

Preparing YWAM Leadership Structures

by David Joel Hamilton - March 2013

As we look forward to the future, we are aware that God is powerfully at work in the earth. We seek to be like the men of the tribe of Issachar who “understood the signs of the times and knew the best course” to take (1Ch 12:32). Thus, as we seek to understand all that is happening on earth, we perceive that we are on the threshold of a great move of God that will sweep the nations in the 2020s and beyond. We sense that God longs for a spiritual awakening that will lead to a season of far-reaching reformation around the globe. To that end we believe the Spirit is calling us to a season of preparation over these next 7 years – between now and 2020 – to lay a strong foundation both spiritually and practically. He’s inviting us afresh to focus on the basics: to strengthen our DNA to know God and to make him known.

First of all, during the season leading up to 2020, we need to cultivate the disciplines of the pursuit of God. It must be our first desire as a mission to become a dwelling place for God Most High. God's intensified presence with us is our goal. We long to live every aspect of our lives intentionally in the light of his presence, welcoming him, fellowshiping with him, being filled, empowered and transformed by him. We want spiritual integrity and depth of intimacy with God to be a hallmark of our lives, both individually and corporately. We want to be growing in our love for God, thriving in our devotional practices, passionately maturing in our daily relationship with God.

Secondly, between now and 2020, we need to be preparing practically for the coming time of global awakening and reformation. This includes many different aspects. It includes intentionally increasing our outreach into omega zones where we are not, like our collaborative endeavors on the Global Outreach Day, etc. It also includes an intentional focus on eradicating Bible poverty, and making the Word of God available to every family on earth in a language they can best understand and by a means that they can best use, as is stated in the Christian Magna Carta and affirmed in Vision 2020. These activities must also be complemented with an intentional effort to transform and prepare our structures to be ready to facilitate the coming season of unprecedented growth that we hope for in the 2020s and beyond.

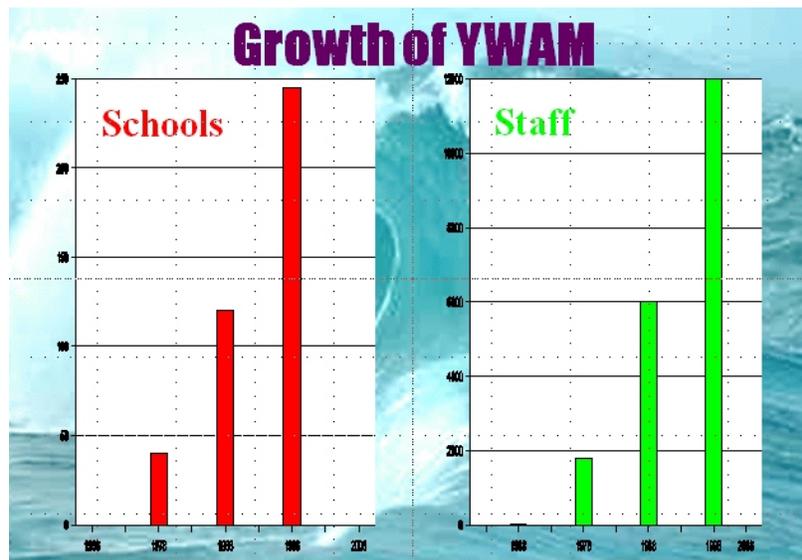
God has been speaking to us that in these 7 years of preparation we need to “gather vessels ... not a few” (see the story in 2Ki 4:1-7). Similarly, we are aware that this is the time to dig the ditches (see 2Ki 3:1-24) confident that as we do our little part in preparation, God will do his big part of filling them in such a way that will lead to a great victory for the kingdom. So, what should we aim at as YWAM leaders? If we are preparing for global reformation, how do we prepare the vessels not a few? What ditches are we to dig?

For the first four decades as a mission we experienced an amazing 11% annual growth rate around the globe. This happened year after year. In our fifth decade the speed of our growth diminished, but was still steadily – though more slowly – upward. In the years leading up to our fiftieth year jubilee we diligently sought to realign ourselves with God’s covenant with YWAM and the vision and values of the mission. The fruit of that effort to hear and do the word of the Lord has started to make itself felt as we have begun our second fifty years as a mission. Many bases are reporting dynamic growth in spiritual passion and numeric increase at the same time.

What if we believed God for a new season of great growth across the mission as we purposefully prepare for the upcoming awakening and reformation? What if we were to grow by 10% next year and then increased that by an additional 5% each year for the next few years (10%, 15%, 20%, 25%, 30%, 35%, 40%, 45%, 50%) until we reached 200,000 staff? During the Jeju GLT this number was spoken to us prophetically and it seems like this is the time of fulfillment. In order to create the capacity these many staff we have to embrace pioneering multiplication and practical infrastructure development afresh to facilitate the fruitfulness God would want to give us. Now is the time we have to grow our ministry platforms so that by the early 2020s we would be positioned for even greater things. Is this what would be required of us to do our part in setting the stage for a global awakening and reformation? If so, the numbers might look like this:

2013	20,000	2018	49,335
2014	22,000	2019	66,602
2015	25,300	2020	93,243
2016	30,360	2021	135,203
2017	37,950	2022	202,804

These numbers do a couple of things. 1) they fulfill the word of “times 10” (the 200,000) and 2) they set us up to fulfill the framework laid out in the YWAM Wheel based on the guiding words of the Lord to us as a mission of a half million plus reformation ministry opportunities (3 callings * 6 points of the Christian Magna Carta * 7 spheres of societal influence * 4000+ omega zones). What if, during this same season, we were to create some new definitions for a YWAM region? What if by 2020/2022 each YWAM region had no more than 100 omega zones and no less than 50 DTS training locations? This would give every regional leadership team a doable short-to-mid term target of starting a DTS in at least every other omega zone. Growth of DTS training locations is the single greatest historic indicator/stimulator of growth of YWAM staff:



What if we intentionally realigned our regional structures (of which there would be 40ish at some point between 2020-2022) to the various words of the Lord to us over these past years of realignment? This would include paying attention to simple but clear concepts:

- Our foundational call to “the all” and “the every” of the Great Commission underlined in the Nanning Covenant and reflected in the 4k framework.
- The “Tripod Message” (given by Loren in Nanning GLT) affirming eldership, relationships

and the freedom in the Spirit under the Lordship of Christ as we align ourselves to his Word. This is how we will continue to grow as a vital apostolic missions movement.

- Dan Bushy's vision at the end of the Lausanne GLT of multiple overlapping circular platforms of leadership including all the spheres of society.
- The call to leadership expansion instead of leadership transition (lighting another's torch to run together, not just passing the baton and dropping out of the race), so as to not lose the historical perspective and wisdom of the elders while championing young emerging leaders in our midst into their God-given calling.
- The call to build altars with stones, not towers with bricks, spoken by Loren at the GLF in Tijuana, Mexico.
- The CCC framework of Circles, Circuits and Cycles given at the end of the Jubilee year.
- The principle of team leadership and our accountability to circles of eldership (comprised of concentric circles of elders, often following the pattern of 3/12/24 people) with rotational chairpersons making room for many gifts, avoiding leadership entrenchment.
- The principle that those who convene elders are temporarily appointed; continuity is provided by a wide pool of missional "grandparents." These overlapping circles of eldership – such as the GLF and the GLG – should be regularly convened.
- Initiatives are served by forums called to meet at places and times as needed; the attendees consist of those appropriate to the issues served and which the convener deemed appropriate at the time. Logistical housekeeping functions should be done by those so gifted who arise within our communities.
- Leadership terms that convey power, hierarchy, control should be changed to terms that appropriately convey the convening, collaborative principles of this season, such as: council, convener, chair person. We will need to create appropriate terminology in many languages.

In light of the above we envision that each YWAM region would be expected to have 5 primary eldership circles comprising:

- the geographic leaders within the region (regional convener, national conveners, and major base directors)
- the UofN leaders within the region (including both college/centre representation and President's Gathering locations, *ie* both thematic and geographical)
- Other Global Networks and Ministries leaders within the region
- YWAM-linked sphere leaders within the region (a platform for YWAM the movement)
- a regional founders circle including apostolic pioneers within the region who serve in a regional grandparents role, making room for their ongoing, eldering role

If each of these circles included 6-24 people, the total number of leaders that would be included among 40 such regions would be 1200-4800 leaders. Representatives from all of these circles could gather together once every two years for the Global Leadership Gathering. This pattern of five overlapping circles of eldership could be reproduced organically at all different levels of our corporate life: at global, field and national levels, as well as other geographic and thematic groupings. These multitudes of overlapping circles would serve to grow the missional framework for the coming reformation. In this way there would be overlapping circles serving fractally at every level of the YWAM family of ministries.

So, let's pray to see how we might prepare ourselves spiritually and practically for the coming reformation. Let's make sure that we have enough vessels gathered and enough ditches dug to receive the outpouring of God's Spirit in the years to come.