

As of November 15, 2013

Note: This memo was first published on April 30, 2003, although its origins are rooted in things I sensed the Lord saying to me a year or so earlier. It gives a snapshot of my understanding ten years ago of where God was taking Antioch Network. (This note is being written in November 2013.) I sent this initially to the board, leadership and staff.

In one sense, this is only an internal memo. In a broader sense, it represents a case study in how the understanding of apostolic ministry developed and was implemented within a specific Christian fellowship, or apostolic band.

AN ORGANIZATION VERSUS AN APOSTOLIC BAND

By George Miley

To the Antioch Network staff—thoughts from George

Follow the way of love ... – 1 Corinthians 14:1

“George, I am bringing a transition in you and in the Antioch team. You are to be decreasingly an organization and increasingly an apostolic band.”—from my personal journal, October 24, 2002

What is an apostolic team?

- A team—see *Loving the Church...Blessing the Nations*
- With an apostolic calling—see *Loving the Church...Blessing the Nations*
 - o To initiate new works of God
 - o To lay foundations
 - o To identify, develop and release new leaders
 - o To 1) proclaim 2) manifest and 3) teach the ways of the kingdom of God.
- Led by apostolic leader(s)
- Initiating, pioneering, entrepreneurial, vulnerable, Christlike.

What is the difference between an apostolic team and an apostolic band?

- A team is cohesive. We staff are a team, but may be growing more into a band.
- A band is broader. It can include people who are not on the team but who are increasingly integrated into an expanding ministry. In Acts 13, Paul, Barnabas and John Mark were a team. By Acts 28 the wider circle of Paul’s co-workers and individuals who were linked with him could be called a band.

What is the ministry of organizing?

- A beautiful, God-given, essential ministry in the spread of God’s kingdom
- A ministry which
 - o Consolidates what has been initiated
 - o Gives structure and order
 - o Provides a platform for further growth and maturity
- Vulnerable, fragile, Christ-like

How are apostolic ministry and organizing ministry related?

- Both are from God
- Both are essential for the body of Christ to expand and mature.

- In God's order, apostolic ministry comes first; organizing ministry follows —1 Corinthians 12:28
- If we violate this sequence, we violate God's order.
 - o Putting organizing ahead of the apostolic shuts down the apostolic.
 - o Pursuing the apostolic without putting organizing in place leads to disorder.
- Mature apostolic leaders provide for organizing ministry. They understand how essential it is. Effective apostolic leaders build teams of co-workers with giftings other than their own.

How are organizing ministry and an organization related?

- Apostolic ministry is supra-cultural—found in every culture where the church is.
- Organizing ministry is supra-cultural—found in every culture where the church is.
- Organizations are cultural, deeply influenced by their cultural context.
- For centuries the most visible organizations were governmental and military.
- Corporations in the West emerged during the industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries.
 - o Organizational structures were needed
 - To consolidate large amounts of capital
 - To establish the means for mass production
 - o Western cultures produced "non-profit corporations"
 - To gather larger numbers of personnel
 - To provide organizational support
 - To raise funds
- Every work of God needs organizing ministry.
 - o Organizing ministry may or may not result in an organization being formed.
 - o We must never allow the strongly cultural organization to define the ministry. Worldliness can enter and damage or destroy a work of God:
 - Analytical thinking can replace waiting upon and hearing God.
 - Self-reliance can replace childlike faith and reliance on God.
 - Human ambition can replace God-honoring humility.
 - o The organization serves the initiating process, never the other way around.
 - o The organization is the "vessel"—the "clay pot".
 - o For example—we are not called to plant churches. We are called to proclaim, manifest and teach the ways of the kingdom of God; i.e., to make disciples. Jesus plants churches. "I will build my church." We serve in obedience with Him as He directs and does it.

What has God called Antioch Network to be? Read *Loving the Church... Blessing the Nations*. This is my best attempt to articulate my understanding of God's call to Antioch Network.

- Antioch Network is an apostolic ministry. In what sense?
 - o We are called to focus on the completion of world evangelization.
 - o We are called to champion a high view of the local church.
 - o We are to call churches to church reproduction, at home and among unreached peoples.
 - o Thus we are called to church planting.
 - o We are called to serve churches in the ways God gives us to serve them.
- To do this, Antioch Network needs organizing ministry.
 - o We have this—praise God.
 - o We have an organization—praise God.

- o Our organization is a non-profit corporation. That is good and right. Our cultural context requires it. But it is a means, not an end—the vessel, not the treasure.
- o We must never allow the corporation to set the direction. The direction is set by God, speaking through his apostolic and prophetic leaders, as they submit in love to one another (beginning with the board/Apostolic Council) and hear God together.
- o We are to thing in this way: Antioch Network **is not** an organization. Antioch Network **has** an organization to serve the apostolic purposes to which God has called us.

What are the implications for us as a staff/team?

- We are called to initiate. We honor organization as crucial, but not directional.
- In WHAT God has called us to, Antioch Network has not changed.
- In HOW we go about it, we have changed many times and will continue to change.
- WHY? Our understanding continues to grow. We are continuing to mature.
- God speaks. We “hear”. But we hear imperfectly. So we enter a process (years) of hearing Him more precisely.
- This is normal in works of God. The initial memos look very different 5-10 years down the road. We can’t absorb all God is saying immediately. We are not expected to do so. We are clay pots. We need daily manna that keeps us dependent on our Father.
- One of our many mistakes in Antioch Network: We expected local churches to exercise more apostolic leadership into unreached cultures than was appropriate.
- Local churches have not failed; we have held inappropriate expectations of them.
- Antioch Network must step up and lead. We must lead gently, with great humility, loving the church and her leaders, honoring them in every way. But we must lead.
- This relates to the internationalization now taking place. I believe we are called to initiate new works of God. We are not just to be “mobilizers”. We are leaders.
- Apostolic leadership is the most effective way to “mobilize”. We don’t say, “Do as we are saying you should do” but “Come, join with us in what we are doing. Let us forge paths for you that allow you to enter in to what God is doing.”
- I believe we are to call the church in Europe to the nations: Germany, France, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Turkey, etc. And the church in Latin America. And the church in Africa. And the church in Asia.
- This gives clearer definition to the roles of staff members located beyond Phoenix.
- We have tried to recruit new staff and raise funds BEFORE initiating and leading. We may discover that God will provide new staff and funding AS we do what He has called us to do—initiate and lead.

Brothers and sisters, THANK YOU for the joy and privilege of serving Christ together with you in loving the church and blessing the nations.

