as His hands and feet, to care for the whole world. The Word says it so well in Colossians 2: 6-8:

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

His hands and feet

Most of us really know this famous Psalm 23:

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

It is true that the Lord takes care of each one of us but who are the hands and feet of God through which He does this? It is us (all Christians). This is why our ministry is not only to minister and serve people but really develop and encourage intentionally a culture of Interdependency (Love & Unity) where everybody cares for and supports one another. Again, we can't teach what we

don't live by ourselves. We have to constantly renew ourselves to be more like Jesus. If all Christians would do well in the characteristics of a renewed life in Christ from Romans 12, the Church would be a much better witness of Christ. But we need to be intentional and have people walking alongside us to develop these Christ-like characteristics.

Linking members (connectors)

It is important to keep in mind that we are just participating in what God is doing and that Christ is the head!

In Colossians 2: 19, it is said:

They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

As Inreach resource servants, we are perhaps ligaments and sinews (linking members) that God uses to keep the body together but it is He who makes the body grow. It is all about Him and not us! As Inreach resource servants, we could also identify ourselves as the 'neurons' within the body which the head uses to communicate with other members. When my head tells my hand to move, it is the neurons which pass the message to it. But when my finger gets hurt, it is the same neurons which tell the other members that one member is affected, thus giving them an opportunity to take care of it.

As we are the ones God is using to link people, we are like 'hubs' connecting intentionally different people so that they can be well-connected in order to be more efficient together. We are actively listening, valuing and investing our time, talents and treasures in them because we love and care for our brothers and sisters in Christ.



At least two by two



When Jesus sent his disciples (Luke 10), he sent them two by two so that they could support each other when one of them felt discouraged. In this ministry, I strongly recommend that we have *at least* one partner who is also willing to be active in this service of caring, encouraging and linking. Alone we go

faster but together we go further as we are always more efficient. Why? Because we are different people who see things differently and it is exactly this diversity which makes our strength. This can help us analyse situations better and gather more ideas to find better solutions together. Even when we are meeting, reporting or addressing leaders/ people, we are able to complement each other. For instance, if we forget something important, our partner(s) can add it. This helps us to be more efficient in our communication. When you read Ephesians 6: 21, we can feel how much Tychicus was not only a partner of Paul but also a brother and friend serving faithfully the Lord. To have such a relationship, we need to build it and develop friendship and trust among one another as we are walking/ serving together. In Colossians 4: 7-9, Paul tells us about this duo of Inreach resource servants and what they were doing together:

Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

To resume, here are some criteria we usually recommend leaders to *consider* before appointing Inreach resource servants:

- Above 18 years old (adults)
- Engaged/ committed in his/ her local church
- A person of integrity who understands what is submission to leadership (accountability).
- A 'people-person' (good in relationship)

- It would be good for the person to have gifts such as hospitality, encouragement, shepherding, service, mercy or skills such as caring or linking.

Please keep in mind that it would be great to develop all those characteristics within us to be more efficient Inreach resource servants but we don't have to have all of them BEFORE doing this ministry. Just like a tree developing and bearing fruits, if we are intentional in what we do and let the Holy Spirit renew us every day, God will develop these characteristics within us by His will in His time. My prayer for each one of us is that we can renew ourselves constantly to receive the best title ever from our Lord Jesus Christ when we will see him; Good & faithful servant!

----- Points to remember -----

- **Key idea:** Inreach resource servants should be G.O.O.D & F.A.I.T.H. F.U.L.L. servants of servants and constantly renew themselves to be better witnesses of Christ and also to mentor future Inreach resource servants.
- **Key verse:** Acts 6: 3
- **Reflection:** Am I renewing myself constantly? What are the characteristics I should actively develop with the help of the Holy Spirit and my community? Do I know anybody who has characteristics to be a potential Inreach resource servant?

Church

The term 'church' has never been used in the Bible to describe a building or a 'denomination'. The Church, also known as *Ecclesia* (or *Ekklesia*) in Christian theology means both: a particular body of faithful people, and the whole Body of the Faithful. Latin *ecclesia*, from Greek *ekklesia*, had an original meaning of "assembly, congregation, council", literally "convocation". If faithful people are gathered, it is important to know for what. Some years ago, with brothers and sisters in Christ, we studied Acts 2: 42-47 and we have realised that there are seven pillars (or principles) of the Church that all Christians should live on a regular basis so that, together, we can be a lamp (church) efficiently shining the light of Christ before others, around us and to the ends of the world (Matthew 5: 16), with Jesus as our foundation/ cornerstone (Ephesians 2: 19-22).



It is important to have principles. Just like a toy plane and a Boeing both use the same principles of aerodynamics, the Christian communities/ churches also have basic biblical principles (pillars). Apply them and you'll succeed but ignore them and your community will not be as thriving as God wants us to be. The seven pillars are:



STUDY & TRAINING (developing our knowledge and skills – such as Bible studies, practical training, assessments, personal research, seeking divine truth, listening to sermons/ talks, etc.)



FELLOWSHIP (developing relationships with one another – such as by not only meeting people but by knowing them personally, eating together, have fun activities, meet Christians of other churches within the Body of Christ, serve with others, linking people with the same hearts/ callings, accountability partners (mentoring), etc.)



INREACH (Caring & Linking members within a Christian community – such as caring for the needs of the people, sharing what we have by putting everything in common, fundraising for others' needs, making the census of needs and resources, making the link between the resources and the needs, encouraging and supporting one another, etc.)



OUTREACH (Reaching out and caring for people outside the church – such as serving and building relationships with them, sharing the gospel to non-believers, social outreach/ activities, etc.)



PRAYER (Praying and interceding for one another – such as intercession time, quiet time, being part of spiritual warfare, etc.)



PRAISE & WORSHIP (Praising and worshipping the Lord (individually and/ or together) – such as through our body, words, songs or other media (as arts), etc.)



BREAKING OF BREAD (Thanking and glorifying Jesus for what He has done for us – such as participating in the Holy Communion (Eucharist/ Thanksgiving), being reminded that Jesus has died for us (our sins) and so we need to be holy, having the opportunity to repent from our sins, etc.)

We encourage communities to ensure that all their members are well accompanied and cared for so that they live on a regular basis those seven pillars. We believe that if every member (from the top leader to the simple member) of every community was persevering in living and developing those

pillars/ principles on a regular basis together, today, there would be no need for Daybreak or any other tools/ organisations.



Who is supposed to praise and worship the Lord? Everybody, right? And generally, there is a team actively serving in developing a culture of Praise & Worship by all members of a community. Who is supposed to study and be trained/ rooted in the Word? Everybody, right? And generally, there

are pastors and teachers actively serving in developing a culture of studying by all members of a community. And who is supposed to care for, encourage, support and link one another? Who is supposed to develop *Koinonia* (which is a Greek term which means both fellowship and sharing; i.e. the Fellowship & Inreach pillars) within our community? Everybody, right? So, why in most communities/ organisations, there are usually none or not enough people actively serving in developing this culture of Interdependency and developing Member Caring & Linking centres to care better for members' physical, emotional and spiritual needs? This is why we usually encourage leaders to have or to start a branch within their church devoted to developing 'Member Caring & Linking' ministry within their community.

Our aim is not to criticize any church's structure but to encourage every community to be intentional in ensuring that at least one person is committed (and if possible appointed) to develop all the seven pillars among all members. Just like an arrow, we need to take one step backward before going towards our



target. When we are ill, we need to assess where is the issue to do something about it. Once, I went to a doctor not sure where I was feeling pain and she told me: "If I don't know where is the issue, I can't help you!". In the same way, as a church or community, we need to be ready to analyse ourselves to improve our health. We encourage you to **assess the pillars** by asking at least three people from your community to put on a scale of 0-10 (where 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'constantly') how much they personally think that every pillar is regularly

practiced within your community and then make an average of your results. You can even use the Menorah diagram we use to represent the seven pillars to shade the respective candle according to the results you got (to visualize your community). Define the three strongest pillars you already have and which are practiced on a regular basis by your community and which need to be valued. Then define the four other pillars which are less strong/ weaker within your community. Then assess together if there is at least one person within your community who is devoted/ committed for every pillar. If it is the case, it is great!



But if it is not, we encourage you to seek the Lord to show you what you should do about it. Keep in mind that it is good to have all pillars on an equal level for the flames to heat one another as all pillars are interlinked and that every pillar can really help to develop within your community a culture of development, trust, partnership, caring, sharing (communication), altruism, prayer, Praise & worship and thankfulness. As Luther King would say "don't ask what your community will do for you but what you can do for your community", so if any pillar is missing in our community, we should start to pray about it and ask God what we can do to develop it.

We believe that if all local Christian communities were living the seven pillars on a regular basis, there would be no need for any other 'organisation' except the Global Body of Christ. This is also why we are also encouraging all 'Para-church' (or 'Pro-church') and Christian organisations to become inter-denominational **tools** to equip and help every church member to fulfil God's purpose in their lives. It will no longer be churches joining them but them joining churches without denominational barriers so that the world may see the Church moving and believe in Christ (John 17). We, organisations, came forward to help churches but it is their responsibility to make **disciples**, prepare and send **missionaries** (whatever the mission/ calling God has for them) and take care of the **needy** (spiritually, emotionally and physically). This is why we believe it is time for churches to take back their place and Christian organisations to become simply tools to better fulfil the Great Commission. Is it not the time for church leaders and church leaders' helpers to walk hand in hand in Love & Unity to witness Christ to the world as ONE Body?

Authority

We all need to respect those who are church leaders as even if they are not the best leaders, if God wants us to be within this particular community, we need to respect and be submitted to them as they will also be accountable for us on judgment day. Here is a very interesting article about it from gossipforjesus.com

Our original passage, I Thessalonians 5:12 – 13a reads:

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labour among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work.

From this we get two things we have to do for our leaders:

- (a) Respect them
- (b) Love them

*these two things are expanded upon in Hebrews 13:17 & I Timothy 5:17.

A. RESPECT FOR CHURCH LEADERS

Before we go into how to respect church leaders, it is good to know “why” we have to do this in the first place. There are two major reasons why scripture encourages us to respect church leaders:

i. Because they are accountable to God for watching over our souls

“for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.” – Hebrews 13:17a

God has delegated authority to those chosen as elders or pastors (shepherds) to oversee the church (Acts 20:28) and serve as our examples (I Peter 5:1-4). These people do not hold absolute authority but will give an account to God for those placed under their care. Therefore, we respect them out of reverence for the source of their authority – God himself.

ii. Because if you cause them grief, you cause yourself grief.

“Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.” – Hebrews 13:17b

Respect for church leaders is to our benefit. Disobedience to them would be unprofitable for us because God designed authority to protect and bless. Since it is clear that our leaders exist to shepherd our souls (under the authority of the chief shepherd), we ought to assist them by making their job joyful. Sheep who are always causing disruptions within the flock, make the work of the shepherd stressful and full of groaning. It is to our own advantage when the shepherd is joyful, for we too will partake in that joy.

How Can We Respect Our Leaders In The Church?

i. The first step towards showing respect for our church leaders is through obedience.

Hebrews 13:17 says:

“Obey your leaders and submit to them”

Obedience implies going along with directions or commands, whereas submission involves an attitude. You can obey outwardly while seething with anger on the inside, but you aren’t submitting. Submission implies a sweet spirit of cooperation that stems from trust.”

The concepts of obedience and submission are often difficult to speak about because our culture is largely built upon rebellion against authority. Many of our countries have been founded upon “independence” from colonialists or rebellion against the church/monarchy.

Such ideas have become so ingrained into our lifestyle that when we hear the words, authority or submission, we almost instantly become militant towards them. We don’t welcome such words as pleasant, rather we put up our guard because “nobody should have to tell us what to do or control us” or because “We love our independence”.

However, God expects us to be dependent on Him, obedient to His commands and submissive to His authority, which He delegates to

some in the Body of Christ to lead, train and prepare us for every good work (Ephesians 4:11-15).

Therefore, our duty is to obey godly church leaders. These are people who are walking in line with their duties according to Ephesians 4:11-15, and bearing the fruit of the Spirit (Matthew 7:15-20). Abusive leaders should be confronted and removed from office (1 Timothy 5:19-21).

Let it be absolutely clear that Christians have no duty of obedience and submission towards abusive leaders and false prophets/ teachers.

The church is only responsible to obey and submit when its leaders teach God's truth, especially on the essential doctrines contained in Hebrews 6. In any other area, especially where many godly Christians hold differing opinions, we should always allow grace to disagree.

The concept of submission and obedience to godly church leaders does not mean following them blindly without question. In a church seeking to follow the Bible, it is not wrong to examine whether the teaching is sound, just as the Bereans did in Acts 17:11.

Even where we are completely sure that our leaders are walking upright, bearing fruit and living holy lifestyles, there must always be room in the church for asking questions and seeking answers about things we don't understand.

However, there has to be mutual trust for times where there are no answers. Our leaders are human too and may not always be able to explain everything. In such times we need to trust and obey, knowing that we do this, not just for their sake or for the sake of peace in the church but in honour of God that leads them (and us too).

More importantly, we shouldn't be prideful in our thinking: "Well God speaks to me too, why didn't I get the same instruction directly from Him?". Thoughts like this often lead to rebellion, which comes with great consequences. Look no further than the example of Korah, who led a rebellion against Moses for similar reasons and perished along with everyone who joined him (Numbers 16).

ii. A key part of having respect for our leaders is being respectful in times of conflict.

Have you ever been in a situation of conflict with your church leader? Did you make sure to resolve it in a peaceful and respectful manner?

How you react to discipline or correction from your church leaders shows the level of respect you hold for their leadership. Are you offended or angry when they correct you or do you respect their decision and respond with humility?

Church discipline is difficult because there are always those in the church who have emotional ties to the one being disciplined. Some always feel sorry for the person and urge others in the church to show grace and mercy, not judgment. But to be effective, discipline has to be enforced. So obedience to church leadership is especially important if the church has to discipline a sinning member.

B. LOVE FOR CHURCH LEADERS

Once again, why do we have to love them? Scripture says plainly that it's because of the work they do. The work of pastoring, preaching and teaching is no small matter and those who respond to God's call to take on such roles should be showered with much love and care. Much like we love and appreciate those in high places of authority – politicians, governors, the president – due to the nature of their work, so we should also appreciate our leaders in the church even more because their work extends to the spiritual and concerns the eternal destination of our souls.

“esteem them very highly in love because of their work.” – I
Thessalonians 5:12 – 13a

How Can We Love Our Leaders In The Church?

i. We can show love to our church leaders through prayer.

The apostle Paul frequently asked for prayers for all sorts of matters (Romans 15:30-31, Ephesians 6:19, Colossians 4:3-4, I Thessalonians 5:25, II Thessalonians 3:1, Philemon 2). We ought to pray that our leaders maintain a good conscience in all things. This is not just to their

benefit when they give an account before God, but also to our benefit as we continue under their leadership.

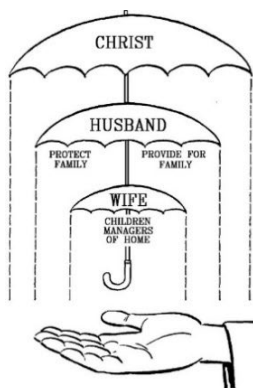
We must also pray that our leaders be delivered from circumstances beyond their control. Any circumstance that can cause them to fall away or fall into temptation will not only affect us but will bring disrepute to God's kingdom; so it is necessary to uphold your leaders in prayer. The more you pray for them, the more you cultivate love and respect towards them.

Prayer is not just a polite gesture that shows brotherly concern, it is a way to lay hold of the power of God. If people prayed more regularly for their pastors, there would be lesser church splits and fewer people leaving churches over petty matters.

Conclusion

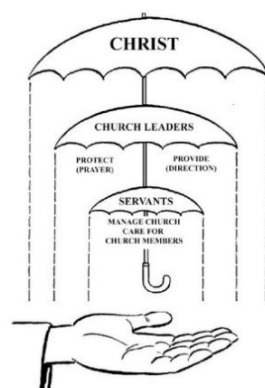
Respecting and loving our church leaders go hand in hand, there is no love without respect and no respect without love. What other ways can you think of through which you can love and respect your church leaders?

Therefore, it is important to respect our leaders and their God-given functions, but we all need to be lead, first of all, by Jesus, keeping in mind that there is only one Shepherd and one flock with all members knowing the voice of our Master, Jesus Christ (John 10:16).



Family Church Model

Taking care of every church member as a family member with a God-given mission



The **Family Church model** (which is represented by the two 'umbrella diagrams') makes the parallel between an 'ideal' family and a church structure. You can adapt this model to your culture but the principle is to care for members as much as parents would care for their own children wherever they are and whatever the situation they are in. I sincerely believe that the only and best God-given structure of any organisation is the Family. Ideally (according to Ephesians 5), in a Christian family, Christ is the leader/ head who has sacrificed his life and is protecting the whole family. Husband is submitted to Christ and is the 'director' who protects (through prayer and good environment) and provides direction (and what is needed) for the family. Wife is submitted to the husband and to Christ and is the 'manager' of the home and of the children. Children are raised to become either future husbands or wives and, hopefully, parents. I am so blessed to have a wonderful wife who really values her role as 'manager' to give me, as husband, the time to pray and seek God's will to maintain the *direction* of our family. Ideally, in a Christian church, Christ is the leader/ head who has sacrificed his life and is protecting the whole community. Church leader is submitted to Christ and is the 'director' who protects (through prayer and good environment) and provides direction (and what is needed) for the community. Servant (leader-helper) is submitted to the leader and to Christ and is the 'manager' of the community and of the church members. We then have church members who are raised to become either future church leaders or leader-helpers (servants). Leaders provide (fatherly) *Pastoral care* and servants provide (motherly) *Member care* and they complement each other to provide Godly care for every member of the Body of Christ. It is thus good for leaders to have servants sharing resources and helping them to take care of physical, spiritual and emotional needs of members so that they can have more time to pray and to study the word to lead the church (Acts 6). It is thus important, out of caring for one another, that we value each other's responsibilities and that we share tasks to be more efficient in caring for and linking members together by taking care of every individual (church member) as a family member with a God-given mission. Every parent needs to care for every child differently as they are individuals, isn't it? This is why it is good to have equipped Inreach resource servants serving with the pastors/ leaders to value and care for every individual individually according to their specific needs and personalities.



As soon as parents get children, their aim is to care for them and prepare/empower them so that they can, one day, leave them to become future dads or mums, isn't it? Isn't it the parents' duty to walk alongside their children until they are fully empowered and even after they leave them? Is it not an honour when they become responsible enough to get

married and become future family leaders? If your children go to another country or get married (thus are now part of another family), would you stop caring for them? You will surely care for them differently but you will always do your best to stay connected to them and to support them as much as you can, right? Then why do many Christian communities often just stop caring (at all) for the members who are no longer attending church meetings, who are abroad or who have new responsibilities in another community? If the members asked us to stop caring for them, we need to respect their decision, but otherwise, should we not stay in touch with them as much as possible, support them and encourage them to stay active members within the Global Body of Christ?

Once, I had put on some weight and one of my friends saw me after some time and told me: "Bro, you have put on some weight!" and when I asked him if it was good or bad, he told me: "For sure good... as long as all this becomes muscles". Many Christian organisations, churches and communities are often very glad to have new members and even to have many members. But are all members well taken care of to ensure that they become *muscles* within the Body? Are they all active members within the Body of Christ? Is being just a member or volunteer enough? Or should each member understand/ know the vision/ mission God has for him/ her and his/ her identity as a missionary?

In the movie '300' ([youtube.com/watch?v=Y9ZEI4aTFb8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9ZEI4aTFb8)), there was a general who was looking down on the Spartans because they were not many. The Spartan king told him that, compared to the members of the general's army who were raised as potters, sculptors or other professions, every member of his army knew from a young age that their first profession is to be 'soldiers' and

they trained themselves for that. There are many small Christian communities who have more impact than big congregations because every member is well committed in serving God's Kingdom. We believe every church needs to encourage every member who is saved (from a young age) to be, first of all, missionaries witnessing Christ wherever they are sent and that they should be properly valued, equipped and empowered as such. To be 'saved', implies knowing who saved us and for which purpose.

We were facilitating a partnership in Zambia in 2018 and the vision of the pastors who were present was: 'Every Zambian saved'. One pastor asked: "Who is considered to be *saved*?" For sure, as there were pastors from various denominations, we started to discuss it but we finally agreed on one definition which is: 'Someone is saved when he/ she recognised that he/ she is a sinner, has repented (gave his/ her life to Jesus), professes his/ her faith (Romans 10: 9-13), considers himself/ herself as a disciple of Christ and knows his/ her function within the Body of Christ and is doing something about it'. Do you agree with this? Are all communities aware of the God-given callings of each and every one and encouraging/ helping them to do something about it? Are we intentionally giving a hand to those around us to show them how much we care for them by listening, valuing and investing in them? This can only be achieved if there is a good culture of Member Caring & Linking present.

One morning during my devotion time, I read a French Bible version of Acts 2: 42 which instead of using the term *koinonia* (usually translated only as 'fellowship') said: "they were living as brothers and sisters". Same evening, we went to eat with my wife, my parents and my sisters after a concert we attended together. While we were eating and laughing together, this verse came to my mind and I felt in my soul that this is really the type of 'fellowship' we should experience every time we are among brothers and sisters in Christ. This *family-ship* where we persevere out of love to gather and spend time without having specific 'timed meeting'. Where we can rejoice in the presence of one another, share our food and lives, and ensure that our needs are met. I am blessed to have a family where we all are disciples of Christ, but as we all are adopted in God's family, should we not live a similar bond as blood family should have with other Christians?

In his book 'Adopted for Life', Russell Moore shared that, just like adopted children become fully members of a family, in the same way, we are adopted in God's family through Christ as brothers and sisters. We are no longer strangers but real family members and that we shall live as such. Living as family in Christ should not be only theological but also practical: through supporting one another and caring for one another's spiritual, physical and emotional needs in tangible ways. Our priorities should move from a two-car garage house and great vacations towards ensuring that our brothers and sisters in Christ are not in need. We need to be involved in one another's lives despite what individualistic and independent trends claim. As it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a church to raise a disciple of Christ. Just like nobody can have a child by himself or herself, we all have spiritual parents who raised us to become who we are today so that we too can become spiritual parents for others. The natural procreation pattern within biological families should be seen within the church too! And as we share with our children our values and good habits (practices), we should do the same with our church members. Let's share with one another our *life practices* (not only our *church practices*) out of love for one another.

Besides practicing on a regular basis the 7 pillars (mentioned above), we strongly believe that every church member should be appointed according to their particular function or ministry within God's Kingdom. The aim is not for every member to get a title or to feed anybody's ego, but especially for the local church to *see* one another to value, listen to and invest in one another accordingly. What do you personally think about it?

In my household, we found it very useful to clarify our responsibilities to take care of one another better. For example, it is my duty to wash dishes and my wife's duty is to cook. We can sometimes alternate when needed but this clear sharing of responsibilities helps us to respect and value one another's duty for the well-being of our family. My wife likes to cook and I enjoy washing dishes. I am really thankful that she is such a good cook and she is thankful that I help her in the kitchen doing the dishes. There are tasks that both of us don't like doing, but we have to persevere doing them for the good running of our household. Should it be the case within our local communities too? Should tasks be properly shared according to one another's gifts and talents?

Delegation

The ability of leaders to trust and delegate responsibilities of pillars to their members has a great impact on the development/ success of every pillar. As Romans 10:14-15 tells us:

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach **unless they are sent**? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

How will people know if nobody is SENT to share the good news? It is fine when people go by themselves but when we are sent, we have an authority behind us which means we are *accountable, submitted to and supported* by them. When Jesus sent his disciples for a mission, he took the time to prepare them and send them. Afterwards, when they came back, he took time to debrief them and listen to what they shared with him. This is another reason why Member Caring & Linking ministry within every community is needed... to ensure that all those missionaries (active Christians witnessing Christ within and outside their communities) are properly sent and supported by their local communities. The aim of having a team of Inreach resource servants is not only to inform but to support the leadership in encouraging members of the community to persevere in their calling (Colossians 4:7-9). Would you like to see every member in your community feel that they are missionaries because they know that your local church is behind them? Pastors just telling them to "witness Christ" at the end of the service/ meeting is not enough. We need to properly send them to fulfill their function within the Global Body of Christ whatever God is calling them to be involved in. We must not be afraid to lose church members but rather be longing for them to leave our local churches to fulfill their God-given responsibilities or, perhaps, be involved in planting/ starting a new church/ community. When parents have children, they look forward to the day when their children will leave their home ready to be responsible for their own homes and potentially children. To see their children autonomous and responsible of their own household is the pride of any parent. In the same way, when we have members who are active in our church, we need to look forward to the day when

they will perhaps leave our local church to lead or be active in another church or locality, where they are needed.

In Acts 6, the church moved from multiplying to *greatly multiplying* because the leaders recognised their limitations and trusted the community and other disciples by sharing tasks like managing, sharing resources and facilitating reconciliation among members. Both apostles and leader-helpers did not have degrees or certificates, but they had the right character to serve and this is why they were considered *full of the Spirit* and respected by others.

One tool that we encourage you to use is the **Partnership frame** (available on daybreak-academy.org/member-care-forms/). To be properly sent, it is good for the missionary to know/ define the five A with his/ her leadership to know what is expected from both sides! This model is inspired from Mark 6 when Jesus clearly defined with the disciples (before sending them two by two) their level of:



- *Authority* (what they can decide by themselves and what they need to ask the leadership before)
- *Accountability* (what, how and how often they need to report to the leadership)
- *Action* (what they can or cannot do)
- *Association* (what type of relationship they shall have with the leadership and with who else they can work/ serve or not)

As the apostles did when they came back after their mission to report to Jesus (Mark 6:30), it is important to have accountability structures within our communities for one another to be clear on what we can do or not (like football players who prefer to play on a playground with clear marks to be sure where are the goals and also the limits). But it is also important for missionaries to hear their leaders *acknowledge* what God has done through them. The more

missionaries are acknowledged, the bigger the frame is and the bigger impact the missionary can have for God's kingdom in our society.

There are different types of servants and we should not impose our serving styles on others. There are *three types of ministers/ servants* that God has gifted accordingly to be His light to the world:



1. *lamp* (someone who is able to help everywhere needed and support several ministries at the same time but usually is not focused on any particular thing),



2. *torch* (someone who tries to focus on some specific causes which are important for him/ her and invest his/ her time, talents and treasures accordingly) and



3. *laser* (someone who is focused on his/ her 'one thing/ ministry' that he/ she is very convicted of and invests his/ her time, talents and treasures for it)

All types are needed and this is why we need to value each one of them but reminding them that the more things we want to do at the same time, the less efficient we will be at everything because all our time, talents and treasures are not unlimited. This is something to consider when we have accountability meetings with people. Everything is 'good' but we don't have to do everything to be 'good'. But we need all types of different lights of Christ around the world to have the impact God wants us to have!

We encourage all of you to seek God's will and also to be accountable/ have the blessings of your community's leaders/ your leadership. Knowing who are behind you/ supporting you before starting any project/ mission/ ministry gives you the necessary confidence to face different challenges (especially when other leaders ask you "Who are you to do this? Who is behind you?"). Having a recommendation/ sending letter from your leadership can be very useful for other communities to know who is behind you. Just like an ambassador, if you are properly sent, those who are against you are also against those who sent you and trust you. Even Jesus said it so well in John 5: 23:

that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

In his book 'How can I serve my Church?', Matthew Emadi explains that the local church is not a *business* but an *embassy of God's kingdom*. When we visit our embassies in other countries, we usually can feel 'home' and this is the same feeling people should feel when they visit any Christian community/ church. M. Emadi makes it clear that to serve within our local community means that we are called to gather for corporate worship, show hospitality towards one another (especially to strangers), share the gospel when we have the opportunity and disciple those God puts on our way wherever He puts us (our community, locality, neighbourhood, work, school, etc.).

How Christianity has conquered the most powerful empire ever on earth (the Roman Empire)? Was it through war and weapons? By fighting each other? No! It was through our Love & Unity among one another! It was not only by what we said but mostly by who we were because if we were not doing what we were preaching, we would have nothing to say! The Christian communities were living the 7 pillars on a regular basis and we conquered the hearts of people and nations by our message and by witnessing Christ by daring to be different. Being a witness is simply to testify of what we know and experienced. Tangible Love & Unity does not mean living comfortable lives and being rich but it is about being ready to do the necessary sacrifices for God and for one another and to experience on a daily basis Kingdom collaboration! To experience real community, we have to persevere to *come-in-unity*! Therefore, are we all experiencing tangible Love & Unity within our communities to be able to share Christ more efficiently with our neighbours?

Points to remember

- **Key idea:** God gave us principles (pillars) that every Christian community should actively be developing to thrive.
- **Key verse:** Acts 2: 42-47
- **Reflection:** Are all members of my community actively involved in developing the seven pillars? What are the pillars that are really present in my community? What are the pillars that we really lack in my community? Is the Inreach pillar (Member Caring & Linking) really efficient in my community? What can we do about it?

Caring

"People don't care what you know until they know that you care." This statement (by Theodore Roosevelt) is valid for Christians too. After an investigation that we have done with several Christians asking them: "Do you feel that your church cares for you?" and "How would you like your church to care for you?", we realised that there were 3 main actions which made people feel cared for. Christians feel cared for when they *feel* that they are **listened to, valued** and **invested in**. If we want our Christian communities to be considered as 'caring', we need to intentionally listen to, value and invest in every member so that they can do the same for others. You can't give what you have not received. 'Care' implies that we feel concern or interest, look after and provide for the needs of those we are caring for.



Many companies, for years, have realised the importance of their most valuable resource... people. They also know that all their employees have to feel that they are well cared for in order to give better performance. They have 'Human resource' departments which work under the company's leadership but doing their best to ensure that people are well listened to, valued and invested in. It is not the CEOs' responsibility to focus only on Human resources as they have to ensure the leadership and direction of the companies.

In the Primitive/ original church (Acts 6), the apostles realised that they were spending too much time sharing resources (food) while they should be spending more time in prayer and in the Word to lead people. This is why they asked for deacons (servants) to delegate this responsibility of sharing resources.

But one thing, that many people forget or don't realise, is that the apostles HAVE NOT LOOKED for the deacons themselves. They have asked people to look among themselves for seven people known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. It was other people who went to look for potential deacons and made the link between the apostles (need) and the deacons (resources). Thus knowing them enough to encourage them to respond to this calling to become ministers within the Church. Those people who cared for, encouraged and made the link can thus be considered as Inreach resource servants who were sent to look for appropriate human resources.

Christian mission agencies (who have been doing their best for years by sending Christians in places where non-believers have not heard the Gospel) have realised the importance of good Member care and always do their best to appoint some people (who are usually not the leaders themselves) devoted to care for, encourage and link missionaries to be more efficient in their missions. But my wife and I encountered many international missionaries who would prefer their local communities to care for them even more than their agencies/ organisations.

Keeping in mind that a '**missionary**' is 'a person sent on a mission' and that all Christians are called to be missionaries where God is calling them to make a difference and be His witnesses (in their families, workplaces, schools, communities, friends, etc.), how would it be if every Christian community had a branch for Member Caring & Linking to ensure that every member is well cared for and also to develop the *culture* of caring for one another?



There are 59 '*one another*' verses in the New Testament that you can discover on this link: storage.cloversites.com/wakarusamissionarychurch/documents/59one_another_scriptures.pdf. I thus believe that developing a culture of caring for and supporting one another within the Body of Christ should be our priority.

Here is a definition of Member Care (inspired by a document drafted by the Leadership Team of the Global Member Care Network in 2008):

Member Care is the ongoing preparation, equipping and empowering of Missionaries for effective and sustainable life, ministry and work (Missionaries - according to local/ regional definition).

Member Care addresses all aspects of a missionary's personality, spiritual, emotional and relational, their physical and economic wellbeing, both singles, couples, families and children, and is developmental and educational. It seeks to empower missionaries to make healthy choices by offering ongoing training, resourcing and equipping in all these areas. It is integral to all aspects of mission, leadership (for/ by), logistics, spiritual formation, and church life. It begins with selection and continues throughout the missionary life cycle to re-entry or retirement. The responsibility for Member Care rests with the sending church/ agency/ organisation, leadership (home/ field), the team, families, individual supporters, competent member care providers and the individual missionaries themselves. Those involved will seek to develop competence in all those areas where they are working by ongoing learning, networking and resourcing. They will serve the mission community with humility, integrity and compassion, recognizing their own weaknesses and dependence on God's grace and gifting.

Here is an interesting article by Tim Herbert, Director, Syzygy Missions Support Network (membercare.eu) which can help us apply Member care within our Christian communities.

Member care steps into that situation to provide active support not only to help the missionaries survive, but also to help them develop a resilience from challenges encountered and ultimately equip them to thrive in an 'alien' environment. It is not there to wrap them up in bubble wrap and protect them from the challenges, but to provide them with additional resources to help them weather the storm and to grow stronger. It can be compared to staking a young tree for protection. If the tree is staked too tightly so that it never moves in the wind, it never develops a strong root system to support it against strong winds. Good staking is loose enough to allow a sapling to sway enough to remind it that it needs to send its roots deep, but tight enough to stop it blowing over. Member care does exactly the same! It can be defined as:

The continual and systematic application of resources into the life of the missionary before, during and after their assignment to ensure they have the inner resources to withstand the stress of their work and its context.

Are we getting soft? Surely the great saints of old didn't need this level of support! What about all those missionary pioneers who went abroad with their belongings packed in a coffin because they knew they weren't coming back?

Firstly, there is ample New Testament justification for Member care. Just look at Luke 8: 3, Acts 13: 1-3 and 14: 27-28, 1 Corinthians 16: 15-17, Philippians 1: 3-7 and 4: 1-20, and 2 Timothy 1: 16-18 to see how people did things that are recognisable aspects of modern Member care – funding, sending, caring and welcoming back. Secondly, how many of those great saints experienced Member care through prayer, supportive teamwork and the hospitality of local believers? Perhaps we'll never know the full extent. And finally, there is some evidence that some of the pioneers of the 19th century missionary movement experienced disillusion or stress-related illness that could have been relieved if they had known what we know now.

Member care is an enterprise of the whole Christian community. Primarily based in a sending church, it also involves friends, family, a sending agency/ ministry/ organisation (or maybe two), other missionaries and local church, and Member care specialists. It does not mean that life in the mission field is not going to be without challenges, but it does mean that a large group of fellow-travellers are there to support and encourage us through those hardships. Just as St Paul's missionary journeys were not without their 'momentary, light afflictions' (2 Corinthians 4: 17 – cf 11: 24-33!), he found himself greatly encouraged by those who partnered with him in the preaching of the Gospel (Philippians 1: 3-5). Or, as one contemporary support agency puts it:

“We don't fulfil the Great Commission at the expense of the Greatest Commandment.”

And also this interesting article from Ronald L. Koteskey
(missionarycare.com/member-care.html):

You keep hearing about Member care, but wonder about it. You are doing all right and wonder why anyone would need help. What is Member care anyway? Since God cares for them, why would missionaries need Member care from other people? If missionaries did need it, who would give it to them? How would missionaries go about getting such care, if they ever did need it? Let us consider some of these questions about Member care.

What is Member care?

Many words can be used to describe what takes place in Member care. Some of those words are friendship, encouragement, affirmation, help, and fellowship as well as sharing, communicating, visiting, guiding, comforting, counselling and debriefing. All of these, and more, are facets of Member care given by someone who understands the special needs of missionaries.

Of course, all Christians have the care given by the Holy Spirit, the one whom Jesus promised in John 14-16. Translated "comforter," "counsellor," or "advocate," the Greek word (*paraclete*) literally means one called or sent for to assist another, someone who has been invited to stand by our side.

In addition to the Holy Spirit, God often uses other people to come alongside and help us, whether we are missionaries or in other vocations. Most people in your passport country have others they can call on for help, whether a pastor, a counsellor, or friends in a small group-such as a Bible study group. Among missionaries who are members of some mission agency or church, the term used for this process of having someone come alongside to offer help is "Member care." This may be something as routine as a regularly scheduled visit from a pastor asking, "How are you doing?" Or it may be as rare as a psychologist rushing to get to you within a couple of days for a trauma debriefing to help prevent post-traumatic stress disorder.

Who needs Member care?

In modern individualistic western cultures where people learn to "make it on their own," even Christians may believe that they do not need help from anyone except God. They may believe that asking for help is a sign of immaturity or weakness, a lack of faith or spirituality, or perhaps a symptom of illness-either mental or physical.

At the training sessions during the orientation of his twelve disciples Jesus told them where to go, what to take, what to do, and how to deal with conflict. He was not kidding when he went on to tell them to be on their guard because he was sending them out like sheep among wolves (Matthew 10). Today as you face the wolves of missionary life whether they are malaria, dengue fever, parasites, depression, anxiety, conflict, burnout, grief, guilt, temptations, assault, the violent death of a colleague, or demonic forces, you may need someone to come and stand by your side.

At the similar orientation session for the seventy-two others, Jesus sent them out in twos (Luke 10). No one went alone. First Church in Antioch commissioned Paul and Barnabas to leave on their first term (the first missionaries), and as they left, John went with them as well (Acts 13). When Paul and Barnabas could not agree on who should go along with them on their second term, they parted company and went out as two missionary teams of two each (Acts 15). There were no "Lone Rangers" (even the Lone Ranger had Tonto, his national companion). Instead of being a sign of weakness, a lack of faith, or a symptom of illness, asking someone for help is a sign of normality, reality, and health.

Everyone seems to recognise that lone missionaries in frontier work need Member care, but so do administrators in the home office. Even people in the secular world know that it is "lonely at the top." Though surrounded by people, chief administrators may feel very alone and need someone to come alongside.

In every war there are many support staff for every soldier on the front lines. When soldiers come back from the front, they are expected and allowed to report that the battle was terrible, that they were anxious, discouraged, and that the conflict was awful. Some say, "War is hell." Missionaries are on the frontline of a spiritual war between the powers of good and evil, and their battles are even worse. They need even more

support staff, more Member care during which they can share their inner battles, because they are literally in a war with the forces of hell.

Who gives Member care?

Of course, anyone who cares can give Member care. It may be a high school friend, a distant relative, a retired neighbour from your childhood, or anyone else. However, most often Member care comes from four major sources.

Your sending church: Ideally much Member care comes from your home church. Members can send letters, call you by telephone, send packages of special things you miss, communicate with you by e-mail, and visit you. Unfortunately, in these days of much education (going to college and then to seminary) missionaries often lose close connections with their home churches. They may not have really bonded with the last church attended before going overseas so that the churches commissioning them may not really feel like their sending church. Thus they may receive little Member care.

Likewise, your support may be in rather small amounts from many churches or many individuals. Since no church really feels like you are their missionary, you may receive little Member care from anyone. When a pastor leaves a church, the new pastor may not know you well and may give you little Member care.

Other missionaries: The people most likely to deeply understand what you are going through and be able to empathise with you are other missionaries. The missionaries you work with are the ones best able to come alongside, but if you share too much, that may affect your working relationships. You may be able to form a bond with missionaries from other agencies/ communities in the area, if there are others nearby.

Your agency/ ministry/ organisation: Many medium-size and large agencies now have people whose assignment is to give Member care. These may be pastors, veteran missionaries, counsellors, and so forth. They may be at centres in different parts of the world, or they may travel from country to country giving care to missionaries in that agency.

Member care specialists: At times you may rather talk with someone completely outside your agency. You may have personal problems that you do not want to share with anyone in the agency or for which you think there is no help in the agency. Pastors, counsellors, social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists who specialise in missionary care are available to come alongside and help.

How do I get Member care?

Ask for it: Tell people when you need help. Find someone you can ask for help when you face the wolves of missionary life.

Your sending church: If you do not feel like you have a sending church, ask a church to play that role for you. Tell them you want to be "their missionary," and ask for care from them. You may even want a coalition of churches geographically near each other to be your "sending church" and furlough in their area. Tell them that re-entry and furlough are difficult, and you want their help especially during that time. Tell them that you need letters and phone calls while on the field; then tell them when you are getting too many email so that they will not expect immediate, personal replies.

Other missionaries: Form support groups with others on your field in your agency or nearby. Meet regularly for Bible study, prayer, and general care for each other. Form accountability relationships with two or three others.

Your agency/ ministry/ organisation: Tell your administrators [Inreach resource servants] when you need care. Ask them to find someone to give you regular pastoral care if they do not already have someone playing that role.

Member care specialists: Some organisations specialise in supplying on-field care for missionaries. This may involve a cost, or the care may be free. Other organisations provide care in sending countries, places where you can temporarily withdraw from the battle and receive help from mental health professionals.

The order of Stephanas

The missionary, Paul, wrote to the Corinthians about the missionary care he received. The household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and Paul noted that they had "devoted themselves to the service of the saints" (1 Corinthians 16: 15). Paul said that he was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus arrived because they brought just what was lacking. He wrote, "They refreshed my spirit." That is just what people do for missionaries today when they provide Member care - they bring what is lacking and refresh spirits.

People supplying Member care do not need to be mental health professionals to be of great help. Literally hundreds of studies have shown that paraprofessionals (people who have received some basic training in the rudiments of counselling) can be just as effective in helping others as are those who are licensed or certified by some state board or agency. Thus, sensitive people from your sending church, empathetic colleagues on your field, understanding administrators in your agency, or professionally trained Member care specialists can be of great help as you face the wolves among whom God has sent you.

In his book 'The local church', Archbishop Prof Ezekiel H. Guti shares that people come to church for the same reason people were coming to Jesus when he was here. They were coming for their actual needs to be met. The needs of people in the church are: love, to be counted, to be accepted, to be concerned for, to be cheered up, to be nursed in prayer, to be counsel in their problems, to be taught, to receive persistent follow-up, to be treated as individual, to be identified with them (eat the food they eat and sit where they sit), to be visited (especially when they are grieving, sick or when they lost someone close to them), to experience a family environment and personal attention, and to have at least someone to trust as a sister/ brother in Christ and friend so as to pour all their heart when going through difficult times. We should be aware that all our church members (especially those involved in ministry and missions) have usually the same needs.

Mission agencies and Christian organisations are really trying their best to provide member care but the best to provide it will always be the missionaries'

sending churches. First of all, we encourage churches to investigate and be aware of the different ministries and missions their church members are involved or are planning to be involved in. There are several churches who facilitate membership sessions for new members who want to be considered as church members. Those sessions are meant to share their core beliefs, structure and the different ministry opportunities within the church (their church's DNA). There are some churches who afterwards give the new members reusable nametags with the logo of the church and their names; so that during various services or functions members can wear them to see one another's name and be easily connected. This shows sense of belonging and commitment to their local church. However, for people to be involved in various ministries, the best way is to meet individually church members, and to ask them where and how they would like to be involved in God's Kingdom. If church leaders do not have time to meet these potential missionaries, they can appoint Inreach resource servants to meet with church members and help them discern in which ministries or missions they would like to be involved, and how they would like their local church to support them. We encourage churches to commission their church members for ministries and missions publicly. It is true that it is God who commissions us for our specific ministry or mission, but public commissioning is a really deep spiritual act as the community, ministers, missionaries and church leadership take a commitment in front of the Lord to collaborate in fulfilling God-given missions. We also encourage churches when commissioning their missionaries, also to appoint alongside them a CARE (Inreach) team to ensure that they are properly cared for before, during and after their missions. As well as to be well listened to, valued and invested in along the way.

A missionary shared with us how she felt cared for by her sending church through:

1. **Prayer** – they were letting her know when praying for her and with her consistently and faithfully (Ephesians 1:15-23).
2. **Response** – they were quick to respond when she reached out to leaders (1 Thessalonians 5: 14, James 1: 19). She particularly appreciated them asking questions in response to her newsletters or during their accountability meetings. She also shared her appreciation when church

leaders and Inreach resource servants dared to ask for forgiveness when they were not able to respond to her need as quick as it was needed.

3. **Encouragement** – she felt very encouraged when her church leaders and Inreach resource servants were reminding her that despite her mistakes and failures, God has also mercy on her (Colossians 3:1-17).
4. **Fostering/ cultivating a culture for sending** – she felt very blessed to know that her sending church was encouraging and teaching people to share resources they have and to support as much as they can those who are sent.

It is good to ask your missionaries about what they want to talk about when they reach out to you. You can share with them about the **4 Ps of care** - Personal, Peer, Pastoral and Professional – and encourage them to precise which one(s) they need when they reach out to those supporting them.

We highly recommend you to develop Inreach (caring) teams within your local churches for the **well-being** of your members (especially those involved in ministry, missions, and clergy). First of all, we need to understand a little bit better what the concept of ‘well-being’ means. Its definition is ‘the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy’.

Here is a great table which summarizes the results Thad S. Austin and Katie R. Comeau received after doing a major research about the concepts of well-being of clergy in North America and which is available in their book ‘Caring for Clergy’. The rows sort major concepts by personal well-being and professional well-being. The columns group major concepts by individual well-being and relational well-being.

	Personal well-being	Professional well-being
Individual well-being	Individual Health (Spiritual, Physical, Emotional, Mental)	Professional Health (Learning, Identity, Financial, Rest, Resilience)
Relational well-being	Personal-Relational Health (Boundaries, Quality of Relationships)	Professional-Relational Health (Work/ life Balance, Leadership, Support, Community)

To be able to cater for all these aspects of the members' well-being, it is good to have a team dedicated to it. A team with, preferably, a pastor or at least one church leader/ elder involved in or overseeing (especially concerning the pastoral care).

Here is an interesting article about the **3 steps to implement a caring (Inreach) ministry team** in your local community (also known in some cultures as *nurturing team*): christianitytoday.com/better-samaritan/2022/october/3-steps-to-building-sustainable-care-ministry-in-your-church.html.

According to the article above, these steps are to:

1. Leverage Community Partners
2. Build a Volunteer Care Team
3. Train and Develop the Team

As Laura Howe states in this article:

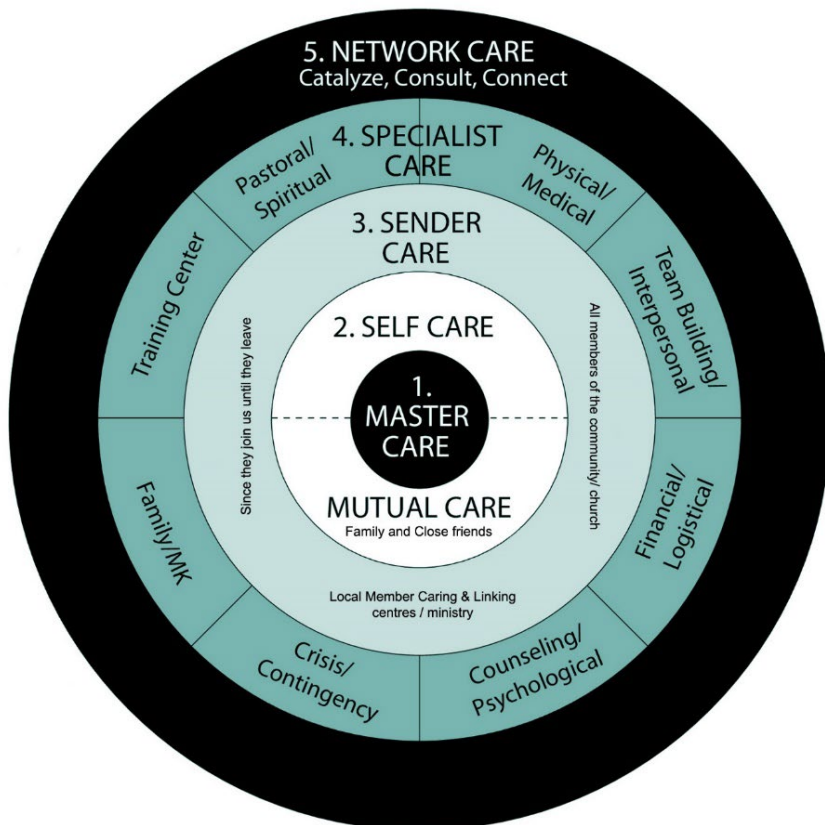
When churches are seeking volunteers to be on a care team, leaders should look for natural helpers. By talking to people one on one or as a small group, leaders can ensure that they communicate the expectations of the volunteer role. Diversity (of culture, gender, age, and experience) on a care team is a strength and an asset, as long as each person has the maturity to maintain ethical standards and confidentiality.

These are simple practices to start caring for the different types of missionaries. Member care models can help us to be more efficient and strategic to do so.

Here is a model/ diagram that we use to describe the **Member Caring & Linking ministry model** (inspired from membercareassociates.org/ - Kelly O'Donnell and Dave Pollock's *Global Member care model* which you can discover the latest version on this link: us4.campaign-archive.com/?u=f34fc856e7776d7b69dafd3b3&id=7155c94ed6). There are various stages of Member Caring & Linking which are important to understand. Keep in mind that the least number of people involved in taking care of any issue someone is facing, the better it is. This avoids waste of resources and potential gossip.

Member Caring & Linking Ministry

(Inspired from membercareassociates.org - Kelly O'Donnell and Dave Pollock)



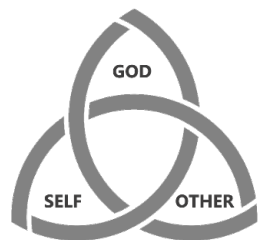
1. **MASTER CARE** – implies that any person facing a spiritual, physical or emotional need can come to God, our Father and Master, to seek the necessary healing. To be able to bring our hurts and pains to the cross and let Jesus heal our wounds and take care of us. It could be by:

- keeping a constant relationship with God through daily prayer and Bible reading.

- devoting quality time to spend with the Lord and rest in His presence (retreat) – we propose at least fifteen minutes per day, half or a whole day per week (Sabbath) and two or three weekends per year.
- asking the Holy Spirit to keep searching your heart so that any blockage can be removed.
- being on the lookout for Satan's attacks. He will especially want to tempt you to go back into addiction, disunity and prejudice.
- confessing and repenting of any sin quickly.
- receiving God's love on a daily basis.
- worshipping God individually and corporately regularly (at church and other fellowship events).
- seeking good prayer support.
- praying for God's refreshment, renewal and cleansing from anything that might have contaminated your spirit.

2. **SELF-CARE** – implies that every member needs to intentionally take care of themselves in ministry as we can't love our neighbours as ourselves if we don't really love ourselves. One of the best ways to care and support one another is to stay personally healthy. It could be by:

- taking opportunities to rest – and schedule days off from ministry.
- take time to breathe deeply in and out (from your knees) at least once per day – or whenever you feel 'stressed'.
- getting enough sleep (7-8 hours per night).
- eating healthy food.
- getting regular physical exercise, such as sport or working in your garden – activities that do not require mental effort.
- taking time out to be by yourself, especially if you are an introvert.
- retiring into 'your spot' (medium.com/@anoopama.vp/my-favorite-spot-in-my-house-2be78fe3728b)



- taking care of your body to honour God with it (1 Corinthians 6: 20) – avoid sexual immorality, enjoy a good bath, take care of your hair, apply body lotions, shave yourself, have a body/ neck massage, do your nails, etc.
- looking for opportunities to help/ support others as caring for others is part of caring for yourself.
- expressing your emotions – do not keep them bottled up inside! Keep giving any pain or anger to God.
- expressing your thankfulness – write in a notebook or share with people what you are thankful for.
- taking up some leisure/ fun activities (for example making crafts, painting, playing music/ games, etc.)
- watching good films and TV programmes (not rubbish!).
- reading good books.
- taking time to enjoy God’s creation – for example going for a walk in natural surroundings. One of the best way to encounter (appreciate) an Artist (the Creator) is to enjoy and contemplate his artworks (creations).
- reflecting on what usually drains out your energy and what resources yourself so that you can be aware of those and do something about it.
- assessing yourself regularly on how you feel you are personally doing spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and relationally using a scale from 1-10 (1 being very poorly and 10 being very good.)

The PIERS Self-Care Model



MUTUAL CARE – implies that you have your spouse or a close circle of family and/ or friends (brothers and/ or sisters in Christ) who intentionally are caring for you by:

- praying for you and with you.

- filling intentionally one another's *Love tanks* by knowing one another's *Love languages* (Gary Chapman). It could be done through:
 - *Quality time* spent with one another to listen or just enjoy one another's presence.
 - *Service* when we are helping/ supporting one another through our actions.
 - *Words of Encouragement* by telling people what we appreciate in them and thus valuing them.
 - *Gifts* that we give to one another to show that we have thought about them (which don't have to be expensive but just a flower or a cake is special).
 - *Touch/ brotherly hugs* given to one another to show to the person that we love him/her enough to hug.
- cooking food and sharing meals together.
- guarding your family relationships very carefully. This is often the way Satan gets back at us. Be careful not to take your tiredness out on your family after any ministry! Also, you may come home very excited about what God has been doing while they may be struggling and suffering at home. Be sensitive to their needs.
- sharing with your family what you are doing so that they can understand and support you.
- playing games with your children or reading to them (have a look at family.fit/en/ which is an all age programme that is ideally suited to help your family grow together in faith and fitness).
- nurturing good friendships – people with whom you can relax and be yourself and express what's in your heart (such as by asking and sharing regularly with one another "How was your day/ week?")
- If you don't have any 'close friends', I recommend you to VISIT – CONNECT – INVITE. This implies:
 - Think about what really interests you then *visit* places/ groups of people who have the same passion(s) as you

(Jesus, church, ministry, sport, art, nature, etc.) and see if you naturally *connect* with anybody there. Feel free to contact us (daybreak-academy.org/contact-us/) so that we can link you with local Inreach resource servants who can help you with that.

- *Invite* this person for a cup of coffee (one-to-one) to discover one another and talk about how you are doing in (living) this common passion that you both have.
- Invite this person's family (those who live in the same house as this person) for dinner/ picnic/ outing to really connect with one another and continue to jump on opportunities to get together around this common passion(s).

3. **SENDER CARE** – implies that your local community/ church/ organisation or even your family and friends are intentionally caring for you because they value you as a missionary (a servant of Christ doing your best to fulfil your God-given calling) since you joined them until you leave (which can be until death). It could be by:

- Meeting (as regularly as possible) the leadership (or the representative/ Inreach resource servant) of your community to share what you are doing and to receive necessary encouragement/ support from your community.
- Having a good accountability/ coaching structure – having someone you respect ask you how you are doing and walk alongside you. For accountability/ coaching, you can use The COACH Model® which is: CONNECT: build trust and relationship – OUTCOME:



ask the person what they want to accomplish – AWARENESS: encourage discovery, reflection, and insights – COURSE: define action steps/ process – HIGHLIGHTS: reflect on learning from this conversation... then determine when will be the next time to talk (keithwebb.com/coach-model/). Coaching is not telling people what to do but empowering them to discern and know what they have to do so that they can own the solutions they will do themselves. There are great platforms (such as FOCOS - focosplatform.com/) where you can be trained to facilitate Christian coaching. For better transparency and accountability, I even encourage you to dare to ask the person what could be his/ her 'less noble intentions' in being active in this mission/ vision and what he/ she expects to gain/ acquire for himself/ herself (personal agenda). When I was asked this question, I was shocked but I realised that deep inside, through the ministry I wanted to get involved, I wanted recognition, facilities and to be able to travel. When I have put that in front of the Lord and asked him for forgiveness, I felt He told me that these things I wanted deep inside are needed and that He had already planned, for me, to receive them but I need to renew myself constantly and keep my eyes focused on Him so that I don't look for anything for my glory but for His glory!

- Debriefing you after any big project, ministry or mission or when you feel you need to process (verbalize, normalize and contextualize) what you are going through. In Acts 21:17-26, we have a great example of debriefing a missionary after his mission so he can feel listened to and valued. Paul was welcomed by elders and he explained in detail what God did through him so that they can rejoice with him and also share with him some practice, advice, and perspective to be more efficient in his ministry. Paul welcomed what they told him and did what they told him to do. Such debriefing practice is important, especially when someone completes an assignment or comes back from his/ her mission (whatever and wherever it was). Here is a nice brochure about it on

missionarycare.com/debriefing.html . You can also contact Daybreak Academy for coaching and debriefing (daybreak-academy.org/contact-us/) or take time to debrief as a team. Ask each other questions like:

- What was most encouraging for you? Take time to praise God for these things.
- What did you struggle with most?
- Did anything re-open old wounds for you and/ or cause you pain?

Then take time to pray for one another, bringing any pain to Jesus.

- Sharing and educating your church/ community about what you are doing so that they can understand and support in various ways, especially in prayer. Missionaries and volunteers can be invited to share with the community about who they are and what they do; either publicly during a service, through writing, or video media.
- Having a Member Caring & Linking centre within your church/ community to which you can turn when you have any need/ challenge you are facing so that they can do their best to make the link between the resources and the needs.
- Investing in the members according to their needs, apart from preaching to the congregation. For example, your local church can facilitate 45min classes on specific topics for people to interact and to connect within the church those who have the same needs or face the same challenges and develop mutual support, just like this church does: capitolhillbaptist.org/resources/core-seminars/
- Celebrating all those serving in one way or another in and out of your church, including volunteers! You can organise a yearly breakfast, brunch, lunch or dinner and be creative in affirming what they do and how they are valuable for God's Kingdom. Here is a funny video you could share to thank them; showing how your service would be without any church volunteers: youtube.com/watch?v=z82VKElqRrI

4. **SPECIALIST CARE** – implies that, sometimes, the best way to care for people is not to try to take care of them ourselves but linking them with the most efficient person (specialist) you know who can really take care of their needs. Such as:

- Pastoral/ spiritual – Have regular or occasional accountability meetings/ visits with your church/ ministry/ organisation leader so that he/ she can be well aware of what you are doing to give you good pastoral and spiritual care. Don't expect them to know what you are going through if you don't share it with anyone.
- Training centre – If your community can't equip your members with specific training (such as music, vocational, even Bible, etc.), It is better to propose to them some good training centres that they can join to be well equipped.
- Family/ Missionary kids – If you are actively serving the Lord, ministry often takes much of your time and, just like the saying "we need a whole village to raise children", we often need some advice and help from family counsellors or other specialists who can help parents not to neglect their children and be a healthy family.
- Crisis/ contingency – If anybody goes through a difficult time due to a crisis or contingency during his/ her ministry, it is important to be linked with people trained to listen and help people to go through those difficult times.
- Counselling/ psychological – when we feel bad physically, we go to a doctor, don't we? When we feel bad spiritually, we go to a pastor/ spiritual leader, don't we? But when we feel bad emotionally, we are afraid to go to a counsellor or psychologist. We can all go through ups and downs emotionally and this is why we need to be linked with appropriate specialists to help us.
- Financial/ Logistical – We can all go through financial problems or need financial or logistical support to be able to develop and reach our full potential. This is why it is good to have specialists

who can advise us on the best practices and ways to get the necessary finances and logistics.

- Team building / Interpersonal – When we work within a team and we are going through difficult times or simply if we want to work better together, it is often better to have neutral people who are specialists in Team building and who could facilitate those sessions with your team. Or at least, you can use other materials which can help your team to go deeper in their relationships with one another and set common vision and goals/ objectives. One material we recommend is the 'EKKLESIA journey' which is available on daybreak-academy.org/ekklesia-journey/.
- Physical/ medical – if someone gets badly hurt or is sick of any illness, the best way to care for them is to link them with the appropriate doctor or specialist who will take better care of them.

To facilitate the link between people who have those needs and those specialists (resources), it is good to develop a 'Member Caring & Linking centre' within your community with Inreach resource servants willing to connect you with the appropriate specialists.

5. **NETWORK CARE** – implies that we don't always have all the resources needed within our local community and this is why it is important for us, as Inreach resource servants, to be well connected with various networks to whom we can ask for help, connections and advice to better respond to the needs of our members.

It also implies that through these networks, we can send our members to other organisations/ churches and communities for them to help our brothers and sisters in Christ so that they would respond better to God's calling upon their lives. But for this, we need much courage, faith and humility to accept that other communities can do a better job than ourselves but if it is God's will, why should we oppose it? We don't own anybody (Acts 4: 32) and if the Lord tells us to let some of our members

go because we love them so much that we connect them with another community/ ministry/ organisation which can care for them better, why should we be against His will? Of course, such a situation can also be an encouragement for our local community/ church to develop and be more efficient in taking care of all the needs of our members.

There are several **Member care centres** around the world (daybreak-academy.org/member-care-centres/) to whom you can turn to when you need additional support or need more information to care for your members' needs. Usually, they can also help you to facilitate/ organise personal retreats/ rest and counselling/ inner healing sessions.

To be more practical, we encourage every Christian community to appoint at least one Inreach resource servant to have a Member Caring & Linking (Inreach) team who can meet every member/ missionary (especially those who are involved in ministry locally or abroad) within our community to assess their needs by seeing with them if they have, among the people they know, at least one person who can support them and help them in these particular areas of need. Here are two **Member care assessment models** which you can use with your members:

1. **Member Support Circle**

Every member (especially those involved in ministry) need to be aware that in some way or another, we all need support from other people in different areas of our life or ministry. Thus, it would be good that every one of us define specific people to whom we can generally turn to when we have *questions* or *issues* in these particular areas. It is important to note that we do not need to have a specific person for each area as one person (or a group of persons) can be able to cater for several areas at the same time. All these people do not have to know each other, but it would be good that they are people with whom we have a personal relationship. This is why, if there is a lack, linking them to the appropriate person (even if the latter is from another denomination/ Christian community) is practical caring.



Member Support Circle

(inspired from Marina Prins & Braam Willemse 'Support team diagram')

Leadership support – If we are properly sent/ appointed by our community, it is good to also feel that the leadership is aware of what we are doing but mainly supports and values our ministry. It is why it would be good that the leadership is able to communicate with and value their members personally. If for whatever reason it is difficult to do so, it would be also good that at least those who are providing pastoral support or member's Inreach Resource Servants (providing Caring & Linking) can also be the link between the member and the leadership to receive needed support.

Pastoral support – someone ensuring that we (and our family) develops and grows spiritually, get the necessary fellowship with other believers, and that we have enough time and opportunities to study the Word and to develop spiritually. It would be good that it is the pastor himself providing it but any person with the gift of shepherding can fill this area of *Pastoral care*. He or she does not need a degree in theology, but must have a heart for people. He/ she should be someone we can turn to when we have spiritual questions or need guidance. Barnabas was such a person. Maybe that is why he and Paul were initially sent out as a team. Remember that our member as a person – together with his/ her family – must be cared for. We also must not forget the spiritual needs of members' children!

Caring & Linking support – someone who considers himself/ herself as our Inreach Resource Servant and is doing his/ her best to ensure that we are well cared for, encouraged and linked to the resources we need. This can also imply to advocate for us (our ministry) and to mobilize/ gather volunteers/ partners/ resources to help us where needed. He/ she can also help us by being connected to the other people in our support circle to advocate for us.

Ministry support – someone (like a mentor or a coach) who can help us to reach our ministry goals/ objectives and to get appropriate training for the ministry we are involved in.

Logistical support – someone who can provide us necessary information/ contacts we need; someone we can trust with all those practical little things that can make life so difficult. It can really vary but some of these practical needs can be for our:

- ministry (transport, Bibles, literature, projectors, materials, sound equipment, props, etc.)
- family (contacts for medical/ doctors or other services, school materials, etc.)

Prayer support - someone willing to get prayer requests from us and to pray for us and with us or even to communicate it to prayer warriors.

Communication support – someone who is usually *reachable* and whom we can easily contact to share about what is happening and to make sure that our news/ newsletters are well communicated/ distributed to the right people (such as to all those who support us in one way or another), help us to keep our mailing list up to date and ensure that the communication channels are kept open. As communication is *two-ways*, this person can also help to ensure that important positive/ negative feedbacks about us by other members or people are communicated to us to build us up.

Financial support – someone willing to care for us to such an extent that worries about financial matters are not part of our struggle, but of our victory. This person can help us (if needed) to:

- plan our budget (help us to manage well our God-given money),
- help us with aspects of banks, insurance, loans, etc. that we might be struggling with,
- help us to organize appropriate fund raising activities (getting the necessary funds) or even
- support us financially according to our ministry needs.

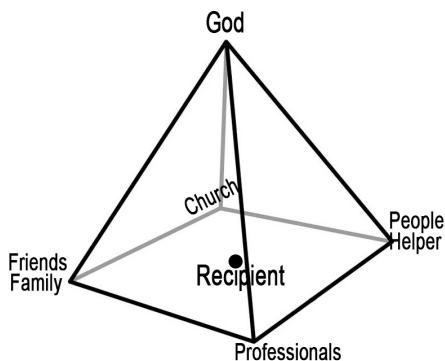
Work support – someone in the same occupation as us that will be able to assist us in the work that we are paid for/ receive salary from. Say, for instance, we are engineers; we might need very specific technical information at some point. A group of engineers in our community can help us to find that information or just support us generally. A teacher might need information on a curriculum or might need teaching material.

Transition support – we all go through different types of transition (departure to another place/ country, re-entry after having lived in another place for a long time, cross-cultural experience, a traumatic experience like the loss of someone

you love, etc.) and it is good to have someone that we can turn to who can walk alongside/ follow-up with us to process these transitions. It can be someone who has gone through the same experience or who is skilled to walk alongside people. Especially departure or re-entry are nearly always accompanied by culture shock, and if this is not managed with wisdom and care, we might be left with a wounded spiritual worker who may take years before reaching his/ her optimum spiritual health again. You might even have a person on your hands who is so hurt and disillusioned that he may never recover!

(This model was inspired from Marina Prins & Braam Willemse 'Support team diagram' from their book 'Member care for missionaries' - memcare.co.za/index.php/resource)

2. Pyramid of care



Here is the Pyramid of care (developed by Harry Hoffmann - Global Member Care Network) – who introduce us about it during his 'Member care foundations online course' youtu.be/BYxRYhpwN3c which is also a good model which puts the recipient in the centre and can help us to define if we have the necessary relationship and support from/ towards:

- Self-care & God (youtu.be/xex8cEtHaw)
- Friends & Family (youtu.be/rHCUiTqxDzk)
- Church (youtu.be/O7XN624F6HY)
- People Helper (youtu.be/FMm44I_dLRw)
- Professionals (youtu.be/Xxp65n1C8bg)

The basic need of human beings is to love and to be loved. This implies that we need to be intentional in caring for ourselves but also that, part of our self-care, we need to care for others. This is why it is good to understand that in all corners,

we can receive support from them but we also need to provide support to them too in one way or another. To understand this concept better, you can view Harry’s video on this link youtu.be/6a8p7JEwHPY and then go through the different corner and write down everything that comes to your mind (even names of specific people or group of people) as you apply “You as Receiver” and “You as Provider”.

Friends & Family

You / Me as Receiver	
You / Me as Provider	

Church

You / Me as Receiver	
You / Me as Provider	

People Helper

You / Me as Receiver	
You / Me as Provider	

Professionals

You / Me as Receiver	
You / Me as Provider	

You can also ask the member to look at the Pyramid of Care and just based on his/ her personal sense right now (after he/ she has understood what it is), assess how strong each of the 4 corners, his/ her God relationship and his/ her Self-care is.



In his video sharing about the recipient (self-care) and God ([youtu.be/ xex8cEtHaw](https://youtu.be/xex8cEtHaw)), Harry also introduced us with the **six areas of Self-care**. It is good sometimes to ensure that members are really well by asking them to assess regularly, among the six areas of their Lives, how they are doing from 1-10 (1 being very poor and 10 being very good).

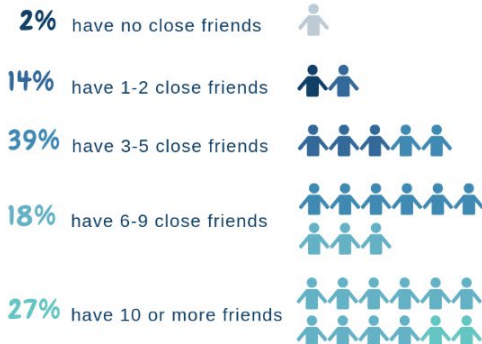
You can discover more resources from Harry Hoffmann on harryhoffmann.global/

Doing such assessments does not mean that we need to be constantly surrounded by many people whom we all consider as 'good friends'. In friendship, what is important is not quantity but quality. We should encourage our members to have real friends on whom they can rely on and to whom they feel connected with. Even if we are all called to love everybody, we can't like/ feel really connected with everybody. Remember that Jesus was surrounded by people but he had only 12 disciples close to him and took only three of them with him to pray (Mathew 17:1).

Here is a nice infographic (from goodtherapy.org/blog/psychology-facts/how-many-friends-does-average-person-have-0208197) about it:

How many friends does the average person have?

According to a 2004 Gallup poll, Americans have an average of 8-9 close friends. More specifically:



According to anthropologist Robin Dunbar, human brains have a limit on how many meaningful relationships they can keep track of. Dunbar says most people can have up to:



A recent survey seems to support Dunbar's theory. Researchers found the average Facebook user

- Has **155** friends on the platform
- Only considers **43** contacts to be genuine friends
- Would only trust **4** of their Facebook friends in a crisis



References:

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3. Konnikova, M. (2014, October 7). The Limits of Friendship. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2hHO4BM>

GoodTherapy

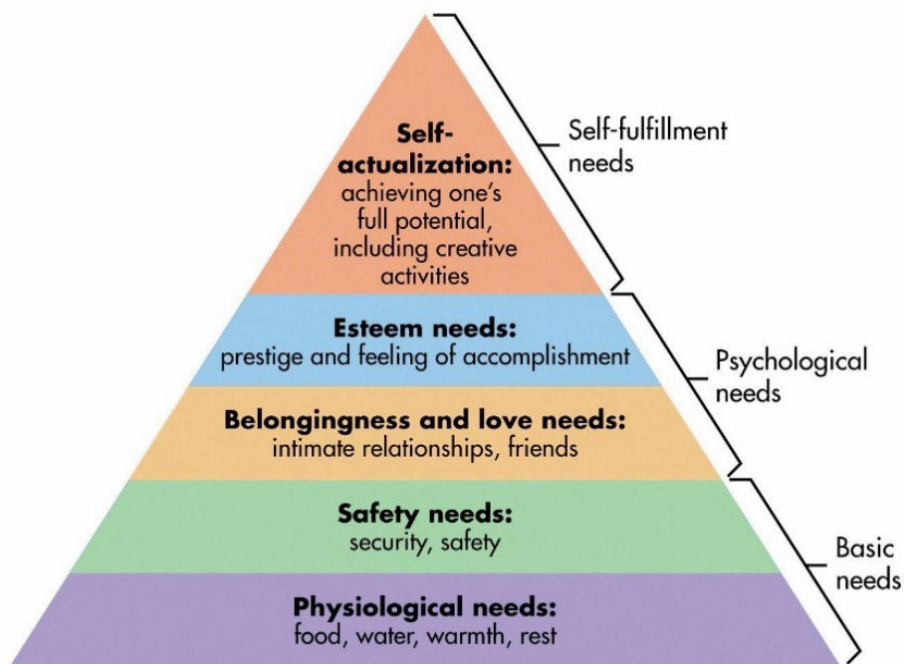
Being myself involved in Member Caring & Linking within my local church, I have really seen the benefit, for both members and leaders, of having people (Inreach resource servants) appointed for this task. Once, my pastor's wife had to go back to her country for a long period of time and we realised that the pastor was not 'fine'. We had a Member care meeting with him and he shared with us how difficult it was for him and his sons without his wife to cook and do household chores. We thus organised ourselves and with some other parishioners, we prepared a roster to cook evening meals and support him. Within a week, he was so much more confident and efficient because he felt well cared for. It happened also with another pastor who had a problem with his phone but did not know whom to turn to. We realised there was a problem and when we discovered his issue, we went to look for a spare smartphone for him and again, he felt cared for. Leaders are often put on pedestals (where they might

feel very lonely) which makes it difficult to reach out to them and care for them, but when there is an Inreach team committed to ensure that nobody lacks anything (Inreach), it makes a big difference. Leaders can feel more *secure* to share their struggles with those who are appointed as *servants of servants*. As they know that they will do their best to not judge or condemn them but to support them according to their individual needs.

As a **Member Caring & Linking centre**, we are also doing our best so that parishioners/ church members are:

- receiving the various communications (by messages, announcements, posters and news or even soul to soul communication),
- listened to (by making census of gifts, talents and needs of people, by visiting or having video calls with the parishioners/ missionaries in our locality and even abroad (such as students) to ask them how they are doing physically, emotionally and spiritually – keeping in mind that we need to listen well to **C.U.R.E** (Connect and Understand *before* Responding and Engaging help/ Evaluating) them),
- valued (by ensuring that all those who are involved within the community in any way are recognised and thanked for what they are doing but also for the witnesses they are – It is good to help every member to process and have clear and achievable personal goals to follow-up with them afterwards as *accountability* increases, so also *effectiveness* and *sustainability*), and
- invested in (by being aware of the various needs – such as training – of the parishioners and looking for the necessary resources to equip them).

According to *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*, we all have different types of **needs** (such as Physiological, safety, love/ belonging, esteem and self-actualization) and we believe that by developing our Member Caring & Linking, every community can really help every member to lack anything to fulfil their individual function within the Global Body of Christ!



Why do missionaries persevere and stay in ministry/ on the field despite all the different challenges we face as Christians? According to Brierley (1997: 99) the following factors, in order of importance, prevent attrition:

1. A clear call
2. A supportive family/ community
3. A healthy spirituality
4. Cultural adjustment
5. Good relationships
6. Pastoral care
7. Financial provision

As Inreach resource servants, our ministry is to do our best for every missionary on earth to not lack any needs and to receive all seven factors so that they can fulfill their part in God's amazing plan! We can even be inspired by Hebrews 10: 23-25:

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may **spur one another on toward love and good deeds**, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.



We need to keep in mind that God uses us to touch the unbelievers but He also uses us to care for them. Many Christians think that our only duty is to bring people to Christ and God will do the rest. It is true that God is mighty and that He doesn't need us, but He wants to use us to touch and then take

care of His children. When someone is born again, he/ she is a 'newly born', so we can't just help 'babies' being born and not take care of them afterwards. It is our duty to ensure that they are growing well spiritually, intellectually, relationally, emotionally and physically. This is Member care.

I thus encourage you to:

- **Analyse** your local Christian community (alone or with some other members) and see on a scale of 1 - 10 (1 the least and 10 the highest) what is the score of the Inreach (Member Caring & Linking) ministry. Then, you can also analyse what is the level of the other pillars (Study, Fellowship, Outreach, Breaking Bread, Prayers and Praise & Worship). This will give you an idea of the needs for improvement in your community.
- Talk about it with your local leader and propose him/ her to develop a **Member Caring & Linking Centre/ ministry** within your church/ community which will be intentionally developing Member Caring & Linking by:
 - Putting together a **team** of members who would like to help/ be involved in this ministry. We remind you that it is good to

have your pastor or at least one of your church leader/ elder to be involved or oversee this ministry (especially concerning the pastoral care).

- Making the **census** of members' needs and resources (gifts and talents) – You can use the tools such as Census form, Discovery form and Individual form available on daybreak-academy.org/resources/ or this free record keeping tool available on planningcenter.com
 - Developing strategies to **encourage** members to be more active within the church and to respond to God's calling upon their individual lives.
 - Helping members to **assess** their gifts and talents – You can use the SHAPE assessment which is available on daybreak-academy.org/shape-assessment/.
 - Developing strategies to **care** for the physical, emotional, relational, intellectual and spiritual needs of members – by making actively and intentionally the link between the resources and the needs.
 - Developing strategies to **communicate** better with one another in a more efficient and personal way and ensuring that members get the communications/ messages.
 - Facilitating **partnerships** among Christians, churches and organisations within and outside the community (knowing that we usually don't have all resources).
 - Developing **Interdependency** (Mutual support, Generosity, Love & Unity) among members.
- If the leaders of your community don't feel the need to develop only Member Caring & Linking, but have as primary focus to develop an Outreach Mission strategy (and alongside developing Member care/ Mission Support team/ Inreach), we recommend you to have a look at the AMPD (Association of Mission Partnership Development) which is a 10 months' program about it on this link: here2there.org/ampd-missions-strategy-cohort/

- Do your best to **connect with as many care-givers** (Inreach resource servants) as possible in your locality, country and even abroad to learn from one another and support one another. We invite you to join the **Inreach Resource Servants network** (with the support/ approval of your Church/ organisation/ community leader) on goo.gl/VgbjMN to be connected with all the Inreach resource servants worldwide.



- Our aim is to develop a network of people involved in Member Caring & Linking ministries. This is specific for Inreach (not Outreach). The scope is globally as God has given resources for the global church and we need to share globally (to share and support one another across denominations and countries). You can also contact us via email on daybreakacademy@live.com or phone (+230) 59467517 (also on Whatsapp and Signal) so that we can connect you with local and international Inreach resource servants. For example, we had a Ukrainian brother in Christ who was going to Kenya for work and by being connected with the Inreach resource servants in Kenya, we were able to link him with another Inreach resource servants within the type of church he was looking for. Linking is practical caring.
- You can join **Global Member Care Network** on Facebook on facebook.com/groups/globalmembercare/ to be informed of the various training, materials and conferences worldwide.
 - You can visit **Missionary care** (missionarycare.com/brochures/what-missionaries-ought-to-know.html) where you can have simple practical tools (brochures) which contain general information about various topics related to mental health and missionary care.
 - You can also look for **books** (such as 'Doing Member care well' by Kelly O'Donnell) or (online) **articles/ resources** (such as on livingwholeness.org/cwf/ | spiritualfirstaidhub.com/resourcesmain | upstreamcollective.org/) and **Member care training** to equip yourself to be more efficient to care, encourage and link.

- You can read more about how local churches can be more efficient in caring for their different types of missionaries in the book 'Serving As Senders' by Neal Pirolo (FREE on KindleUnlimited - [amazon.com/Serving-Senders-Today-Care-Missionaries-ebook/dp/B00SAEF6P2?ref=ast_author_mpb](https://www.amazon.com/Serving-Senders-Today-Care-Missionaries-ebook/dp/B00SAEF6P2?ref=ast_author_mpb))
- Look also for **secular materials/ tools** to be more equipped especially when you have to deal with members affected by crisis/ emergencies, depression or other mental health (you can visit who.int/news-room/fact-sheets | pscentre.org/emergencies/)

----- Points to remember -----

- **Key idea:** Member care is about devoting ourselves to the service of the Lord's people to ensure that nobody lacks anything to be efficient in their individual God-given mission.
- **Key verse:** 1 Corinthians 16: 15
- **Reflection:** Am I receiving enough care? What can I do about it? How is the Member Caring & Linking (Inreach) within my community? What can we do to develop it?

Communicating

To be able to care for, encourage and link, one important aspect is to build trust. Trust often takes much time to build but just like a wall, it can be destroyed in one blow with a dangerous wrecking ball called 'miscommunication'. That is why we



need to be very careful in our **communication**; both in what we say and how we receive the information when we pay attention (listen) to what others are saying verbally and non-verbally.

Any expert in Communication would tell you that in Communication, 10% is through what we say or write and 90% is through what we do or who we are. And when we asked the Lord about what 'Communication' is, He answered through James 1: 19:

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,

When we think about it, God has given us two eyes and two ears and only one mouth, so, we should be watching and listening much more than we speak but unfortunately, we often do the opposite. We must learn how to speak with our brothers and sisters, even if we do not agree, and to respect the different points of view. We are generally different and this is where we can complement each other.

We have to go from *egocentric* listening (where our ideas are put forward) to *empathic* listening (where we try to understand the other and his/ her point of

view), even when we talk about the Word of God. We must understand that it is Christ alone who can change and transform the lives of people and NOT us. Therefore, we should not impose anything on our brother/ sister. Thus, we need to:

1. be willing to understand
2. refrain from judging
3. support even in case of disagreement (to appreciate that one shares with us one's points of view and also one's feelings)
4. wait to express our own ideas
5. let the Lord work in people's hearts

Comprehensive techniques

- Let's listen with our eyes, our mouth, our neck, our hands, our backs and our feet.
- Let's watch the feelings as well as the facts.
- Let's try to see the situation from his/ her point of view.
- Resist the urge to give our opinion before our brother/ sister feels understood.
- Let's check that we have well grasped his/ her ideas.
- Ask questions (to be sure) then summarise.
- Let's approve his/ her thoughts.
- Ask permission to give our point of view.
- Resist the urge to say, "You are wrong!" or "No, but..." Instead, share what the Word says or does not say, perhaps, share our personal experience and then let the Lord do His work.

Here is a (reviewed) extract of Phil Butler's book '**Well-connected**' about 'Listening'.

What do you think is the single most important factor in good, interpersonal communications? Since infancy we've been exchanging information with others. In human relationships our communication

goes on at many levels—tone of voice, posture, facial expressions, vocabulary. In the appropriate setting, the gift of touch is a powerful communication tool. Intentional, thoughtful silence can also be an important element. A variety of wonderful books and articles have been written on human communication.

But in the facilitator's [Inreach resource servant] role, **effective listening** is so vital that it merits specific discussion here. While this may seem obvious, we can all improve as listeners. The problem is that we've been listening for so long we think it is "natural." Almost like the rhythm of our heartbeat, controlled by our autonomic nervous system, we assume we don't have to think about it! Typically, it's only when we're challenged, things aren't clear, or other interpersonal difficulties arise that we even give passing thought to our communications. Even then, our effectiveness as listeners is often last to come to mind.

Here is a place to start. Be quiet. A key element of good listening is *not* speaking. Effective communication is not necessarily eloquence—using words or vocal intonation well. Your effectiveness is often in what you don't say and when you don't speak. But don't think of being quiet as being passive. Being quiet is a vital part of thoughtful, active listening.

Effective listening is also closely linked to being able and willing to ask good questions. An old parable suggests, "The person who knows he's right never has to ask questions." Think of some of the people you know or have lived or worked with. They're absolutely certain of what they know and believe and aren't interested in listening to others—much less asking any real questions. The more certain we are of our position, the less we are likely to be genuinely curious—wanting to ask questions and know even more. Active listening is far from a sign of weakness; it's a sign of maturity and effectiveness.

In this context, think about Jesus. How much does He know? He is the second person of the Trinity. He spoke and the world was created. As we read the Gospels we see that He knew men and women's hearts before they spoke. Yet despite His all-encompassing understanding and knowledge, He was the master questioner.

The Old Testament, from the first chapter of Genesis, points us in the God direction. In short, a closer look reveals that the nature of God's relationship with us is one in which God talks *with* us not *to* us.

Think about it. How did God deal with Adam and Eve after their fateful decision? Did He immediately declare them guilty? Did He immediately pronounce judgment? Go back and read the first half of Genesis 3. At this most critical, watershed moment of the human saga, how did He communicate? God knew what had happened; He knew the hearts of Adam and Eve. He knew what the fateful consequences were going to be. Still, He did not make statements. *God asked questions!* And as He asked, *Adam and Eve discovered their own tragic dilemma.* All through the Old Testament and the Gospels and the chronicle of Jesus' life, we find account after wonderful account of God in *two-way* communication with men and women.

As a partnership facilitator [Inreach resource servant] you need to be deeply committed to the issues you're working on; the basic challenge or vision God has put on your heart, plus the idea that, to realise that vision, His people need to work together. But never think that your commitment to a vision and the need to listen are mutually exclusive.

Unlike God, we don't know everything. Nevertheless, I am sometimes amazed at the way I have acted. I recall standing in the hallway of our family home years ago with one of my young daughters during one fairly tense exchange. I was certain I understood what was going on, why my daughter was saying what she was. But I thought, "Well, I'd better not be too dogmatic here. I need to think of my old professional journalist's approach and ask a question or two." You can imagine the surprise and chagrin I experienced after asking the question for which I was certain I already knew the answer, when my daughter replied, "No, Dad, that's not what I'm talking about at all." She went to explain what was on her mind from a perspective I had never even considered!

Here are a few questions that, in almost any situation, can strengthen your communication, raise the effectiveness of your listening, increase your understanding, and strengthen the relationship.

- "I believe I hear what you're saying, but would you mind restating it another way?" (Remember, this is not a game! You're not just playing dumb. If you listen carefully, the

answers to these questions will flesh out your understanding and often provide another perspective or information you didn't have.)

- “May I try to restate what I think I’ve heard you say, to make sure I understand?”
- “Would you mind elaborating a bit more on this?”
- “What other aspects of this issue would be helpful for me to know?”

Asking good questions and listening carefully does several things.

- It reflects humility. We acknowledge we really don't know everything. It's a great place to start.
- It allows us to actually learn—about people, facts, circumstances, history, relationships and a host of other things vital to achieving our vision.
- It communicates respect to the person we're interacting with. It says, “You're valuable—your history and experience. You're worth listening to.”

As an effective partnership facilitator [Inreach resource servant], you have to listen to many voices. There's the Holy Spirit, the group you're trying to reach or serve, and the people that make up your partnership (speaking for themselves or their organisation). You also need to be listening to your advisors—the facilitation team or steering committee that's behind you and the vision.

Effective, active listening strengthens your credibility, provides access to a rich tapestry of information, and yields fresh ideas about needs, opportunities, or ways the partnership can work more effectively. Encourage active listening throughout your partnership. Participants who know they will be listened to and taken seriously will listen to others. Relationships will be strengthened, and the partnership will become more effective. What goes around comes around!



Thus, active listening implies to intentionally stay quiet and listen to the person with all our body, ask questions to ensure that you have well understood and, if possible, restate/ reformulate in your own words what

the person has shared until the person agrees that you have understood him/her clearly. This implies that we are doing to others what we would like others to do to us (Luke 6: 31) and that we are following the Great commandment, in Mark 12: 29-31, which is:

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: '**Shema**, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

The Hebrew word 'Shema' is often translated as 'hear' or 'listen' but actually, the original word implies 'listen and do/ react/ obey' (thus **active listening**). Here is an artistic video by Bible Project about it on this link [youtube.com/watch?v=6KQLOuIKaRA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KQLOuIKaRA)

Art in Communication

Since the beginning of the Bible, we were introduced to God as a *creator* taking the time to make his *creations* just like an artist who takes the time to look at what he has done and see if it is good or not. We can see that Jesus also used many parables/ stories/ images to explain his points more visually (just like the allegory used with the parable of the sower of Luke 8:4-15) because he knew that human nature *needs to see* to believe/ understand.

In a period of time where literacy skills were not available so easily, the Orthodox's icons and the renaissance and post renaissance paintings about Jesus and his apostles or even Mary (Madonna) were important for people to grasp/ understand the good news of Jesus Christ. These paintings still have influence on the faith of many people nowadays. There are many Christians who have a picture of 'The return of the prodigal son' (by Rembrandt) hanging on their wall to remind themselves of



God's grace upon their lives. Those paintings, such as 'Madonna and child', made at different eras/ periods really gave the opportunity to mark this specific time and place (through the style of clothes and architectural backgrounds used) and helped people to feel connected to Jesus and the other biblical characters.

Even since hand-written Christian books were made, many illustrations or decorations were included to make those books more precious and also more understandable. The 'Luther Bible' had printed illustrations and the 'Illustrated Family Bible' (1880) even had colourful illustrations. Artists are constantly improving the designs of Bibles to make the reading more user friendly (such as 'Revolution: Bible for teen guys' using creative designs to create interest for the target audience).

Throughout time, people have been using various types of media/ methods/ ways to influence our views on Christianity. There are Christian texts on buildings, shirts and vehicles (design). Christians are widely using TV and radio to influence their nations. Praise & worship songs and hymns which are inspiring many people to believe that 'we are no longer slaves' and that God gave us this 'Amazing grace'. There are several Movies/ series/ drama on the life of Jesus (like 'Jesus film' by Cru - jesusfilm.org/) which had much impact on people around the world as audio-visual is really an amazing way to interest and connect with your audience (who nowadays have difficulties to only listen and/ or read).

Even decorations and colours used for specific Christian celebrations (such as Christmas or Easter) are influencing time and place in many countries around the world in Christian buildings but also in secular places such as offices and malls. And for sure, all the artworks made in those famous buildings are the reasons people (Christians and non-Christians) go and come back again and again to those places as Holy Sepulchre (Jerusalem), Shrine of the Virgin of Guadeloupe (Mexico) and so many other Christian buildings worldwide.

We can say that artists (singers, poets, painters, etc.), to some extent, had and are having more impact on the 'general Christian population' than even scholars as Art engages other senses than just intellectual. And even if there are diversity in interpretations, how we value the Christian artists' artworks is often surprising.

It is why in our Communication, it is good to get creative/ artistic people involved and to value their contribution (whatever type of media used).

Means of Communication

Communication is also the process of exchanging and transferring information, ideas and knowledge from one person to another. Keep in mind that in Communication, it is not about the 'emitter' but it is all about the **receiver**. The emitter could have wanted to express something particular but if the receiver(s) receive and understand another message, it is not they who have to work on the message transmitted but the emitters. It is thus important to do our best to analyse and understand those we are communicating with to use the appropriate words and terms to ensure that they receive the right message. In design, we often use the 'K.I.S.S.' principle which means 'Keep It Simple and Stupid'. It sounds funny but it is a very good principle to be as short and sweet as possible when you communicate specific things to people. It is a good practice to be as much 'to the point' as possible by highlighting (laying emphasis on) the most important information (words) and to use appropriate visuals (illustrations/ images/ stories). It is always good to try to talk about/ share *one thing* at a time in the message/ mail/ communication you are sending as people can often receive so much info/ messages and finally not respond to anything. Be 'to the point' (as much as possible)! Too much information kills information! Besides, it is also good to get feedback from some potential receivers before sharing the information. This helps to identify whether your message is clear enough or not.



In a world where we can't avoid using technology, we need to be aware of the various communication methods and tools available and do our best to use them correctly. It is also good to use the tools according to your context and to whom you are communicating with. We need to keep in mind that people are so bombarded with many small, medium and big news that Good news is often not well shared and received. This is why we often have to be consistent and persevering in our communication. We need to renew ourselves and be updated on the various means of communications to use them efficiently.

During an Inreach Mission Trip in Zambia in 2018, we gave training to some Inreach resource servants and leaders who were from 'the bush' and who did not have access to the Internet where they lived. This really challenged us as we had only a few printed tools (that we gave them) while the tools which we proposed to them online was not an option. This is why the best way to know which tools to use to communicate with those you serve is to simply *ask them*. In our local community, we have proposed options for church members to tell us how they would prefer us to contact them and this became quite helpful in the long term.

Here is a list of various means you can use and their advantages, disadvantages and some tips when you use them:

Face to face (one on one, in front of the public, etc.)

- *Advantages*

- Possibility of having eye contact as the eyes are the "mirror of our souls".
- Once you have a 'soul to soul' communication, there are greater chances that you will build stronger relationships.
- People can read our body language too (including face, posture, etc.).
- You can ensure that you have been well understood by simply asking them what their take-aways are at the end of the meeting.
- Both can express feelings. People can share some ideas, and feelings better than using words.
- There is no distraction and you can be fully focused on one another.



- *Disadvantages*

- It takes more time and more effort to arrange this type of meeting.
- It can be costly according to where the person lives (transport).

- If you are not feeling well or comfortable in front of them, they can feel it too. Your body language can hardly lie.
- It can happen that you forget the question(s) you wanted to ask.
- You can start to talk about something else and you will not have time to talk about the real deal.
- *Tips*
 - Dress as clean and neutral as possible when you meet people.
 - Write down (anywhere) the main points to be discussed before and check them as you are talking together but not too often.

SMS (usually via your network service)

- *Advantages*
 - As people receive less SMS (as they are more on social networks), they are more likely to read it.
 - It gives the person a sense that the message is 'private, personal and important' as you *invested* in the cost of this SMS.
- *Disadvantages*
 - Sending many SMS can be costly.
 - The length of a message is limited.
- *Tips*
 - Try to limit the content of your SMS to maximum 300 characters (price of 2 SMS) to ensure people will read but also to save money.



Phone call (usually via your network service but also available on WhatsApp, Facebook, Skype, etc.)

- *Advantages*
 - It gives the person a sense that the communication is 'private, personal and



important' as you took the time to call him/ her and you are *investing* in the cost of the call.

- People usually respond to phone calls if their phone is next to them or if they are not already busy.
- Both can listen to the intonation of voices to communicate better with one another.
- *Disadvantages*
 - Several phone calls can be costly.
 - You cannot see the person thus can't read his/ her body language.
 - You can have network problems (especially when it is raining).
- *Tips*
 - Even if people don't see you, always try to smile (it directly affects your intonation).

Video call (available on WhatsApp, Facebook, Skype, zoom, etc.)

- *Advantages*
 - No need to spend money on travelling to have a face to face conversation with people in your country and around the world (cost-effective).
 - You can meet people anytime.
 - You can send links or type messages through the chat available to ensure people have well understood.
 - You can see if the person is listening or not to what you are saying.
- *Disadvantages*
 - You need to arrange and plan a time to have a video call. It is usually not possible (easy) to have a video call with someone as you can through a phone call.
 - If you have a poor internet connection, the video call can sometimes be painful.
- *Tips*



- Always try to smile in front of the camera (to be more welcoming).

Video meeting/ conferencing (available on zoom, Cisco Webex, Skype, Google Meet, FreeConference, etc.)

- *Advantages*

- No need to spend money on travelling to have a face to face conversation/ meetings with several people in your country and around the world at the same time (cost-effective).
- You can easily control the times/ dates/ people attending through options like specific links, password and/ or admitting people (or not) to the 'meeting room'.
- You can send links or type messages through the chat available to ensure people have well understood.
- You can see if the person is listening or not to what you are saying (if their camera is on).
- You can share screens to share your videos, presentations and, even, to use your whiteboard.
- You can break out attendees into small groups so that they can talk among themselves.
- You can mute or remove people who are disturbing the meeting.



- *Disadvantages*

- You need to arrange and plan a time to have a video call. It is usually not possible (easy) to have a video call with someone as you can through a phone call.
- If any of you has a poor internet connection, the video call can sometimes be painful.
- It can be expensive to buy appropriate plans to host many people for a long period of time.

- *Tips*

- Try to start the online meeting at least 5 minutes before, remind attendees how to use the platform (such as how to mute yourself to avoid background noises, how to use the chat or the other options, etc.) and stay with the attendees at least 5 minutes after (for proper goodbye).

Letter (mail)

- *Advantages*
 - The person can *feel valued* because you took the time to write, design, print, put in an envelope and look for a way to deliver it to you (often by post).
 - People are more likely to read it (especially if they don't usually get mails).
 - It is more 'official' to send mails than to send messages or even talk together.
 - It provides a 'proof' and 'record' of the correspondence.
- *Disadvantages*
 - It takes time to write, design, print, put in an envelope and look for a way to deliver it to you (often by post).
 - Many letters can be costly.
 - Some letters can be lost and not delivered. You are thus not sure if the person has well received it.
- *Tips*
 - Try to be creative/ personal (like using nice postage stamps, writing the name of the person in colour or using a nice envelope) to differ from usual 'bad news' mail (like bills).



Email

- *Advantages*
 - It is a fast way to communicate.

- Cost effective as you only need the internet to send it to the person.
- It is more 'official' to send emails than to send messages or even talk together.
- It is easier to make searches to look for the mails you have sent or received.
- It provides a 'proof' of the correspondence.
- *Disadvantages*
 - It takes time to write a formal email correctly.
 - You can't be sure that the person has well received or viewed your email (which could have been sent in the spam box).
 - Many people receive so many emails that they often miss, don't read thoroughly or don't reply to your email.
 - Your account can be affected by viruses or even hackers.
- *Tips*
 - Make your mail as short and to the point as possible and even create a 'signature' with your contacts (which will automatically be at the end of every mail you write)
 - Write the title of your e-mail having in mind: "What would I type to search this email easily in my inbox afterwards?"



Visuals (Poster, Billboards, Newspapers, Brochure, etc. and what can be shared via social media or messages)

- *Advantages*
 - When you make an attractive design, people are more likely to read it than only messages (as they can connect the message to the visual).
 - You can reach a wider public as anyone can see it.
 - You can also take the picture of the design and send it via social media.
- *Disadvantages*



- It takes time to design and print a poster and you need appropriate programmes and visuals for that.
- It can be very costly to produce posters (design, printing, fees, etc.)
- Printed materials cannot really be reused afterwards. Not really eco-friendly.
- You need the necessary permissions to put your posters in public places (even in your own local church).
- *Tips*
 - Write the least amount of text possible on your visuals and let the image speak as much as possible

Video (that can be uploaded on YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook, Tiktok, etc. and be shared via social media or messages)

- *Advantages*
 - Audio-visual communication helps people to understand your points better.
 - Many people enjoy watching videos, so they are likely to watch it (if it is well made).
 - Having uploaded it online, it is easy to share it afterwards without taking space in devices.
- *Disadvantages*
 - It often costs a lot of money and time to make a good quality video.
 - If your video is longer than three minutes, many people don't even watch it.
 - It is often difficult to simplify your explanation and present it in a creative way.
- *Tips*
 - Make your video as short and to the point as possible



Website/ web page

- *Advantages*

- People around the world can have easy access to it whenever they want.
- You can put all the contents, links, pictures, videos and text you want on different pages for people to go through everything.
- You can interact with those who visit your website and even receive their feedback.
- *Disadvantages*
 - It can be costly if you have to pay (for domain) and for designers to make the website for you.
 - It takes a lot of time to understand how to build a website in a creative way (even if you have limitations especially when you use website builders such as WordPress).
 - You have to review its content as often as possible to keep it up-to-date.
 - You can be hacked easily so security is important.
- *Tips*
 - Try to put as little text as possible, use more visuals (pictures) and include links for people to read more if they want to (especially for your main pages).



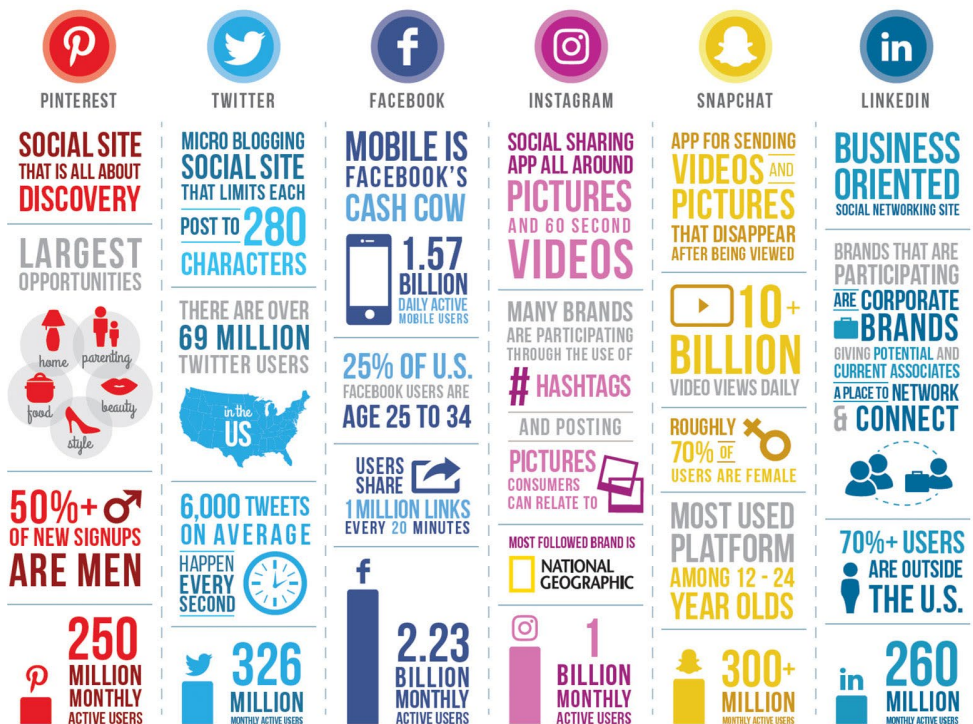
Social Media

- *Advantages*
 - You can easily share pictures and videos with many people at the same time. They can reach many people.
 - Cost-effective as you don't need to spend much to share what you have to share.
 - You can send private messages to people.
 - People can easily and quickly respond to what you share.
 - Many people are on Social media so, in some way, you can reach them where they are.
- *Disadvantages*



- People receive so many notifications and messages every day (saturated) that there is less chance that they pay much attention to the message/ poster/ video you are publishing/ sharing.
- People can respond to what you share but it is not really a 'two-way communication'.
- The more you are involved in Social media, the more time for you to check all of your accounts regularly.
- *Tips*
 - Accompany important things you share with a visual (poster, picture or at least a colourful background)

Here is a 2018 infographics (leverageestl.com/social-media-infographic/) for you to have an idea of the various social media available:



Statistics as of 12.27.2018 Designed by Leverage - leverageestl.com

There are other Social media which are very popular such as **WhatsApp & Messenger** (more than 1.3 billion active users worldwide and both owned by Facebook), **Signal** (20 million users worldwide and owned by Signal Messenger), **Telegram**



(500 million users worldwide and owned by Telegram Messenger Inc.) or **Hangouts** (often included in Android smartphones and owned by Google). These applications are connected directly via your phone number.

- *Advantages*
 - You can easily share messages, videos, documents and links (if you have internet).
 - You can check if the person has seen your message or not.
 - You can create groups and include the people concerned in it.
 - You can create groups that only the admin can post (which prevents too many messages from everybody).
- *Disadvantages*
 - People receive so many notifications and messages that they often don't pay attention to what you shared in groups but they are most likely to check what you've sent to them personally.
 - Many don't even read messages when they consider the message 'too long'.
- *Tips*
 - Create specific groups/ communities to communicate about specific issues and put simple visual/ graphic logos for each group (to find them more easily) and always send a welcoming message after having added someone to a group
 - Create a 'broadcast list' to share messages to people as 'personal messages' (especially for Whatsapp)

Almost all the means are nowadays accessible and possible through any smartphone. If we have enough space, we can easily download all these apps and even use apps like Word, Powerpoint, Adobe or especially Canva (canva.com/download/android/) to create our logos, posters, posts, stories,

thumbnails, presentations, cards, covers, videos and even infographics! Our smartphones are good tools but should remain just a tool and not 'intruders' into our communication with others. When we are invited to someone's place, we don't usually bring guests along with us, is it? So, let us not bring others/ intruders in our conversation when we are meeting someone face to face and also online as this always affects our interaction. We need to be sincere towards ourselves and try not to communicate with too many people at the same time as we just can't. Let us not do to others what we would not like others to do to us when we are trying to communicate with them.

As we have seen, all those communication tools/ ways have advantages and disadvantages and when we use them, we need to be cautious of how we are communicating and on whose behalf. For this, we need to do our best to understand the communication structures of all the organisations and churches we are working with and go through them to avoid any miscommunication.

Once, there was an event that we organised with various churches in Mauritius and I was asked to send an invitation to the church leaders to ask them to invite their church members. I was careless and I sent an email from my email address with my name as 'signature'. One of the church leaders was very offended that the mail was not sent on the behalf of another church leader but instead was sent by me, a simple lay leader-helper, and that caused much tension among them. That is why, when we are signing mails/ emails/ messages, it is always good to investigate who is the most appropriate person who should be signing it according to those you are communicating to. Even if sometimes it looks logical for us, remember that people and organisations are different. That is why it is always good to have the approval of at least one more person (on the content of the mail and on the way to send it) before sending any important mail or message.

Before sending a mail, we must not forget to verify our 'signature' (at the end of the mail). When you are addressing your family, church or work colleagues, you can sign as yourself. However, when you are sending an official mail which requires people to know on whose behalf you are sending it, it is better to include the name and particulars of the organisation or church you are

representing. This is also applicable to posters and communications that you send. You need to be cautious whose logo(s) or name(s) you are using after ensuring that they are all fully behind you. It is sometimes better not to put the name/ logo of someone, if you are not sure of their participation/ partnership.

On social media platforms (such as WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.), you are free to share a message/ link about an event or tool/ resource which you personally found appropriate for the group you are in. However, if the administrator/ leader of the group asks you to remove it as he/ she doesn't think it is appropriate, I encourage you not to argue and to remove it as soon as possible. One of the best proof of love is trust; thus, trusting the administrator/ leader builds mutual trust.

When we communicate/ interact with people, it is good to keep in mind some of those points below:

- Be as **humble** as possible by keeping in mind that it is not about us but it is all about God. We must not put forward that we have so much knowledge but rather be humble servants who will be respected not by our 'title' but by our love and fruits. Humility is not about thinking of yourself less but thinking less about yourself.
- Listen to **silences**. Irish mystic John O'Donohue maintained that, "One of the tasks of true friendship is to listen compassionately and creatively to the hidden silences. Often secrets are not revealed in words, they lie concealed in the silence between the words or in the depth of what is unsayable between two people."
- Encourage **interaction** between one another as alone I can *say* but together we can *talk*.
- Try your best to **simplify** complicated explanations.
- **Love and trust** in the potential of the person(s) you are addressing to understand what you are sharing and that they are full of resources too.
- Listen, research and try to **understand** your audience before addressing them. This will help you determine the best terms to use for your audience to understand what you are sharing. How people learn determines how you will communicate with them.

- **Propose** simple practical actions according to your audience's context as maximum learning is always the result of maximum involvement.
- Before imparting information to your audience, it is good that you **build bridges** with them by using terms and situations (examples/ illustrations) you know they are used to.
- Communication that impacts is not head to head but heart to heart. **Connect** with them by listening to them, serving them or even encouraging/ attending/ joining the activities they are organising. People need to trust you, before trusting what you will share with them. You need to be intentional about connecting with people as *trust grows at the speed of relationships*. You can connect with them by meeting some of them personally and get to know them by asking questions about their profession, family and hobbies and, even, about what drives them. Asking just "what drives you?" is often quite vague for people to answer. You can ask questions like "if you could have one room only for you in your house, what would you put inside?" or "if someone calls you in the middle of the night, what will this person talk about to make you willing/ passionate to talk with him/ her?"
- Try to **encourage** them by pointing them towards proper motivations which are not material but rather eternal. When you are addressing Christians, always point them to God and His Kingdom and not to yourself.
- If possible, **let people know** what you will be talking about (even for video call meetings) prior to doing so, so that they can be adequately prepared to interact with you. It is like watching a trailer before watching the movie. You already have an idea of what the movie will be about and while watching it, you are confirming whether you were 'right' or 'wrong' about what you thought would happen. Give your audience a brief description of what you want to share with them before meeting them.
- Give **freedom** to people to make their own choices and trust them. Even if you think that your solution is better, you must always propose and never impose. Just like Salvation, we can propose people to be set free, but we can't impose anything on them. Loving someone implies respecting them. Philippians 2 encourages us to consider others better

than ourselves and to talk about it, we must live it personally. People need to feel that they had the freedom to choose even if it is not what you would personally choose.

- **Persevere** and do your best to ensure that your audience has heard your main point at least three times to keep it well in mind. Even if it will take more time, most of us need time to process a new idea, we need ninety days to consider changing our habits and almost three years before this new habit becomes natural. No need to rush to bring changes (especially when you will be sharing about the culture of Interdependency in communities which are often affected by individualism). Patience is a Fruit of the Spirit.

Public Speaking



Whether we like it or not, it can happen that we have to speak/ give a talk in front of a public (even just to make an announcement to our community/ church) and we should prepare ourselves for that. I would like to recommend you to read this

short free e-Book from Dale Carnegie on this link dalecarnegie.com/en/resources/presentation-effectiveness-a-free-guide-to-effective-public-speaking where he explains some important points to consider when you have to speak in front of a public. Such as:

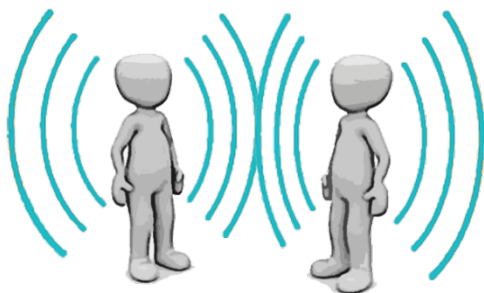
- Talk about something that has aroused your interest.
- Become excited about your subject.
- Talk from your heart – Not from a book.
- Have an eager desire to communicate.
- Talk about your experiences.
- Talk about things you have studied.
- Say something simple.

And about these 8 principles that will help immensely in preparing your talks:

1. Make brief notes of the interesting things you want to mention.
2. Don't write out your talks.
3. Never, never, never memorise a talk word for word.
4. Fill your talk with illustrations and examples.
5. Know far more about your subject that you can use.
6. Rehearse your talk by conversing with your friends.
7. Instead of worrying about your delivery, find ways of improving it.
8. Don't imitate others; be yourself.

Non-verbal Communication

When you are addressing people, it is good to keep in mind that there is much more that can be communicated nonverbally than verbally. I would encourage you to read more about non-verbal communication and to keep in mind that we need to know the context and cultures of those to



whom we are addressing to decode their body language. Here are some general clues which might be useful for you in the ministry of caring for, encouraging and linking people:

- Always dress yourself according to what your host thinks is the most appropriate way to address people. This really depends on cultural context and that was why I had to change my dress code by cutting my long hair and by removing my bracelets – to be more efficient in my non-verbal communication. You can have the most amazing message to share but just by the way you look, people (especially Christians) can easily judge you and not pay attention to you. Avoid necklaces or shoes (accessories) that are too fancy.
- When someone is looking at you in the eyes and his body is towards you, you have his/ her full attention. It is why it is important to do the same for people and keep your whole body focused on each one of them. Try your best to look at every person you are addressing and do not let anybody feel apart.

- When someone looks at his/ her watch or clock, this often means that he/ she will have to go, thus, time is limited. Be as short, precise and 'to the point' as possible.
- When someone yawns, breathes heavily or makes the sound 'chic' with his/ her mouth, it often means that he/ she is tired, thus, no need to try to explain difficult terms today.
- When someone looks at you with perplexed eyes or in a strange way, stop what you are saying and ask if he/ she has any question.
- When someone's feet are constantly trembling, it can mean that something is wrong so try to make them feel comfortable by asking them if everything is alright such as by smiling at them. Keep in mind that the parts of your body which are the furthest from your head/ brain are usually the ones that do not lie.
- Adopt humble postures (and not chest forward) in front of leaders who, you know, can have the tendency to bring you back to your place.
- Don't be too 'close' and 'touchy' with anybody in front of people during meetings to avoid any miscommunication.
- Every 3-5 minutes, try to observe those you are addressing to, try to decode what their body is saying to you and be wise in your next non-verbal communication.

Truth builds Trust

Building trust takes time so please don't destroy it by lying or hiding information from your partners. As humans, we are often tempted to 'lie to protect others' but always keep in mind that the father of lies is the devil (John 8: 44) and that the Bible tells us in Ephesians 4: 25 and 5: 8-13:

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. It is shameful even to mention

what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.

It is only truth that can set us free (John 8: 32) so this is why we must always do our best to speak truthfully to one another in love. Even if there are times when the truth is not so pleasant to hear (such as when things are not going well, when we are facing specific challenges, when we have made mistakes, etc.), we need to trust our partners enough to tell them. It can happen that people will be offended or even react in such a way that you feel betrayed but it is always better than telling lies to your brothers and sisters in Christ.

And when we are sharing news to our partners (especially on social media), it is always good to verify the information with at least two different reliable sources (people or websites) before sharing it. If it happens that you shared information that you sincerely thought was true but was proven wrong or even if you have wrongly shared it (either not to the appropriate audience or not in a clear way), don't hesitate to admit your mistake and to apologise for sharing it. As good Inreach resource servants, we need to be considered as a *reliable source of information*. It is better to share nothing than to share something that we are not sure is true. Here is a great resource (link) where you can get guidelines on how to investigate truth, verify potential hoax (fake news) and also discover several fake news still shared nowadays: incontextinternational.org/2016/09/24/hoax-verification-guidelines/

Prayer Support

As Inreach resource servants, even if we are meant to communicate much with Christians, we are in a mission - a battle field. This is why I strongly encourage you to look for at least 2-3 prayer partners who can back you up in prayer when you have to meet, report or address to leaders/ communities. Keep them regularly informed of the various meetings (even video calls) and challenges you are having but also about the praise points/ victories. In this individualistic world, we often don't realise the importance of those intercessors who are



behind us but trust me, they are like the inner parts of the body that we perhaps don't see but who are vital for the well-being of the body.

We can be inspired by Paul when he asked Colossians to pray for his team in Colossians 4: 2-6:

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your **conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.**

Always keep in mind that as Inreach resource servants, we are always in the mission/ a battle field wherever we are and that people are constantly looking at and listening to us through everything we communicate. We should thus be careful how we live, how we dress and how our conversations can be full of grace, seasoned with salt and, by God's grace; He can lead us on how to answer everyone. Improving our communication skills and using the appropriate means of communication to communicate better with people is a practical way to say "we value and care for you". This will help us to be good witnesses of Christ and communicate Love & Unity wherever we go and whoever we communicate with.

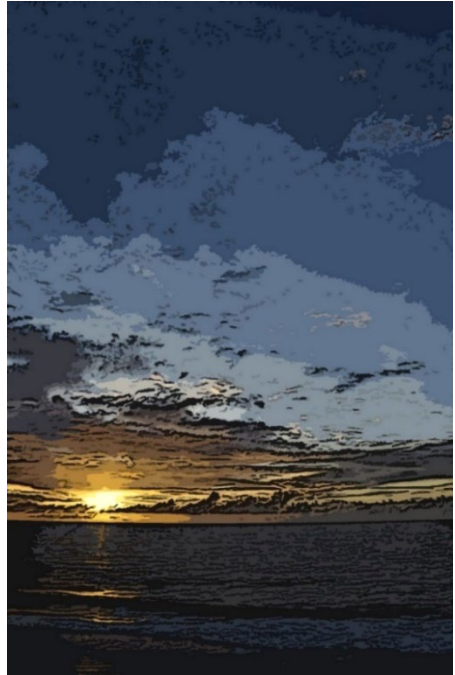
Points to remember

- **Key idea:** The best way to communicate is to listen to what others say verbally and non-verbally and afterwards to propose (in a humble way) without imposing.
- **Key verse:** James 1: 19
- **Reflection:** Do I communicate well? Am I actively listening to people around me? In which means of communication should I improve myself? Is my community actively developing Communication (both for Inreach and Outreach)? What is one thing we could do to improve our Communication?

Encouraging

Do you know what the word 'Daybreak' means? It is the time in the morning when the first beams of light break the night. Thus it is the specific moment when light breaks darkness to bring the day for people to see what is around them. This name was not chosen but was given to me during a time of prayer when I asked the Lord what would be the name of the tool/ ministry He was giving me. I opened the Bible and received in Acts 5: 21:

At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin--the full assembly of the elders of Israel--and sent to the jail for the apostles.



I did not know what this word meant, but I knew it was what the Lord gave me. And it is only later that I discovered the depth of this verse. As there will be times when you will be persecuted or oppressed by those who are considered as leaders because you will be sharing about and encouraging a *sharing culture* across denominations which is very difficult for some to grasp and understand because they have not been taught so. But forgive them and persevere as they don't know what they are doing.

After Member care, one of the main action of Inreach resource servants is to **encourage** people by developing **Interdependency** (also known as Generosity or 'we don't own anything mindset' across denominations) which the Bible describes so well in Acts 4: 32:

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.

The *Interdependent mindset* implies sharing with one another our God-given resources, sharing the pains and also the joys of God's children while being proud of others as we are proud of ourselves despite our mistakes and failures (2 Corinthians 1:14). We should not only teach/ talk about it but give opportunities to Christians to experience it. In this mission, Inreach resource servants often have to face a great challenge which is to encourage their own church leaders and the elders to share the resources that God has put within their hands with the churches of other denominations. Sometimes, we can feel persecuted, but we need to remind ourselves that it is God who will be working in the hearts of our leaders. It can be hard but keep in mind that to 'encourage' means to give support, confidence, or hope to (someone) and stimulate the development of (an activity, state, or belief) and this, requires faith, patience and perseverance.

When I received the vision for Daybreak, it was quite difficult for me to explain it to my leaders. When I shared it with the Bishop of Mauritius, he told me that if I started something like that, he would write letters to all the church leaders he knew to tell them to boycott me and my team. We had to persevere, but God knew the doors He was closing, as this gave us the opportunity to start Daybreak with Christians from various denominations right from the beginning so that nobody could own this tool. God has also been working in the heart of the Bishop as now, he is really one of my good friends. He even wrote official letters of introduction (1 Corinthians 16: 3) to support us in our ministry when we went abroad and his life is now all about reconciliation and unity of Christians! Praise the Lord for that! We can often feel frustrated when things and people don't go according to what we planned. But as Christians, living in Kairos time, we should be aware that most of God's plans are NOT our plans. As we pray to God that

His will be done in His time, we should be like surfers going to the sea to catch waves knowing that it is only when the wave comes that we can catch it. There are so many things we just can't force but just accept God's will and timing; just like Paul who was also willing to change his plans when needed (2 Corinthians 1-2).

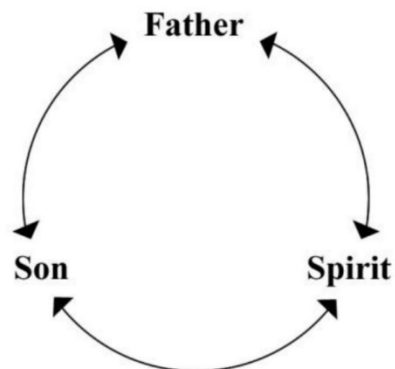
How can we practically encourage Interdependency (Love & Unity)?

We can't expect people to do something that we are not personally doing. As my friend told me once: "It is good to *talk the talk* or to *talk about the walk* but it is important that we *walk the talk* to be good witnesses of Jesus Christ". We need to experience and share/ teach about Interdependency as often as possible. Why? Because the best way to learn something is to teach it to others.

It is important that we realise that Interdependency is one of the foundations of the Church. We are Christians who are called to be 'Christ-like' thus to be more and more like Jesus every day. Jesus is part of the Trinity which is the perfect model of relationship. The following material is from 'Healing Hearts Transforming Nations' handbook (hhtnglobal.org/resources/):

Before the world began, Father, Son and Holy Spirit were living eternally in an amazing circle of relationship. Consider some of the characteristics of the way they relate to one another:

- Love
- Trust
- Mutual respect
- Affection
- Enjoying and celebrating one another
- Perfect unity
- Supporting one another
- Working together towards the same goals
- Confidence in one another
- Interest in one another



- Teamwork – co-labourers
- Open communication with one another
- Honouring and esteeming one another
- Always there for each other
- Different in role but totally interdependent

What we see here is perfect love with each one complementing the other. Though they are one in substance, in their Person they are not identical. But being different was never a problem – it is what makes them Father, Son and Holy Spirit! What we see in its most perfect form is unity in diversity. There is no competitiveness, no power struggle, no one threatened by anyone else, no one trying to dominate, no one jealous of anyone, no conflict of interest. Here is the model of a perfect relationship, enjoying one another throughout eternity.

If the Godhead's relationship together was so wonderful, why did They decide to create us?



There is something about love that always wants to reproduce. There was a desire to share with others the wonderful quality of relationship They were already experiencing. It was too good to keep to Themselves. It is as

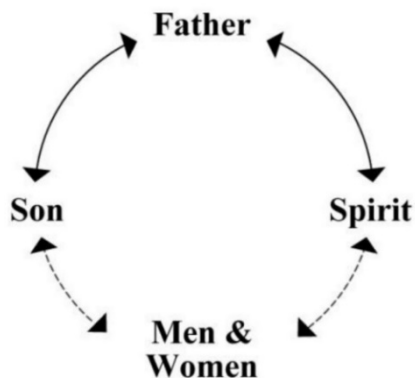
if God said, 'Let Us open up the circle. Let Us create human beings in Our image, so that they can share in this wonderful relationship both with Us and with one another.' This is what Jesus later prayed for in John 17: 21-22. He prayed that all His disciples across the world may be ONE as They are ONE!

Take a moment to think about the wonder of this. We were born for glorious relationships!

What, then, is the goal of Interdependency?

It is nothing less than to be restored to God's original purpose.

We know that the three members of the Godhead were all involved in our creation. How did They feel when They were creating us? We know from the first chapter of Genesis that They felt pleasure; surely there was also a joyful, eager anticipation for relationship with the created ones. Because the Godhead is a relationship, we conclude that God's image is most clearly seen (or not seen) in the quality of our relationships. That includes every kind of relationship among people.



Why do you think when Jesus described the law (Mathew 19: 18-19), he mentioned only the laws which talk about our relationship with people out of the Ten Commandments? Did He forget the importance of the laws which talk about our relationship with God? No, for sure. Jesus knew the importance for us to live in Love & Unity among one another to be able to better live in Love & Unity with Him and every believer for eternity. If we can't enjoy the presence of one another here on earth, what will we be doing together for eternity? It is important for us to realise that, as believers, we are all Disciples of Christ, members of the Holy nation and thus citizens of heaven. We need to realise that we are called to support and to care for one another by sharing what God has put in our hands and which does not belong to us. It is usually easier to be generous when we share what does not belong to us. We need to encourage every believer to realise that we are **members of the same body** and to live as such in an interdependent way in Love & Unity.

In 1 Corinthians 12: 12 -13:13, Paul tells us:

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, **there are many parts, but one body.** The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have **equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.** Now you are the Body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It **always** protects, **always** trusts, **always** hopes, **always** perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is **love**.

We often forget that this kind of Love in 1 Corinthians 13 should be not only between a husband and wife, but it should be tangible among every brother and sister in Christ. The question is; do we see this kind of Love among Christians around us? And if we don't see it, how will the world see it? As Jesus Himself said; that it is by our love for one another that the world will know that we are His disciples (John 13: 35). We are made to live the *one another* and not *one without the other*!

Here are two songs which I encourage you to listen to, when you need to be reminded of the importance of Christian Love:

'When Love sees you' (#The Story) by Mac Powell (Third Day) -

youtube.com/watch?v=l2zHk95UnsE

'By Our Love' (#AD The Series) by for KING & COUNTRY -

youtube.com/watch?v=d9zoq3k-3K0



As interdependent Christians, do we really understand that the sufferings of our brothers and sisters in Christ are also our sufferings? And do we understand that the successes of our brothers and sisters are also our successes? The best way to

encourage a team is to suffer and rejoice with them, is it not so? In the same way, we are called to help one another to grow and bear fruits keeping in mind that we are in the same team, the Global Body of Christ, the Holy Universal Church. Even if there is still division among us, all the fruits that we bear separately and/ or collectively belong to our Master, Jesus Christ!

In Mauritius, where I'm from, there are some churches who have a very good relationship with one another and others who don't. I was personally touched by the story of the Anglican community of Tamarin (on the west coast of the country) who wanted to start an English-speaking service in this region but did not find a place to meet. The Roman Catholic Church in the region generously proposed for them to use their library and for years, this community has been meeting there. There is even one of their musicians who is a Roman Catholic, who became a good friend of the Anglican priest and who plays music every week during their service (even if she is also active in her community). These communities have very good relationships and do several projects together. Would it not be wonderful if every Christian community in the world could share their resources and facilities to support other communities to grow and to

thrive? Thus encouraging Christians to put aside what divides us and focus on what unites us to serve together for the growth of God's kingdom?

As Inreach resource servants, we are called to be peacemakers by caring for, encouraging and linking one another. We should never be afraid to persevere and to declare to everybody that it is Jesus' will that all his disciples may be one in Love & Unity. It is not usually easy but in Ephesians 4: 2-6, we can be exhorted by these words:

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.** There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

In Amplified Bible, the term 'Peace' is defined as 'each individual working together to make the whole successful'. And this is what we are here for... to live as *collective individuals*. Thus, don't be afraid of anyone, who will be against you (even the leaders) and remind them that we all have our God-given functions to do as it is said in Ephesians 4: 11-16:

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, **so that the Body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity** in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is

the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, **joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.**

As Inreach resource servants, our 'ligament ministry' is to ensure that every part does its work but in a coordinated way and we need one another, especially leaders, for this Global Body of Christ to be the glorious, shining and powerful church God wants us to be through our Love & Unity.

Once, I received a vision of how the Lord sees His bride, us, the Global church. We were beautiful but at the same time so disabled as every part was trying to do things their own way and naturally, the body was suffering from it. God wants us to value our diversity and be well coordinated among



one another to be more efficient, no longer as 'our denomination' but as the Holy Nation! For this, we need to value and develop intentionally the culture of Interdependency among every Christian community, which we know is difficult as many Christians have brought in and accepted one of the biggest lies ever... which is to be 'independent'.

My country, Mauritius, became 'independent' in 1968, but I personally believe it is not completely true as we constantly depend on other countries to sustain and develop ourselves. Once, there was one young boy who told me that he is waiting to be more 'independent' then he will see what he will do. But we are NOT made to be independent but to be *interdependent* and to embrace/ value it. Nowadays, there is not one single thing we can say we have done all by ourselves. You can say you had a good idea but to be able to write it down on paper, you needed people to manufacture the pencil and the paper for you! We should thus bring the light on this issue to every human being and encourage them to accept our weaknesses and limitations, value our Interdependency (that we need one another), fight individualism and encourage every Christian to be

more and more generous in sharing their Time, Talents and Treasures with one another knowing that we don't own anything and that everything is for the King and His Kingdom.

We can learn from the apostle Paul who shared with us that he is doing his best not to be a burden for anybody but rather a support/ blessing for them (1 Corinthians 9). In the same way, being *interdependent* doesn't mean to *depend* on others constantly but to do our best to be as *autonomous* as possible – NOT to be a *burden* for others but a *support* for one another. Thus, we should all be less independent, more autonomous and even more interdependent.



In 2019, we facilitated an 'Empowerment partnership' (for community development) among churches and NGOs involved in this area. At our strategic thinking session (during which we agreed on our common vision and mission), there was a homeless guy among us who told us that we, as churches and NGOs, should stop *assisting* the 'needy'. He encouraged us to instead *help them to help us* because they want to help but we do not give them the opportunity to do so. We thus realised that we should stop 'assisting'

people but rather focus on real empowerment. He helped us to realise that one mistake we often make in our ministry is not to be 'vulnerable' towards those we serve and be willing to be blessed by them. Even the great Moses was supported by Aaron and Hur when he needed help to keep his arms up for the Hebrews to win the battle (Exodus 17). There is no shame or guilt to accept our vulnerability and to be helped/ supported by others. I always valued and respected even more my parents and my leaders and they gave me the opportunity to also pray, bless and support them according to their needs. One of the best ways to empower others and to teach them interdependency is to

be interdependent towards them too. This implies that we should all realise that we are all *needy people with God-given resources* and that we should support one another to support those around us better. Either we are 'rich' or 'poor', we are all 'homeless' people making our way back to heaven (our real and eternal home). This is Interdependency.

We need to be open that God can use anybody (even non-Christians) to make us grow or accomplish our mission/ ministry/ tasks. Jethro (Moses' father-in-law who was not a Hebrew) helped his son-in-law to establish judges within the community to make Moses' burden lighter. When I was a teenager, I was struggling with a sin, did not know what to do and was praying about it. I received the answer to my prayers during a Christian Youth Camp from a guy that everybody considered a 'bad guy'. He came to me one afternoon and made me reflect about the sin I was struggling with. I felt it was God speaking to me through him at this specific moment. We never know how God can work and we need to accept his creative ways of shaping us and renew ourselves constantly. Keep in mind what is written in Colossians 3: 8-17:

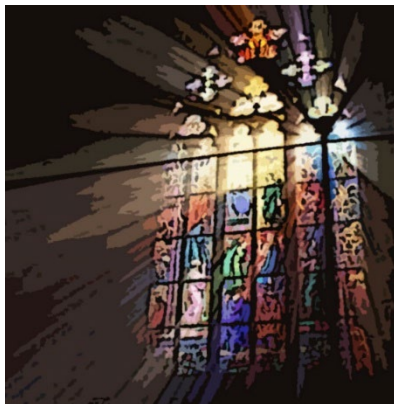
But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. **Do not lie to each other**, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.**

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through

psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

How many of us are constantly lying to one another because we want to make people *think* that we are *fine* and that we are living a good life not lacking anything. How many of us are crying during the week and putting on our 'smiling mask' every weekend when we go to church meetings? Do we realise how much we have hurt people by making them feel so 'bad and inferior' because



when they went to church, they felt that they don't belong to a community with 'perfect' people? Are we aware how many people encountered 'Christians' and decided not to be a member of this 'community of hypocrites'? Keep in mind that what Jesus was really reproaching to the teachers of the laws and Pharisees (Mathew 23) was exactly to be hypocrites (i.e. a person who puts on a false appearance of virtue or religion/ a person who acts in contradiction to his or her stated beliefs or feelings). I personally really appreciate and love my parents and my leaders when they are *real* towards me by showing me their vulnerability and when they are willing to be cared for and supported too when needed. As the band Casting Crowns reminds us through their song ([youtube.com/watch?v=pzE1cXVResg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzE1cXVResg)), we should stop this **stained glass masquerade**, accept our vulnerability & limitations, forgive one another for all the hurts done consciously or unconsciously and be the Church Christ wants us to be.



It can often be challenging for us to encourage Christians and help them to develop this Interdependency of loving each other enough to bear with each other and to forgive one another. Here is the link to an article by Dr Joe. Raphael (irvinechristiancounseling.com/8-steps-to-forgiving-others/) which explains what is and what is not forgiveness and also the *8 steps to forgiving others* which are:

1. Acknowledge the pain
2. Think through things
3. Imagine being on the other side
4. Remember God's forgiveness.
5. Reflect on our Biblical command.
6. Let go of the hurt.
7. Continue to forgive.
8. Pray for the person who hurt you.

We can also encourage our members to forgive using the **seven steps towards Forgiveness** (via letter):

1. Write to the person who hurt you stating how you felt hurt (express yourself even not in a 'Christian way')
2. Ask God to give you the strength to forgive and in the name of Jesus, forgive the person
3. Write another letter to pronounce blessing on this person
4. Write a letter to write blessing on your life
5. Make as if the person is in front of you and read to the person both letters
6. Burn the negative letter and keep the blessing ones
7. Share about this experience of forgiveness with one or more people (you trust) and, if you feel you can, tell to the person who hurt you what he/ she has done and that you forgave him/ her (to potentially reconcile).

When you feel ready, you can also share about your experience publicly in a 'politically correct' way (such as by not naming anybody), not to get 'justice' but

rather to protect other victims (by denouncing/ raising awareness about such situation) and to give other people the opportunity to help/ support you.

Reconciliation

In 2018, I've been to Rwanda and encountered many 'Christians' who, during the genocide of 1994, had killed other 'Christians' from other tribes because of prejudices and of their human nature. I have seen some who were able to reconcile with themselves and reconcile with those who even killed many members of their family. However, I have also seen many who still had a lot of difficulty to really forgive one another. During the Genocide, there were many 'Christians' who were killing during the week but not on Sundays as they had to go to church. Having met those brothers and sisters in Christ in Rwanda but also so many Christians around the world who have so many prejudices concerning the 'other Christians' from other denominations and even towards those from the same community... I really don't consider Christians better than anybody else. And even if being a Christian implies that we know that we are sinners and this is why we needed a Saviour to be able to be saved by His grace, we are still humans with our sinful nature that we are fighting every day to be more and more Christ-like. This is why we all have to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

During my travel in Rwanda, I was very blessed to meet and hear the story of reconciliation of Eliya, Gaston and Gaston's sister-in-law (next to him on the photo). All three of them lived in the same village in 1994. Because of various prejudices and of hate which developed in his heart, when the



genocide started, Eliya killed so many people from the Tutsi tribe that he doesn't even remember. He went to prison for several years because of his crimes. Gaston saw all his family being killed in front of him, but was able to escape

and tried to commit suicide 3 times because of what he experienced. Years later Gaston and Eliya found themselves in the same reconciliation session (organised by one of our partner organisation). When Eliya asked for forgiveness for his doings and on behalf of his community who killed many Tutsis, Gaston saw true repentance and was able to forgive those who killed his family. They became friends and went back to their village. Gaston's sister-in-law lived there as well but she didn't wanted to forgive Eliya, who had killed 9 members of her family. Gaston acted as a mediator between them and succeeded to make them both attend reconciliation sessions where she was able to forgive Eliya. Now, they are serving together and witnessing how reconciliation, with the love of Christ, is possible despite all the worse things which can happen. You can listen to their testimony on this video: youtube.com/watch?v=PkKaLvF1MN0

If they were able to forgive each other, reconcile and serve together, is there anything *too hard* for us to forgive?

To be able to sincerely live in an interdependent way, we have to reconcile with ourselves to be able to reconcile with others. One very great journey that my wife and I recommend is the '*Healing Hearts Transforming Nations*' workshop (hhtnglobal.org/) which was developed by some friends in Rwanda after the Genocide and from which few parts of this manual were inspired. When I went to be trained to facilitate this reconciliation retreat, I thought I was 'fine', but it was there that I was able to bring all my past hurts to the Cross and to even reconcile with my own roots (ethnicities). We often tend to forget what our Lord Jesus told us in Matthew 5: 21-24:

"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in

front of the altar. **First go and be reconciled to them;** then come and offer your gift.



Our Lord prefers that we go and reconcile with those who are against us **BEFORE** we come to worship Him. It looks like He puts Reconciliation before worshipping Him! It is true that it is almost impossible to sincerely praise and worship God in Spirit and in Truth if we are not at peace within ourselves and with others. How many of us go to church every week to praise and worship our Lord but have so much to ask for

forgiveness, to forgive and to reconcile with one another? How will they be able to realise the importance of reconciling with one another if they are not properly educated about it? How will real peace be possible if some of us are not intentionally standing in the gap?

As Inreach resource servants, we need to keep in mind that we will often have to be 'peacemakers' among people fighting with each other, and even Christians. However, keep in mind that it is said in Matthew 5: 9:

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Can we call ourselves *children of God* if we don't look like our Father God? To be a peacemaker, we have to *make peace*. Peace and reconciliation do not come naturally. We need to be intentional about *making peace* and not only *agreeing* that peace is good.

It is also important to accept that we will not be able to resolve all conflicts and divisions among people and not take it personally. There are people who can be reconciled and start again to serve together hand in hand but there are others, for the sake of peace, who need to split just like Paul and Barnabas (after

the issue with accepting Mark as their helper or not – Acts 15: 36-40). I encourage you to have a look at this link peacepursuit.org/biblical-foundations/ to discover the **Five pillars of peace pursuit** and **practical guides/tools** for peacemaking if:

- a) you feel offended or hurt by someone,
- b) it appears that you have offended or hurt someone,
- c) you are considering to help two other people with their relational problem or
- d) someone has come to you to talk about a relational problem between two people.

Generosity

Being 'Generous' is about *giving*, but being a 'Generous Christian' is about *sharing*. It implies that we stop giving to people who are *in need*, but actually that we start to *share* what God has generously put within our hands and *invest* in the Kingdom by investing in people. Our present state in this world is perhaps best described by a word that has practically disappeared from the English language and which is the word **steward**. A steward is one who is entrusted with what belongs to another. He is thus faithfully expected to use, according to the owner's wishes, what has been committed to him, and therefore he must periodically give account of his stewardship.

Interdependent Stewardship is handling God's resources for God's purposes keeping in mind that we don't own anything and that everything is for the King and His Kingdom. We often don't understand what a kingship is, as most of our countries are now ruled by governments and not kings. In ancient times, people understood better what it meant to live under a king. They knew that everything belongs to their king and master and, thus, he could take back their houses and lands whenever he wanted, because it has always been his property. We have been so much influenced by independency and individualism (of *mine* instead of *ours*) that we often have difficulties to understand this concept. We often waste our King's resources instead of sharing and using them for His glory. Jesus told us in Matthew 24: 45-51:

“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus asked us to be good stewards of the wealth He has entrusted in our hands to ensure that nobody lacks anything. We are called to share what God has put in our hands with His other servants, otherwise, we will regret it. When there was famine within the church of Jerusalem, there was a need there and resources were available at Corinth. For this reason, Paul and the other Inreach resource servants (Titus and Silas) made the link between the resources and the needs. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 8-9, the apostles were not asking Corinthians for money lest anybody becomes ‘poor’, but were asking them to share their God-given resources to ensure that nobody lacks anything. The Global Church already has all the resources, people, money, knowledge and facilities to take care of the whole world but the problem is that we don’t share or we are not aware of what the Lord has already entrusted to us.

Here is an article by Emmanuel Nuesiri on ‘Jesus and Generosity to the poor’ (brotheremmanuel.blog/2020/09/27/jesus-and-generosity-to-the-poor/)

“The poor you will always have with you” – is a saying from Jesus in Mark 14:7 and John 12:8. It is part of the story where Mary poured nard oil on Jesus, and in response Judas said this expensive perfume should have been sold to help the poor; John 12:6 says Judas the team treasurer, did not really care about the poor, he wanted the money because he was stealing some of it for his own personal use.

What did Jesus mean, when he said the poor you will always have with you? Should this make us less concerned about the poor? Jesus was

compassionate to harassed and helpless people, and was on a mission to represent the love of God to all humanity. Why then did he say ‘the poor you will always have with you’?

Deuteronomy 15:7-11 (NIV) says: “If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites... do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them... do not show ill will toward the needy among your fellow Israelites and give them nothing... Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart... There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore, I command you to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land.”

Israel already had clear divine principles on how to care for the poor – those who have should give generously to the poor. While it looks like Jesus just made a simple response to Judas, in reality he was quoting from Deuteronomy, to remind Judas of the divine solution to the poverty problem.

God’s solution to never ending poverty is never ending generosity! The poor will always be with us, so too those who have a little more than enough will also always be with us – and they have been called upon to be open handed, not to be hardhearted or tightfisted, and to be openhanded and generous to the poor.

Lord, convict us to be generous to the poor in our community, Amen!

Have you ever heard about the story of Alexander the Great? It seems that one day as this great conqueror was riding down the road, his envoy came upon a very poor beggar who was asking for a few small copper coins



to get something to eat. Now this beggar was so poor and broken that no one was likely to give him any attention – let alone giving him any money. The story goes on to tell us that this man was often subjected to the anger and scorn of

the people who travelled that road as well as that of the people of the town. But as Alexander the Great rode by, he saw this beggar and made his envoy stop so that he could address this man. History tells us that before anyone could say anything, Alexander tossed the man several gold coins that were worth a tremendous amount of money. Apparently the old man just stood there shocked. One of Alexander's advisors protested the king's generosity by saying "Your majesty, a handful of small copper coins would have surely been more than enough for this beggar's humble need?" To which Alexander responded with perfect understanding "Yes, a few copper coins would have suited this sad beggar's needs. But gold coins suit Alexander's giving."

As children of the Most High God, I can't help thinking that our attitude should mirror that of Alexander the Great. As Christians we have been empowered to demonstrate the same generosity and extravagance in our interaction with the poor, the broken, the hurting, the lost — and our church. As Christians we should be the most generous people on earth, knowing that as we tithe (by investing at least a tenth of our time, talents & treasures in His Kingdom) and as we share with others our God-given gifts, we are opening the floodgates of heaven (Malachi 3: 10), and accessing all the riches of our Father who promises to meet all of our needs according to His riches in glory by Jesus Christ (Philippians 4: 19). We should stop focusing on what we can accumulate because no one knows when Jesus is coming (Luke 12:16-21). We should rather focus on what we can invest in His Kingdom through our God-given time, talents and treasures as long as we can still do it. We should remind ourselves that a greedy person has no inheritance in God's Kingdom. (Ephesians 5: 3-5). According to Luke 6: 38:

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

It is very important for all of us to be as generous as God wants us to be as the Word tells us in Ephesians 5: 5:

For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Generosity, good stewardship and tangible Love & Unity are all elements of Interdependency which has to be encouraged by every Christian. The aim is not that we all become under one Christian denomination but that we all realise that we all are already members of the Global Body of Christ where all members who are called to be hands can be hands together, all those who are called to be feet can be feet together so that when the world will see what we are doing together through our Love & Unity, they will ask: “Who is doing that?” And we will be able to reply simply: “It is Christ through HIS Body!”

You can have a better understanding of Biblical Generosity through this video by Bible Project (bibleproject.com/) - youtube.com/watch?v=62CIEkRCso

Development

It is our duty to not only share our resources but also to develop/ fructify our God-given gifts and talents, as only maintaining the resources, what God entrusted to us is a sin! Remember the parable of the Talents in Matthew 25: 14-30:



“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.' "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

"The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.'

"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

"Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

"His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.'

"So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

How many resources has God already given to the Church and that we are just *maintaining* instead of actively encouraging and developing them to grow? How many people are just keeping their God-given time, talents and treasures instead of investing them in the Kingdom of heaven? Do we realise that many

members within the Body of Christ will perhaps be called 'worthless and lazy servant' instead of 'good and faithful servant' because we are not developing our God-given resources? To develop our God-given resources (and not only maintain it), we need to be intentional about it. We need to get rid of our *scarcity mindset* (of never having enough) and dare to Go, Get & Give all these God-given resources as He is the owner! We need to understand that even if we don't own anything, we need to intentionally take ownership/ responsibility of what (time, talents & treasures) and who (people/ family/ partners) God gave us and asked us to take care of. Here is a nice tool (R.A.D.A.R. – *Resources & Abilities Development Action Route*), we recommend to help members to assess our God-given Top resources (Talents, Time & Treasures) and define SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely) objectives to develop them: daybreak-academy.org/radar-forms/

Here are practical aspects of SMART goals which we can remind one another when setting goals (from BiteSize Learning):



Co-workers

Are we, Christians, living in such a way that we realise that the challenges that other brothers and sisters are facing are also our challenges and that their fruits are also our fruits? As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3: 3-9:



You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will **each be rewarded according to their own labour**. For we are **co-workers** in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.



We are all co-workers in the eyes of God. Just like we need a whole village to raise a child, we need a whole community to raise a disciple of Christ. Nobody can proclaim "I have made disciples all by myself!" I believe that we could have done

so much more together if we could embrace Interdependency and rejoice in the fruits of other Christian communities as they are all for God's glory alone. We should invest in one another and water what others have sown (especially in

missionaries who will be active where we can't go) out of our will to encourage one another for God's Kingdom to grow.

In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul also points out *three bad attitudes* which are dangerous for all Christians. Firstly, he reminds us that we should not compare ourselves with one another to keep us from envying/ being *jealous* of others' God-given gifts. Paul also encourages us not to *boast* about our success (verse 21) as we are only servants serving a great God who is the One doing everything through us (verse 7). And finally, Paul reminds us that *quarrelling* and *taking sides* is considered *unspiritual*. Thus, we should avoid such bad attitudes and develop positive ones towards one another.

Encouragement

To be good *encouragers* and to develop our encouraging skills, I would like to share with you this very good article, from Stacy Wiebe (thelife.com/19-ways-to-encourage-others), about different ways to encourage one another:

Encouragement goes straight to the heart. In fact, the word itself comes from a combination of the prefix *en* which means “to put into” and the Latin root *cor* which means “heart”. Knowing what a big difference encouragement makes in your own life, what can you do to help others to take heart when the going gets tough and the way feels long?

1. **Learn people's “love languages”**, the special ways they communicate and understand love. In his book, [The Five Love Languages](#), Gary Chapman explains that not everyone's emotional needs are met in the same way, and that it is important to learn to adapt ourselves to their needs. The five love languages are:

words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service, and physical touch.

2. **If an encouraging thought comes to mind, share it!** Don't let shyness hold you back. It may not have the same effect if you wait. Form a new habit: *Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today"* (Hebrews 3: 13).
3. **When you introduce someone, add a few words of praise** for their abilities and accomplishments. You could also share how they've helped you or what is the nature of your relationship. This encourages people to be praised in front of others.
4. **Send flowers (or any other gifts).** A surprise delivery makes any occasion or accomplishment feel more momentous, and is a tangible sign that you are thinking of someone even when they're not around.
5. **When someone is discouraged or hurting, offer specific, practical help.** If you ask, "How can I help?" the person might be at a loss to answer. It's better to ask, "Would it help if I..." or say, "I would like to..."
6. **Send a note.** Although most communication is more and more digital today, there's still nothing like receiving a hand-written note in the mail.
7. **Remind fellow Christians of the specific promises of God** and characteristics of God. The Apostle Peter wrote, *"I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have."* 2 Peter 1: 12
8. **Let people know that you're praying for them.** Tell them what you're praying for them. One idea is to pray specific Scriptures for individuals according to their needs. For instance, you could base a prayer for someone who is suffering on Romans 15:13: "[I pray that] the God of hope [will] fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in

him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

9. **Make celebration a more regular part of your relationships.** Celebrate one another’s victories, large and small, with a note, coffee together, a special meal, a congratulatory phone call, or just a high-five!
10. **Be specific when you offer words of praise;** it makes your encouragement more credible and concrete: “You did a great job at...”, “I really appreciate that you...”, “I was really impressed when you...”
11. **Encourage other believers with a reminder of Christ’s coming.** It redirects our thinking towards an eternal perspective and our ultimate deliverance from sin and death. *We who are still alive and are left will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words* (1 Thessalonians 5: 17b-18).
12. **Realise the power of presence.** Just being there can be encouraging! When you’re with others, you’re telling them that they’re important. The Apostle Paul closed his letter to the church at Colossae promising to send his friend Tychius *that he may encourage your hearts* (Colossians 4: 8b).
13. **If you’re part of a church, Bible study, or fellowship, show up.** Your presence encourages others that they are part of a community of faith and that they are not alone. That’s why the writer of Hebrews says, *Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as we see the Day approaching* (Hebrews 10:25).
14. **If someone you know is working on a large project, send them a single flower** to encourage them at the beginning of the project, and a full bouquet when it’s done.

15. **Use encouragement as a form of outreach.** If anyone should be known for being an encourager, it should be a Christian. Write a letter of appreciation to people at work, your apartment manager, your child's teacher, or your doctor. Often when we interact with these people, we are asking for their services. Take time just to say thank you!
16. **If you really want to encourage someone** who gives you excellent service, **write a letter of commendation to the person's boss.**
17. **We could learn something from the way team athletes freely pat, touch, and high-five each other in competitions.** Touch is a powerful encouragement. Be sure to be sensitive in this area, though. Ask someone if you can hug them before doing so. And be careful to remain above reproach in all your relationships.
18. **When you see someone making positive changes in their lives, affirm them.** "You seem to have a really great attitude about...", "It may be that I'm just starting to take notice, but I see that you are...", "Do you think that you are becoming more...?"
19. **Tell people how they've encouraged you!**

To this list, I would add:

20. **Let someone know that you really care for him/ her by proposing to them to feel free to call you** at any time for anything. Let them know that you will *do your best* (it is better not to promise anything) to make yourself available to listen to them and, if needed, help them in any way. And look at them in the eyes when you tell them that to show that you really mean it.
21. **Remind people to have a good rest.** People are so 'busy' now that they feel cared for when someone asks them how they are doing and if they are having enough rest, healthy food or sport activities.

22. **Prepare food or even a simple cup of coffee/ tea for them.** It is also good to buy but there is nothing more caring than someone showing hospitality by really making an effort to prepare a food/ drink for you and by bringing it to you with a smile. A simple action which says: "I am glad you are here!"
23. **Even if someone made a mistake or sinned, tell them that you still believe in them** and that God has amazing plans for them. Try to point out to them their successes rather than their failures.
24. **Propose/ recommend them resources or courses/ training** which you know can interest them according to their individual callings/ passions. You can also link them with someone who can help them develop their skills or improve in what they are doing. This shows to the person that you believe in what they do and that you are investing in them by making the link with potential resources they may need.
25. **Connect/ link them with someone who has the same passion/ heart/ hobby.** It is always encouraging to meet like-minded people with whom we can, potentially, become friends or even partners in whatever we do.
26. **Point out/ remind them what God is doing through them** and value their gifts & talents.
27. **Comfort those who are going through difficult times** such as by reminding them that the Lord and yourself love and believe in them. If you feel it is appropriate, you can also try to help them to gently see the positive sides of this particular situation and even praise the Lord for what happened. Remember what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1:3-7:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the

sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

28. **Begin your small group or Bible study time**, asking each person questions like "What are you thankful for?", "What worries you?" and "Who needs our help? How can this group help them?" (These are proposed questions from Discovery Bible Study which is a simple method developed by David L. Watson and Paul D. Watson to see for oneself what the Bible says about life's big questions - dbsguide.org/)
29. **Prepare a Monthly Prayer Calendar** with (at least) a name per day of someone close to you or that you feel you need to pray for (E.g. 1 – Jeremy, 2- Anastasia,... 31- Thomas) and every day, try to send a message or call this specific person (attached to the date) to ask them how they are doing and their prayer requests.
30. **Be creative!** Feel free to prepare or do something which is not *usual* to show the person that you care. You can write a song (or change an existing song lyrics) with words of encouragement, write a poem, make a video, etc.

A simple way to encourage someone is through words of affirmation and valuing a person. We encourage you to affirm others using the **G.U.E.S.S.** method (from 'Leadership Coaching' by Tony Stoltzfus) so that they never have to *guess* how you feel and what you think. This acronym means:

- **Genuine** – mean what you say;
- **Unequivocal** – affirm decisively and confidently (no maybes!);
- **Energizing** – your responses grow enthusiasm and bring the energy level up;

- **Specific** – tie affirmation to tangible performance and real evidence of character;
- **Substantiative** – strong affirmation says something important about who the person is.

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, was called by the apostles "**Barnabas**" which means "son of encouragement" (Acts 4: 36) because he was generous enough to share his God-given resources (time, talents and treasures) with those in need. He



is the one who believed in the potential of Paul when even the disciples of Jesus did not trust him. Barnabas even brought Paul with him on his Inreach mission to Antioch to reconcile with the Jewish and pagans who became Christians but had difficulties living with one another. He was known to be a good encourager because he believed in the potential of those around him and did his best to listen to them, to value them and to invest in them. He is known to be a *generous giver* (Acts 4: 36-37), a *faithful friend* (Acts 9: 26-27), a *committed encourager* (Acts 11: 22-26) and a *forgiving brother* (Acts 15: 36-41).

An evangelist from Liberia whom we met recently expressed gratitude for having an Inreach resource servant assisting him in his outreach trips. But because his companion wasn't the one preaching and "bringing people to Christ," the evangelist also realized how little this precious coworker – his Barnabas – was valued by his community. Nevertheless, the coworker was extremely valuable in constantly offering encouragement in ministry, such as by helping the evangelist push a car through miles of mud on one occasion to reach their destination! Christian leaders appreciate knowing that they have people who are willing to support them through tough times without passing judgment.

Therefore, I encourage you to read more about Barnabas on this link: biblehelpsinc.org/publication/barnabas-a-generous-encourager/. Let's be inspired by him and *choose one or two action points* on this list of 'encouragement ideas' to encourage someone in your life today. Here are also some free materials I would like to share with you:

- **'Purposeful Living'** by Gary Hoag (christiansuper.com.au/ebook/) – Where you can get many materials and advice about how to be a generous Christian and a good steward.
- **'Generosity Gameplan'** by John Stanley (generositygameplan.com/tools-and-resources/) – Where you can assess how generous you are and how you can be more strategic in your giving/ sharing.
- **Healing Hearts, Transforming Nations** (hhtnglobal.org/resources/) – although the HHTN Teaching book and the other resources in different languages are available on the website, it is better to experience this workshop of inner-healing and reconciliation in person.

----- Points to remember -----

- **Key idea:** Interdependency is about realising that we need one another and that we should be more generous, better stewards and live in Love & Unity to be good witnesses of Jesus-Christ.
- **Key verse:** Acts 4: 32
- **Reflection:** Is Interdependency a reality within my community? My family? Am I living in an interdependent way myself? What are the aspects of my life that I should develop to live as such? How can I encourage at least my family to do so? For whom can I do at least one of the 'encouragement ideas' list today or this week?

Cross-culture

We often talk about '**unity in diversity**' but do our communities really value it? Is this really part of our culture? Through my experiences, I have realised that unity is not conformity (that is to say that everyone must think exactly the same). Do you remember my testimony when the Lord said that I cannot change



hearts, but that He is the only one who can do it, as long as everyone is sincerely His disciple and that they are ready to question and renew themselves every day to seek Him and not men? When I understood this, I stopped arguing with anyone anymore. We simply try to see together what the Bible says and, in respect and love, we let the Lord, our Master, speak to us personally to transform us. Would it not be great if we all acted in the same way and let the Lord do what only He can do? That is to reveal to us HIS truth. My wife and I don't always think the same way, however we live together, we pray together, we serve the Lord together, we go to church together, we have communion together and, above all, we love each other! If my own wife doesn't think exactly the same, it's a waste of time to make the whole world think just like me, right? Diversity should not be a reason for Christians not to serve together, but we should all realise that it is rather an opportunity for all nations and tribes to worship the Lord in ONE accord. For a musician to be able to play his guitar, all strings must

be perfectly tuned *differently*. It can often be difficult to adjust to one another and embrace/ accept our differences but diversity is the key to real harmony.

Even if we are different, when we take the time to discover one another, we can discover so many things we have in common. There are perhaps many Christian denominations around the world but amazingly, we have more in common which should bring us together instead of dividing us. But whom can we consider 'Christian' and what do we have in **common**?

The International Consultation on English Texts (ICET), a first inter-church ecumenical group that undertook the writing of texts for use by English-speaking Christians in common, published *Prayers We Have in Common* (Fortress Press, 1970,1971,1975). Its version of the **Apostles' Creed** was adopted by several churches and is thus an interdenominational version that we can use to define who are our 'brothers and sisters in Christ' even if there are other secondary things that we possibly don't agree on.

We believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
We believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church, the communion of the saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Many would perhaps say: "But how can I serve with this or this denomination if they...?" If this is still an issue for us, we perhaps need to redefine our view on 'Unity in diversity' and what are 'denominations' for. The following material is from 'Healing Hearts Transforming Nations' handbook (hhtnglobal.org/resources/):

Different but of equal value

We are different, but we are of equal value in God's sight. When He created mankind, God had no favourites (Acts 10: 34-35). God put a special treasure into every people group, intending that they develop their uniqueness. God's plan was that we would all love, appreciate, respect and enjoy one another, considering others as better than ourselves. The beginning of Philippians 2 is very challenging. He wants us to see each other as a source of enrichment and greater blessing for our lives. Go back to the list where we talked about the Trinity. This is how God wanted the different people groups to relate to each other!



A diamond with its many facets (or faces) is so much more valuable than a pane of glass, which has only one face. The greater the number of facets, the more beautiful it is, as each facet reflects the light in a slightly different way. It is also much stronger. In the same way, God wanted each people group to be

a facet of a huge, magnificent diamond, with each different group reflecting His glory in a unique way. Revelation 21:24-26 tells us that God has put glory and splendour in every people group, and He wants it all brought into the New Jerusalem.

A 'denomination' is a recognised autonomous branch of the Christian Church. We are perhaps autonomous but God never asked us to be *independent* but to be *interdependent*. To live as Acts 4:32 where they were one because nobody was saying "this is mine". To live everyday of our lives with the 'we don't own anything mindset'. But do we see every Christian lives as such nowadays?

Christians from all over the world have been affected by individualism and this is why many think more in terms of 'me' instead of 'we'. To move from 'ME' to 'WE' is a paradigm shift. People don't realise that when 'I' is replaced by 'we', even 'illness' becomes 'wellness'. There is a whole education to be done and we are so rooted



in the thought that our relationship with Jesus is 'personal' that we often forget that Jesus asked us to live in terms of 'we' rather than 'I'. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, he did not ask them to pray "My Father..." but rather, in Matthew 6: 9-13, He told us:

"This, then, is how you should pray:

""**Our** Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give **us** today **our** daily bread.

And forgive **us our** debts, as **we** also have forgiven **our** debtors.

And lead **us** not into temptation,
but deliver **us** from the evil one.'

Even this famous verse in Jeremiah 29:11 where God says:

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.

The Lord is not addressing *one person* but to *His people*. God has plans for US to prosper and not to harm US, plans to give US hope and a future. That is why we need to walk together in Love & Unity to fit in His plans.



We should all realise that if we agree with the Apostle's Creed and, thus, we agree that we are all called to have a personal relationship with Christ and to serve the same God and HIS Kingdom, our roots are all planted in the same soil, the same foundation. There is no forest without many trees. And just like in a forest, every tree

looks different, individual and has different forms, but their roots are usually connected and this is how they can resist many storms or natural disasters. This is the kind of Interdependency that we are called to live among Christian communities (churches).

Same team

Have you ever watched a football game with supporters? It is amazing how the supporters can be angry at one of their own players, the striker, when he was not at the right place at the right time to score a goal, but we often forget that it is always, in the end, the team who wins or loses. Just like in any game, everybody would like all players to be doing their function according to their individual position so that in the end, the whole team can win. It is always the team work which makes the difference.

In 2014, during the FIFA world cup in Brazil, I was supporting the Brazilian team but I admit that the German team deserved to win as their team work was really amazing compared to Brazil's. I was not even able to remember who were the key players as all Germans were equally valued and honoured

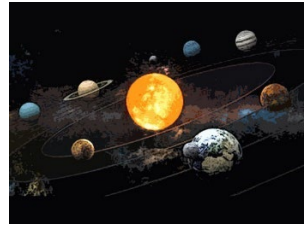
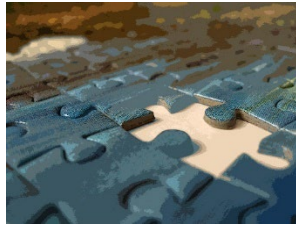


compared to some other teams that usually have only two to three key players who are put forward. When the Brazilians had to face the Germans without two of their key players, they could not stand at all against them. This is why I believe that when we link people to serve/ work together, we must always do our best not to put forward some of the key players but rather value each one of the partners equally so that we can together be a *winning team*.

And for that, we need to be united! **'Unity'** means being united or joined as a whole. The very action of uniting is to come or bring/ join (link) together for a common purpose or action and the root word of 'Unity' is 'ONE'. Thus, remember that as 1 Corinthians 12: 26 says:

If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.

If the best guitarist ever breaks his little finger, I can guarantee that he will not be able to play as well as he could. Every member, even if it looks not valuable, is important. Just like the image of a puzzle where there is a missing piece or even our solar system missing one planet. If it was the case, we would all have died because every planet is part of this wonderful magnetic field created by God for us to be able to live on Earth.



If one of your hands gets burnt, the other hand can't just relax and enjoy a cup of tea. In the same way, we all need to get out of our comfort zone and be active members within the Global Body of Christ. It is important to value and believe in our local teams/ communities but we should not boast about our local branch but about the tree as it is the roots (Christ) who is holding all of us and is bearing fruits through each one of us (Romans 11:18). 1 Corinthians 12: 20-25 reminds us:

As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

When it comes to finding a home church, our options are unlimited. Traditional, contemporary, you name it—we can probably find it! But our individual place in the Body of Christ is another matter entirely; that's not determined by us, but by God.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 12:13:

For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink

When we accept Jesus as our Saviour we become a member of His redeemed family and a *miracle of placement* takes place in us. It isn't a choice we get to make; it's God's choice—and it determines our spiritual identity. Anybody anywhere in the world who names Jesus as their Saviour and Lord is more connected to us than our hand is to our wrist. And we have a role to play in relation to each and every one of them. God not only placed us in His Body, He determined our unique role when He arranged 'the parts... just as He wanted them to be.' (1 Corinthians 12:18) He also gave us certain 'gifts', and He expects us to use them to fulfil His purposes (Romans 12:6–8). When we ask God to show us our gifts, He will. And when He does, we must take every opportunity to use them for His glory.



Once, several Christian organisations and churches partnered together to make a Christian musical, written by two sisters in Christ from different denominations, called "MIARAKA – Time to dance". Sometimes, I would

just sit and watch them warming-up or rehearsing together as it was just beautiful and uplifting to do so. We were Christians united to serve the Lord and, among us, there was no barrier of denominations, colours, ages, languages, social backgrounds, talents, competitions, etc. There were very rich people and others much less rich materially, but we were all a family serving our Lord together as we had a common vision which was to 'use art to share the gospel and bring awareness about women oppression', that is unity! But to really understand this, I sincerely invite you to live in unity and experience such opportunities of serving together with brothers and sisters in Christ from other denominations (no matter your talent) on various common projects!

"BUT there are so many things they do that are against the Word! I can't stay with them! They don't even want to listen to me when I want to correct them!" Yes, it is true that the Word asks us to correct each other fraternally. But HOW do you want to correct someone fraternally, IF you do NOT have a fraternal relationship with him/ her *first*? Let us stop having prejudices against one another and let us realise that we have as much to learn from them as they do from us. We can sincerely and fraternally grow with our brothers and sisters who are members of various denominations and traditions such as Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Protestants, Evangelicals, Adventists, Pentecostals, etc. by considering them simply as brothers and sisters in Christ. Because, basically, ALL want to follow Christ, right? Try it, you will be amazed how they welcome what you share with them more easily! Our real enemies are not the other saints (Christians) but as Ephesians 6: 12 tells us:

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

If all those who sincerely want to be Disciples of Christ and serve him with their lives can be considered 'Christians', it is important to be linking others while making them realise that we are all *already* part of the same team, the Global Body of Christ. But many Christians often have an 'identity problem'.

My name is Jeremy Thomas and I will always be of the Thomas family, but my first personal identity is JEREMY because that's who I am. I grew up, I recharge my batteries by enjoying my family's presence and I am evolving within the Thomas family, but I repeat, my first identity is to be who I am, Jeremy, because I am neither like my parents nor my sisters. The apostle Paul puts it so well in 1 Corinthians 1: 12-13:

What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

And even later, in chapter 3: 3-9, he tells us:

You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labour. For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

As Christians, we should stop thinking only about our local church or our denomination when we talk about the expansion of the church. We should no longer think only of enlarging our churches but as well about enlarging the Church



of Jesus Christ. Whatever local church or denomination our brother or sister is part of, the most important is that they are where God wants them to be to fulfil their individual parts as members of the Global Body of Christ. Do you want the Church to finally work together without denomination barriers, as the Lord desires?

Here are two videos about what it is to 'be the Church' and illustrate well what is discipleship through our love and testimony (actions) rather than only with our words on youtube.com/watch?v=8qoM78TwJ34&feature=emb_title and youtube.com/watch?v=oJWkQ9UP_m8. And for this unity to be a reality, we need to be ready to change our ways and 'turn this life around' and this song, by Paul Colman, illustrates this well: youtube.com/watch?v=YzV0aHwrtwc

Here is an extract on **The Power of Unity** from 'Bible in one year 2020' (by Youversion with Nicky Gumbel):

In Buchenwald concentration camp, 56,000 people were put to death by a totalitarian regime that saw the Christian faith as a threat to its ideology. One block of cells in the camp was reserved for prisoners who were deemed especially dangerous or notable. Paul Schneider, a Lutheran pastor who was called 'the preacher of Buchenwald', was placed in this special block because even from the small window in his cell he loudly proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ – in defiance of the orders of the Gestapo guards. Otto Neururer, a Catholic priest whose work on behalf of the Jews and other so called 'undesirables' had made him a threat to the Nazi warlords, was also put in this block. He too ministered in Jesus' name to his fellow inmates in the concentration camp until he was crucified upside down. In unity, these two men, one a Catholic and the other a Protestant, bore witness together to their common Lord – Jesus Christ. Unity is so powerful.

The church and the world (John 17:6-26)

In the Gospels, we frequently read about the prayer life of Jesus. But only on rare occasions are we informed at any length of what he prayed for. In this great prayer of Jesus, before he goes out to face the cross, we see his priorities. Jesus prays not only for his disciples, but also for those who will believe in the future – that is to say, he prays for the entire church – which includes you and me (v.20).

This prayer is dominated by the theme of unity. Jesus prays not only for unity among his disciples (v.11), but also for the church (v.20). He prays for a unity like that which unites the Trinity: 'that they may be one, *as we are one*' (v.11, AMP).

The *motive* for unity is the great commission of Jesus. Jesus prayed for complete unity *so that the world may believe* (v.23) and know unity with God (vv.21,24). One of the greatest barriers to belief is disunity in the church. In politics, the moment a political party becomes disunited, it loses popularity. It happens in the secular world and even more so in

the church. Jesus says that he protected his disciples and kept them safe ‘so that they may be one’ (v.12). Now he prays, ‘*protect them from the evil one*’ (v.15) who will seek to divide them.

When churches fight each other, people lose interest. Conversely, when churches do unite it is so attractive. It is the source of joy. The followers of Jesus are not supposed to be miserable. Jesus prays ‘that they may have *the full measure of my joy within them*’ (v.13). Joy comes from unity. Disunity is a joy-stealer. Unity is powerful.

The *means* of unity is the Holy Spirit of Jesus. Jesus prays for your holiness. Jesus prays, ‘*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth*’ (v.17). Holiness comes from the truth. The truth is found in God’s word. That is why it is so important to soak yourself in God’s word.

Holiness comes as you welcome the Holy One, the Spirit of Truth, who comes to dwell within you. Jesus prays, ‘that *I myself may be in them*’ (v.26). This is the most extraordinary truth of the New Testament – that Jesus comes to live in you by the Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit lives in all Christians of whatever church or denomination. The Holy Spirit unites us.

The *mark* of unity is the love of Jesus. Jesus prays, ‘that the love you have for me may be in them’ (v.26). What higher love can you have than the love that God the Father has for Jesus his Son? Jesus’ prayer for you is that you should have the same love that God the Father has for Jesus in your heart for other Christians, for other parts of the Body of Christ.

The *measure* of unity is the visibility of Jesus. Sometimes people speak about ‘invisible unity’. But Jesus didn’t pray for invisible unity. Nor did he pray that we might be ‘almost united’. He prayed that they may ‘be brought to *complete* unity to let the world know that you sent me’ (v.23). He wants the church to be completely and visibly united.

One day it will be (see Ephesians 1:9–11). In the meantime, as we build bridges, work together and come together with other Christians from different parts of the church, as hearts and minds are bonded together

in communion with Jesus, we can see, as in Buchenwald, visible signs of our invisible unity.

Lord, thank you for the way the Holy Spirit is drawing us together. May we see increasing signs of visible unity so that the world will believe.

The friends and rivals (1 Samuel 19:1-20:42)

In politics, business or even in church life, two people who are great friends can at the same time end up competing for the same job. How should we handle the tension between our ambitions and our friendships?

The friendship between David and Jonathan was remarkable. They were rivals for the throne. They had every reason to be envious of each other and to hate each other. Yet Jonathan loved David ‘as he loved himself’ (20:17). This type of love, which Jesus commanded, is the highest love one person can have for another (Matthew 22:39).

On the other hand, Saul was filled with jealousy. Jealousy starts with comparing ourselves to others – comparing our achievements with those around us. Jealousy has the power to deprive someone temporarily of their senses. When Jonathan points out to his father, Saul, that David has not wronged him and has benefitted him greatly and it would be quite wrong to kill an innocent man, Saul says, ‘As surely as the Lord lives, David will not be put to death’ (1 Samuel 19:6).

Logic and reasonable argument may convince a person who is filled with jealousy at the time. However, jealousy is so powerful that once it gets a grip of a person, as it did with Saul, there is no stopping it. As Shakespeare put it in *Othello*, ‘It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on.’

David and Jonathan loved each other. Jonathan ‘was very fond of David’ (v.1) and he ‘spoke well of David’ (v.4). Jonathan even said to David, ‘Whatever you want me to do, I’ll do for you’ (20:4). What a great commitment to make to a friend! Their commitment to each other

took the form of a ‘covenant’ (v.16), which included even their descendants (v.42). And Jonathan ‘made David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself’ (vv.16–17).

As a result of his jealousy ‘Saul’s anger flared up at Jonathan’ (v.30). Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David (v.33) and he ‘got up from the table in fierce anger’ (v.34).

The difference between Saul’s anger and Jonathan’s anger was that Saul’s was unfounded and produced by jealousy. Jonathan’s anger was righteous anger; ‘He was grieved at his father’s shameful treatment of David’ (v.34). Anger is not always wrong – but examine your motives carefully.

David and Jonathan were not ashamed of showing their affection for each other: ‘... they kissed each other and wept together’ (v.41). Crying can be seen by some as showing weakness, but they had no shame. In crying openly and showing their love for each other. This is a powerful model of friendship, love and unity. Marriage is one of God’s answers to loneliness. Close friendship is another. It was this love and friendship that enabled Jonathan to be totally loyal, supportive and protective in spite of the fact that he was a rival candidate to the throne.

And here are other extracts from the book ‘Cross-cultural conflict’ by Duane Elmer in his chapter on ‘Cultural Diversity was God’s Idea (and so was unity)’:

John 17 contains our Lord’s prayer for those who were his disciples and those who would become his disciples. It could be called the “glory chapter”, since *glory* or some variation of it occurs about nine times. The ultimate goal for our existence is to glorify God, and we are most like God when we are in union with one another just as the members of the Trinity are in union.

In the opening verses Jesus prays for himself, stating his concern for glorifying the Father. Next he turns his attention to the disciples and the glory they will bring to the Father. In his prayer for them he says, “I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your

name” (v. 11). What kind of protection is Jesus requesting for the disciples? Is it physical protection because they will face persecution and martyrdom? Read further in verse 11: “so that they may be one as we are one.” Jesus prays that their unity will be protected. This is a special kind of unity: “that they may be one as we are one.” It is a unity that reflects the Godhead.

...

Jesus prays “that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (v. 21). Here, in one verse, is the link between the unity of God’s people and the fulfillment of God’s mission in this world. Our ability to resolve conflict, thus preserving unity, is directly related to people’s coming to Christ. Humanly speaking, the world’s believing is contingent on believers’ oneness. The body of Christ, when its members live together in unity, becomes the visible manifestation of the triune God. If the watching world observes the love of God holding believers together, they are confronted with the glory of God in his people.

The contrary is also true. A lack of unity in our relationships veils the glory of God. So relationships affect mission. When we nurture unity among ourselves, we declare that God loves us and sent his Son to secure our redemption.

...

In his letter to the church of Corinth, Paul had to write to them to address the various problems they were facing. Many of us would be inclined to start with the grosser sins, but Paul starts with an issue that he believes foundational to all others. In fact, he spends three chapters on this topic: building *interpersonal solidarity*. Unless relationships are intact, all other resolutions and corrections will be reduced to rubble as arguments, disagreements and disrespect continue. Unity is foundational to everything else that God wishes to accomplish in his church.

In 1: 10 Paul begins with his goal: “I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so

that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.” He then mentions a report from Chloe’s household that “there are quarrels among you.”

“Quarrels” is the Greek word *schismata*, from which we get the English word *schism*. This word was used in the garment industry to describe a piece of cloth that had somehow become mangled, torn, stained, wrinkled and altogether unattractive. Paul’s hearers, coming across this world, would immediately think of the marketplace where the garment merchants hung their finest pieces to attract shoppers into their shops. No merchant would hang up a *schismata* garment, for the tears, holes, stains and wrinkles would only serve to drive customers away. Who would be interested in the merchandise if they saw *schismata*?

The Corinthians must have immediately gotten the point: who would be interested in considering Christ if when they saw Christians they saw *schismata*? Relationships affect the integrity of the gospel. Life and witness cannot be separated.

Realizing this, Paul begins dealing with the severe interpersonal problems. If *schismata* can be replaced with wholeness and unity, the power of the Gospel can be released.

...

It is noteworthy that Paul’s plea for unity and oneness is joined with the notion of glorifying God. Paul then tells us how to make this unity a reality: “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you” (15: 7). “Accept” is another way of saying “honor” or “hold in high regard” – we are to treat each other as important, significant, worthy.

Synergy

Have you ever heard about synergy? According to the dictionary, it is the interaction or cooperation of two or more organisations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects. Some good examples are geese flying in a ‘V’ shape to support one

another to fly further with less effort or even two farm horses being able to push thirty-two tons together rather than six tons individually.



Imagine what it would be like if all brothers and sisters in Christ could support one another in perfect harmony in perfect synergy as the Word asks us to do in Hebrews 10: 24-25:

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Here are two videos concerning Synergy:

'Wisdom of Geese' - youtube.com/watch?v=5rOg4WfNDfM

'How to create synergy with others' - youtube.com/watch?v=GHRWhEpxXFW

Division

We can often feel discouraged when we see the lack of will of so many Christians to serve together, but remember, we need to persevere and to have compassion for them as "they don't know what they are doing". Many Christians are not aware of the consequences of not being among those who are gathering the people of God. Many people heard about Jesus saying "Either you are with me or you are against me" but are we aware of the next part of this same verse? Jesus told us in Mathew 12: 30:

Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

On which side are Christians when they are intentionally preventing or discouraging others to serve together with other brothers and sisters in Christ? Are we *gathering* or *scattering* the Body of Christ? And what is the consequence of being on the wrong side? Paul tells us in Titus 3: 9-11:

But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a **divisive person** once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are **self-condemned**.

It is also said in Proverbs 6:16-19:

There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are **detestable** to him:
haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that
devises wicked schemes,
feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies
and a person who **stirs up conflict** in the community.

And 1 John 3: 14-15 also tells us:

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a **murderer**, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

Dear Inreach resource servants, when we are encouraging our brothers and sisters in Christ to gather rather than scatter and not to hate but rather love and value one another, our aim is also to preserve them from condemnation because we want all of us to spend eternity together. If 'blessed are the peace-makers' (Matthew 5:9), this can imply that 'cursed are the peace-breakers'. We all need

to be aware of it and start to move together as one Body in Christ for His glory by respecting and loving one another as brothers and sisters!

It is true that in Luke 12 and John 15-16, Jesus warns us that because of him, there will be division. A tangible division between those who belong to the Kingdom of God and those who belong to the world (and thus reject Jesus). Even if we need to keep good relationships with those outside the Body of Christ (1 Timothy 3:7), Christ warns us to not hope to see tangible Love & Unity within all humanity because it is not possible (especially with those who openly reject Christ). Apart from loving them and witnessing Christ to them, we should not invest ourselves to try to be *united* with them. People from different religions who worship other gods and therefore serve other kingdoms are simply going different from us ways. Unless they change their ways and decide to turn to Christ, no Kingdom collaboration is possible. We simply cannot call them disciples of Christ as they don't want to be called as such.

As disciples of Christ, we belong above all to Christ. It is our duty to remind this also to our brothers and sisters in Christ. That's why ALL who call themselves Christians are our brothers and sisters in Christ so we have to be concerned about them. We have to stop saying "He is not from my denomination, it's not my problem". This is OUR problem! Because we all belong to Christ! In Acts 15, Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement which was so deep that they separated. Even though they went in different directions, there were no 'denominations' and they stayed united because they knew they were serving the same Lord and they shared the same message of repentance, love and hope in Christ ALONE. They were simply Christians serving God.



Coming back to football. What makes a team successful? It is when everyone is doing his function according to the talent they have while having the same vision, the same goal which is to score the goal and win the game! Brothers and sisters, by

being united (in the same team) and staying FOCUSED on Jesus Christ, we will find a way to real unity! By the way, do you consider that the supporters are part of the team? Do you know what defines a team that has real supporters? It is when the supporters continue to support the team in good times but ESPECIALLY in bad times! My brothers and sisters in Christ, how can we forget or be ignorant about what our brothers and sisters in Christ in the middle-east or in communist countries are enduring (opendoors.org/en-US/persecution/countries/)? They are slaughtered (not even like dogs) because of their faith! But even in darkness, there will always be a ray of light (hope)! Once, while brothers and sisters of different denominations were praying for them, I received from the Lord that we must really thank and glorify Him for these martyrs because they are not only examples to follow, but their sacrifices are still bringing Christians (from different denominations all over the world) together to pray for them. Terrorists do not bother if they are Catholic, Anglican, Protestant or from any denomination. They simply ask them "Are you a Christian?" and it is in the name of Christ that they are being killed! Brothers and sisters, if this tribulation can serve to reunite us, the Family, the Body of Christ, may these sacrifices not be in vain and may the Lord be glorified through this situation! But we need to keep in mind what Jesus told us in Matthew 5: 43-48:

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, **love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

If we are called to love and pray for those who are against us, how much more shall we love and pray for those who are in our team, the Body of Christ? The word tells us in Ephesians 6: 18:

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

It is our duty, as Christians, to keep on praying for all the Lord's people around the world, but unfortunately many Christians are not really taught about it. Many of us often pray for our local community or denomination but not enough for the Global Church across denominations because we don't have this *Kingdom mindset*. Instead of supporting one another to become stronger together as the day of the Lord is near (Hebrews 10: 24-25), we often persecute or condemn the other churches and denominations. Instead of building God's Kingdom, we are actively building our own little kingdoms.

In Philippians 3, Paul tells us that he was so faithful to Jewish traditions that he *made the church suffer* and often we can do the same by being *faithful* to our traditions, to the way of doing things and to the doctrines of our churches! How? By judging Christians of other denominations by saying that: "If they are not like us, they have no place with us!" And history shows us that the tragedy of the 30-year war in Europe between Catholics and Protestants was just because they did not think the same. May I remind you that all those who basically want to sincerely follow Christ are our brothers and sisters in Christ whether we like it or not!

For example, at my place, we don't drink and we don't smoke. However, when, for example, I go visit my uncles, they do it, and even if I am against some of their actions, they remain my family. I still love them. Why? Because we have common grandparents and therefore the same blood and I can't deny this. All Christians who sincerely want to follow Christ have basically the same Christ, right? Aren't we all from the same family? From the same Body of Christ?

As it is said in Colossians 2: 19:

They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

Do we not all agree that it is our faith in Jesus ONLY that gives salvation and of course drives us to do good deeds? So, it is Jesus who will make the difference in us and not what we will force others to do. It is through our Love & Unity that we can lead others to the Way, the Truth and the Life, Jesus Christ!

I am not telling anybody to compromise but to remember to focus on what is most important so that we can all reach heaven together. Imagine that we are on a boat at sea, that there is a big storm and that, to save our lives, we need to throw overboard the maximum of unnecessary things. What would you throw away? The people? I don't think so. We would look for all the other material things to get rid of before targeting people. Within the Global Church, we often do the opposite. We target people instead of getting rid of the things and traditions that we are attached to and which are not so important in the end. Communities are divided because of our pride and lack of humility to accept that we need each other and that we can learn from one another. Let's build God's Kingdom instead of building our own little kingdoms.



My wife and I were really blessed to be missionaries on OM ships (youtube.com/watch?v=N5UHb_2GvB0) and this experience really inspired us to be Inreach resource servants. It is a ship with more than 300 people from more than 55 different countries who live, work and serve together because they have a common goal/ vision: to witness Christ among the least reached. Every missionary on this ship comes from a different denomination, culture, background, and has different views, but when you enter this ship, Love & Unity is so tangible that it feels like a glimpse of heaven. Every nation, every tribe and language are able to be witnesses of our Lord in one accord. There are sometimes conflicts, but they are rarely doctrinal but rather cultural. People are usually *prepared to be hurt* by others as they know they will be sharing life and

ministry with people who are really different from them. Having a clear purpose of why OM missionaries are there ("bringing knowledge, help and hope to the least reached"), they are able to put doctrinal differences aside and live and serve together. They know that they have one same message to proclaim: the Good news that the Kingdom of God is here through Jesus Christ! All missionaries on the ships are volunteers who are investing their time, talents and treasures in God's Kingdom! Would it not be amazing if every Christian on Earth did the same?

Remember what is said in Colossians 2: 6-8:

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

And in Jude 17-21:

But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, **keep yourselves in God's love** as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

Witnessing Christ

Do you know that Love & Unity is one of the best ways to evangelise? I know several people (including my wife and myself) who were touched and attracted to God NOT by what people were saying, but because they saw Christians who walked together and who were *shining* due to their love for one another. For example, I have a secondary school friend who was a stubborn, really stubborn atheist devoted to tell whoever wants to listen to him that God does not exist. A few years later, on the university campus, he saw a group of young people who often met in a cafe to share and pray together. And, from afar, these questions puzzled him: "Why are these people so united? Why do they *shine* with so much joy and love? What do they have that I don't have?" Through this love that existed among these young academics, my friend became curious and went to them to inquire. He heard the Word, gave his life to Christ and is now serving him! When we evangelise, we share about salvation and about the Kingdom of God but do you know that this Kingdom does not start after our death? The kingdom of God should be lived on earth! So, is it not time that we lived precisely in harmony, in Love & Unity, as we will be with Jesus Christ in heaven for eternity?

In Genesis, it is God who separated Light & Darkness and Men & Woman. He also made all of us different (Psalm 139:14, Ephesians 2:10, Isaiah 64:8) so that we can complement one another through our diversity & differences. It is this diversity between us which is supposed to bring tangible unity among us. Unfortunately, we have used it to divide instead of encouraging one another to be *attracted* or *curious* towards one another.

There is a difference between harmony and unison just as there is a difference between unity and unification in the Body of Christ. Personally, I prefer harmony in the Body of Christ which implies that we recognise our differences and our different ways of doing things and by putting everything together, we can make the most amazing melody in the world. I call it 'The Symphony of the Body of Christ!' But to sound in one accord and in perfect harmony, we must build relationships with those we play with and value one another's contribution to God's Kingdom.



We need to understand that God is busy gathering His children around the world and it is He who is breaking walls of division for His Church to live in peace and harmony (Love & Unity). There are churches from various denominations who are gathering to worship the Lord as One Body. There are many relationships and agreements among our church leaders to serve together and to accept each other as members of the same Global Body of Christ and all Christians need to be aware about what God is doing. You can discover more about it by watching this video entitled 'The miracle of Unity has begun' by Net for God on [youtube.com/watch?v=y8WoTRS7bwE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8WoTRS7bwE).

Cultural diversity



It is true that there are many conflicts which make tangible Love & Unity in the Global Church not possible for now. Through our experience, we realise that several conflicts are often not really

"theological" but rather *cultural* or *generational*. More and more communities around the world are becoming more and more diverse with so many people from different origins/ ethnicities and as any family, especially the younger generations, often have difficulties to cope with the older ones and vice versa. It is why it is important to try to understand our differences to walk together better. For a tangible transformation, we need to develop our attitude towards one another by developing our cultural & generational skills and knowledge.

This is our common **T.A.S.K.** (Transformation, Attitude, Skills, and Knowledge). We encourage you to develop your *knowledge* by reading books, looking for help from people and educating yourself about the culture's history. To develop your *skills* and grow, we encourage you to practice/ apply what you learn with the people around you. To develop your *attitude*, we encourage you to observe, reflect and debrief your experiences with others. And to accept your *transformation*, we encourage you to ask yourselves how your life has been transformed by other cultures. We need to accept that in one way or another, we are all different and instead of rejecting/ pushing aside strangers, we should care for them and welcome them as God himself asked us to (Malachi 3: 5). In John 4:1-42, Jesus dared to break the taboos and ask a stranger for help to connect with her and to value her, and this encounter would transform the lives of the other Samaritans in this locality. In the same way, we should learn to welcome and trust more and more those we consider "strangers" and be Jesus to them. The Word also tells us in 3 John 5-11:

Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honours God. It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. We ought therefore to **show hospitality** to such people so that we may work together for the truth. I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church. Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God.

Dealing with co-workers who react and think differently from us can be very difficult. This can bring division even among the best teams. In Acts 15, there was a big theological and ethnical debate about circumcision of non-Jews who became Christians. This issue was able to be solved after much discussion in Antioch and also with the apostles and the elders in Jerusalem. They were able to come to a common agreement and even sent missionaries for an Inreach mission in Antioch to clarify the situation and encourage the believers. There was no division. But right afterwards, in the same chapter, it is the attitude of John-Mark (nothing theological) which divided Paul and Barnabas. They even had to part company because of this issue. Our different attitudes and our different ethnicities, ethics and practices are often the main reasons of divisions within Christian communities. We often have difficulties to accept and value that others doing things differently is not always *bad* but just *different*.

It is our duty as Christians to welcome those who are *different* from us and even do our best to care for each one of them accordingly. This should be part of the Christian culture! But what is a 'culture'? Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts (livescience.com/21478-what-is-culture-definition-of-culture.html). This means that all those who usually speak a different language, who live their faith differently, who prepare different food or drinks, who have different habits and who enjoy and play different types of music from us are considered to be



different culturally from us! We also need to be aware that somebody's culture is not only about what we can see (*surface culture* – which is only the tip of the iceberg) but also about what we don't see (*deep culture*). It is amazing how our faith and our traditions are interlinked with our different cultures. I have been believing for many years that everybody should make the difference between their *culture* and their *religion* and not mix them. I was even proud to be able to do so compared to many other religions who couldn't. I was against why the minister of Art & Culture (in Mauritius) was so connected to the different religions. But through personal experiences and studies, I have realized that it is difficult to separate family, work and faith (in both religion and politics) because all these make you who you are and define your personal culture and experiences. Looking at the fact that there was never one final definition of being a Christian accepted by everyone everywhere and that even in a married Christian couple who are considered 'one', they both think differently; we all have our own culture according to what we personally believe is best for us. My wife comes from Ukraine and myself from Mauritius, when we got married, we had to create our own culture trying our best to take the best from our families' cultures and traditions.



Was Dietrich Bonhoeffer an heretic because he was going against the "Christians" (at this time) of the Nazi Germany? Surely not as he was a good citizen of heaven doing his best to go according to what he believed was good and right according to his views on God's will (religion) which affected his political views. I believe that if we want to really respect someone for who he/ she is according to his/ her beliefs, we need to value and respect his/ her religious,

cultural and political views. It is only then that you can make an effort to understand and love your neighbour (the *others*) as yourself. Here is an extracts of a presentation by Karen L. King about '**Others**' (from EDX Harvard – Christianity through scriptures):

All groups, religious and non-religious groups of whatever kind, distinguish themselves from others. They create others in the process of articulating their own identity. We can see this, for example, in the rise of the nation state, where citizens are distinguished from foreigners. On the surface, this seems simple enough. But we know that, in practice, it is not.

If we look to the earliest Christians, we see similar dynamics in process. They were working out what it means to be Christian. And in the process, distinguished themselves from others. There was never one final definition of being Christian accepted by everyone everywhere. To say this is not to downplay the profound continuity in the tradition and the many efforts to establish unity and uniformity. It is simply to note that Christianity, like other religions, is internally diverse. And I should add, to be clear, that differences are not always matters of conflict or even necessarily topics of discussion. Differences and diversity can enrich a tradition in many ways. Nonetheless, the boundaries of who belongs and ways of determining that have been, and remain, fluid. It's also important to note that establishing boundaries with others is always tied to the ongoing project of situating ourselves. What I mean is that, in defining others, groups are making claims about who they are. We can learn a lot about a group by paying attention to who they include or exclude and why.

With this in mind, let's look now at some categories that Christians invented. I want to emphasize that not all Christians used these categories. And even when they did, they didn't and don't necessarily define them the same way. But early on, Christians distinguished three groups of others - Jews, pagans, and heretics. These categories have largely come to be taken for granted. Yet, the validity of these categories is not as self-evident as their widespread usage might imply. Although Judaism and other religions of the Mediterranean world were around before Christianity, Christians defined these groups in ways that suited their own projects of identity construction. They aligned the name Christian with truth, Judaism with superseded truth now gone awry, and paganism with error. In other words, the main criteria was who possesses the truth. Now, calling other Christians heretics, meanwhile, was an effort to place outside those who claim to be insiders, often precisely by characterizing them as too much like outsiders. That is, too much like Jews or pagans in their thinking or in their practices. In the cases of inner Christian polemics, however, charges were going in all directions. In the end, the winners were those who got the label of heretic to stick to their opponent.

Now, let's look a bit closer at the category of pagan. Why do I say it is an invented category? Well, if you were to walk up to a citizen of ancient Athens, for example, and asked if he or she was a pagan, you would probably get a very blank stare. Pagan was, first of all, a Latin term, not Greek. And even so, it meant something like a rustic peasant. To say people were Athenian already meant that they worshiped the gods of Athens, as well as spoke Greek, and kept the customs of the city, and so forth. It would be much the same case for other groups in the ancient Roman world. It wasn't until Christianity was well

established in the fifth or sixth centuries that some people began to call themselves pagans and mean by it at least something of what Christians meant. Namely, they understood themselves as non-Christian worshipers of the ancient gods. Now, the exception to this capacious designation of others as pagan idolaters was the Jews. They are, in some ways, similar to the case of our Athenians, however, in that to be a Jew, a Judean meant one worshiped the God of Israel, belonged to the Jewish people, and practiced a Jewish way of life. But in this case, if you were to ask someone if he or she was a Jew, the answer might indeed have been yes. But would they mean the same thing Christians meant when they said that? Only in part.

Jesus and his earliest followers were Jews. And the Christian scriptures came to include many Jewish writings. Indeed, the bulk of the Bible, the Old Testament, is made up of Hebrew Scriptures. What Christians did was to appropriate some Jewish tradition for themselves while applying everything that was rejected by them to Judaism. In doing that, they had invented what I call a usable Judaism. And we do well not to confuse it with the beliefs, practices, and self-understandings of actual Jews or of Judaism.

It is important to realise that to define ourselves, we have to define who we are or not. We need to value our strengths but also work on our weaknesses individually and collectively. We need to value our cultural diversity and not fight against each other as Jesus told us in Mathew 12:25:

Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.

If someone claims to be a citizen of our country and does bad things because he is not benefiting from all goodness the nation provides, what shall we do? Would we go to him/ her, calm him/ her and help him/ her to understand the benefits of being part of this nation and what the nation requires



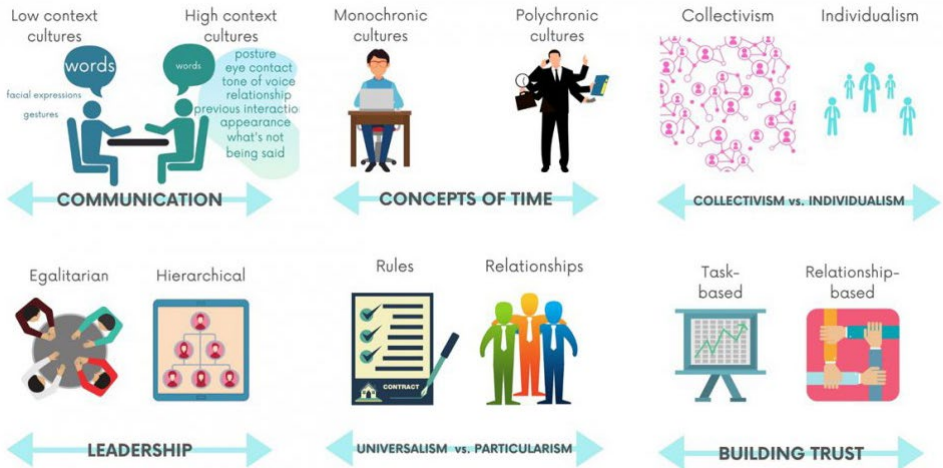
from him/ her to be a good citizen? Is this what we do when we see people claiming to be Christians doing things we consider "not right" and just say "I don't think they are Christians" and just wash our hands on them? It is our duty to reach out to our brothers and sisters in Christ and help them to be good citizens of heaven but we need to always renew ourselves to ensure that we are ourselves being good citizens. We can't teach what we don't practice. For example, many Christians have the tendency to be against and "correct" those who are open to talk and even collaborate with people from different faiths and religions. I am not saying that we should be united to anybody (especially if they don't recognize Jesus as their Lord and Saviour) but the Word reminds us that a good Christian leader is someone who is also respected by people outside the community (1 Timothy 3:7). We live in the World and we encounter everyday people from different faiths and beliefs and we need to respect them and collaborate with them as much as we would like them to do towards us. We can't blame our leaders for keeping a good relationship with those of different faiths if we ourselves in our workplace work with people who are different. There are so many things we can learn from one another. We all went (at least once) to a doctor, specialist or scientist who was either an atheist or from another faith to be physically healed. There are several Christians working with the United Nations to have more impact on our world by wasting as little resources as possible. We need to keep in mind that even if the original twelve disciples of

Jesus Christ were all of the same ethnicity, His ministry was multicultural. He travelled far beyond the scope of Israel into Samaria, Decapolis, Tyre and Sidon. He ministered to a Roman centurion (Mathew 8:10), a Syrophonecian woman (Marc 7:24), a Sidonian (Luke 4:26), a Syrian (Luke 4:27), an Ethiopian (Mathew 12:42) and several Samaritans (John 4, Luke 10:25, 17:16). He ministered to all people, regardless of background. His ministry of presence demonstrated engagement, compassion, love, acceptance and forgiveness for people of all backgrounds and walks of life. In the same way, walking alongside others is necessary to witness Christ to them not only through our words but also through our **C.A.R.E.D.** (Compassionate, Attentive, Respectful, Efficient and Disciplined) **actions**. Diversity should not be *tolerated* but *celebrated*! You can discover more about *unity in diversity* in this great article by Scott Ridout converge.org/article/new-testament-bible-verses-about-diversity

Cultural skills

How we view authority and freedom can really vary according to our cultural practices. This is why we need to develop our cultural skills to be aware of our different cultures and different ways of thinking & working to be able to serve/ work together accordingly. We are sharing with you only generalities (which are not fixed and absolute) but for example, there are cultures which are very **tolerant** towards others who are different from them (even other denominations or religions) and others not really. There are cultures which really value **status & titles** and others not so much. There are cultures which really value and empower women (even single women) within the church/ community and others who view the **role of women** differently. There are cultures which encourage people to take **risks** whereas others prefer to avoid uncertainty. There are also 6 cultural dimensions that I encourage you to discover on this

link and which can really change how you view the world: chameleon-coaching.com/en/six-essential-cultural-dimensions-that-will-change-how-you-view-the-world/



Nowadays, we are so connected worldwide and we are so much in contact with what is happening around the world that whatever the community we are, we are all in one way or another influenced by several cultures and we often have people whose cultural attitude can be associated with **hot or cold climate cultures**. There are also people who are a mixture of both. It is why it is good to observe people (and even yourself) and to share about these different dimensions with your community to be aware of which culture mostly defines who you are (personally and collectively). Here is an extract from 'Notes from the book Foreign to Familiar' by Sarah A. Lanier (poetice.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Foreign-to-Familiar.pdf)

ORIENTATION: Relationship vs. Task

RELATIONSHIP: Hot-Climate Cultures

- Relationship based
- Communication must have a “feel-good” atmosphere

TASK: Cold-Climate Cultures

- Task oriented
- Communication must provide accurate information

- Though individuals may be otherwise, society is feeling oriented
- Efficiency and time do not take priority over the person
- Inappropriate to “talk business” upon first arriving at a business meeting or making a business phone call

- Though individuals may be otherwise, society is logic oriented
- Efficiency and time are high priorities, and taking them seriously is a statement of respect for the other person

COMMUNICATION: Indirect vs. Direct

INDIRECT: Hot-Climate Cultures

- It’s all about being friendly
- Questions must be phrased in such a way as to not offend by directness
- Use a third party for accurate information if you sense that a direct question will be too harsh, or not get the results you are seeking
- A ‘yes’ may not be an answer to your question. It may be the first step in beginning a friendly interchange. Or verbal compliance may be required by culture. (avoid yes-no questions)
- Avoid embarrassing others.

DIRECT: Cold-Climate Cultures

- Task-oriented
- Short, direct questions show respect for the person’s time as well as professionalism
- ‘Yes’ is ‘yes’, ‘no’ is no. No hidden meanings
- An honest, direct answer is information only. It does not reflect on how the person feels about you
- You can say what you think (nicely), and it will usually not be taken personally

IDENTITY: Group Oriented vs. Individualism

GROUP: Hot-Climate Cultures

- My identity is tied to the group (family, tribe, etc.)
- Group protects and provides for me
- Taking initiative within a group can be greatly determined by my role
- I do not expect to have to stand alone
- My behaviour reflects on the whole group
- Southern US doesn’t necessarily fit the group orientation

INDIVIDUAL: Cold-Climate Cultures

- I am a self-standing person with my own identity
- Every individual should have an opinion and can speak for him/herself
- Taking initiative within a group is good and expected
- One must know how to make one’s own decisions
- My behaviour reflects on me, not the group

- Team members expect direction from the leader

COMMUNITY: Inclusion vs. Privacy

INCLUSION: Hot-Climate Cultures

- Group oriented culture
- Individuals know they are automatically included in conversation, meals, and the other activities of the group
- Possessions are to be used freely by all: food, tools, etc.
- It is not desirable to be left to oneself
- It is rude to hold a private conversation or make plans that exclude others present

PRIVACY: Cold-Climate Cultures

- Enjoy time and space to selves
- People are expected to ask permission to borrow something or to interrupt a conversation
- Each person is considered to be the steward of his or her possessions and has the responsibility to maintain and protect them
- In a community setting, it might be common to label one's food, tools, etc. to set them apart from the group's common possessions
- It is acceptable to hold private conversations or make exclusive plans with a few people, not including everyone

CONTEXT: High-Context vs. Low-Context Societies

HIGH: Hot-Climate Cultures

- Who you are related to matters
- Who you know matters
- It is better to overdress than to underdress
- Watch to see how others respond in a situation in order to apply appropriate behaviour
- Remember to honour the people you are dealing with; too casual is insulting
- Ask a local person who has lived overseas for a while what is important to know
- Use manners
- Respect the rules

LOW: Cold-Climate Cultures

- Who you know matters, but not as much. What you know is important
- Do not be offended by the casual atmosphere
- Lack of protocol does not mean rejecting, nor is it dishonouring
- They do not know what your rules are, so leave your rules at home
- Address people by their given names unless others use titles

- Give attention to appropriate greetings

HOSPITALITY

Hot-Climate Cultures

- Hospitality is spontaneous, often without an advance invitation
- It is the context for relationship (even business relationships)
- Takes place in the home
- Host fully takes care of the needs of the guest. The guest pays for nothing
- A gift is usually expected
- Food and drink are involved
- Travellers are taken in and provided for

Cold-Climate Cultures

- Hospitality is taken very seriously and is planned for
- Not as spontaneous. Host usually needs advance notice of a visit
- Travellers are expected to make their own arrangements other than what is specifically communicated to the host ahead of time
- Guests need to expect to pay for their transportation and restaurants if visiting the US. If the host plans to pay, he usually will say so
- Hospitality is a special occasion, taking the full attention of the host

TIME & PLANNING

Hot-Climate Cultures

- Are not as oriented toward the clock as cold climate cultures
- Are event oriented
- Are spontaneous and flexible in their approach to life
- Respond to what life brings
- Consider that saving time is not as important as experiencing the moment
- Recognize that structure is required in some areas of life (the military, for example)
- Have informal visiting as part of the event

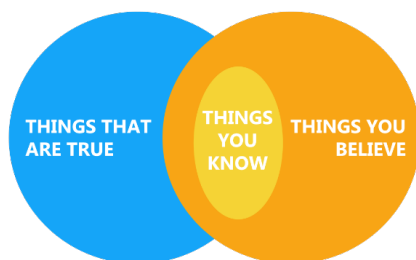
Cold-Climate Cultures

- Time-oriented
- Structured in their approach to life
- Enjoy using time efficiently
- Try to plan their day, and saving time is a value
- Expect the event (dinner, guest arrival, meeting) to begin at the time announced. Visiting or informally chatting happens before or after the event

HELPFUL HINTS

1. *Invest* time with those from other culture/ ethnicity in your community to ask them about their cultural food, songs, traditions, etc.
2. Look for a "culture interpreter" (if possible from that country/ ethnicity) who can tell you about the other country/ ethnicity.
3. Organise "Cultural nights" during which the different communities in your community can share their stories, food, music, traditions and interesting facts about their country or people group.
4. Read as much as possible about the history of the people from cultures in your community.
5. Seek out book sources in libraries or on the Internet.
6. Try to find out the values of the different cultures in your community.
7. Be aware of culture shock and culture stress which people can experience.
8. Learn phrases or songs in the other cultures' language.
9. Go listen, observe. Don't pass judgment until you have discovered the reason behind people's "strange" habits.
10. Identify which values/ dimensions describe better your country and those which describe better your community.
11. Identify which 1-3 of these values/ dimensions that could potentially create tension and problems with others.
12. Have fun activities (as fishing, eating, games, sports, etc.) with people from other country/ ethnicity.

Coming back to the Culture Iceberg, we also need to keep in mind that we are able to see usually only 10% of who people are (through their language, expressions, words, tonality and skin colour) and 90% are difficult to see (such as their beliefs, values, fears, prejudices, assumptions, bias, dreams and feelings). We need to prepare ourselves to constantly discover people around us as between the things that are true and the things that we believe, there is finally not so much that we can know. So get ready to never stop learning and discovering others!



Generational diversity

Even if people have the same ethnicity, every generation has its own *cultural differences* and we need to be attentive to them. Otherwise, it is complicated to work together. We encourage you to read more about it but here are basic differences between generations (especially about their relationship to media to better *connect* with them) and how we can link one another.



Builders (also known as Silent Generation, traditionalists)

Birth Years: before 1945

Current age: 75+

Media Consumption: Builders are usually quite discrete people who enjoy traditional media like television, radio, magazines, and newspapers. Many nowadays have a smartphone and are on some social

platforms like Facebook or Whatsapp but it is mainly to stay in touch with their families or friends.

Shaping Events: emergence of technologies that future generations would take for granted — from automobiles and aircraft to indoor plumbing, Great Depression and World War II



Boomers

Birth Years: 1946 to 1964

Current Age: 57 to 75

Media Consumption: Baby boomers are the biggest consumers of traditional media like television, radio, magazines, and newspapers. Despite being so traditional, many baby boomers have a Facebook

account. This generation has begun to adopt more technology in order to stay in touch with family members and reconnect with old friends.

Shaping Events: Post-WWII optimism, the cold war, and the hippie movement.



Busters (also known as Generation X, "Latchkey" generation, MTV generation)

Birth Years: 1965 to 1979/80

Current Age: 41 to 56

Media Consumption: Gen X still reads newspapers, magazines, listens to the radio, and watches TV (about 165 hours' worth of TV a month). However, they are also digitally savvy and spend roughly 7

hours a week on Facebook (the highest of any generational cohort).

Shaping Events: End of the cold war, the rise of personal computing, and feeling lost between the two huge generations.



Millennials (also known as Gen Y, Gen Me, Gen We, Echo Boomers)

Birth Years: 1981 to 1994/6

Current Age: 25 to 40

Media Consumption: 95% still watch TV, but Netflix edges out traditional cable as the preferred provider. Cord-cutting in favour of streaming services is the popular choice. This generation is extremely

comfortable with mobile devices, but some will still use a computer for purchases. They typically have multiple social media accounts.

Shaping Events: The Great Recession, the technological explosion of the internet and social media, and 9/11



iGeneration (also known as Gen Z, Post-millennials, Homeland Generation)

Birth Years: 1997 to 2012/15

Currently Aged: 6 to 24

Media Consumption: The average Gen Zer received their first mobile phone at age 10.3 years. Many of them grew up playing with their parents' mobile

phones or tablets. They have grown up in a hyper-connected world and the

smartphone is their preferred method of communication. On average, they spend 3 hours a day on their mobile device.

Shaping Events: Smartphones, social media, never knowing a country not at war, and seeing the financial struggles of their parents (Gen X).

Here are some *Cultural Differences* between generations that we should consider:

Older generations are usually more willing to commit themselves on a long term basis (despite the difficulties) compared to younger generations who prefer to enjoy a diversity of experiences and have a tendency towards short term **commitment** (which can also be caused due to conflicts with leadership). Older generations are usually more loyal towards their work, organization or church compared to younger ones who are ready to change if needed. Especially as for younger generations, what they consider as 'Kingdom work' is not limited only to church activities. For example, many youths can feel that caring for abandoned animals is also part of their mission for God's kingdom (Creation care).

Older generations usually have the tendency to have a high **power distance** between leaders and members/ staff but younger generation prefer to have a low power distance between those they consider as their leaders and themselves. It is why elders need to be aware that when youths say what they think, it is not always out of disrespect but it is sometimes out of respect.

Younger generations can sometimes be considered as 'unconscious' because they dare to take high **risks** compared to older generations who prefer security and who are more low risk taking. Youths want to prove themselves (first of all to themselves) and living in this connected world where everything seems to be possible, this is why they dare to do so.

Every generation has preferred communication methods (such as emails or social media) but younger generations have often led older generations in their adoption and **use of technology**, and this largely holds true today. Although Baby Boomers may trail Gen X and Millennials on native technology usage, the rate at which Boomers expand their use of technology is accelerated. In fact,

Boomers are far more likely to own a smartphone than they were in 2011. But the difference is that older generations have the tendency to simply tell Gen Z to “get off your phone”. It’s far more nuanced than that. Older generations might say: “What’s in front of you is real, digitalis fake,” but this generation thinks about technology in a completely different way. Gen Z’ers are able to form *real relationships* via digital mediums, and their social circles are no longer limited by geography. This is why they experience genuine stress and anxiety if they are separated from their phones. For them, switching off their smartphone is the equivalent of switching off reality itself. What would it look like, I wonder, for the Church to prioritise the training and deploying of online missionaries, engaging with young people in their native tongue?

Gen Z are self-starters, who through the internet, social media and in particular YouTube, are able to find whatever they’re looking for without the help of intermediaries – such as libraries, shops, teachers or even youth workers. They sincerely want to make a difference and they are more independent and self-directed than any generation before them. Leadership for Gen Z looks much more like collaboration and contribution than command and control. So are we creating avenues in the Church for their **voices** to shape our programmes and ministries? Are our church governance structures ready to set loose a generation that is passionate and able to make a difference?

You might be surprised to learn that young people see their **family** as a massive positive influence. Young people long for family, and the Church is supposed to be this family for a generation who are not strangers to broken families, absent fathers and living between estranged parents. Are we sharing only the gospel with our young people, or are we inviting them to be part of our day-to-day lives too?

Younger generations are also more **visually oriented** as their language is more rooted in videos, GIFs and emojis than in spoken words. A 40-minute entirely spoken presentation will not engage the Snapchat generation. The use of media, props, videos, photos and visual presentations is paramount if we are to communicate in a way this generation can understand.

Older generations have sometimes difficulties to cope with the new different styles of **music** (especially when they are considered 'noisy') but many youths have grown with the possibility to use earphones and to choose how loud they would enjoy their music or videos. There are music styles which can be considered as 'non-Christian' by all generations. Hymns can be considered as not "powerful" by youths because they "lack feelings" and older generations can reproach the new songs to be too simple or repetitive and not enough "biblical". This is why we encourage communities to vary their music styles according to the generations and cultures (languages) present.

For younger generations, **tolerance** is the ultimate value as inclusivity, diversity and equality are the ideals that have shaped them. For many youths, nothing that is external –whether it is a parent, peer group, the law or the scripture – is given more authority than that which is internal, because you are your desires– and thus freedom to fulfil your desires is no longer a mere pursuit of personal pleasure, it is a moral obligation. Truth is relative, and fulfilment comes primarily through discovering "who we really are" and having the freedom to authentically express that inner reality without hindrance. This is why, many youths consider themselves more "open" about sexual diversity, divorce and single parenting (which they can consider non-shameful options) which many older generations still consider taboo.

This is why when we are caring for, encouraging & linking people (whatever the generation or culture they are), we need to

do our best to have a good balance between supporting/ respecting the community (Organisation, church, agency or ministry) we are serving and the person (as an individual).



These information are inspired from these resources:

kasasa.com/articles/generations/gen-x-gen-y-gen-z ,

missionarycare.com/generational-differences.html, genhq.com/moments-shape-generation/ and contents from Harry Hoffmann online Member care

sessions (harryhoffmann.global/).

Youth Involvement

Why are we talking so much about the younger generations? Are you aware how our body is constantly renewing itself? In the same way, the Body of Christ (our local Christian Communities) need these youth as they are not the church of tomorrow but of today! We need to connect with the younger generations where they are and give them the responsibilities they deserve within our communities even if they will do things differently from us.



Once, I woke up with a big question in my head which was “How old were the apostles when Jesus was with them?” I did some research and discovered that Jesus had to wait up to 30 years old to start his ministry because, in the Jewish culture, you had to be at least 30 years old to be a ‘teacher’ who has disciples. And your disciples can be either the same age or younger than you. Knowing Jesus started his ministry at around 30 years old and died around 33-34 years old, the 12 apostles were aged between 18-34 years old (maximum)! These men who received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost day and started to evangelise the whole world were all young! We usually depict the apostles with beards on paintings and in movies but they were all under 35 years old! It is why I appreciate the vision of the World Council of Churches which is to see at least 25% of decision-making committees (at all levels) will be youth (18-35 years old). We both need the wisdom of the elders and the strength and passion of the youths to be vibrant Christian communities. We thus encourage every community not to only *expect* the younger generations to be involved in the local church but to be *intentional* about listening to their visions and dreams and sincerely do our best to help them be who God wants them to be.

To get our youth involved, we must invest in them and share with them about different types of ministries and missions opportunities (short-term or long-term) which they can be part of within our community or even with/ through other communities (church/ organisation). Like Jesus did, when he sent his apostles for mission trips (Mathew 10), it is good to mobilise and then support our members to live, at least once in their life-time, an **out-of-comfort-zone experience** to serve the Lord within their region or abroad for a certain period

of time. We recommend you to encourage your youth to have such an experience right after their secondary or tertiary studies (before they get additional responsibilities like studies, work or family). I hope that your community already organises *mission trips* (such as for evangelism, to plant/ start new churches/ communities, to develop Member Caring & Linking in other communities, to facilitate partnerships/ networks, to repair other communities' buildings/ facilities, to care for the needy, to translate Bible or other materials in local languages, to help other communities to develop/ steward their finances/ resources, etc.) but if not, there can be other communities/ churches within your locality who could be organising them and with whom you could partner to put resources together. If there is no local community organising such mission trips, you can also consider looking for inter-denominational mission organisations (such as Operation Mobilisation - om.org/en, Campus Crusade for Christ - cru.org/, Youth With A Mission - ywam.org/, etc.) with whom you can partner with to send your members worldwide.

Let's keep in mind Romans 12: 9-21 which tells us:

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary:

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Someone feels welcomed when he/ she feels that what he/ she says or does has a significance/ value for the community. Let's trust more those from different cultures or people from younger generations and let's give them opportunities to be decision-makers too within our communities. Even if they will do things differently, let's trust in them enough for them to trust us in return to seek advice and even accept criticism/ corrections to be more efficient for God's Kingdom! And this is why we need to adopt the *cross-culture* which values unity in diversity and one another as members of the same body; only possible through the price Christ already paid for all humanity on the *cross*. Let's always keep in mind that the great multitude that no one could number of Revelation 7 will be from every nation, from all tribes and peoples (which implies from different sex, colour and age) and languages!

----- Points to remember -----

- **Key idea:** We need to develop our cultural and generational skills to value unity in diversity and be one for the world to believe in Christ.
- **Key verse:** John 17: 21
- **Reflection:** Do we have similar or different generational and cultural categories in my community? Which ones? How is my community dealing with cultural and generational differences? Are we welcoming well 'strangers'? Are our members aware of the importance of unity in diversity? What can we do about it?

Linking

It's all about **Kingdom Collaboration**.

Since their first experience with Jesus, during the miraculous catch of fish (Luke 5), the disciples realised that they would not be able to cater for all the fish. They asked for help from other fishermen with whom they shared their blessing. Collaboration means to work jointly on an activity or project which should be, for every Christian, for the Kingdom of God. John Stanley describes Inreach resource servants as 'Generosity champions' especially when we are intentionally linking two individuals that we know have a common passion (heart/ interest) or are facing a common challenge so that they can support each other better in whatever they are called to do together and be more efficient. Linking is practical caring.



The basic principle of linking people is to look for the common denominator (vision, mission, passion, challenge, culture, etc.). As real Interdependency is not yet natural within the Global Church, we have to reach our brothers and sisters in Christ where they are and bring them to realise the power of serving together by facilitating **partnerships**. Even linking two Christians to serve together is a partnership. And if we want to facilitate partnerships among Christians, churches and organisations, we always have to spend much time in listening to them individually so that we ourselves can connect with them to link them with *potential partners* afterwards.

There are **four Relationship steps** before someone really collaborates with somebody else (become his/ her partner). To explain this concept, we will take the situation of someone who is coming to your place. The four steps are:

1. *Gate/yard* - Know one another

You will ask this person who wants to enter your home, who he/ she is, what he/ she does in life, etc. (This is usually the first time you meet and start to get to know each other)

2. *Doorstep/ entrance* - Like one another

After getting to know the person, you start to like him/ her enough to invite him/ her to get inside your home. (This is usually when you are willing to have activities or do things together)

3. *Saloon* - Trust one another

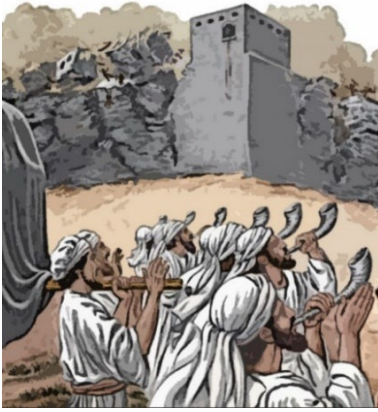
You sit with this person and get to know each other even more (this is usually when you are willing to have one on one quality time with the person to really build friendship)

4. *Kitchen* - Serve with one another

You are willing to let this person use what you have in your house so that you can prepare food together (this is usually when you trust each other enough to collaborate and put your resources in common to do something together)

This process (steps) can take much time according to each and everyone's personality, but I strongly encourage you to value the journey of building relationships with one another and even to ask yourself in which step you are with the people around you (friends, family, colleagues, etc.). There is no real collaboration (unity) without real relationships.

Interlinked



Even if we are not yet totally united, it is important to understand that we are all linked! Remember, after the walls of Jericho fell (Joshua 2-6), the army lost the battle because only one person had disobeyed the Lord and returned to the temple to steal. And when the Prophet asked why, the Lord answered: "YOU disobeyed and YOU stole, that is why YOU lost!" So we are ALL linked! Your problem is also mine and vice versa because we are part of the BODY of Christ!

This is why we encourage Christian communities to encourage their members (especially those involved in the same ministry or working groups) to appoint specific time (at least once a year) to have the opportunity (proper space/ time/ atmosphere) to tell to our brothers and sisters what we sincerely think they can improve to be better witnesses of Christ (promote growth on specific issues) and also to value, appreciate, praise and thank the Lord for what He has done through each one of us. Many people are easily offended when others tell them what they sincerely think of them but if we were all properly trained to accept criticism this would be part of our culture. It is also true that we can't have brotherly correction without brotherly relationships first! This is why we encourage people to build relationships and trust before attempting to correct other brothers and sisters in Christ. The Bible even encourages brotherly correction in Matthew 18: 15-17:

"If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

We need to realise that the sin of my brother or sister in Christ is also *our* sin and *our* problem. Are we concerned enough about one another to even go through these three steps to correct one another when the Lord shows us the sins of those we love? Is brotherly correction really part of our culture or do we judge others by assuming that they will never change so it is not worth to *waste* our time correcting them? Would we be willing and even value it if one of our brothers or sisters in Christ correct us (if needed through those three steps)? For God's kingdom sake, is it not worth it to dare to get out of our comfort zones to support and love one another? Isn't it time we take care of each other? Isn't it just time to love one another as the Lord asks us to love ourselves? In Colossians 3: 14, it is said:

And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

In many dictionaries, '**Love**' is described as an intense feeling for someone or a great interest and pleasure in something. But there are two words to describe 'Love' in the Bible; The Hebrew term 'Ahavah' or the Greek term 'Agape'. These terms include this aspect of making the choice to 'care and make sacrifices' for those you choose to love.

You can have a better understanding of these words through these videos by Bible Project (bibleproject.com/):

Ahavah - youtube.com/watch?v=HV_LUs2lnIQ&t=134s

Agape - youtube.com/watch?v=slyevQ1LW7A

It is said in 2 John 5-6:

And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

Love is the cement which can really keep us together to be able to stand firm when difficulties and challenges arise. We must realise that Love & Unity are the foundation of ALL ministries (worship, children, young people, etc.) and without love between us, unity is impossible but, above all, we cannot be true disciples of Christ as in John 13: 35 says:



By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

We are all different but as Disciples of Christ coming from different cultures and traditions, we need to keep in mind Ephesians 2: 19-22:

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

In Acts 11, even the apostle Peter had to face opposition because he went towards those who were different (the uncircumcised). But God encourages us to welcome everybody. Whatever background and nation or denomination they come from, as long as they sincerely want to seek God and consider Him their Father, are they not God's children?

As it is depicted in Revelations 7: 9-11, I am sure we will all be surprised about all the people we will meet in heaven standing in front of God's throne. We will all be experiencing *unity in diversity* (every nation, tribe, language) and at the same time *humility* as there will be no more hierarchy. Despite being a senior pastor or a simple Christian or being rich or poor during our time on earth, we will all be wearing the same white robes with the same worshipping tools (palm

branches), just like all the angels and those in the heavenly realm. If we have difficulties to experience Christian unity in diversity on earth, how will we be able to live as such for eternity?

My brothers and my sisters, is it not the time for the true Disciples of Christ to sincerely seek Christ and not please men? Is it not the time for the light of Christ to shine through us, through our unity? This unity which should no longer be an eventuality but a *priority*!

How to practically contribute to this unity?



First, as Inreach resource servants, we need to encourage those around us to **pray and glorify the Lord** (alone or with one another) for this coming Unity and for all the Christians around the world (Ephesians 6), if possible, every day, so

that His will be done. We can follow the example of Paul and his co-workers who were aware of the Colossians' Love in the Spirit and who said in Colossians 1: 9-12:

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has

qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

Or even by Epaphras in Colossians 4: 12:

Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.

We can thus pray that we all become better Disciples of Christ who are ready to question and renew ourselves every day to be able to live in peace with everybody and sincerely seek the Lord's will and NOT to please men.

Please note that when I say not to please men, I am NOT saying that we should no longer respect our leaders. The Word tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5: 12 to respect them precisely because the Lord has given them to us to advise and guide us (as they will be accountable before the Lord for that) but not to impose anything! Is it not the Lord Jesus, our Master, who should have the last word? Are we not all called to be HIS disciples? So, in everything you are told, I encourage you to welcome what is shared with you and then go and ask Jesus if it is really His will or not. Beware of not putting your trust in the people you serve but in Christ as you will be deceived and betrayed by them. We need to keep on loving one another as none of us is perfect. We also need to forgive those who hurt us as they don't know what they are doing (Luke 23: 34). It is our duty to be more Christ-like every day and to seek Jesus' will in everything we do.

In John 17:21–22, Jesus was referring not only to unity in the Church but also to the intimate union of believers with the Father and Son. He was saying, "Make

My disciples one, the way You and I are one with each other. Make them one with You in the same way that I am." The Father loves you and wants the same communion or *common-union* with you that He has with Jesus. Your prayer life can make you so intimate with God that you will naturally manifest His works, just as Jesus did. Most people could not understand how Jesus spoke with such wisdom and did such miracles. The disciples knew Jesus' secret because they observed his life-style of prayer. They knew He had a special communion with the Father, in effect, they asked: "Lord, don't teach us to do miracles; teach us to pray." If we learn what they learned, we will do the things Jesus did. Lord, teach us to pray! Through the example of Jesus in the Gospels, we can also learn from him how to prayerfully serve people:

1. Pray – seek God's will to know to whom to go or not;
2. Contact – connect with them;
3. Welcome – be good to them;
4. Sympathy – suffer with/ try to understand what they are going through;
5. Serve – meet their physical, emotional and spiritual needs;
6. Trust – get their trust/ believe in their potential;
7. Partner – invite them to follow the Father and to grow together.

One of the best ways (which often takes more time) to discern God's will is to seek His will together with other brethren in Christ. As when we are in one accord seeking His will, God can reveal Himself to us. It is said in Matthew 18: 19:

"Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

It is important to pray but, as Inreach resource servants, we also have to seize every opportunity among our friends, family, church, workplace, school, organisation, community, and anywhere God puts us to **share about Love & Unity** with our believers. One nice way to share about it is by sharing with them

about **The LOVE day (7 February)**. Here is the video: youtube.com/watch?v=IuXYgR1GWOQ&t=2s and the text which can help you to share about it (via a message or face to face):

Greetings dear brothers and sisters, in the name of the Father, our Saviour Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit our great Helper.

We are addressing to you with great pleasure and honour, as to those who share in the glory of our risen LORD, awaiting with us HIS return and working to share His gospel around us to the unreached and to those who want to grow more in the knowledge of their heavenly Father!



*As your brothers and sisters in Christ, we want to share with you an **opportunity** for all worshippers to serve together and to respond to Jesus' prayer in John 17: 21, 23 "May they be **ONE** as you and I are one... so that the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."*

*The LORD has granted an opportunity for us all to show our love for HIM and, most of all, our LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER on this occasion. On the **7th February**, we are inviting every Christian to celebrate THE source of Love, Jesus Christ, amongst brothers and sisters in Christ within our locality (if possible, with those living at walking distance from our home) or simply WHERE we are everyday (in our workplace, our school/ universities, our activities, etc.) to be living communities throughout the world as ONE Body in Christ.*

Love is the greatest of all gifts and the Holy Spirit is our Guide and Helper. We encourage you to be led by the Holy Spirit to meet all those who are already living for Christ.

Brothers and sisters, may we remind you that Christ is not divided! (1 Corinthians 1:13) We are all members of One Body, there should be no barrier preventing us from loving each other. Like us, guided by the Holy Spirit, and filled with that

*LOVE from God, go out and visit other brothers and sisters in your neighbourhood to greet them and to know them, knowing that this is the will of our LORD who calls us all to be ONE Body. Know their stories, their visions, their gifts and their talents. If possible, spend time and pray with them. May we take the time to **KNOW those we MEET every day**, our brothers and sisters in Christ... our neighbours!*

*On the 7th of February, you can meet at **any venue** which suits you in your locality or where you usually meet. Let's use this moment and share a meal, a cup of coffee/ tea or simply spend time together so that on this day, we will all in One Heart and as One Body spend some time in praise and worship together with all the worshippers meeting in their respective localities. In doing so, we can celebrate our Love & Unity and lift our voices to the One who makes our life and this event possible!*

Do not burden yourself with any special programme... just let the Holy Spirit lead you.

Receive our love and affection, being sure that we keep you in our prayers so that through you, the light of Christ and the Gospel can be shared to those who need grace, love and salvation from the one and only True God.

God bless you, all Glory and all honour belong to the Father!

At the end of your presentation, you can give to each one of them a small piece of paper (or a bookmark) and ask them to write the names of at least two Christians they usually meet (even within their community) but do not really know so that they can do this move towards them even if it is not the 7th February. And for sure, inspired by the Holy Spirit and depending on how much time you have to share about Love & Unity, you can also share with them about other points mentioned in this manual. Always keep in mind that the focus is to encourage your audience to move from prejudice to curiosity and from curiosity to strong relationship with brothers and sisters (inside and outside your local church) who are *different*. By building relationships and loving one another

through actions and words we experience heaven on Earth through our Love & Unity within the Global Body of Christ.



Through the various partnerships we were able to be involved in, we had the grace to experience the power of Kingdom collaboration. Do you know that even the secular world has realised the importance of collaboration? When we look at the various airline networks and alliances made worldwide which are able to provide a better service together

at lower cost while everybody is *winning*. Collaboration is really the key to success. If we could all collaborate at various levels, the Global Body of Christ could change the World! Do you want this world to change? That Christ may shine throughout the world through our Love & Unity? Are you ready to be a drop that will cause the ripple effect - a drop that can move all the other drops? This drop that will show an example and a way to true Love & Unity in the Body of Christ without any barriers of denominations. Imagine if each Christian could be this drop that moves other Christians around them. If each Christian organisation could be this drop that moves the other organisations around them, we could move the oceans! We would be a tsunami! We could change the world! The real question is: Christians, are we ready to change the world?

My brothers and sisters, let us be Disciples of Christ. Let us be His witnesses where He placed us WITH the people he entrusted to us. How? What we are proposing to you is to, first, do not be afraid to go to your brothers and sisters in Christ who say they follow Christ, accept them with their strengths and weaknesses, meet them where you are, at school, at work or in your locality, love them, grow together and support each other in order to be the light of Christ TOGETHER. It would be great if you can have moments of sharing and praying together (no need for a programme). We do not need to make official gatherings to live in unity and worship the Lord where He has placed us. If we can meet at the office, in the corridors or during lunch time to share what the

Lord is doing in our lives and to pray together in order to grow together as Disciples of Christ, it would already be extraordinary! We are not proposing to you anything new, but it is just a call to go back to square ONE and to live as the primitive/ original church was living just like in Acts 2: 46-47:

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. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

As Inreach resource servants, we should always **seek/ facilitate opportunities** for brothers and sisters in Christ, across denominations to



serve together to give them the opportunity to experience Kingdom collaboration. Feel creative to initiate or encourage whatever the Lord puts in your heart to do. My wife and I decided to have as theme for our wedding day - 'We are the Bride' - and God gave us the opportunity to gather more than fifteen church leaders from various denominations and ethnicities to co-celebrate our wedding celebration. We were even blessed to have brothers and sisters in Christ from all denominations in Mauritius and abroad involved in the preparation of the wedding which was a real success because the children of God had gathered and served together for a common vision. Love and Unity was tangible during this celebration. You can have a glimpse of it on youtu.be/qKApXXxnUIE



As Inreach resource servants, we need to encourage one another to meet others, **out of our comfort zone** in all simplicity of heart, know each other, love each other, take care of each other and help each other to share the light of God better with the whole world. When I say go to meet

the other, I don't mean to go to a different service every Sunday or Saturday, no! In general, we go to our local church once or twice a week and the rest of the week we are in our school, our work or our locality, isn't it? In everyday places where the Lord has placed each one of us, there are often at least one brother or sister in Christ from a different denomination with whom we can witness God together. Unfortunately, it is difficult to ask someone: "Do you consider yourself a disciple of Christ? ". This is why it is important that we meet outside our work, place of study or our church in order to get to know our family in Christ; so that we could, for example, pray for our work and our colleagues together in all simplicity as children of God who meet and love each other. We need to recognise that all those who want to follow Christ are our brothers and sisters in Christ with their strengths and weaknesses. We need to be witnesses of Christ through our Love & Unity where we are every day, so that the world may believe in Jesus Christ. So that, like the primitive/ original church, we could meet every day to share and pray together in simplicity as citizens of heaven, members of the same Body of Christ. If different armies had to face the same opponent, why not work together by sharing our resources and supporting one another to be more efficient? A common challenge/ adversity is always a good opportunity to unite people. When we fight together, we can thrive together! Here is a video called 'The Ninja vision' which illustrates this concept well on youtube.com/watch?v=obdhNsoIwF0

The COVID-19 worldwide pandemic and the various lock-downs around the world (since 2019) has really moved people to collaborate across differences. We lost many brothers and sisters and there were various positions/ points of views on how to fight the virus but, because of this common invisible enemy, there were many barriers which were broken and humanity had to redefine our

'new normal' (especially on how to use online platforms and tools to stay connected and support one another). We were able to overcome our differences and develop our flexibility to be able to support one another as much as possible. Here is a nice video by for King & Country called 'Together' which reminds us of what we went through youtube.com/watch?v=IR1Hk0FVi_k



All our God-given resources are meant to be shared so that we can all become stronger and more efficient as one Body in Christ. Even if the letters in the Bible were written for particular communities, those letters were then shared (through the Inreach resource servants) with the other communities too (Colossians 4: 16) and now we all have the grace to have access to these precious resources through the Holy Bible. It is our duty to share with our brethren in Christ across denominations all that we received to be stronger together!

One practical way to make the link between the resources and the needs is to **continuously investigate/ be attentive to and record** the potential needs around us and also to the potential resources people have/ are. For example, when you get to know people, you can categorise those you encounter by creating 'contact groups' on your phone or even an excel sheet on your computer according to their functions, gifts and talents. When you create a new contact on your phone, you can also put next to the name the particular gift/ talent the person has/ is. For example, if you know someone is a plumber, put 'plumber' next to his name or create a contact group named 'plumber' and add him/ her in it so that when you need one, you can easily look for him/ her (even if you forgot his/ her name). This is really handy to look for the needed resources according to people's needs afterwards (especially when their need is urgent).

You can also spend some time every week to go through the newspapers and if you see an interesting article or opportunity, you can **share** it with the person or the groups of people who came to your mind and who could be interested.

We always feel glad when someone see something and shares it with us as he/she thinks about us.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we need to stop waiting for others to experience Love & Unity within the Body of Christ. Let it start with US! The others will then follow. Let us be leaders by our example by supporting one another as brothers and sisters in Christ as we are all called to do. And above all, let us learn to stay focused on Jesus who said in John 10: 16:

I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd

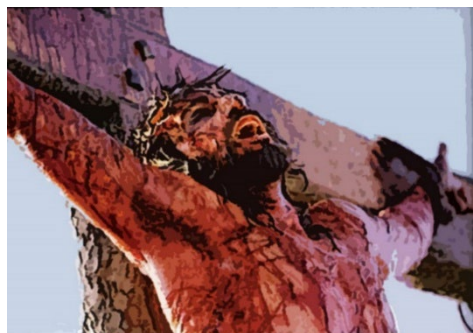
Let us learn to listen to the only voice of Jesus Christ, the only good shepherd and let us be examples among the flock through our love and our unity. Jesus prayed for us in John 17: 21:

that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

We cannot love Jesus and pretend that unity is not our problem because it is the only thing for which he prayed for concerning us. It is like a husband who makes only one prayer for his wife but she does nothing about it. Isn't it time for a change? Do you believe that Love & Unity within the Global Body of Christ is possible? Do you believe in the power of Jesus praying for all of us, His Disciples? This is why actively linking Christians to be the Body of Christ that God wants us to be is a very noble cause.

Sacrifices

As Inreach resource servants, we often will be backstage for others to thrive together on stage but always remember that their success is our success. It is completely worth it!



There are sacrifices which will be needed but always remember what Jesus, who already made the greatest sacrifice for us said in John 15: 12-13:

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

And 1 John 3: 16 tells us:

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

According to this verse, one word which can best define 'Love' is *sacrifice*. The basic needs of every human being is not food, shelter and clothing. It is to "love and be loved". Thus, we can also say that the basic need of human beings is to "sacrifice and have people making sacrifices for us". I can die of hunger or thirst or of any other death as long as I feel sincerely loved! Don't you think that every person on earth (especially all Christians) should be able to really feel loved? This is why caring for, encouraging and linking Christians, churches and organisations is really worth it. Through people intentionally building strong links between people, Love & Unity (or 'sacrifices' & 'Kingdom collaboration') within the Global Body of Christ will soon be a reality.

Working together

It can be very difficult to thrive when our team members are not really committed. For your community (local church), organisation or even company to be more efficient, I recommend you to apply the **seven steps to execute a successful community engagement strategy** (inspired by an article of Laura Soper on interact-intranet.com) which are:

1. **Make the vision, mission and strategy of your organisation clear** for every member and ensure that they are aware of them. You can talk about, print or project them on screens so that all members can see them as often as possible.
2. **Ask members' opinions, regularly.** In order to get accurate and real-time insight into how members are feeling, they need to be asked *little and often*. You can do this in a number of ways and there should be variety. Using online tools can make it quick, easy and accessible (even to remote members) as does including it as an agenda item in team meetings. Getting feedback in this way not only makes the information much more manageable as you'll be able to address one or two priorities at a time, but members will feel more engaged as a result. The more members will become used to this style, the more it will become a part of the culture. Members will feel more comfortable about answering questions and give you more honest feedback.
3. **Get each team leader involved.** Of course to really make an impact, everyone needs to take personal responsibility. This means the members themselves, team/ ministry leaders and the leadership (steering committee). Team leaders also have a responsibility to be the voice of their team. They should have an awareness of how their team is feeling, and how to respond if there is any evidence of disengagement.

To see if they are aligned, consider asking team leaders to complete a scorecard and compare the results. This can be just as easy to do and if it's online it may capture a higher audience reach. It is worth bearing in mind that this may highlight an engagement issue with the leadership itself. After all, Gallup ([gallup.com/analytics/](https://www.gallup.com/analytics/)) revealed the main factor in workplace discontent is not wages, benefits or hours, but the top leader. However tricky this may be, it's good if you're given the opportunity to address it.

4. **Share the results.** All too often the first team to see the results is the leadership. The results are only shared with members once they've been processed, perhaps when an action plan has already been decided, or sometimes they are not even shared at all.

The results shouldn't be held back, after all the members know how they've answered! It will take everyone a while to process the information and no one will expect answers straight away. By sharing immediately, you are showing full transparency and that you value all feedback.

What members will expect is information around the way you're going to approach it...

5. **Set up groups.** It's not unusual to find that changes implemented from a survey are decided based on what the Leadership feels is what the members are looking for. This may not always be the case, so even if the good intention is there, it makes the whole process quite pointless and frustrating for all.

Members' contribution in this process shouldn't just stop at answering a few questions. They will also have ideas as to how to make the changes that will improve their engagement. You could set up groups in teams, across branches (ministry teams) or even leaders groups.

There needs to be a facilitator (Inreach resource servant) per group – there isn't a problem solver at this stage. Each topic should end with the question, "What would have to happen to give this a top score the next time we ask?" This is a great way to focus minds and it enables your members to offer more targeted solutions.

6. **Make the changes happen.** At the risk of sounding like a broken record, get members involved in making changes – they will take responsibility to make the changes that will improve their lives. Consider creating working groups (for specific tasks) with representatives across the organisation/ community. This will

uncover any hidden knowledge or expertise within the community and remain inclusive keeping teams informed through their peers.

Of course this isn't always going to be the right solution, especially with more sensitive issues. And some will be easier to address than others, requiring just one person to own the action but keep everyone updated.

To combine the pleasant and the useful, I encourage you to seize every possible opportunity to *celebrate* (around a cup of coffee or meal) what you were able to accomplish together and at the same time update one another.

7. **Keep updating and asking.** This is crucial! Members need to see what's going on in order to keep their engagement and encourage them to continue answering honestly. This doesn't just mean sharing the good bits. If something can't be done – tell them. As long as you have a reasonable explanation and an alternative solution, it won't be a problem. By keeping everyone updated you will also find people offer suggestions and you will uncover expertise you didn't even know existed.

Of course the more positive news you can share, the better. Set realistic timescales so that you have enough time to prepare updates. Ask everyone involved what timescales they think is realistic around their tasks.

Most importantly, out of sight is not out of mind! Once the changes have been implemented, don't just close the action. Keep checking how members are feeling and whether they can notice a difference and what further suggestions they have. Essentially, think of this as a *cycle*.

It can be difficult for the Leaders to commit so much time to keep this cycle on-going. This is why it is good to set-up a team of Inreach resource servants (facilitators) who will be responsible for the ongoing Member Caring & Linking within your community.

Team building

One way of linking people is also by helping them to be more efficient as a team. Here are two resources we would like to share with you. You can discover and use the Ekklesia journey (daybreak-academy.org/ekklesia-journey/) to go through the 7 EKKLESIA Steps which are:



1. SHARING – Share our personal testimonies (how God touched our lives), how we live our faith, who we are, what we do and what is the dream/ vision that God has put on each of our hearts.
2. ANALYSIS – Analyse and reflect on what challenge(s) bring(s) us together (as a team)? What is our big common vision? What is our historical/ current context? What is our SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)? How do we feel about our situation?
3. RECONCILIATION – Ask for forgiveness and forgive each other for our past mistakes and adopt a positive attitude towards living together.
4. RELATIONSHIP – Learn to know one another on a deeper level (our struggles and difficulties, gifts & talents, our visions / dreams that the Lord has put on our hearts, life-goals, callings, how we serve the Lord, etc.).
5. LOVE – Learn how to really love one another (to see how to fill our 'emotional love tanks', listen and respect each other, etc.).
6. PARTNERSHIP – Agree on common vision, motivation and mission (go through priority roadblocks, what can be our priority responses and objectives). Look into who will be involved or not (GO/ NO-GO), share responsibilities. Organize task force/ time-table/ communication system.
7. WITNESS – Move in one accord and do, as a team, what we have planned together (being witnesses of Love & Unity and motivating other members of the Body of Christ to be more active and to get more involved/ committed in God's kingdom).

And the second resource is inspired from 'The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable' by Patrick Lencioni (2002) (amazon.com/Five-Dysfunctions-TeamLeadership-Fable/dp/0787960756/) and which thus encourages us to:



The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

1. *Pay attention to Outcome, Results and Goals* – such as by asking ourselves questions like: “Why are we a team? What is our Goal?”, asking ourselves personally: “I have done a good job when...” and by setting daily, weekly and monthly goals.
2. *Be accountable & check up on people’s work* – such as by asking team members questions like: “Have you done this? How have you done this? How did it go? Any feedback?” and by defining a clear job description (including expectations and consequences).
3. *Focus on commitment* – such as by encouraging one another to develop the right attitude and to play the best game we have. Leadership should motivate, celebrate wins, set clear goals and hold members accountable.
4. *Develop our ability to face Conflict* – such as by being aware that people can cope with conflicts in different ways (such as *Fight* (those who oppose us), *Flight* (avoid completely the person/ situation), *Freeze* (just do nothing about it), *Fake* (make as if everything is fine) or *Face* (see tangible ways how to deal with the conflict by facing the person/ situation)). This can be avoided or dealt with if the expectations and goals (daily, weekly and monthly) are clearly set to use them as references to know what went wrong or not.
5. *Build trust* – such as by working together to develop trust, have community (eating) together and by building trust on-the-job and off-work.

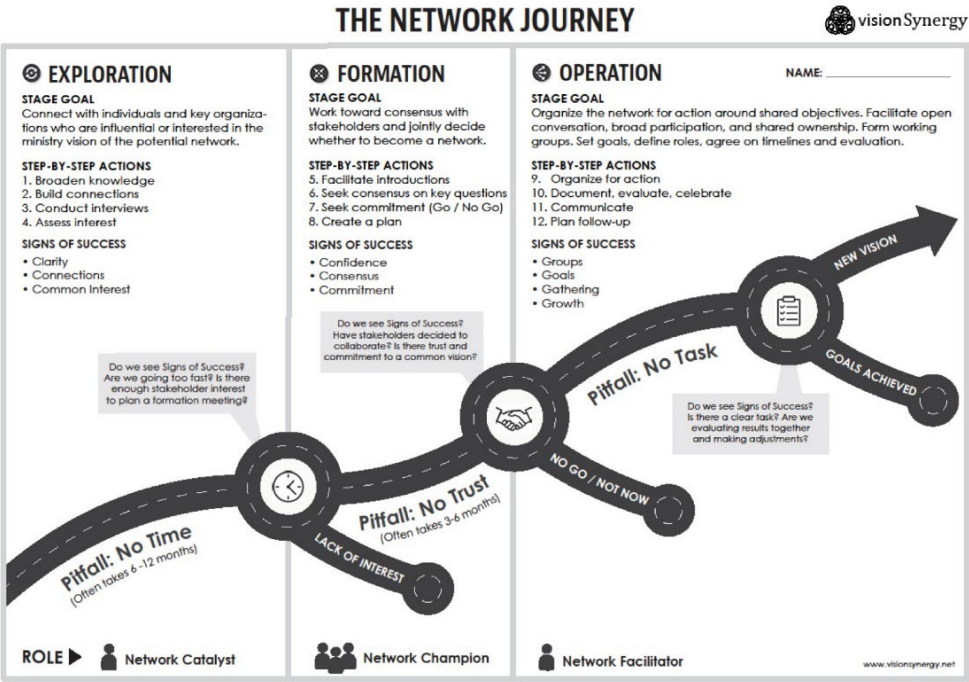
Networks and Partnerships

Throughout my experience, I discovered that one of the best ways to really care for active members is to connect them with others (within your community or outside) who have the same passion,



vision or who are facing the same challenges. Connected people with the same interests are called networks as *nets work*! When we feel that we are not alone and that we can be supported by others who are like us, we can really feel that nothing is impossible. Networking is usually natural as to some ways or another, we all have our networks of people we know and work with. But to be **effective networks** which have a *clear purpose*, that members can see an *alignment* between the *activities* of the network and the *outcomes* they believe are necessary to make an impact in the network's focus area, which have *strong relationships of trust* among a diverse group of members, which *organize and sustain* their operations so that members can be productively engaged and that there is *sufficient structure* in the network to enable members to interact, share, and collaborate with each other; we need to be *intentional* about it.

Here is the Network journey developed by VisionSynergy (visionsynergy.net/) which gives us an idea of the 3 stages of Exploration, Formation and Operation to develop an effective network.



To efficiently **facilitate networks & partnerships**, here are the **15 Critical Principles** from Phill Butler's book 'Well-connected' (faith2share.net/perch/resources/well-connected-by-phill-butler-free-ebook-1.pdf) which can be very useful as for Christian ministries working together in local cities/ communities or internationally, success is often elusive. Decades of field experience have revealed certain key principles that power virtually all effective partnerships. Build your ministry partnership with these principles, and the likelihood of success is very high. Ignore them, and the likelihood of failure is equally high!

Here's a quick look at the key success factors and the benefits that employing them can produce:

1. **VISION. An effective collaborative partnership is driven by a compelling and commonly-owned vision.** A strong partnership vision that will energise, motivate, and challenge each participant in the partnership must first of all be compelling. This means that it must be larger than the capacity of any one individual or single agency (church/ministry). The vision must also be commonly-owned. This means that it must connect to the individual values or goals of each participant such that each one can clearly see that they have a contribution to make. Partnership merely for the sake of partnership will only lead to failure. Partnership must have a larger purpose. An effective partnership will guard against the distraction of day-to-day operational demands by constantly renewing their focus on the big vision.
2. **STRUCTURE. An effective collaborative partnership builds only the minimum structure necessary to accomplish the big vision.** A good structure should not constrain or complicate the partnership. It should only be what is required to address the priorities for action. As the needs change, so can the structure. An effective partnership does not start by trying to establish conditions for membership or write statements of theological agreement. Consensus is usually better than constitution. An effective partnership starts by identifying the needs of the people the partnership is trying to reach or serve, the barriers to progress, the resources required, and the realistic priorities for action. The *form* of the partnership (how it is structured) should always follow the *function*.

3. **OBJECTIVES.** An effective collaborative partnership begins with **limited and achievable objectives which expand as the partnership experiences success.** While an effective partnership is driven by a big vision, it does not attempt to do too much too soon. At the beginning, an effective partnership does not try to pursue ambitious goals, where failure can lead to frustration and diminishing hope. Instead, an effective partnership focuses first on defined objectives that are both valuable to all the participants and have a reasonably high possibility of short-term success. This positive experience demonstrates the capacity of the partnership to realise change through its efforts. This in turn leads to greater confidence, increasing hope, and a willingness to pursue broader.
4. **CHAMPIONS.** An effective collaborative partnership has an **advocate, or "champion," within each partner agency.** A partnership champion is a person who clearly sees how their own agency can benefit from practical collaboration. This person promotes the vision of the partnership among their own colleagues and facilitates the involvement of their own agency in the partnership. Collectively, the partnership champions provide ongoing communication among the partners and help keep the partnership focused on the expected outcomes.
5. **FACILITATOR** (Inreach resource servant). An effective collaborative partnership has a **committed coordinator, or "facilitator," who serves the operation of the whole partnership.** The partnership facilitator is a person - or a team of people - approved by the partnership to coordinate its day-to-day operation. This person is usually loaned to the partnership by a partner agency that is dedicated to the big vision and allows the facilitator to serve in a neutral role for the common good. The facilitator has a deep personal commitment to the purpose of the partnership as well as the process of working together. Thus, this person must sometimes play the simultaneous roles of prophet (keeping the focus on the big vision) and servant (demonstrating concern for each partner). An effective partnership values the contribution of the facilitator and provides for their resources, training, and encouragement.
6. **DIVERSITY.** An effective collaborative partnership is made up of **a diversity of partners with their own clear identities.** A diversity of strong partners is essential for success. A strong partner is one who

knows who they are, what they care about, and what they do best. Partners who cannot clearly define their own identity, calling, or strengths will have difficulty seeing how they fit into the partnership, what they can contribute to the big vision, or how they can benefit from the joint effort. Strong partners will understand their potential roles more fully and will be able to evaluate the impact of the partnership on their own agency. Clear identities strengthen relationships among partners and reduce ambiguity, overlap, and duplication in the work.

7. **COMMONALITY. An effective collaborative partnership recognises and accepts the differences among partners but concentrates on what they have in common.** The focus of an effective partnership is always first and foremost on the common purpose that draws the partners together. Acknowledging differences is important, but a strong partner looks for commonalities with other partners in areas like vision, values, and experience. It is not necessary to agree on every aspect of history, methodology, and belief in order to accomplish something significant together. A strong partner values the diversity of the backgrounds of other partners but emphasises their common focus.
8. **PARTICIPATION. An effective collaborative partnership maintains the widest possible participation in decision-making.** Commitment, ownership, and participation is encouraged by actively engaging people in the process, not just the dream. An effective partnership is never top-down or hierarchical in nature. Partners give special attention to developing processes for planning, decisions, and communication that enlist broad participation.
9. **STAKEHOLDERS. An effective collaborative partnership recognises and meets the expectations of key constituencies.** There are more interests involved in a partnership than the partners themselves. As a partnership grows, it acknowledges at least four key constituencies: (1) the people the partnership is trying to reach or serve; (2) the partners themselves and the staff of their own agencies; (3) those who pray, give, and provide support for the partners and the partnership; and (4) the partnership itself with its own growing expectations. An effective partnership is aware of these constituencies and strives to continually communicate the progress of the partnership in ways that each constituency understands and appreciates.

- 10. TRUST. An effective collaborative partnership depends on relationships of trust, openness, and mutual concern.** A partnership is more than the "mechanics" of coordination, planning, strategies, and tactics. It is about real people working together in relationship. To be effective, there must be trust in both the people and the process. A strong partner invests the time it takes to know, understand, and appreciate the other partners. A strong partner is especially sensitive towards those from cultures or backgrounds other than their own. The heart of the Gospel is restored relationships, and at the very core, an effective partnership demonstrates this reality.
- 11. PRAYER. An effective collaborative partnership is committed to continual prayer and seeking the direction of God in all they do.** Strong partners realise that the true enemy is Satan and that the most significant barriers to progress are spiritual. They are aware that it is the intention of Satan to destroy relationships, fragment the people of God, and neutralise the effectiveness of their work in the world. An effective partnership overcomes the schemes of Satan as they seek the presence, power, and provision of the Spirit of God through prayer and communion together. They are also intentional in soliciting prayer from others outside the partnership. Strong partners who have spent time together in prayer listen and respond to the direction of God.
- 12. PATIENCE. An effective collaborative partnership is an ongoing process, not an event.** Strong partners know that it takes a great deal of time and effort to form and maintain a partnership. An effective partnership does not rush through the early stages of doing the research, identifying potential partners, building the relationships, establishing trust, and forming consensus. Much time is spent in one-on-one meetings before ever trying to call a meeting of the whole group to propose a partnership. Calling a big meeting too early is a quick way to kill a potential partnership. Strong partners are patient, and they know that the bigger the challenge, the more essential it is to form a foundation of common understanding. Strong partners also know that an effective partnership does not operate on its own, and they invest the collective effort it takes to maintain the partnership.
- 13. INVESTMENT. An effective collaborative partnership requires intentional investment from all the partners.** Strong partners know that an effective partnership does not come free of charge. It requires resources to accomplish the purpose of the partnership. An effective

partnership strives to keep the "overhead" of its operating costs as low as possible by avoiding complicated partnership structures, offices, equipment, staff, and so on. An effective partnership finds ways to share the resources of the partners and where the partnership itself requires additional resources to operate and accomplish its objectives, the partners contribute together to make it possible. For example, a partnership facilitator is often loaned to the partnership by a partner agency to function in a neutral role for the common good. The other partners will often, in turn, contribute to support the facilitator.

14. REINFORCEMENT. An effective collaborative partnership prepares for inevitable changes and conflicts by proactively reinforcing the values and skills of partnership among all the partners. Changes and conflicts within a partnership are inevitable. An effective partnership expects problems, disagreements, disappointments, and other issues which can negatively impact the partnership. But an effective partnership also expects positive changes as well, such as new leadership, new opportunities, and the potential for new partnerships. Whether negative or positive, these situations are most effectively addressed by partners who share the values and skills of the partnership process. People are not born knowing how to work together in teams or in partnerships. An effective partnership reflects on its learning and reinforces the best practices of partnership among the partners. New networks and partnerships are often launched out of existing partnerships; thus, a current partnership provides the best preparation for work in a new partnership.

15. CELEBRATION. An effective collaborative partnership appreciates the importance of ongoing reflection, evaluation, and celebration. Working in partnership to accomplish a big vision can be very challenging. It can take a great deal of time to achieve significant objectives, so an effective partnership celebrates progress - even in small things - along the way. An effective partnership is committed to shared success, and claims achievements in the name of the partnership. An effective partnership also develops clear measures to evaluate the work, and communicates these measures consistently among the partners. Strong partners reflect on their own contribution to the joint effort and the impact of the partnership on their own agencies. From the beginning to the end, an effective partnership honours God in everything.

Forming collaborative partnerships with these core principles in view can accrue a wide range of substantial benefits. Regardless of geographic locations or types of ministries involved, here is a selection of the kinds of benefits that can be realised:

1. **Potential and options for action to expand.** Working alone, no matter how sophisticated or substantial your resources, limits what one person or ministry can accomplish. Working with others who complement your strengths expands your potential and your horizons of ministry and impact.
2. **Achievement of goals accelerates, costs decrease, and waste is eliminated.** An effective partnership produces efficiency and reduces the gaps and overlap that result when we all do our own thing. Return on Kingdom investment increases.
3. **Individuals and ministries are able to capitalise on their strengths.** Effective partnerships allow people or organisations to do what they do best, to maximise their contribution rather than spreading themselves too thin by doing many different things—often poorly. When we join hands with others, we discover different, often complementary, strengths.
4. **The bigger picture comes into focus.** Effective partnerships let you see what's needed to accomplish the bigger vision, identify the missing pieces, and connect with resources to accomplish the vision. Getting all the pieces together, focused on a common objective, is a sure recipe for better outcomes.
5. **Flexibility increases.** Partnerships encourage individuals or ministries to play their unique roles. When they don't have to do everything, they have more options in timing, more available resources, and the ability to concentrate on what they do best.
6. **Risk diminishes.** The larger or more complex the vision or project, naturally, the greater the resources needed. Working in effective partnerships, we can share the load and reduce risk while increasing the speed of progress or the quality of the outcomes.
7. **God's power is released in a special way.** Working alone on challenging projects, particularly in our own strength without God's

presence and power, can be scary! God promised that His power will be present and released in a special way when we join with His people in partnership. (Psalm 133)

8. **We receive refreshment and new hope.** In challenging circumstances, hope keeps us alive. Whatever our vision, in our community or elsewhere in the world, the knowledge that others share our vision refreshes our spirits and sustains our hope. (Matthew 5: 9, Psalm 133)

And perhaps most importantly:

9. **Our work gains significant credibility.** God's people working together demonstrate the core scriptural truth: the work of Jesus restores relationships, both with God and with each other. Working in collaborative partnership infuses ministry with authenticity - both in word and in deed - and moves us closer to the fulfilment of the Great Command (Matthew 22: 36), the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 18-20), and the great, unfulfilled prayer of Jesus in John 17 (John 17: 20-23).

Feel free to take a look at Phill Butler's resources (with 140+ articles and 30+ videos) all around the topics of effective collaboration (partnerships and networks) and communication on kingdom-resource.org

There are two types of network/ partnership facilitators.

The first type (**Task-oriented facilitator**) wants a specific task/ cause to be accomplished or a challenge to be overcome and, thus, connects/ links people who can only do this great vision/ mission if they work together. The second type of network/ partnership facilitator (**People-oriented facilitator**) sees the great work that several people are doing separately and, out of caring for them, connects/ links them so that they can be more efficient together by supporting one another. It is good to define

which type of network/ partnership facilitator you are so that you can define which other type of facilitator you need in your facilitation team for your network/ partnership to be *both* task-oriented and people-oriented.



As facilitators who are often *in-between* people, 2 Corinthians 8: 18-24 can teach us an important principle. To show transparency and accountability while making the link between the needs in Jerusalem and the resources in Corinth, Titus (Paul's co-worker) was sent along with two other *respected* missionaries from other churches as *outside Inreach missionaries*. As resources are sent and shared within Christian networks and churches, it is a good practice to have different communities sending/ appointing their own Inreach resource servants for such distributions. But to be able to share our God-given resources, we need to build relationships and trust among one another's community/ church.

Unity should no longer be an eventuality but a priority for each of us because Love & Unity are the basis of ALL ministries! How to do it? We could encourage our brothers and sisters around us to:

- **pray and glorify** the Lord for the coming Unity of Christians. That we all become Disciples of Christ who are ready to renew themselves every day to sincerely seek the Lord and NOT to please men.
- proclaim our first **identity**, to be disciples of Christ (Christians), before being part of our denomination.
- go and **meet** other Christians (out of our comfort zone) so that we can really meet, in simplicity, take care of each other and help each other to share the light of God better to the whole world.
- **stop waiting** for the others to move but live this unity as simple children of God. The others will follow afterwards.
- Propose to your local Christian communities to **appoint Inreach resource servants** with elders/ pastors involved (if possible) to intentionally develop Member Caring & Linking within your locality. As an option, they could register themselves on the **Inreach resource servants Network** (goo.gl/VgbjMN) which is a platform connecting

brothers and sisters in Christ around the world to care for, encourage and link Christians, churches and organisations.

- **Share** with the whole world (or at least those around you) the importance of Love & Unity in the Body of Christ.
- See if there are opportunities to use the partnership/ networking principles (Exploration, Formation, Operation) to facilitate a **network among different Christian communities in your locality or country** around specific issues (felt-needs). This can give an opportunity to the maximum of Christians to experience Kingdom collaboration across denominations. Through our global experience, it is always good to have both a senior pastor and delegates involved in the issue networks for better engagement and commitment.

For example, several churches developed a partnership among 15 churches and 16 Mission agencies to reach the Sunda people - the largest Unreach People Group in Indonesia. Since 1860 and till 2018 (before the partnership) there were 60,000 believers among this people group. Within the next 5 years of partnership (2018-2023), 72,000 new believers gave their lives to Christ! Partnership works but we have to facilitate it! Unity just don't happen, it has to be created and developed!

- Above all, we encourage you to **live and experience** this Love & Unity where the Lord has placed you!



Keep in mind this **motto** which is:

Function brings people together,
Fellowship keeps us together,
Discipleship makes us grow together and
Christ's Love binds us together perfectly.
**BODY OF CHRIST, LET US BE THE
LIGHT UNTO THE WORLD**

Here are also some free materials I would like to share with you:

- 'Well connected' by Phil Butler (drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B615n3tk8nDzaFREMzB5N3Rsb1k?resourcekey=0-YRfB_oFRwQK3KRhxb1fj2A&usp=sharing) – where you can learn better about what is 'Kingdom collaboration' and how to be a good facilitator (Inreach resource servant) in facilitating networks and partnerships. You can download the book in various languages and its summary.
- Visit visionsynergy.net to be able to have access to many tools and training (videos, PowerPoint and texts) to understand the importance of working together as networks and partnerships.
- Register on synergycommons.net to be able to be connected with various facilitators (Inreach resource servants) around the world and to be able to attend online webinars and cohorts to be equipped better in linking members within the Body of Christ.
- Visit linkingglobalvoices.com/ to discover the various Christian networks involved in missions worldwide. We live in an unprecedented period of mission history. The new paradigm of "from anywhere to everywhere" is by nature complex, resulting in an increasing need to partner with others for effective ministry.
- Visit (and contribute on) max7.org/ which is a global platform where Christians around the world have shared millions of free resources about children and family ministry in different languages according to your needs. A very good example of Kingdom collaboration.

Networks are a strategic tool for ministry leaders navigating the complexities of the globalized world of missions. Mission minded churches and agencies are developing their "network engagement strategy". Healthy networks facilitate the sharing of resources and are constantly birthing partnerships. What a testimony the Global Church could be if we have efficient Christian interdenominational networks and partnerships in every spheres of society actively witnessing Christ together? Jesus' prayer of Unity within His body could be tangible for the world to turn to Him!

Points to remember

- **Key idea:** We need to be intentionally linking Christians to experience Love & Unity (Sacrifice & Kingdom collaboration) for the Global Body of Christ to be efficient witnesses of Christ to the world.
- **Key verse:** Ephesians 2: 19-22
- **Reflection:** Is my community involved in networks/ partnerships with other Christians from other denominations and/ or organisations? What is the main challenge that we are facing in my community/ society? With whom could we collaborate to face it?

Overcoming

God never promised us an easy journey in life, but only a safe arrival. We all go through different kinds of difficulties we have to overcome alone or together. Remember that Jesus overcame the grave and all apostles went through



hardships. The primitive/ original church was really persecuted for who they were and many Christians are still facing various kinds of dangers nowadays around the world. We need to be aware that following their examples implies going through hardships too but, by God's grace, we can overcome them together.

Our ability to overcome any situation is a matter of attitude! For example, every difficult situation can either be taken as a problem or a challenge/ opportunity to grow. The way we see something will highly influence how we deal with it. Without additional time we had, due to lockdowns because of COVID-19 and the *detours* (change of plans and programs) which occurred, this manual you have in your hands would be very difficult to produce. This difficult situation gave us the opportunity to produce this manual. Lockdowns worldwide also moved Christian communities (even the elders) to adapt themselves and be able to review their way of having church meetings to go online and use tools like YouTube, Zoom, etc. Remember that it is because of the persecution of the primitive church in Jerusalem which naturally contributed to the movement of Christians to witness Christ from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. We should thus try to develop ourselves to have a more positive attitude towards difficulties and start to embrace **detours** as in every challenge, there is an opportunity! No pain, no gain!

Risk Assessment

But this does not mean that we don't need to recognize the pain and sufferings of those going through hardships. We should make ourselves available to refresh their spirits and support one another to move on to fulfill our God-given purposes on earth. We are all at risk in one way or another. We need to be intentional to be aware of the various risks which can affect the members of our community. Keep in mind what the Bible tells us in Proverbs 27:12 and 14:16

A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.

The wise are cautious and avoid danger; fools plunge ahead with reckless confidence.

There are different things which can affect us, such as: robbery, sexual violence, domestic violence, diseases, pandemic, national/ cultural conflicts, war, natural causes (earthquakes, tsunami, heavy rainfall, flood, etc.). We highly encourage you to read more or to attend courses on Risk assessment (such as RAM workshop - better-than-gold-faith.blogspot.com/) but we will share with you some simple tools you can use.



The "*Risk Bow Tie*" is a common tool to understand risk as a comprehensive concept that includes all of these characteristics: *causes*, *risk events*, and *consequences* (which can

also be positive). For example, because of a weak police protection (causes), your family can be a victim of robbery (risk event) which will result in the loss of property (consequences). Here are the steps to use this tool:

1. Make a list of all potential risk events that concern you or your team/community. (Alternatively, you may choose to record these on "bow tie" forms).
2. Identify and record everything that may be a factor causing each risk event to occur.
3. Identify and record the consequences (both positive and negative) that would result from each risk event.

4. Consider additional instruments and resources (such as security specialists) to assist in evaluating and assessing the risk events that you have identified.
5. Make a plan for getting regular streams of information and how you will regularly keep up on the information and analysis.

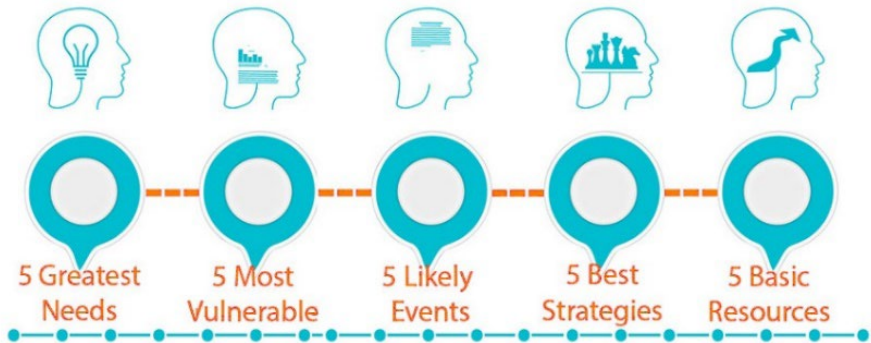
Using this tool, we can assess potential risks that our members can face and start to plan strategies to respond to them before they happen. If possible, by preventing them to occur as “prevention is better than cure”. This is called **preventive care**! But we need to be aware of who are the most ‘vulnerable/ at risk’ in our respective communities. Here is a list of groups or kinds of people who are likely to experience additional stress when crisis looms (by Dr. Laura Mae Gardner’s ‘**At risk populations**’ - globalmembercare.org/pdfs/AtRiskPopulations_Gardner.pdf):

1. *Leaders*. They have the responsibility of knowing what to do and of doing it, all the while caring for their people.
2. *Mothers with young children* (they are often chronically depressed due to isolation, frequent illnesses, chronic exhaustion, lack of help, sleep deprivation, etc).
3. *Double jeopardy people*. Those who are at critical intersections of life stage and mission stage (i.e., going to the field and having their first baby, or children leaving home along with some big mission event).
4. *Emotionally fragile* people, empty people, ‘kid glove’ or ‘high maintenance’ people, angry people. That anger may be directed toward administration, or with others, or within their own families, or at their church because of failure to support them.
5. *Extreme introverts* without social skills. These folk may withdraw excessively or look for needs to be met in other cultures instead of their own group. Or they may ‘escape’ into unhealthy means of comfort (pornography, etc.)
6. Those who are *isolated* geographically or socially from own language and culture. These folk have no peers or same language speakers close by. They may experience loss of self-identity, loss of self-esteem, and often receive no positive feedback or affirmation.
7. *New members*. Everything is new, and they may feel like a baby, with no control over anything, and feel unable to predict what is likely to happen.
8. *Finishers*, who have come in to the community/ organization with expectations, or long-time members who are completing their life work.

These folk may have high expectations of the way things should work (and they don't) or grief at finishing but seeing so much still undone, or feeling regret about what they didn't do.

9. People who have been through *another crisis recently*, or a very traumatic one that is very much like this one.
10. People with *hidden trauma* in their past.
11. People who work where it is dark and cold, or where freedoms are *restricted*.

Remember, though, that most people are vulnerable at different points in their lives. No one should be chastised or demeaned because they lack the coping skills others seem to have.



To assess the needs of our community, we can use the **5by5 plan** by asking ourselves the following questions:

1. What are the five *greatest needs* of our entity?
2. What are the five *most vulnerable populations* within our community?
3. What are the five *events* most likely to happen to some of our members within the next year?
4. What are the five best *strategies* to begin to meet some of these needs?
5. What are the five most *basic resources* we need in order to begin to care well for our membership?

You can make a list of answers for questions 1-3 and put them in this **Risk (severity) assessment grid** (between the Potential severity rating/*Impact* and Likelihood severity occurs/*Probability*) to define which are the most urgent needs of your community and see what strategies you should develop accordingly. It is good to do such risk assessments as often as possible to stay up-to-date.

		Potential Severity Rating			
		Minor	Moderate	Significant	Catastrophic
Likelihood severity occurs	Very Likely	Moderate	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Likely	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
	Unlikely	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High
	Rare	Very Low	Very Low	Low	Moderate

These tools are from Gardner, Laura Mae. ‘Healthy, Resilient, & Effective in Cross-Cultural’ ([amazon.com/Healthy-Resilient-Effec>ve-Cross-Cultural-Ministry-ebook/dp/B07BFQNNX4/](https://www.amazon.com/Healthy-Resilient-Effective-Cross-Cultural-Ministry-ebook/dp/B07BFQNNX4/)) and Harry Hoffmann online Member care courses (harryhoffmann.global/)

A Christian approach to ‘risk’ is to consider it as a ‘potential loss or gain for Christ’. A risk is a *tension* which will always be there as we all take various types/ levels of risks everyday (such as walking on the street or driving a car). We need to be aware of this, but instead of living in fear, we need to embrace/ accept the challenges we will face in our lives and prepare ourselves to respond accordingly. To be able to deal with potential risk which can affect us physically, emotionally, relationally, intellectually and spiritually, we need to prepare ourselves to cope with it before the risk event happens to either avoid it or to walk alongside those going or who have gone through a specific crisis or disaster. Here are some ways to prevent/ avoid/ prepare ourselves to face different types of risks such as:

- keeping good healthy habits and practices (such as eating healthy food at regular time, having enough rest, having regular physical activities, sitting correctly to avoid back pains, doing our best not to sit too much, etc.)
- having an insurance or contributing in retirement pension (if we can afford it)

- continuously developing Member caring, encouraging and linking within our communities
- assessing potential risks and developing Safety practices in both our home and work environment (keep utensils out of reach of children, have a fire extinguisher nearby, repair/ get rid of any broken electrical device/ apparatus, wear appropriate gloves for appropriate work/ duty, etc.)

We are not always aware of the potential risks around us. If you think that someone can be affected in one way or another by a risk event and you want to help him/ her process it through a risk processing conversation, you can use the **Triple A Method** which is to:

1. *Ask*: Enquire about how someone is being affected by a risk or danger event (How you are doing?)
2. Invite *Awareness*: Help them gain awareness for the situation (What happened? Why?)
3. Encourage *Action* steps: Explore helpful ways to cope (Not giving answers/ solutions)



Needs

We all have needs, but we will not be aware of the various needs of our members within the community if we don't assess them. God knows all our needs, but for us to know our members' needs and to respond accordingly, we need to ask them and then record them. One way of doing so is through *Member care forms* (daybreak-academy.org/member-care-forms/) which we can ask members to fill and, with the results, act accordingly.

Another way is to send Inreach resource servants towards members to investigate about their needs, define appropriate strategies/ resources to respond to these needs (such as looking for appropriate volunteers/ professionals) and then define communication strategies to let members know about it (such as a poster on a notice board or an online platform which we can assess these information – a good example is Saddleback's Member Caring &

Linking ministry platform that you can view on this link: saddleback.com/care). When we talk about 'needy people', we often think only about people with financial needs but there is a lot of other needs/ challenges (often unspoken) that we can help our members to overcome by providing/ facilitating/ linking them with:

- Online services/ meetings (for those who can't attend for various reasons like restrictions, distance, sickness, disability, transport, etc.)
- Academic/ Practical skills classes (literacy, numeracy, how to use computer/ social media, help for homework/ school, art, budgeting, etc.)
- Care for vulnerable families (people coming from foster, adoptive, kinship, reunified or safe families)
- Career coaching (for unemployed, underemployed or transitioning careers)
- Counselling
- Celebrate recovery/ crisis response (to help those who went through different types of crisis to process it individually or collectively)
- Small groups (for neighbours, adults, students, kids, etc. to grow as a community together)
- Legal Aid (for those who need legal information and direction in various areas of law)
- Memorials (to serve families who have lost a loved one)
- Mental health support (reduce the stigma of mental illness and help individuals living with mental illness and their families)
- Prayer (to lift people's requests up before the Lord in prayer)
- Resource coaching (for those who need help as they are not sure how to tackle the challenges they are facing)
- Support groups (to offer Christ-centred communities filled with comfort, strength and hope to face the common challenges we face not to impose ourselves but to be present for one another). Support groups can be:
 - RELATIONAL (such as women who were hurt, Adopted, Kinship, & Foster Care people, Divorced, Parents of LGBTQ/ children, people who went through Miscarriage, Still Birth and Infant

Death, Families with Incarcerated Loved Ones, Grief Support for Loss of a Spouse or child, spouse going through difficult/ complicated Marriage, Abused Women, those Pregnant After a Loss, Separated Men, Separated Wives, those who loss someone by Suicide, Veterans of the Armed Forces, Widows, etc.)

- MEDICAL (such as for those who, themselves or close people to them, are facing everyday Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Alzheimer's, Autism, Bipolar, Brain Injury, Breast Cancer, Cancer, Cardiac, Chronic Pain/Illness, Couples Infertility, Families and Friends of those with Mental Illness, HIV and AIDS, Kidney Disease, Parkinson's, Postpartum Depression, Prostate Cancer, etc.)



It is important to realise the value of being part of a **small group** (which can also be in the form of a cell group, church house, support group, connect group, etc.) to have a small and safe environment to share, to grow and to be able to support one another better.

If possible, it is good to be part of a small group in your locality so that you know that you can count on the other members anytime. According to Wilson and Hanna (1990), a small group is defined as, "a collection of three or more individuals who interact about some common problem or interdependent goal and can exert mutual influence over one another." They go on to say that the three key components of groups are, "size, goal orientation, and mutual influence." Interpersonal communication is often thought about in terms of a dyad, or pairs. Organizational communication might be thought of as a group that is larger than 12 people. While there are exceptions, for the most part, group size is often thought of in terms of 3-12 people. Even Jesus had his small group around him and valued them. Keeping in mind that *linking is practical caring*, to help people to overcome difficulties, it is good to encourage every member to be part of a small group and link them with the appropriate group

according to their particular needs and people among whom they can feel they belong or feel welcomed.

We need to walk alongside those going through difficult times not for them to *know* but to sincerely *feel* that you respect and care for them. We often have the tendency to think that we *know* what people need and to be *pushy* towards them to do what we think they have to do. People are individuals who heal and overcome situations differently and we have to value and respect this. Even after a difficult event, difficult times can still be here.

Stress

We all go through difficult/ challenging times which can result in additional stress. *Stress* is a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. Stress is your body's reaction to a challenge or demand. In short bursts, stress can be positive, such as when it helps you avoid danger or meet a deadline. We all go through different levels of stress and this is why we need to listen to our body as how it reacts can speak more than what we think. We need to encourage our members to be aware of the consequences of too much stress on us (such as Anxiety or irritability, Depression, Panic attacks and Sadness) especially if we live in a high-stress context/ culture. We can't avoid stress, but we can stop it from becoming overwhelming by practicing some daily strategies such as:

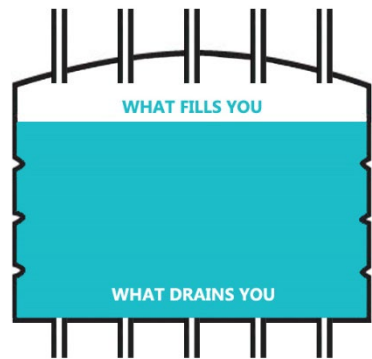


- Exercise when we feel symptoms of stress coming on. Even a short walk can boost our mood.
- At the end of each day, take a moment to think about what we've accomplished — not what we didn't get done.
- Set goals for our day, week and month. Narrowing our view will help us feel more in control of the moment and long-term tasks.
- Consider talking to a therapist or a member of our community about our worries.

Here is a great article about Stress and how to prevent it:
my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/11874-stress

Applying the **Energy Tank Principle** is a good way to help us to cope with stress. To use it, you can:

1. print or draw this diagram on a sheet of paper,
2. write the five main things that personally fill you on the top of the tank,
3. write the five main things that personally drains you at the bottom,
4. write down 1-3 limited achievable objectives (for a period of maximum 3-6 months) to ensure you have enough of what fills you and decrease/ avoid what drains you, and
5. share about it with at least one person close to you (for support).



We encourage you to do this exercise at least once a year to re-access what is filling or draining you (which can really be anything) and to share about it with someone (or your small group) to be able to support one another. It can be sometimes hard to accept what really, sincerely, fills us or drains us because of shame or guilt. But it is important to be *real*/towards ourselves by admitting and accepting who we are or not. For example, if someone really enjoys watching cartoons or doing something people might consider silly to fill his/ her energy tank, it is fine. We need to accept them and even ensure that we do them as often as possible to refill ourselves. If someone feels that seeing his/ her extended family is draining (especially in a cultural environment where regular family meetings are important), we need to be aware of it and see how we can talk about it and see how we can decrease the times we personally attend family gatherings. If you feel that taking care of people (or any ministry or work you are involved in) is starting to be draining for you, it is important to see when you can have a time of rest from it as soon as possible to avoid any potential burn out. **Burnout** is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by

excessive and prolonged stress. Here is an interesting article about how to prevent and treat it: helpguide.org/articles/stress/burnout-prevention-and-recovery.htm. There is also an online test from Spiritual First Aid to check if you are close to burnout: quiz.tryinteract.com/#/61dc8243b3d29400186f178b. You can also download this free e-book on '101 ways to overcome burnout' on: spiritualfirstaid.org/101-ways-to-overcome-burnout.

Dark times

We need to remember that God made us all different in every aspect. There are people who may seem to always stay positive whereas there are many people (even many Christians) who go through depression or other



negative constant feelings (they would also like to get rid of). **Depression** is a constant feeling of sadness and loss of interest, which stops you doing your normal activities. Different types of depression exist, with symptoms ranging from relatively minor to severe. Generally, depression does not result from a single event, but from a mix of events and factors. It can be caused by Family history, early childhood trauma, brain structure, medical conditions or even drug use. It is good to be aware of what those going through it feel to not judge them but rather have an empathic attitude towards them. Here is a great video by the World Health Organization called "I had a black dog, his name was depression" to have a glimpse of what people going through depression feel: youtube.com/watch?v=XiCnniLQGYc and also great resources about 'everything you want to know about depression' (and its treatment): healthline.com/health/depression or my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/9290-depression on

According to the World Health Organization; "Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution

to his or her community.” We need to be aware that everyone has some risk of developing a **mental health disorder** (such as anxiety disorders, panic disorders, phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorders, Post-traumatic Stress disorders, mood disorders and schizophrenia disorders), no matter their age, sex, income, or ethnicity.

Here is a great article about mental health disorders, early signs and potential treatment on medicalnewstoday.com/articles/154543#definition

Our members experience different types of negative experiences which are both known and unknown and such experiences can even lead to suicidal thoughts. Even if **suicide** is *taboo* in many cultures, when we walk alongside our members, we need to be able to talk about it and be aware of what we can do when we discover/ discern that someone has suicidal thoughts. If you know someone at immediate risk of self-harm, suicide, or hurting another person:

1. Ask the tough question: “Are you considering suicide? How?” (don’t be afraid to ask as, trust me, it can save life)
2. Listen to the person without judgment (keeping in mind that this person’s pain is the main reason for his/ her suicidal thoughts).
3. Call a local emergency number or communicate with a trained local crisis counselor.
4. Stay with the person until professional help arrives.
5. Try to remove any weapons, medications, or other potentially harmful objects.



We need to be aware that Christians are NOT super-humans and that we all can go through the ‘Dark times’. Keep in mind that Jesus himself cried out to God when He felt that his father had forsaken him on the Cross (Mathew 27:46), that the great prophet Elijah asked God to take his life (1 Kings 19:4), Joseph went through hard times as a slave and in the jail, Job was crying out his pain to God and felt He was not answering (Job 30:20), many apostles spent much time in jail and were beaten and there are several psalms which are lamentations (Psalm

13). There are many different factors/ experiences which can contribute to these dark times. One of them is **Moral injury** which refers to the intense psychological distress which can follow actions, or the lack of them, which strongly clash with someone's moral or ethical code and this can lead to develop other mental health disorders or suicidal thoughts. You can discover more about it and its causes by viewing this video by Kings College London on youtube.com/watch?v=QX8_QkNUoy8

Our members (even our leaders) can also go through such darkness but we can stay positive knowing that after they have gone through such times, we can transform and be *more equipped* to face pain as it is less painful (Wounded Healer), we experience deeper love (Compassion), we realize that *doing* is less important than *being* and we value even more close relationships. Hard times also give us the opportunity to understand better those who are also going through it to care for them better. One person's pain can open a pathway for another's healing. It is good to pray for people but only praying is not always the best thing to do. We can care for those going through such situations by supporting them or linking them to appropriate professionals for proper treatment (Counselling or therapy) especially if we feel we can't handle the situation. We can't always heal others but we can, at least, show them:

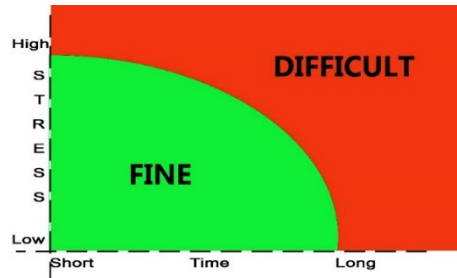
- Cognitive Empathy (I understand your pain...)
- Emotional Empathy (I cry with you...)
- Compassionate Empathy (Acts of love...)

Here is a great article about these **Three forms of empathy** on tacomachristiancounseling.com/articles/three-types-of-empathy-which-is-most-important and an article on how we can handle dark times by Sally Morgenthaler on christianitytoday.com/biblestudies/bible-answers/spirituallife/handledarknights.html

Trauma

People experience trauma when they respond with intense fear, helplessness or horror when they are confronted with something that involves the threat of

death or serious injury to themselves or others. This may be something people actually experienced themselves, something they witnessed or someone close to them have experienced (such as accident, assault, rape, conflicts, natural disasters, epidemics, etc.). Although nearly everyone living



through such events has some symptoms for a week or two, some have much longer-lasting minor symptoms that do not interfere with their lives. However, some experiencing severe trauma and high level of stress for a long period of time can develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and their symptoms are:

- Re-experiencing the traumatic event in the form of having recurring images or thoughts, or distressing dreams, feeling as if the event is happening again, and reacting physiologically to stimuli associated with the event or similar to the event
- Avoiding things associated with the trauma, such as conversations, activities, places, people or feeling detached from others, unable to experience emotions, and unable to remember significant parts of the trauma
- Experiencing symptoms of increased arousal, such as being easily startled, unable to sleep, irritable or angry, and having difficulty concentrating

These symptoms may occur immediately or be delayed for months or years. They may last for a few months or for many years. It is often necessary to refer them to professionals who can treat them if it is serious but there are things we can also facilitate to help those who went through traumatic experiences.

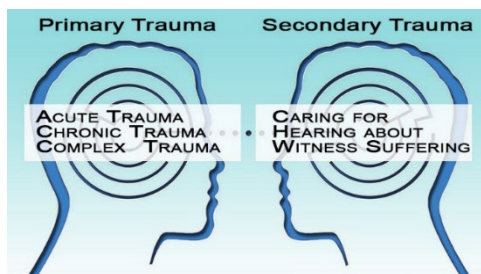
Here is a great article by Ron and Bonnie Koteskey about Trauma and PTSD and **Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)** which is a method of helping prevent PTSD from developing in someone who has experienced trauma and which should be done between 24-72 hours after the crisis: missionarycare.com/trauma,-ptsd,-and-cisd.html

Here is a practical booklet called 'Beyond disaster; A survivor's guide for spiritual First Aid' (cloud.squidex.io/api/assets/thi-beacon/3a7a4bfa-39ff-49ba-863f-3f4d914166f4/) you can download and share with those who have survived a disaster (such as the COVID-19 pandemic/ lockdowns) to help them with practical ways to care for themselves and their loved ones. It also can help them recover emotionally and spiritually from the trauma they experienced. This booklet can even help them to lament/ cry out to God! You can discover more resources from the Trauma Healing Institute and how to facilitate them on traumahealinginstitute.org/resources

There are also great resources about trauma & resilience on traumaresilience.com/training-materials.html or in their handbook that you can order here traumaresilience.com/

Sarita Hartz also shared in her article on saritahartz.com/a-missionarys-story-of-ptsd-and-healing/ the four ways to heal from trauma or PTSD by normalization, safely sharing, acknowledge trigger and have a plan and speak truth over yourself.

It can be hard to walk alongside people going through hard times if we don't equip ourselves too. If you feel called to care for people at deeper levels, we recommend you to look for opportunities to be trained for counselling (even through online courses). **Counselling** is a talking therapy that involves a trained therapist listening to people and helping them find ways to deal with emotional issues. Sometimes the term "counselling" is used to refer to talking therapies in general, but counselling is also a type of therapy in its own right. You can see which training your church/ organisation can facilitate for you but it is also good to go through secular counselling courses which you will be able to apply afterwards for anyone in need (Christian or not). I must admit that going through secular counselling courses really developed in me the ability to trust even more in people's potential and their ability to heal and find solutions by themselves through guided help. Otherwise, there are interesting Christian training available to provide high-quality, one-to-one, Christ-centred care to people in the congregation and the community experiencing life difficulties (such as Stephen Ministries - stephenministries.org/stephenministry/default.cfm/917)



If, as Inreach resource servants, we are involved in members' healing process by actively listening to them to heal or overcome specific difficult/ traumatic situations/ experiences, we also need to be aware of the risk that we face called

Secondary trauma (or Compassion fatigue). When someone is experiencing acute, chronic or complex trauma and we are caring for him/ her, we can hear about the traumatic experiences and we can also witness the suffering of this person. This can affect us to such an extent that we can also experience PTSD and its symptoms/ consequences (such as often imagining the situation, having nightmares, experiencing stress, sweating, panicking when reminded of the trauma, being easily upset/ angry, avoiding anything that reminds you of the trauma, feeling emotionally/ physically numb, feeling like you can't trust anyone, feeling like nowhere is safe, feeling like nobody understands, blaming yourself for what happened, overwhelming feelings of anger, sadness, guilt or shame. etc.). If you start to experience these symptoms, you need to be intentional in self-care (such as Prayer, meditation, reading the Word, having breaks through the day, and restful lunch, time with friends, spouse, and children, exercise, sleep, and relaxed meals, hobbies and other outside interests). You can learn more about it and how to deal with Secondary trauma/ compassion fatigue on missionarycare.com/compassion-fatigue.html and these pictures are from Harry Hoffmann's courses harryhoffmann.global/

Transitions

With all the detours that we go through our lives, we can go through several times of transition (moving from the *known* to the *unknown*) which can be difficult to go



through. When we have to change job/ ministry or to move to another country/ place/ community for whatever reason (such as COVID-19 situation), we encourage you to apply the **R.A.F.T. Model** (inspired from 'Third Culture Kids: Growing up among worlds' by Ruth E. Van Reken & Michael V. Pollock & David C. Pollock. [amazon.com/Third-Culture-Kids-3rd Growing/dp/1473657660](https://www.amazon.com/Third-Culture-Kids-3rd-Growing/dp/1473657660) and an article on figt.org/blog/8857196):

R is for Reconciliation – Recognizing and acknowledging disruption, stress, tension, uncertainty, concern, turmoil, and loss associated with the transition: within our families, our communities, our countries, worldwide. We cannot make peace with difficulty, begin to address any negative impact on us, or take steps to reduce stress if we don't take the time to identify and put words to our thoughts and feelings.

The 'Six Levels of Why' exercise helps us each identify and acknowledge our own deepest concerns and challenges within our new circumstances, in order to begin the process of reconciliation. Acceptance is not the same as liking something, nor is it giving up or giving in. It is understanding that naming what we truly fear or stress over most is the first step in loosening its hold over us. When we are tense or experiencing negative feelings, we can ask ourselves this simple question: "How am I feeling?" Without rushing, we wait for our answer, which can be written, spoken, or simply thought. Then we ask "Why?" and answer ourselves beginning with "Because..." (and say what comes to mind). It is in repeating "Why?" And answering with our reasons (Because...) multiple times that we gently drill down to the core of what is bothering us, thus setting the stage for reconciliation. We tend to move from our conscious mind to our subconscious mind, helping to surface underlying concerns so that we may address them. You can repeat this exercise as often as you wish, as circumstances change.

You can also identify with whom you should reconcile with and, if possible, go for it (such as by asking for forgiveness or letting the person know that you were hurt)

A is for Affirmation – Appreciating and acknowledging who and what matters to us and recognizing we can identify positives, even during challenging times.

The 'Six Levels of Why' exercise now helps us each identify and consider those little rays of light in our new circumstances. Sometimes they may feel difficult to identify, but they do exist. We shift our question to "Who/ what am I thankful for?" and then ask ourselves six rounds of "Why?" responding with "Because..." to mine the deeper meaning. This helps us appreciate small positive aspects (and, yes, sometimes simply less negative aspects), so that we can acknowledge and affirm them. This is where we find the seeds of hope and gratitude.

You can also look for/ create opportunities to affirm and thank those who were part of your life by telling them specific way(s) they blessed you. Usually, you can receive some affirmations from them too but do not *expect* it.

F is for Farewells – To *enter* well requires us to *leave* well. Usually we are thinking in terms of saying goodbye to the people, places, activities, and rituals that are important to us so that we avoid deep regrets for not having done so later. Here we may be saying goodbye to where we thought we'd be and what we thought we would be doing; we also add what opportunities or choices we no longer have, people we cannot be with, etc. While some of these might simply be postponed, others are avenues clearly closed off to us. This is where we focus on what we're leaving behind: the way we had hoped things would be, the positives we'd been looking forward to, and as much of the negative feelings we're experiencing as we are able. The metaphor of releasing a balloon (or handful of balloons) represents letting go of our losses and what might have been. As in saying goodbyes to people and places, this stage can be bittersweet, but is necessary to move on in as healthy a way as possible.

T is for Think Destination – Only after reconciling, affirming and saying farewell are we ready to turn our attention more fully to what comes next. It is important that we try not to impose undue expectations on what lies ahead, instead remaining open to what is to come. During challenging times, it helps to think of what one or two small “next steps” you could take to help move you along to a better place. This could mean redoubling self-care efforts, reaching out to check on or check in with someone else, giving yourself permission to do something that gives you joy (or simply makes you feel better), or even allowing yourself to take a well-needed break.

We all go through different types of transitions when we have to change work, country or even church. When we had to move to another church, we were personally blessed to use the R.A.F.T. model. It motivated us to meet and explain clearly to our former church leaders the reasons for our departure. They told us how thankful they were that we came to them before leaving, and gave us afterwards their blessings personally and publicly (in front of the church) for this transition. This really gave us peace for this new season of our life. Someone who has been in ministry for years even came to tell us that it was the first time she has ever seen someone being blessed to join another church and that she hopes other Christians would do the same (if needed). All glory to God!



To walk alongside those who are active members within the Body of Christ (Missionaries), we need to understand that we all go through different stages (transitions) and that our community should provide the necessary care along the way. Here is a model called the **‘Community Missionary’s Flow of Care’** (inspired by Dave Pollock’s model and article on ‘Flow of Care’-

worldevangelicals.org/resources/rfiles/res3_61_link_1294949610.pdf#page=35 and Saddleback's membership classes - saddleback.com/events/class) which describes the 9 stages that we usually go through (transition) as a member of a community and how Member Caring & Linking can be involved. These are:

1. *Belonging* – Helping new members of the community to discover about our history, vision and mission, learn about why we are here and why each one of us matter and connect with other members.
2. *Growing* – Helping members to grow in spiritual maturity, slow down the busyness of our schedule by learning how to develop a regular time with God, learn about interdependency, getting involved in a small group and let go of materialism by learning how to give to God first.
3. *Serving* – Helping members to find meaning and value in what we do by going from consumer to a contributor, assess/ discover our S.H.A.P.E. (Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality & Experiences), discern in which ministry we can be involved and see how we can make a difference in the lives of those around us.
4. *Discovering* – Helping members to learn how to witness Christ with the people around us, explore possibilities to fulfil the vision/ mission God has put on our heart and get a renewed perspective on how God is working all around the world and how we can be part of His global plan.
5. *Preparing* – Helping members to prepare ourselves and get the necessary training, strategy, resources and tools to fulfil our God-given mission.
6. *Mission* – Helping members to fulfil and stay active in our individual missions by providing ongoing Member caring, encouraging & linking.
7. *Preparation to hand over* – Helping members to realize when it is time for them to pass the baton to younger generations and provide proper mentoring/ preparation to them.
8. *Readjusting* – Helping members to readjust to their new reality of supporting the new generations and no more being on the front line through debriefing and planning.

9. *Ongoing support* – Helping members to stay active and to support the younger generations (and other members of the community) but also continue to support them if they lack anything physically, emotionally, relationally, intellectually and spiritually.

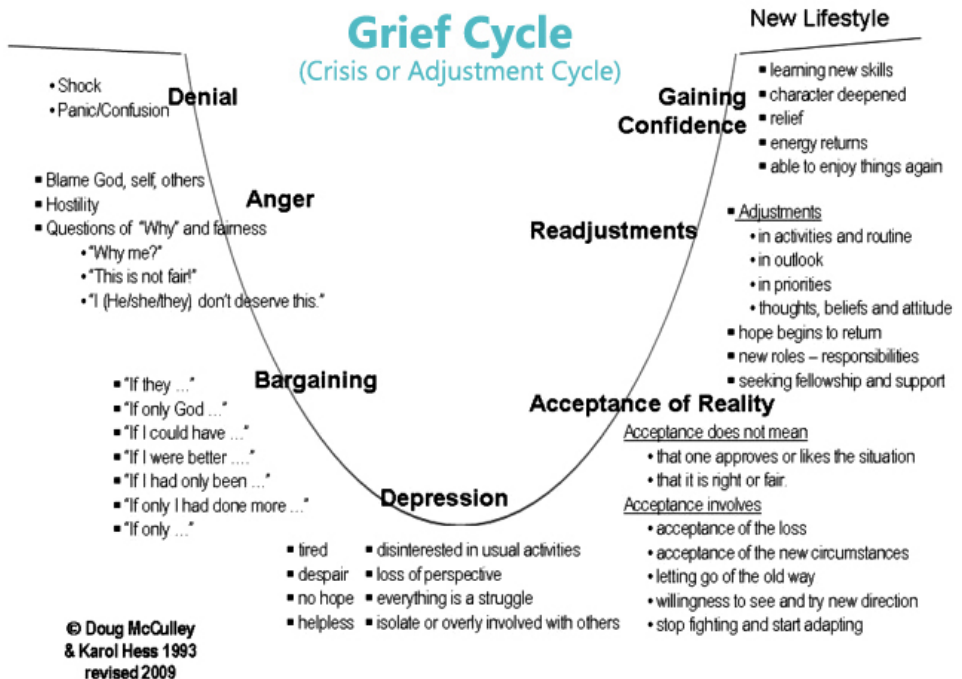
We encourage every community to develop strategies and sessions/ workshops to walk alongside our members (from belonging to supporting) according to our context, structure and values. Here are some tools which might be interesting to consider:

- CLASS 101-401 (store.pastors.com/class-101-401-updated.html - stages 1-5)
- Alpha courses (alpha.org/ - stages 2-3)
- Discovery Bible Study (dbsguide.org/ - stages 2-4)
- Inreach Training, Member care forms, S.H.A.P.E. Assessment and Ministry Action Plan (daybreak-academy.org/resources/ - stages 1-9)

Grief

Grief is the response to loss, particularly to the loss of someone or some living thing that has died, to which a bond or affection was formed. Going through Grief is about learning to live with the thing we've lost. Although conventionally focused on the emotional response to loss, grief also has physical, cognitive, behavioural, social, cultural, spiritual and philosophical dimensions. We had missionary friends who lost one of their children and to be able to process it and grief this child, they did not answer messages or calls for a month and we respected that and it is only when they felt ready to do a ceremony to 'celebrate their child's short but sweet life' that we were able to talk to them again. Now they have overcome this loss but the healing process is still ongoing. We need to respect the grieving process of those going through it and help them ONLY when/ if they want to be helped. We need to care and not impose ourselves. Let them know that you are here to listen to them and when they feel ready to do so (especially when they contact you), it is good to listen to how they feel and to let them express themselves. You can also *normalise* what they are going through by sharing with them the **Grief Cycle** (developed

by Doug McCulley & Karol Hess). Help them to recover by sharing with them about the different feelings and stages people grieving usually go through and give them hope by helping them to realise that it will get better and that it will take the time needed (no rush). Here is a good article about grief and how to cope with it on helpguide.org/articles/grief/ coping-with-grief-and-loss.htm



Disaster

When crew members live on a ship, they often have drills to prepare themselves in case of any emergency. Why don't we do the same with our member-ship? Even if our country seems to be in peace, when disaster strikes, we need to be aware of the steps that can save lives. Natural disasters or national conflicts/ war can happen anytime. This is why it is good to prepare ourselves to leave our home anytime. Here are great questions (from RAM workshop - [better-than-](#)

gold-faith.blogspot.com/) which we encourage you to share with your members to be able to prepare themselves for any disaster:

Keep the list of items to take and things to do in a safe place where it can easily and quickly be found in case of an emergency. Prioritize the **list**, and work through it systematically when the emergency arises.

1. Five-Minute List: Make a list of what you will grab if you have only five minutes to get prepared. Keep the items to only two kilos (4.4 pounds).
2. Two-Hour List: Make a list of action steps if you only have two hours to pack.
3. Twenty-Four-Hour List: Make a list based on having two days to pack.
4. Clean the House: Go through your home and office with the mindset of someone looking to find “evidence” against you. What books and papers should you shred or burn before leaving the house? Keep a list of what you need to get rid of so you don’t forget items that can be used against your national colleagues in your absence.
5. Evacuation Criteria: What evacuation criteria do you have for when you feel it is too dangerous to stay? Write these down, and if the situation reaches that point, then pray to discern if the Lord is calling you to stay despite the threat level.

In case of disaster, it is good to have your **updated** database of potential volunteers (within your community or networks) to coordinate/ make the link between the resources and the needs (E.g. knowing the potential skilled volunteers – such as plumbers, electricians, builders, architects, etc.- who can help to build/ reconstruct houses or infrastructures). Here are great practical advices (from jw.org/en/library/magazines/awake-no5-2017-october/disaster-steps-that-can-save-lives/) which we recommend you to share, at least once, with your members to prepare them in case of disaster:

Earthquake . . . hurricane . . . terrorist attack . . . school shooting. Those terms appear in the headlines too often. Of course, it is one thing to *read* about a disaster; it is another to live through one. What can you do *before*, *during*, and *after* a disaster to improve the likelihood of your survival?

BEFORE—PREPARE!

NO ONE is immune to disaster. Preparation is your most important key to survival. But what does preparation involve?

- **Prepare mentally.** Acknowledge the fact that disasters happen and that you and your loved ones are potentially at risk. It is too late to prepare *after* disaster strikes.
- **Learn about disasters** that can happen in your area. Know where shelters are. Consider whether the construction of your home and its location are as safe as possible. Remove fire hazards. Install smoke detectors, and change their batteries at least once a year, if not more often.
- **Prepare emergency supplies.** Power, water, phone, and transportation services can fail. If you own a car, try to keep the fuel tank at least half full, and always have food, water, and an emergency kit in your home.
- **Have access to the phone numbers** of friends, both near and far.
- **Make and rehearse an escape plan.** Know the nearest exits in your building, as well as the emergency plan of your children's school. Set up family meeting places—such as a school or a library—one nearby and another outside your neighborhood. Authorities recommend that you practice walking with your family to those meeting points.
- **Plan to help others**, including the elderly and the infirm.

DURING – ACT QUICKLY!

- **In a fire.** Stay close to the floor, and move quickly to the nearest exit. Smoke makes it hard to see, and most fire deaths are caused by smoke inhalation. Leave behind personal items. Seconds can make the difference between life and death.
- **In an earthquake.** Get under sturdy furniture or next to an inside wall. Expect aftershocks, and get outside and away from buildings as soon as you can. Trained rescuers may not arrive for hours, so try to rescue others if you can.
- **In a tsunami.** If the water suddenly rushes away from the shore, move *quickly* to higher ground. Expect more and larger waves.

- **In a tornado or a hurricane.** Go to a storm shelter without delay.
- **In a flood.** Stay out of flooded buildings. Avoid wading in or driving through water. Floodwater can contain sewage and conceal dangers, including debris, open manholes, and downed power lines.
- **Did you know?** Two feet [0.6 m] of moving water can carry a car away. Most deaths in a flood result when people try to drive through moving water.
- **If the authorities order evacuation,** leave immediately! Let friends know where you are, or they may risk *their* lives looking for you.
- **Did you know?** Text messaging may be more reliable than telephone voice service.
- **If the authorities direct residents to remain at home or shelter in place,** stay inside. In case of an outdoor chemical, biological, or nuclear accident or attack, stay indoors, turn off ventilation, and seal all doors and windows. In a nuclear event, go to the lowest internal part of your building to reduce exposure to radiation. Listen to local TV or radio news. Stay indoors until authorities announce that the threat has passed.

AFTER—*STAY SAFE!*

To avoid disease and danger, consider the following recommendations:

- **Stay with friends,** if possible, rather than in a camp.
- **Keep your living space sanitary.**
- **Use personal protective equipment** when cleaning up debris. If possible, wear gloves, sturdy shoes, a hard hat, and a dust mask. Beware of electrical wires and hidden embers.
- **Keep your daily routine** as normal as possible. Your children need to see that you are calm and hopeful. Do school lessons, play, and worship as a family. Do not dwell on news coverage of the tragedy, and do not take out your anxiety or frustration on family members. Accept help, and help others.

- **Acknowledge that disasters cause loss.** Government and other relief efforts focus on helping people to survive, not on replacing everything that was lost. To survive, we need clean water, food, clothing, and shelter from the weather. —1 Timothy 6:7, 8.
- **Recognize and address emotional injury.** This often surfaces after the initial shock has passed. Symptoms include anxiety, depression, and mood swings, as well as difficulty thinking, working, and sleeping. Talk to caring friends.



DO YOU HAVE WHAT YOU NEED?

Disaster management organizations urge families to store and annually update emergency supplies. Of course, needs will vary according to your location and circumstances, so check with local emergency management services for recommendations that could be applied in your area.

In general, it is recommended that you keep at least three gallons (11 L) of water per person and three days of nonperishable, ready-to-eat foods.

Also, some families have prepared “go bags” with such items as the following:

- Blankets, complete change of warm clothes, and sturdy shoes
- Flashlight, radio (battery or windup), and spare batteries
- First-aid kit and a whistle to signal for help
- Eating utensils, can opener, pocket tool set, and waterproof matches
- Dust masks, waterproof tape, and plastic sheeting for shelter
- Toothbrushes, soap, towels, and toilet paper
- Child-care supplies and special-needs items for seniors or the disabled
- A waterproof container with needed medication, copies of prescriptions, and other important documents (as birth certificates, marriage certificates, personal important notes, etc.)
- List of emergency contacts and meeting places and a local map
- Credit cards and cash
- Extra set of house keys and car keys

- Paper, pencils, books, and games for children
- Bible

Crisis and disaster has often brought people together as we realise how much we need one another. We get closer when we face challenges together as we can support one another and debrief/ discern about the situation together. Again, we should not *fear* risks, disasters or crises, but rather prepare ourselves to face them together when they occur. Here are some interesting resources on how to face different types of crisis (such as active shooters, bombs, evacuation, travelling, terrorism, kidnapping, floods, earthquakes, etc.) on crisisresponsenetwork.net/resources/.

Resolving Conflicts

One issue which directly affects our ability to overcome/ face difficulties, disasters or crises together is when we have unresolved conflicts among us. This is why we also need to be intentional about resolving conflicts as soon as possible. This is why we need to assess the conflict situation and intervene accordingly.



Friedrich Glasl's conflict escalation model is a very useful diagnostic tool for the conflict facilitator, but also valuable as a means for sensitizing people to the mechanisms of conflict escalation. Such sensitizing may lead to a greater

awareness of the steps one should take care to avoid if one wants to prevent a conflict from escalating out of control. These stages are:

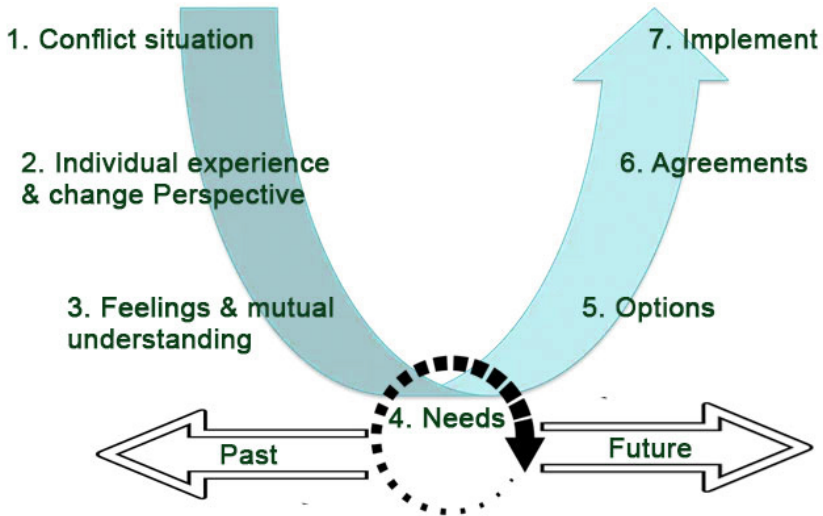
1. Tension/ Hardening
2. Debate and Polemics
3. Action instead of words
4. Images and Coalitions
5. Loss of face
6. Threat Strategies
7. Limited destruction
8. Total annihilation/ Fragmentation of the enemy
9. Together into the abyss

You can understand better about every stage (causes and effects) by reading this summary article by Thomas Jordan on docentes.fd.unl.pt/docentes_docs/ma/JPF_MA_29293.pdf or mediate.com/articles/jordan.cfm

For *stages 1-3*, people involved can resolve it **by themselves** through efficient communication/ sharing (such as by Connecting and Understanding *before* Responding and Engaging help/Evaluating - C.U.R.E), encouraging one another with scriptures (such as about Love - 1 Corinthians 13) and do as the scripture tells us (such as brotherly correction – Matthew 18:15-16, being slow to anger – James 1:19, repaying no evil – Romans 12: 17-21, being peace-makers – Matthew 5: 9 and to look at others interests – Philippians 2: 4) so that the conflict can end in a win-win situation.

For *stages 4-6*, it is still possible to resolve the conflict by themselves but it is recommended to have a **neutral mediator** (a person who attempts to make people involved in a conflict come to an agreement; a go-between) helping with the mediation after both parties have CALM DOWN (which can be done by breathing deeply, mindfulness, scripture reading, quiet retreat, etc.) and brought together in the same room. It can happen that it will be a win-lose situation in the end but it is important to deal with it as soon as possible.

Mediation



For stages 7-9, the conflict is already quite difficult and tense and it can already be a lose-lose situation. It is why it is recommended to try to bring the conflict to an end with the help of a **neutral arbitrator** (an independent person or body officially appointed to settle a dispute) and to try to restore both parties. It is often necessary that both parties separate/ stop to work together for the well-being of the community/ team and it is fine. Remember that Barnabas and Paul had to separate because of a conflict but this didn't prevent God to use both of them within the Global Body of Christ.

And when someone did something wrong within the community or hurt people and the conflict was able to be resolved, we must not constantly push aside this person. We should rather forgive him/ her and love this person even more so that God can bring a complete healing within his/ her heart. We should always keep in mind what the Word tells us in 2 Corinthians 2:5-11:

If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead, you ought to forgive and

comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

Many issues and conflicts can also be resolved at the *dinner table* when we spend quality time while eating with others. In Luke 19: 1-10, Jesus could have told Zacchaeus to pray and to go to synagogue to learn how he could change his life, but he preferred to come to his place and eat with him. I believe that sometimes this is what we should be more intentionally doing. We should take the time to sit around the dinner table to find our way both with Jesus (spiritually) and with one another.

Here are extracts for **practical conflict resolution** (especially cross-cultural) from the book 'Cross-cultural conflict' by Duane Elmer:

“Carefronting” means directly approaching the other person in a caring way so that achieving a win-win solution is most likely. With this approach neither party loses anything important and the relationship does not suffer. However, several conditions must be met to achieve a mutual win situation through carefronting.

1. The two parties can come together, meet face to face and talk with open honesty.
2. They each make a commitment to preserve the relationship and dispassionately explain the values/ goals that each wishes to protect or achieve.
3. They can creatively find a solution in which they can both be equal winners, with neither giving up anything of value, and thus preserve the relationship.
4. They can do this with reason, keeping emotions under control.
5. They are both able to separate the person from the issue and speak objectively to that end.

6. Neither will be satisfied with a solution until the other is also completely at peace with it.

Striving for the win-win solution has been the focus of many management and interpersonal relationship books in recent years, and rightly so. It is a major step in breaking the competitive nature of problem-solving and replacing it with cooperative attitude and skills.

Some authors argue that carefronting is not simply one way of handling conflict but the only right way. They cite Matthew 18: 15-17:

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that “every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

...

I have never seen a [cross-cultural] missionary who is intentionally malicious and flagrantly exercises control over host-country people. But it is within the nature of all of us, when we have power, to believe that our ways are right. Power inflames egocentrism – the belief that my way of seeing things is the right way. When I firmly believe that I am right and possess the power to exercise that rightness, the slide into the mode of “I know best” is effortless.

...

“What happened?” cry the missionaries. “We gave them the Word of God, education, medicine, church buildings, salaries, vehicles. We invested our very lives in these people, and now they turn on us. How could they do this after all we have done for them?”

But how did the host nationals interpret the missionaries’ efforts? Perhaps they would say: “You always knew what was best for us and did not need to develop the deep relationships, mutuality and

interdependence that are needed for healthy interaction, partnering and empowering.”

This scenario is being repeated around the world as missionaries and national believers struggle to understand each other’s motives and behaviours. I suspect it will continue to occur until Westerners realize the multitude of ways they are perceived as winning and begin to change their patterns.

...

I have often heard missionaries say, “They [the nationals] want us to make decisions – they ask us what we think and what they should do.” I myself have experienced this deferring to my opinion, and I confess that it is heady to have others seek my advice. But what does it mean? Does it mean they value my opinion over their own? That they see my way best? Probably not! Usually it means they want to show respect. It is an expression of courtesy in a culture where guests must be made to feel welcomed, significant and honoured.

Thus many Two-Thirds World people are more concerned with dialogue and relationship than with getting the right answer. If I respond with my “right” answer, the indigenous people feel some obligation to follow through lest they cause me shame by ignoring my advice.

Rather than giving advice, Westerners overseas might do well to use probing and supportive responses – that is, take a discussion approach rather than a telling approach. In such a way, they would not only achieve understanding but also allow others to work out their own conclusions, which would undoubtedly be more culturally appropriate.

...

Ten General Rules for Dealing with Conflict

No matter what kind of conflict you may face, and whether you are using direct or indirect methods for resolving it, take the following steps:

1. Ask whether this is worthy of attention or should be let go.

2. Make your approach one of concern for the person and for preservation of the relationship.
3. Seek understanding through inquiry before forming judgments and making accusations (blaming).
4. Separate facts from rumour, partial information, feelings and interpretation.
5. Consider how much stress the relationship can bear; this will help you tell how much time and sensitivity will be required.
6. Put yourself in the other person's place and try to appreciate his or her perspective on the matter.
7. Address behaviours rather than motivation.
8. When you detect tense emotions or defensiveness, back up and give assurances of friendship and your desire to understand.
9. Frequently acknowledge and summarize what the other person has said to assure accuracy of understanding for both parties.
10. Believe a win-win resolution is possible if both parties can remain calm, understand each other's interests and negotiate with integrity and fairness.

Principles for Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution

When in a Two-Thirds World situation, consider the following:

1. The degree to which shame, face and honour are core cultural values will determine how important it is to choose an indirect method.
2. If the other person has had extensive exposure to Western culture, sensitive directness may be acceptable, understood and not offensive.
3. All forms of confrontation should occur in private, if possible, so as to minimize any loss of face.
4. Familiarize yourself with the stories, parables, fables, legends and heroes of a culture in order to appropriately interpret their use in conflict situations.
5. Understand the various indirect methods used in the Two-Thirds World and be alert to which ones are used and under what circumstances.

6. Build a close relationship with a host-country person who will be able to help you interpret confusing situations.
7. Ask God for help in understanding and applying unfamiliar conflict resolution strategies.
8. Scripture is the final judge of all cultural forms; prayer and discussion may be required before some cultural expressions are embraced.

Keep in mind that there are several Member care centres around the world (daybreak-academy.org/member-care-centres/) to whom you can turn to when you need additional support or need more information to care for your members' needs. Usually, they can also help you to facilitate/ organise personal retreats/ rest and counselling/ inner healing sessions.

You can also connect with Inreach resource servants around the world through the network (forms.gle/t1txzGPh28we4bid6) to be linked with the resources you need.

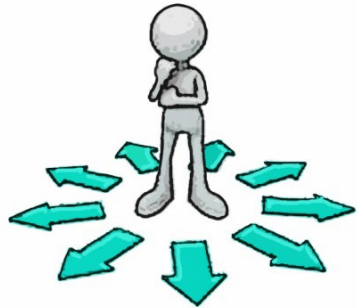
We are all facing different risks every day and we can all go through different types/ levels of stress, crisis, disasters, trauma, etc. This is why, out of our will to care for, encourage and link our members, we need to assess the potential risks to prepare ourselves by identifying and stewarding our God-given resources (such as the necessary volunteers/ people for specific needs) to be able to respond accordingly by either avoiding, transferring (making somebody else do it), limiting or simply accepting the situation and develop our resilience/ endurance. We also need to communicate these strategies to our community and keep the habit to evaluate/ investigate our members' needs and risks we are facing as often as possible to remain up-to-date. Love & Unity is often developed through difficult times that we overcome together as one body in Christ!

Points to remember

- **Key idea:** We are all *at-risk* and we need to be intentional preparing ourselves to overcome any challenge together.
- **Key verse:** Proverbs 14: 16
- **Reflection:** Is my community regularly doing risk assessments? Is my community providing efficiently for the various needs of our members? Do we talk enough about stress, dark times, trauma, grief, disaster and conflicts in my community? Are we well prepared to face them? What is one practical step we can do about it in my family and in my community?

What's next?

I hope reading this manual was an encouraging and useful experience for you. Do you feel like you want to use it or propose this vision/ tool to your church/ community? Keep in mind that it is not only about some specific people involved in this ministry but about the whole community having members who are more caring, encouraging & linking. If it is your vision to develop Member Caring & Linking within your community, I encourage you to follow George Verwer's *five steps* when having a vision:



1. You get the vision,
2. Calm down (pray/ discern about it and count the cost)
3. Share about the vision
4. See who is behind you for the vision (resources)
5. Go for the vision

There are different ways to propose to your church/ community or, even, to other communities' leaders (from other denominations) to develop Member Caring & Linking. Even if we don't have a *winning formula*, here are some tips/ steps that I would like to share with you:

- Spend time with the Lord to seek His guidance to know the right way and the right timing to present this vision.
- Work on yourself to be as *irreproachable* (good and faithful servant of servants) as possible to develop *trust*.

- Investigate and be aware of your local context history, Members' needs and resources available.
- Intentionally build strong relationships with your leader(s) by caring for, encouraging and linking your community with the necessary resources so that people consider you as a *resource person* (even if you are not officially appointed as such).
- Ask for an appointment with your leader and start by listening to him/her by asking questions like:
 - How are you? How do you feel?
 - What is, according to you, the greatest challenge that our community is facing?
 - What is, according to you, God's vision for our locality/community?
 - What are the main roadblocks preventing this vision from becoming a reality?
 - What are potential responses/ solutions we could do together against those roadblocks?
 - Do you think that developing a Member Caring & Linking centre to develop Member care & Communication within our community can be useful towards your vision?
- Then if you feel that your leader is ready and open to listen to you, share about the Inreach resource servants, Member Caring & Linking centres, Interdependency and partnerships and, if you want, you can also share about Daybreak's resources to help you to develop this ministry.
- And if you feel that your leadership does not understand, keep in mind that the concept of Inreach (Member Caring & Linking) can sound quite new for them. So don't be offended if they don't support you right away. Be patient and perseverant and do your best to provide caring, encouraging and linking towards your leadership to give them the opportunity to experience what they probably have not received themselves. Then, have a few more meetings with them to talk about developing Inreach in your community. May God's will be done in His time!

Developing this ministry can take much time as trust has to be built first. However, we always need to keep in mind that it is not our project but God's project. We need to be flexible and patient and let God put the right people at the right time for His Kingdom to come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

I just want to encourage you that if you believe in this vision of Love & Unity within the Global Body of Christ and in Inreach resource servants' ministry, God will open the doors which He has already planned to open or close the unnecessary doors. When God gives a vision, he gives the provision! If you feel called to be an active Inreach resource servant within the Body of Christ, the great news is that you are not alone. God has been busy raising Inreach resource servants all over the world (forms.gle/t1txzGPh28we4bid6) and it is He, who is our head and who is connecting us for His body to be well connected and healthy for His glory. If you need any kind of Member care, we are here for you too as it is our duty to care for and support one another.

I encourage you to fill your Ministry Action Plan (M.A.P. - daybreak-academy.org/ministry-action-plan/) with S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic/ Relevant and Timely/ Time-bound) goals/ objectives (mindtools.com/pages/article/smart-goals.htm) for the 3-6 months to implement/ develop Member Caring & Linking in your community and look for/ ask someone close to you to check upon you and ask about your goals as often as possible. If you feel that such vision is just a *dream*, I encourage you to apply the **T.H.O.M.A.S principle** (also applicable for whatever dream/ vision God has put on your life) to accomplish this dream even without seeing it (for now):

- TIME – set a time to do every step,
- HOLINESS – spend time with God to seek his will,
- OPTIONS – define at least 3 different options of your dream,
- MENTORS – look for mentors/ people you respect and who you think has experience in the same field you want to achieve and ask them their wisdom,
- ACTIONS – Go for it and try limited achievable objectives,
- SEARCH – look constantly for opportunities to grow and develop yourself in the field you are



By actively listening to people and by helping them to discern their calling (such as through one-on-one meetings or S.H.A.P.E. assessment), you will most probably **identify potential Inreach resource servants**. So if you see any brother/ sister in Christ who has the characteristics and even the will to actively care for, encourage and link Christians (missionaries), please don't expect this person to come to you by himself/ herself to be involved in this ministry. I recommend you to:

1. pray and ask the Lord's discernment, wisdom and intelligence to know if you have to approach them and how to do so.
2. go to them and share about what it is to be an Inreach resource servant (functions and also difficulties you can encounter as we are tackling the *devil's winning lottery ticket* which is DIVISION) and also about Member Caring & Linking centres, Interdependency and partnerships.
3. ask them to pray about it and to consider if they feel called to be involved in this ministry and to come back to you and share what God has put on their hearts. Please point out that they have the choice to say "no" as we are not recruiting anybody. Our duty as Inreach resource servants is to ensure that every member of the Body of Christ is at their right position and is connected with the other members who have the same function.
4. If they tell you that they don't feel called to be active in this ministry, thank them for sharing their hearts with you and bless them so that they can be active where God wants them to. You can also ask them if they want to stay in touch or even join the groups on Social media (such as Daybreak Network on WhatsApp: (+230) 59467517 or forms.gle/b749TYzZM5CMdJ137) to be informed about the various events and opportunities to connect with other Christians and to serve together as one body in Christ.

If they tell you that they want to be more active in caring for, encouraging and linking Christians, commit yourself to stay in touch with them and ask them if they would be interested that you (or

somebody else) mentor them to be trained and equipped to become better Inreach resource servants.

5. If they agree to be mentored, plan some specific times to meet with them to share about the various topics in this manual and to prepare them for the mentoring process (already shared in chapter about [Growth](#)).

The best way to learn is to teach but when you mentor someone, always try your best to keep good relationships and be willing to learn from your mentees. Keep in mind that the greatest success of a mentor is when their mentee becomes better than themselves. I personally love, value and respect my dad for his mentorship (for me to become a man) since I was a child but, now, we really support and learn from one another as much as possible. He often comes to me for spiritual and other advice and vice versa. Remember that your mentees are NOT you so do not help them to become *like* you but help them to become who God wants them to be as their success will be also your success!

Resilience and perseverance will be the key for this ministry so keep in mind the **Five Fs** (inspired from a GLS Talk with Bear Grylls) as an encouragement:

- *Failure* – it is through failure that you will learn,
- *Fear* – will make you go further/ forward and you should deal with your fears right in the middle of difficulties,
- *Fire* – you need to keep the fire inside you burning despite difficulties,
- *Faith* – remember for whom you are doing it, that God will never forsake you and that His grace is enough and
- *Family* – you are not alone, God gave you a local and global family of Christ you can rely on (it's not about *me* but about *we*)

Jesus also went through Failure (looking at how his disciples betrayed him), Fear (before his death- Luke 22), Fire (his crucifixion) but he had Faith in his father's plan and knew that it was for those he loves, his Family, that he was doing it! So never give up!

I thank you for going through this manual which I hope will be useful for you and your community. Please, I encourage you to send me an email on daybreakacademy@live.com to share with me your experience going through this manual and even send me your proposals so that we



can develop this tool to equip Inreach resource servants and communities around the world to care, encourage and link better. My aim is only to share my knowledge and experiences with you, so feel free to adapt these materials to your context. I am your brother, your friend, I love you and I trust you.

As Numbers 6: 24-26 says:

"May The LORD bless you
and keep you;
may the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
may the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace."

I pray that our merciful Lord will continue to bless and lead you in taking care of His sheep (John 21: 17) so that we may be ONE for the world to believe that God has sent His Son (John 17: 21).

Faithfully yours,

Jeremy Thomas

Daybreak Academy (God is the founder and we are His servants)

Member Caring & Linking within the global Body of Christ

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"Unity in Diversity" by Jeremy Thomas (Acrylic on canvas)



Jeremy & Anastasia Thomas are a Mauritian-Ukrainian couple (married since 2017) who are passionate about caring for Christians, especially people in ministry and missions. They both had a cross-cultural mission experience within Operation Mobilization. They are now serving full-time within Daybreak Academy. For

sustainability, Jeremy works as a college head of the department of Art & Design and teaching Social & Emotional Well-being and Anastasia works as a psychosocial practitioner doing her Masters in Psychology. They are involved in Member Caring & Linking ministry in their local church in Mauritius (Indian Ocean). Jeremy & Anastasia are together certified in Christian networking, coaching, counselling and as facilitators of Inner Healing & Ethnic Reconciliation. They are active members within the Africa Member Care Network (GMCN too), International Partnership Associates and the Global Inreach Resource Servants Network.

Jeremy & Anastasia are the leaders of Daybreak Academy which is an Inreach Resource Centre ministering for the Love & Unity within the Global Church by developing Member care and facilitating ministry collaboration for the well-being of Christians involved in ministry, missions and clergy, since 2011. They wrote and published the 'Inreach Manual - for Member Caring, Encouraging & Linking', wrote articles about Inreach (Member care) in international publications (EMQ and AfriGO) and are one of the co-authors of 'Global Member Care 3'.

They both enjoy travelling, nature, all types of arts and have a passion for the Global Body of Christ.