

TOWARDS
AN INSTITUTIONAL
OR
APOSTOLIC VISION

ALEJANDRO RODRÍGUEZ

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Printed in Argentina.

My deepest thanks to all of those who have helped and contributed to the translation, design and editing of this book: Sheila Aguilera, Johanna Bishop, Jazmín Garza, Christina Harniess, Michele Hernández, Alejandro Cruz, Erica Pecker, Ryan Hollibaugh, Angela King, Darío Muñoz, Malcolm Thiesfield, Daniel Sonderegger, and Robert Thiesfield.

... To my grandmother, parents and siblings, who taught me the value of the Word of God.

... To Wedge Alman, Juan Carlos Ortíz, Alberto Mottesi, Jaime Araujo, and so many others who have invested in my life and ministry since my youth.

... To my beloved wife, Martha, and my children, Diego, and Paula, who taught me how to be a husband and father (I am still learning).

... To those who grew up by my side and who are now tremendous servants of God today; those that surprise me and teach me so much every day!

... To Daniel and Norma Etchart, José María and Rosana Liste, Verónica, Shelley, Angélica, Diana, Jorge and Isabel Ríos, David and Mary Olivera, Martín and Nayda Peregrina.

... To Walter and Claudia Luna, not to mention the Barrios, Diomede, Rolón, Paulini, Ginoccio, Bishop, and Navarro families, as well as Franchesca, Patricia, Delfina, Juan, Silvina, and so many others that it would be very difficult to mention all of them. But they know that I carry them in the deepest part of my heart!

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Foreword

When Jesus was asked the difficult question of whether He should pay taxes or not, He used a coin to demonstrate His answer. On the face of the coin was the image of Caesar, and Jesus replied that we are to “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” (Luke 20:25) His brilliance, His wisdom, His correctness, and His fulfillment of the entire law was demonstrated in everything that Jesus did, whether in action or word. Jesus’ submission to His Father’s will allowed Him to always depend on receiving God’s wisdom.

When God, in the first chapter of Genesis, gave mankind dominion over the world, He never took it back; God always keeps His covenants. When His Son came to us and became human, born of a virgin, He was a son of man even though he was still the Son of God. Jesus opened the way for you and I to become sons and daughters of God because He came as a son of man, born of woman. He was then given all authority in heaven and on Earth.

In Jeremiah 27:5 God declares, “I have made the earth, the men and the beasts which are on the face of the earth by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and I will give it to the one who is pleasing in My sight.” He said to His son in Psalms 2:8, “Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.”

Jesus, as a son of man pleased his Father, who declared at his baptism, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.” (Matt. 3:17) So the Father, as He had declared in Jeremiah 27 and Psalms 2, was able to give Jesus all authority; the same authority that He had given Adam and Eve. God was able to keep

His covenant, justly giving all authority to Jesus; the very mandate for dominion that Adam and Eve lost due to sin, and that which Satan had usurped. God redeemed that mandate through Christ, giving Him all the authority.

When Jesus sent us to go and disciple all nations, He delegated His authority to us. This authority is given to enable us to do His work in His way. He never anoints what He does not appoint. Jesus is the One who through His spirit gives us our gifts and callings; which are irrevocable (Romans 11:29). In Ephesians 4:11, we have been given the five leadership gifts that equip the saints to do the work of God: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. When we, as the people of God, then join together in unity, God commands a blessing; which includes the anointing of the Holy Spirit to accomplish His good work. We can then pray the will of God in faith, and with His anointing: Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.

The apostle's role has always been that of a builder, and in Ephesians 2:20 it explains that we have "been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone." From this we understand that the apostle needs the prophet in order to remain true to God's plumbline; and a prophet without an apostle cannot lay any foundations. The apostle is like wet cement that fills the spaces, while the prophet acts as the formwork and steel reinforcing that keeps everything straight and strong.

God is the architect. Abraham sought for a city whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:10). Therefore any buildings that we build should follow His plans, as He is the Architect; and unless the Lord builds the house they that build it labor in vain. Our task is to maintain our focus on the cornerstone, Jesus. Whenever He bends to the left or to the right, we must follow Him. It is easy to forget the roles that God has called us to, and start to think that this is actually our work. Well, it may be our

work, but only as the Holy Spirit works in and through us as we yield to Him as it is a work that is beyond our natural abilities.

As I have listened to Alejandro Rodriguez, a dear friend of mine, a fellow leader in the body of Christ, and a fellow YWAMer, he has caught the essence, the spirit, and the nuances of the way in which God works through His servants. He has also seen, as many of us have, those things that are the efforts of man, things that lead us away from fruitful, fulfilling, life giving and joyful ministry; where we serve, not control, and where life is multiplied.

As you read Alejandro's words, try to see it through the eyes of the Spirit, the truth of the Bible, and the outcome that God longs for; and you will begin to understand that which is not easy to describe using our finite words. Alejandro has written this in Spanish, and the book has been translated into other languages, so it will be even more important to ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand his heart as you read these words.

This book will provide you with understanding, perhaps even revelation, and it will help you to be equipped to better serve in the ministry that God has given you. It also serves as a warning for us as God's workers, for when we swerve to the left or to the right, instead of fulfilling the dreams and purposes to which God has called us.

I know that this book will be a blessing to you, and to many others, as you receive it in the spirit in which I heard Alejandro give it; that same spirit which can be found in all of his writings. A spirit of desiring to rightly divide the word of truth. We live in a world of Caesars, and there are certain things we have to do for these Caesars, but it must not pull us from our call. Let us render unto God all that is God's and see his Kingdom come on Earth just as it is in Heaven.

Loren Cunningham
Founder, Youth With A Mission

Introduction

Dear fellow warrior... As you find yourself reading the pages of this simple and short publication, my hope is that you will be challenged, made uncomfortable, and encouraged to enter into everything that God has designed for us as His YWAM family, and for each and every one of us individually!

It is not my desire that you agree with everything I express here, but rather that this writing would simply be useful to affirm your deep convictions which come from our Father; and to remove those opinions and actions that have seemed so normal in our ministerial life, yet do not reflect God's expectations. Therefore, all Glory be to God.

With that, I shall be satisfied, for I have been faithful to that which God has told me to do. I write, not because I have all the answers, but rather as an apprentice, who wishes to share with other servants of God, those lessons that he is learning in his own walk with Jesus.

I write with a heart full of gratitude at having had the privilege to be a part of a movement of faith so simple, yet so extraordinary as YWAM. I was born in 1960, the same year that YWAM was founded. Many things have changed during my life; my family, my priorities, and my goals over the years. My children have married and are now also part of YWAM; and as if this was not enough, I am also a grandfather! Three generations of YWAMers. We are not all involved in the same things, and there are different stages and moments in our lives, but we all have the same foundation and the same spiritual DNA.

That is the way it is in YWAM these days. We all have such

different stages, and different experiences. The reality of our mission changes with every nation; tied to the vision and spirituality of those leading our bases and ministries, and influenced by the local churches, the political and economic situations, and the culture of each people group, amongst many other things.

In some nations YWAMers are sowing with great enthusiasm while in others they are pioneering and seeing much growth. In some countries, where there are older bases, we are struggling to keep the flame alight, trying to survive, and looking for the key that will open the door to a new spiritual awakening!

I remember when we started YWAM Argentina in 1989, with so much fire. When we began to build we had nothing. There was one bathroom for thirty-five people, and the people were happy. We had no hot water. Everything that the first generation of YWAMers had achieved with great difficulty became normal for the second generation. I remember an illustration where one man began to build a large business, and went from poor to rich. It did not happen overnight, taking much effort and dedication. This man had children, who having grown up amongst the riches, believed this status to be normal. They grew up with the idea that everything was easy. They failed to see the great effort that their father had put forth each and every day in order for them to have the things that they had.

The importance for each generation to have their own Goliath is that each one of us will experience how to enter into a life of faith and face our own processes. Sometimes, those of us who are (rightfully referred to as) Spiritual Fathers from previous generations, or leaders, make the same mistakes as our natural parents: We say that we do not want our children to suffer, and that they should not have to suffer the things that we had to suffer. We foolishly seek to make things easier for them, and we make a great mistake: we hinder them from developing their own faith, their own relationship, and their own experiences with God.

How easily we get used to blessings; how little we value the inheritance that we have received. When we sent our first outreach team outside Argentina, it was historic, their departure just as much as their return. We had a huge celebration.

This last year we have sent teams to thirty-six countries around the world and we no longer have a huge celebration. Now when a team goes out to Japan, one comes back from India and another leaves for South Africa, the only thing we say is: 'Great! Excellent. Glory to God. Welcome back.' We no longer celebrate as before. When an offering used to come allowing us to buy toothpaste, it was time to celebrate. Now we say, "I received an offering of \$2000 for my travels." Our response is, "Oh, Glory to God." We have become accustomed to these blessings, yet when we ask ourselves why we do what we do, we must realize that all provision is a gift from God. And for that we should be highly grateful.

Let us talk about our Mission. Who are we? Where are we going? How do we avoid losing the fire? There are many Christian organizations and ministries throughout the history of Christianity that began with fire yet lost it later. What becomes of us when we have grown so much in our ministries? What happens when we already have years of experience, buildings, vehicles, and technology? Are we content with maintaining what we already have? We were all created by God to be fruitful and multiply; reproducing who we are and what we do.

It is a genuine desire that all human beings carry in their hearts. This is why we ask if we are bearing fruit. What we are multiplying. Who we are as a mission. Where we are heading.

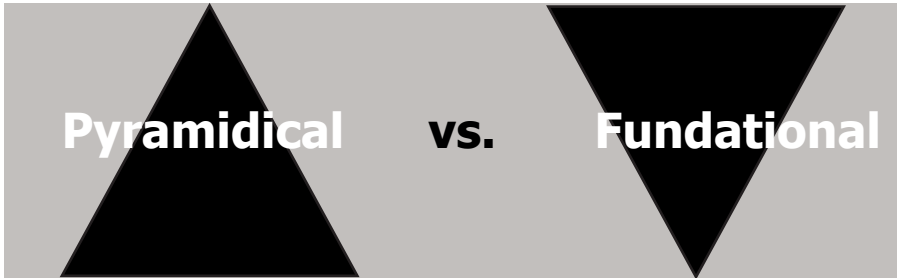
It is incredible and amazing to be able to look back and see the huge things that the Holy Spirit has done in and with us. We have seen His faithfulness and mercy each and every day, throughout every year of the life of our mission. But today we have decisions to make, a course to follow,

and these will affect the future of our ministries, whether it bring glory or pain. There is no 'Autopilot' switch.

Where are we heading? What will become of us? Will we continue to be an apostolic mission, with solid foundations, with a clear vision, and with the power of the Holy Spirit? Or will we be a beautiful Christian institution, living off the memories of our glorious past, and trying to sustain ourselves by following the latest trends or Christian entertainment?

In which direction are we walking? What are we building?

Institutional Vision vs. Apostolic Vision



For many years I had a phobia to the word “apostolic.” I did not like to talk about apostles; there are a lot of them mulling around, and many that call themselves apostles because they have a big church, or because they are on television. They present themselves as an elevated figure, as if they were more important by being an apostle. So every time you hear me mention apostolic ministry, or an apostolic vision, or even an apostle, it has nothing to do with position, or control. If you have the same problem that I had, ask the Lord to help you. When we talk about anything that refers to apostles, we should never see it as being superior to others or as a thing that controls; because if we do, then we are talking about something very different.

In many Christian circles apostolic leadership is mentioned as a sort of summit to strive for. It is often thought of as the number of churches under my leadership, or the number of members in my congregation, or the number of people under my covering. It is frequently referred to as if it has a greater dimension of power. A friend once told me, “I am now no longer the pastor; I am Apostle So-and-so.” It now seems as if such a hierarchy is not even enough.

Now we have general apostles, high apostles, angels, etc., among us.

If we keep on in this way, we will have archangels, seraphim, and cherubim, until we reach the very level of Lucifer himself.

The passage in 1 Corinthians 3:10-13 discusses the concept of construction. Paul said that he was a master craftsman who had laid the foundations, and that others were building upon them. But it also says clearly that each person must be careful how they build.

1 Corinthians 3:10-13
"By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work."

This introduces to us the concept of an upside-down pyramid; Christ is the foundation and Corner Stone, as mentioned in this passage, with Paul the master builder, after whom others will come to build upon his foundations.

God has changed many of my wrong concepts on authority. Many of us have them, because many of us have grown up in areas of the world where there the pyramid concept of authority is reversed. People in Christian leadership declare:

"I am the boss. I am the leader. I am the servant of God, the anointed one of God. You are all under me. You are my collaborators, although you may have others under you."

This is how we have seen this chain of command operating. It may work in businesses and institutions, but in the Body of Christ things work differently. Jesus told his disciples, "Among you it will not be this way." Therefore, although it is true that God has appointed apostles first, this needs to be redeemed in our culture because we say that the apostles are high-up, the

Ephesians 2:19-22
“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God’s people and members of God’s 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 in His Spirit.”

leaders; they are the most important ones.

When we use the vision of building something, then construction starts from the bottom. For a great auditorium to have been built, we must first lay a solid foundation. The apostolic therefore becomes the foundation on the bottom, upon which we build the works of God.

In this way, God has changed many wrong concepts that I have had with respect to authority. In Ephesians 2:20, it declares that we were built upon the foundations of the Apostles and of the Prophets; what a tremendous word. Once again we see the concept of a well-founded building. The big question for this generation of YWAMers is, what are we going to be building from this day forth?

Christ is the corner stone. We are talking about building and constructing. The most important thing in a building is unseen; the foundation is the first thing laid in the construction. This is why an apostolic vision and an apostolic mission are linked to the things that are yet to come, so that they can ensure the foundations are sufficient for what is about to be built; not something hierarchical.

For this reason, when different pastors and ministries have asked me to be their covering, I tell them that I do not know what they mean. I do not act as a covering to anybody, but they are welcome to follow me if they wish; they can imitate me, as the Apostle Paul suggested. They may use me as a platform to climb upon and reach greater heights, but I warn them to be very careful how they build, and with what materials they choose to use. After all, we are all builders in our ministries.

The pressure to build quickly, often encourages us to use weaker materials. They may be beautiful in appearance, but they are easily consumed in the fire, and fall apart in the midst of trials; because fire test and fire reveals. That is why Jesus was able to say, "You shall do greater things than these."

The leaders we raise up are there for exactly that: to be lifted up on top of us.

A Christian Organization vs. An Apostolic Mission

What are we? It is not easy to define the structure of YWAM. We plant churches... but we are not a denomination. We train missionaries... but we are not a seminary. We send missionaries... but we are not a sending agency. We have mercy ministries... but we are not humanitarian aid organization.

It seems as if we were a contradiction. It is very difficult to define YWAM, to box it in. This is because the ministries that we establish in each location, are directly related to the gifts and callings of each of our YWAMers, which God has placed on their hearts.

When two disciples asked Jesus, "Teacher, where are You staying?" He answered them, "Come and see." So they went, saw and stayed. Our desire is that people would come and see, and be so impacted by what they see in our midst that they want to stay. I like to think of us as a walking miracle, because there is no logical way you can explain our mission. We hang from a string, suspended by God's mercy! YWAM is made up of thousands of missionaries, none of whom receive any salary; instead, we all have to pay to be a part of this thing that is permanently moving and changing. How crazy is that.

A long time ago I used to believe and say, that if the church did what it was supposed to do, then Para-church organizations around the world, including YWAM, would not be necessary. In my days as a pastor prior to joining YWAM, my understanding of the church was limited; what a heavy mantle of guilt I was placing on the pastors and their congregations for not doing everything there was to be done in the world!

Over time, I started discovering that the Lord's church has a much greater reach than the impact of a local church. There exists no such thing as a Para-church organization. There is nothing outside of the church. The idea of being para-ecclesiastic, is the result of an attitude of the heart: not wanting to join in, feeling like I am the best, competing and comparing myself with others, wanting to separate myself from others, and not valuing the activities that others in the body of Christ are doing. The Para-church mentality can be found as much in a YWAM base, as in any congregation or denomination.

Either you form part of the church, or you will not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. YWAM is not a plan 'B' from God, created because the church is not doing its work; we are not a band-aid solution and even less an aspirin. The idea that the church began in Jerusalem with the Passover is not completely true; because according to Acts 2:41, three thousand were added to the church that day. If they were added to it, then this means that the church already existed, unless you think that Jesus and the twelve, the seventy, the one hundred and twenty, and the five hundred, were a Para-church organization.

Truthfully, the greatest obstacle is not what pastors and other Christian leaders think about YWAM, but rather what YWAMers themselves think about YWAM. Some of our pamphlets say things such as, "We are here to serve the local church." This shows that we are not clear about our identity. We have been called to serve everyone; we form part of His church around the world and all of us as Christians are called to serve — to serve one another. This is why it saddens me greatly when some of our YWAMers criticize the local church as if it were separate from them. They isolate themselves within their ministries, without fellowship with other expressions of the Body of Christ, as if they were not important or we did not need them!

When we have a clear understanding of our identity as a mission

there is a greater freedom to be able to walk in unity. We should not feel as if we need to ask for permission. We do not have to stand with our heads hung down before a pastor, nor do we need to criticize or belittle them because together we are the church; in our city and nation. It is this that will allow us to receive the spiritual authority that God has always wanted to give us for our apostolic ministry.

I believe the many years of experience that YWAM now has, is giving us a greater influence throughout the Body of Christ. We have now held pastoral conferences in many nations: 500 pastors in England, 1700 pastors in Brazil, 1500 pastors in Puerto Rico, as well as in Norway, Cameroon, Holland, and many other places. When we talk to them about these things, they say, "Wow, it's true," because what we are talking about is a Biblical principle and not something that has changed.

If YWAM did not exist, we would still have to declare it. Today we understand it better because we are gaining a greater level of influence in the Body of Christ, and especially in the areas of Christian leadership. Some of this has occurred through the many students who completed their Discipleship Training School (DTS) years ago, and are now denominational pastors and leaders today. This has given us greater influence in many countries. We have always believed, and been convinced that YWAM came out of the very heart of God. Through the environments in which we have worked in the Body of Christ, these concepts have found their way through to our ears, eyes, and heads, and have finally settled firmly in our hearts.

In some places the local church has been elevated to a level that borders on idolatry, as something sacred. The majority of local churches around the world today, however, were born out of divisions and splits, revealing that they are not sacred at all; nor are they untouchable and infallible. Even so, we are all God's people, forming part of the wonderful Body of Christ!

May God open our hearts and minds to see that YWAM is an apostolic movement, a creative expression of His, and a precious part of the glorious church in the midst of the nations.

Identity = Authority

The first time I rode a horse, the instructor told me to approach him with confidence; to not fear him, because the horse could sense my feelings. If the horse realized that I was afraid, instead of me steering the horse, he was going to take me wherever he wanted.

Being clear about our identity affirms our place and spiritual authority in the Body of Christ, in society, and in the nations.

Abraham had a dream for his life; as we all do. He had his own expectations of how things would work out. He could have chosen to remain as Abram (exalted father), achieving his own goals. That is why, before continuing to develop the apostolic and institutional vision, we must confront our own personal vision.

Abraham teaches us something about this. What is the difference between Abram and Abraham? Abram wanted a son, wanted to be somebody, wanted an inheritance, but he was thinking about himself and his own family name, about his own ministry and the things that God had already placed in his hands. Abraham, however, was a father of nations. The father of multitudes. The Lord has given YWAM a missionary vision that we would see YWAM not just in every country, but that we would also be Fathers of Nations.

Now we may say that we want our son, to have a child, our own child. We may declare that this is our ministry, our calling. Some people have come to YWAM with this attitude. Their sole purpose is to find an international platform from which they can develop their own ministry. They use YWAM for their own benefit. As we say here in Argentina, they want the chocolate,

but not the factory. The chocolate of YWAM is delicious, but the factory gets dirty and messy and someone has to clean it. It is noisy, it is smelly, and it has to be maintained. There are basic ingredients to be purchased, wrappers made, and much work to be done. We are grateful for the chocolate, but we criticize the factory.

Others have claimed that God did not call them to YWAM itself, but rather to develop a ministry through YWAM. Obviously, even though they have completed their DTS, and may already be working in YWAM, they still do not understand that we are an apostolic mission. Do not limit yourself to a small or personal vision, because there is a calling upon us all to be Fathers of Nations.

As I have said, the Lord has called us as a mission to be apostolic. That means that even though we are in a particular ministry engaged in a specific task, our vision must be much greater than both us and the things that we are doing. Conflicts arise when we cling to our own ministry and fail to understand this broader vision that comes from the heart of God.

My Vision

Some of us may also have a personal vision, the vision that God has given to me; my vision. This vision is what I use to guide my actions, to make me feel good about what I am doing and to give me a feeling of satisfaction. Some people are limited to a small vision. They may be a missionary in some place called Tongo Tongo and say that God has called them to be a missionary there. But they limit themselves to the specific calling that God gave them, and never look beyond.

Talking with missionaries like this reveals that they are closed toward other missionaries. When I tell them that they need to be more open toward other missionaries, to open the way for new missionaries to come, they say, "No, I can't, I am too busy

learning Arabic (or Russian, or Mandarin), and I don't have time to help new missionaries." They limit themselves to their own work, never understanding that they are there to open the way; to facilitate the way for others. It is possible to die in that place, limited by a small, individualistic vision.

Others broaden their vision to a local ministry, perhaps within their YWAM base or their local church. For them, it does not matter what is happening in the rest of the base, or if other ministries are suffering. They remain disconnected from the work of other ministries on the base as long as their ministry continues to function well.

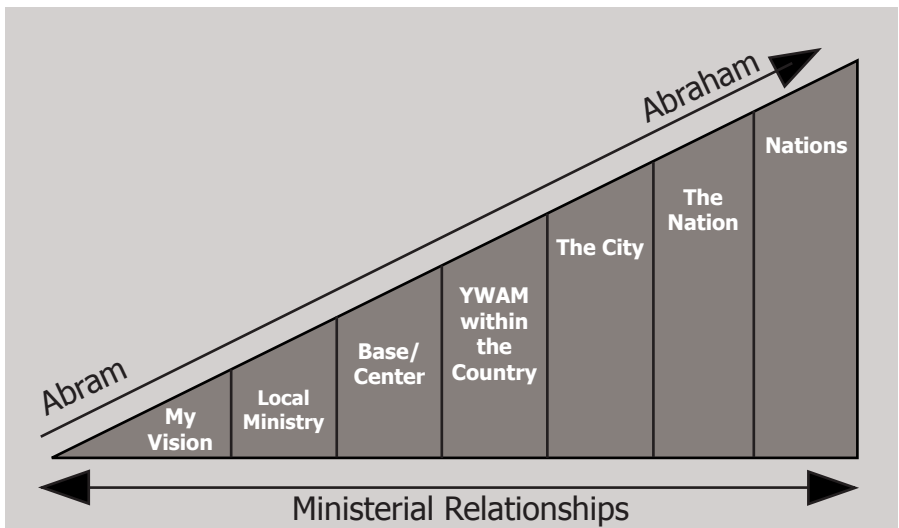
When my vision remains small, it does not matter to me if the other schools have professors or not, nor how many students they have. What does matter to me is that my school, the one that I am directing, works out well. Everything else is the base director's problem. I am using the base to develop my ministry, because I have a local vision. Within the base, I draw others into what I am doing, and recruit staff for the school or project I am directing. I have no interest in the projects and needs of the base. I dedicate myself only to the school I direct, or in which I am working. Therefore, I recruit people for my school, but when the project that God has given me is finished, everybody leaves, as there were no ties with the base. I had only worried about my own ministry.

Some people develop a broader vision. They follow in the steps of the apostolic vision. These people already have a heart and vision for the whole base. They are more mature; more open-minded. They do not only think about one school or one ministry, but rather they look out for everyone on the base, and try to help all of the ministries and the base to grow. They are glad for all of the good things that happen, but they also worry and even cry over the things that go wrong. They no longer say, "I don't care," but are involved in some way with everything that happens in the base, and are growing in the apostolic vision.

Even so, some of us stop here. We end up as base leaders, but that is as far as we go. We are happy that our base is moving along well. Other bases may not be doing well, but that is their problem. "To each his own," we say, as long as everything in my base is in order and working fine. We think that as long as our base is good, everything else should be the national director's problem, or the responsibility of the national leadership team.

Our vision is limited to our base. However, if we want to continue growing in the apostolic vision, and develop a heart for others, then we need to begin to have a passion for everything that is happening in YWAM throughout the country: YWAM in my ministry, in my base or location, in my vision, and in my country.

We might even change some of these categories, by adding our city, or a vision for some region in our country, and more. Ask the Lord to give you a burden and a passion for the whole city, or for a province or state, even for the whole nation, or for nations. What shall we do? Are we going to remain as Abram? Will we choose to remain where we are, or are we going to move towards the apostolic vision of Abraham? Are we going to be Fathers of Nations? It is our choice.



Looking Out for One's Own Ministry vs. Being Part of Something Greater

We could say many things about Nehemiah. We could talk about plenty of leadership principles, and there are many teachings given on this. We could write books about Nehemiah, and about how to rebuild the wall; the steps that Nehemiah took, and the strategies that he developed. We have heard wonderful things about Nehemiah, but I am going to share with you from a different perspective.

There is a small expression that is repeated many times throughout the book of Nehemiah, especially in chapter three. The phrase, "next to..." can be found almost twenty times. Together with "after them/him" they appear more than thirty times. It refers to a family, rebuilding part of the wall next to, together with, or close by, another group; right there beside them. This expression appears over and over again. This is why they were able to rebuild the wall. They were together on the same project, and they had the same vision. They were from different families. Each had their own way of doing things. Each had their own giftings, working in a specific place. But they were together, working next to each other, to rebuild the wall.

Something interesting is that of everybody building the wall, only the priests (and a few others) limited themselves to building just the section of wall that was directly in front of their house (verse 28). Furthermore, the high priest did not build at all, but had his wall built for him (verse 20-21).

As mentioned earlier, the Bible talks about freedom, but never talks about an independent heart. More so, the scriptures inspire us to be interdependent; to love one another, to confess our sins to one another, to carry one another's burdens, and to forgive

one another. We are to give, serve and wash one another's feet.

Sometimes we experience a tension in our own communities, when we notice that each ministry is looking after their own interest, seeking their own development, and maintaining a certain indifference to the needs of other ministries. We must develop a greater sense of generosity and service toward one another. Independence sets limits on the development of any leader. If I am working, investing, and making an effort only for my own ministry, my leadership will only grow to a certain point. However, as we extend our service to the whole wall (our generosity, and participation with other ministries), our ministry field will also expand, and with it, our area of spiritual authority.

Our heart should always encompass a greater circle than simply that of our own area of work. If I am involved with a mercy ministry, my heart should reach out to the rest of the ministries in my base and city. If I am involved with the leadership of the base or over a city, then my heart should reach out to the whole country. If I am involved in the national leadership, then my heart should stretch to cover the mission around the entire world.

I was greatly blessed to see some of the communities, like the one in Perth, Australia, where, even though they have many ministries and live in different places, they go out to evangelize and eat together, and they have developed a strong sense of belonging as YWAM Perth. King's Lodge in England closes their base once a year, and together they mobilize all their ministries and people to go on a mission trip together.

We are part of a greater work of God that transcends our own geographical space, and our own measure of time; it goes beyond the present. God has already been at work in the midst of our story; our roots. We have a glorious inheritance as

a mission, a living, breathing inheritance. We embrace everything that God has put into our YWAM history, and we will continue to shed light on this inheritance and pass it on to those who will come after us. We can either have a compartmentalized vision, or a heart for the whole mission. Sometimes we say that we do not get involved with evangelism, because our ministry is worship; we declare that it is not our area. Sometimes though, we work as very rigid boxes.

A few years ago, I was visiting one of our bases. The person in charge of hospitality received me, showed me to my room, and gave me the welcome basket with a very nice card. When I left my room, I had this sense of great isolation. It seemed that only one person in the whole base had the hospitality ministry. She did her job very well within her appointed schedule. As for the rest of the YWAMers, they each lived in their own world. When we have a heart for the mission, and are looking at the whole wall, then we will acquire a heart for evangelism, for hospitality and for worship as well.

Along those same lines, I would like to focus on the development of our bases and ministries. The first thing I would like to say in order to break the ice, is that no ministry or base should have autonomy, as if this were an automatic right. Autonomy is not an implicit right that we get in our ministries, but a privilege. It is the result of a maturing and growing process, and of an interdependent heart and ministry.

For example, my son traveled to South Africa at the age of eighteen to attend his Discipleship Training School. He had an autonomy then, which he did not have before. He was traveling around different parts of the world, so I gave him an extension of my bank card so he would be able to get money from the automatic teller machines in case of an emergency. Nonetheless, it was not like this when he was twelve. I would have never have given him a debit card or a bank card, because he was not prepared for such a significant level of responsibility at that

time in his life.

Now he was grown up. Our relationship had now seen many years go by. He was my son; I was his father. I had made mistakes with him, and he had made mistakes with me. We had asked for each other's forgiveness many times. He had taught me how to be a father, and I had brought him up in the ways of the Lord; and we continue on with that process even now. His responsibility had allowed him that new freedom. He had acquired it through the deep level of trust that was between us.

So it was this trust, our relationship, that had given him greater autonomy. Why did he have this freedom? Because I trusted him, and he trusted me. There was a sense of seeking advice from each other, consulting each other when we were together, as we walked together.

It has been a number of years since then, and now he is married to a woman of God. He lives in another country, and makes his own choices now, and he handles his own finances. Yet he will always be my son. He knows he will always be able to count on me. What remains between us? What is always there? A solid trust. A deep relationship. Cherished love.

When there is an apostolic foundation, we should not have to discuss the autonomy of bases and ministries. What we do need to examine is the depth of our level of trust, and the strength of our relationship.

Often, it is easy to confuse a leadership with strong convictions, with a leadership that is controlling. Sometimes we associate the strong personality of a leader, and his or her determination to move forward, with a stifling person who imbues fear and leaves no room for others. We can see at least two types of visible manifestations of controlling leaders:

1. Those who impose with an overwhelming force, who get everything done exactly how, when, and where they want.

2. Those who, having a charismatic personality, manipulate in such a way (at times even causing pity), that they make those following them feel guilty; and in this way they always achieve their purpose.

How do we discover the difference between strong leadership and controlling leadership?

There are leaders that have a strong personality and strong convictions, but they have multiplied themselves in many other leaders, giving each the freedom to grow with their own individual characteristics. They create a diversity of ministries in the midst of an environment of freedom, initiative, and creativity. They are parents, whose children have also become parents; and in this way, the family multiplies and grows. But when a ministry has been established in a city or a nation for several years, and the same people always call the shots, then we have a problem that needs to be resolved. When there exists no vision broader than the vision of the leader, and nothing can be started that has not come from the heart of that particular individual, then we need help. It is difficult to come into agreement when there is a controlling leadership, and there will be little fruit. The cogs of the mechanism will always get jammed.

That is why we cannot introduce a rigid policy for upcoming, new ministries in a country where YWAM is already present. In many cases, there is no previous relationship between those that are already there, and those arriving, which makes it even more difficult to establish good relationships and communication. This is because both sides are more interested in the ministry than in relationships. In other words: How can I do my work, while still getting along with others in the best way possible!

The subject in question is much deeper than just trying to reach an agreement, or achieving good communication. Nor does it have to do with each party being more sensitive in giving a little right-of-way. Solomon's wisdom never had to do with splitting

the baby in half and giving a part to each woman; rather, that test showed what was in each of their hearts. In this way he was being 100% just and gave the whole baby to the true mother.

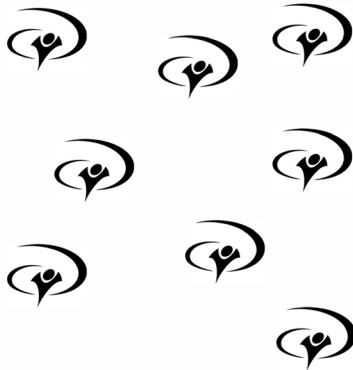
No one should have control, or maintain a monopoly, over a country or a city. Nor should anyone submit to a controlling leadership anywhere. However, we should never go against those who have true spiritual authority, and are developing a fruitful task of transformation in that city or nation. If there are spiritual fathers and mothers in the city or country that you go to, do not wander around as an orphan. Seek them out. Draw near to them, and your vision and ministry will be greatly enriched.

Anarchy is just as evil as control, like when our own attitude of working in freedom, hides our true attitude of independence. Personal revelation, or the word that God spoke to my heart about starting some new projects, needs to be accompanied by wisdom from counselors. The Bible never talks about independence, but rather freedom. Many of our leaders are developing a healthy, solid, and multiplying ministry. God backs them up, and they have a broad vision. If you can see Jehovah is with them, then follow them, and stick with the fathers and mothers of the mission in that place (Joshua 1:17). Stay near to them for a year or more if necessary. It will not be a waste of time for you or your ministry.

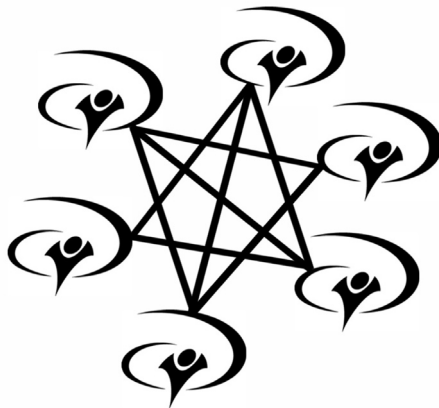
Spiritual authority in a nation is not gained by the years that YWAM or its leaders have been there; nor by the properties and resources that they might have. It is gained instead by the response of those leaders to a clear vision; getting involved in all areas of society, and sending missionaries out to the nations. We were called to be a family of ministries, not a ministry hotel (all living under the same roof with a few house rules, and everyone doing what they feel fit). We must choose which we want to be: a family, or a hotel.

I would like to give a few examples of some of the perceptions, or feelings, I have received while spending time with some of our ministries in YWAM. It examines how they function together, their connection with each another, and the way they connect with those on the outside.

1. Independent and isolated functioning. There may be many different YWAM ministries in one place, but they all have the attitude that: "I have the resources and the contacts to establish my own ministry, without needing others. I land with my own parachute."



2. Independent and relational functioning. I do what I think is best, although I do have contact with the other ministries of YWAM.



Please note that when we talk about decentralized ministries, we must understand that in order to decentralize, we must first all come from one centre; one core if you will. There is no decentralization without first having a core origin. It does not have to do with the idea of “parachute decentralization,” which is where we arrive out of nowhere to a place of work. We can only decentralize in a city or a country, if we started out with a common core origin.

3. Enclosed in a bubble. We are self-sufficient with our own students, our own programs, our own workers, and our own outreaches; separated from the body of Christ and alienated from society.



4. A strong common identity, but with a diversified and decentralized vision. Things move from the inside out, and from top to bottom, like a growing sapling. Branches reach out and multiply, bearing abundant fruit, all from a common root and a common trunk.



As we mentioned previously, we have a wonderful identity as a diverse family that has multiplied. This perspective allows us to include others in our ministries. Also, others in the faith who want to participate, and are not yet part of YWAM, can follow in our vision; as was the case of my wife, Martha, who directs a ministry called Women of Faith for a Changed Nation. This is a YWAM ministry directed by a group of YWAM women, but it has hundreds of female leaders getting involved and participating throughout the country.

Bases vs. Missionary Communities

When we have an institutional perspective, we develop structures around our ministries, so that they have their own schedules, duties, protocols, and rules. We work from eight to five, and comply with our schedules and our responsibilities; but once our work or day is finished, we do not want anyone to bother us. During our free time, and on our days off, we do not want anybody coming to ask anything of us. This is our life, after all!

Sometimes we reach the point where we feel that we have to schedule time just to socialize with others on the base. We treat it as though it was one more activity in our schedules. But we are not made up of different ministry-operation-centers thrown together, where staff try to relate to each other as best they can within their work environment.

Being in YWAM is all about relationships. Naturally we have to continue forward with our work, but without sacrificing our interpersonal relationships. Let us never forget our main focus, which is people.

We are also not a community of people isolated from the body of Christ, outcast from society, and living to create a better world of peace and love within our own four walls. We should not be navel gazing, fixed on our own issues, and those of others. We are communities with purpose. We are a prophetic community, founded and built on God's love. We believe, live, and declare God's truth, wherever we go. We are an apostolic community, built upon solid foundations, entering places we have never been before and doing what we have never before done. Ours is an innovative and pioneering spirit!

We are called to be a community, not because we all have to live under one roof whether we like it or not, but because we choose to live in committed relationships with one another, based on love, mutual service, and common purpose. We join together to work towards everything on the Lord's heart that He continues to show us for each city and nation.

When I was visiting a base, the director looked a little concerned as he asked me, "Why can we not feel the spiritual atmosphere in our base?" I responded with some questions first:

"Where are your leaders after 5 p.m.?" I asked.

He answered, "Each goes to their own house."

I continued, "How many beds does the base have, and how many are occupied by staff?"

At this second question he looked at me strangely, but answered, "Seventy-five percent are occupied by students, with the remaining twenty-five percent by staff that have mostly been in our mission for less than a year."

"And how many of your staff and leaders have been trained through this base?" I questioned.

"Around fifty percent," was his answer.

The spiritual atmosphere in any community is always determined by the spirituality of the people that live and work in it.

Who is present on your base to disciple the students and new staff? I have seen a large difference in those bases where seventy percent or more of their staff have completed their DTS in that very place. Their connection to the base is much stronger, and their sense of belonging is much greater. So what am I saying? That every YWAMer has to stay in the same place that he or she completed their DTS forever? Not at all. Rather, that each YWAMer may have the opportunity to establish themselves firmly in a base where they can be discipled, and grow under the natural authority of healthy leadership. Then, when God takes them to the places He wants them to go, they will be able to build a solid, and fruitful ministry, on firm foundations.

There are some common elements that I have discovered in our communities around the world, which are growing and bearing fruit. Some of these have already been mentioned, while others will be covered later in this book. You do not have to agree with me on every point in this list, but hopefully it will encourage reflection.

Growth comes when...

1. The current leaders are those that have been the spiritual fathers and mothers, the pioneers, or have received a legacy (DNA) from their original leaders, and follow in their footprints.

2. The great majority of the workers on that base (at least seventy percent), have done their DTS in that same place, and have established themselves there; with a strong sense of belonging. It is a solid nest, not so they stay there the rest of their lives, but rather, so that when they fly away, they will know how to build other healthy nests.

3. The majority of the leaders in the base and the ministries established there, have been born out of the same heart as the base (even though there have been some very good exceptions).

4. The community is mobilized to go not only "overseas," but also to influence each and every area of society.

5. They are a multiplying community, not just accumulating a lot of people, but multiplying in others who they are, and what they do.

6. Despite the diversity of schools and ministries, they have a common base that connects them all. E.g. evangelism, intercession, meals, worship, etc. The training schools are included as part of daily life on the base.

7. There is an atmosphere of faith for miracles, healing, deliverance ministries, and spiritual warfare.

8. Families are involved in ministry.

9. There is a continuous circle of generosity between YWAMers and ministries (and should this flame of generosity

weaken, then our strength will also flicker and go out).

These are simple points, but they are very important and make a significant difference in the daily life of our ministries. It is important that we keep them in mind.

Another key element in our communities is the strength of our YWAM families. Several years ago the director of a large base told me that one of the main problems that they were having was related to the large number of families that they had on the base.

Some of the situations included:

1. Families in conflict with their own children, and struggling with having other children so close in the community setting.
2. Families where there was little to no involvement of the mothers in ministry.
3. Low levels of productivity from the families, due to domestic situations.
4. Only one spouse serving in YWAM.

There is much to say about this area, but the following observations will suffice for now.

Families on our bases

There are times in which we may need to live off base, in order to get a little more rest. I understand that there are times in which we need more privacy. Sometimes we reach saturation point because of people who do not respect our privacy, and turn our house into a community gathering-place. Of course we need to correct some of these things, and find solutions that work, but in these last few years, I have seen a strong tendency for key leaders to move off base. At first one enjoys it, and it is both good and healthy, but later you can start to cling to that lifestyle, and no longer want to return to the base. This is where the headaches start. Not in the beginning, or in the first year, but later on. Thus the base begins to lose its spiritual authority,

because we have let it happen. It is not necessarily because we are doing something wrong, but because of our absence as leaders. We start directing by remote control, shut up in our houses or offices because we are tired of dealing with problems. But the solution is not always living off base. In the midst of so much pressure from the family and ministry, sometimes our first reaction is to seek refuge in our own home. That is not always the best solution.

We may think: Lord, I want to take care of my family, but I also want to be part of this YWAM family; I do not want to lose community life, for there is a strong anointing in community living, and it is a great blessing for all our family.

Most of the time, the main reason a couple leaves the base is due to unresolved conflicts between them. It is not always because of the children, as we often tend to think. Most of the time the children suffer because they see their parents suffering. If the children see their mother complaining or hear their father talking negatively about YWAM and the base, or if they see that their parents are upset and frustrated, then they are going to absorb all of this until one day they will say, "Dad, I want to leave the base, I am tired of YWAM." We will react, saying, "See, it is because of my children. My children need more space, they need a different environment, and on base it is too stressful for them." We say that this is why we are leaving.

However, even though that sounded like it was the reason, it was not the real cause. That is why leaving the base is not always the best solution.

This is not to say that every family in YWAM leaves their base because of unresolved marital conflict; nor are these to be considered as instructions or the final word for married couples. Furthermore, Martha and I are currently not living on the base (although we are right beside it). These things are mentioned here so that we can process it together with the Lord.

There are different stages in our lives and our ministries, and with each comes different levels of involvement. There are many factors to consider when talking about a family with young children. There is an increasing tendency for the husband to work in YWAM, while his wife dedicates herself to the children. **WARNING!** Be careful, because the next step for them will be that they move off base. The wife begins to feel under increasing pressure, and even though she allows her husband to continue in the ministry, she begins to create her own world. She might go to some meetings, but she is no longer a part of it all, no longer involved.

My wife travels quite extensively to preach, she also directs the base and she has many other responsibilities. But it was not always like that. Our children are now grown, so we have more flexibility, but there was a time when our children were very young, and Martha had to dedicate more time to them. She could not travel as much, and could not work as many hours in the ministry as she does now. They were different times, and we understand this. We know that priorities change over our lives.

However, there is one thing that can never be lost, be it with one child or with twenty children. We must not lose our passion, the heart that interlocks us with the mission, even though we may be cooking, changing diapers, and washing clothes. To still have the desire to be interested and up-to-date with what is going on in the base, and to find a way to remain a part of it all.

I remember when some girls approached Martha. They asked her if they could talk with her, and if it was possible for her to pray with them about a problem. Martha had a lot of work to do at home with the children, but even then she would say, "Come to my house." There, as she washed clothes and changed diapers and cooked, she would disciple them and help them with their projects. She could not travel, she could not dedicate all the time she wanted to the base, but her heart was in the mission,

and this was not negotiable. This is key. We both have to work together on this, husband and wife. Perhaps as men, we need to help our wives more often, so that they will have more opportunities for ministry. Perhaps some of us will have to learn to cook or clean.

The most important detail is that both partners in the marriage must be committed to the mission. Even if they cannot dedicate the same amount of time, both need to always feel involved. If this does not happen, then your marriage, the ministry, and the people will suffer, because both were called to YWAM, and both were a part of that calling; God has a vision for you both. If you do follow this advice, then your children will enjoy it, and although you may not derive much comfort from this, they will want to continue on in YWAM when they are older, because they will have seen the fullness of God and His calling upon dad and mom.

It is obvious that when the children are young, the attention and care they need is much greater. During this stage a mother's participation is limited, but when there is a passion for God and an awareness of the privilege we have to be in YWAM, then there will always be some way or another that these mothers will be able to be involved with all their heart, even if it is from home. Everyone else then notices this attitude, and it is very encouraging for us all. Unfortunately, some mothers have used their children as an excuse to hide, arguing that they can never get involved in anything. I say this, not to discourage anyone, but rather to help us discover how to help our families find their place, and participate within the mission.

Leaders vs. Pastors/Spiritual Parents

A base leader told me once, "I need to find a director for the DTS. I am thinking about inviting a certain person from one of the other bases."

"Please, do not do that!" I told him. "Where are the leaders that you have discipled?"

"I do not have any," he answered back with complete honesty. "And if you keep on as you are now, you will never have any!" I exclaimed.

We may need leaders for one of our ministries. We may need to recruit more workers. We might send e-mails out all over the world looking to fill the empty places in our structures. But let me tell you this: **Having good leaders is not enough to transmit the DNA of our mission.**

Franchises and their Field-manuals, their systems, methods, and even their values, may work very well in many companies and for their staff. However, an apostolic mission is something completely different! If it is an institution, we can lead without loving. We can lead activities, projects, and teams of people, but we cannot guide people to life.

In our journey as parents, Martha and I were not the only ones that taught our kids to ride a bike, brush their teeth, get dressed, and clean the house (all of those things could have been taught by any instructor). But in order to teach them to be a family, to love, to share, to forgive, to serve, to give, to respect, to have integrity, to have compassion, and to live, it takes much more than being good leaders; it takes parents that will guide and shape them, starting from their first few years.

What then should we do to recruit workers?

Let us start at the beginning. A base leader ought to lay down the foundation of the most important aspect of YWAM; the one thing that unites us the world over: the DTS (I speak as someone who has done the DTS twice). Sometimes, I wonder if all of us in leadership ought to do a DTS again. It is the best recruiter of workers, it creates a tie with the leadership, and its vision is transferred to our DNA. They will be the disciples who will continue on and lead the next DTS, and the ministries that you raise up in your city, and in the nations. And they will do it the same, if not better than us.

The Apostle Paul said: "I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). To form disciples hurts, because there is a lot of love, and a lot of surrendering.

"...as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you," (1Th. 2:8).

"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1 NKJV)

"The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep." (John 10:11 NKJV)

How can we lead with this kind of heart? From an institutional focus it is not possible. Only with an apostolic heart will we be able to lead from our vulnerability; from our loving, our suffering, our rejoicing, and from giving ourselves over to those who walk by our side.

We cannot lead, unless we are willing to invest in others, in order to mould and shape them. Some of us have difficulties in being spiritual parents, because we have never been children. We have become orphan leaders. An orphan leader multiplies what he or she is.

But there is always time to seek out those spiritual fathers and mothers, time to recognize our orphaned state, and to be for others

the parents that we never had.

At another time, a base leader shared with me that, "The students that finish their DTS, do not stay, or they leave shortly after."

I asked her, "What real challenges and opportunities for service would the new staff have?"

"Well," she responded, "they could work in the DTS, in the offices, or in the base logistics."

I asked her again, "What challenges do you as a leader have, in which you could involve the new staff?"

If we are not walking with a clear vision, we cannot expect others to follow us.

What I have observed is that many young people, upon the completion of their DTS, stay for a year, or a year and a half, and then leave YWAM. The majority of them got involved in what they knew the most, the DTS. They worked in one or two schools, and then they left. They had no one to follow! They had no challenge to make them carry on.

In some countries, it is harder to get students for our schools than it is for others. What are we to do? Many of our current leaders were reached on the streets, rescued from drugs, or other difficult situations; we brought them to Jesus. Others had backslidden, and they reconciled with the Lord and later began their DTS. In other words: If the students do not come to us, let us go and find them, on the streets.

Training vs. Discipleship

When we reopened YWAM in Argentina in the late 1980s, the word, discipleship, still caused a certain sense of unease in some Christian circles, not only in Argentina, but also in many countries around the world. Discipleship was associated with a level of control, and an annulling of the individual.

In other circles they would tell us, “discipleship should be done by the local church, and YWAM should restrict itself to training missionaries.” It sounded great, but in practice we have seen how decisive the DTS has been in the personal life of each student.

Over the years we have observed that discipleship cannot be confined to a program of six months, or a year. It is a lifestyle. If we can enrich this with some good training, then what a tremendous blessing it is. Training however, must never replace discipleship. Many of our YWAMers experience a harsh blow in the transition from being a student, to becoming staff. They were so well cared for as students, with personal discipleship sessions, small groups, ministry times, and much more.

So what happens now? You are staff! May God help you.

More than ever in a time like this, it seems as though we need two Discipleship Training Schools to be able to obtain the same results that we used to achieve in just one. The students these days come with much deeper levels of problems than in past years. They are broken from drug use, abuse, and all kinds of sexual perversion, ruined families, consumerism, and disbelief. On top of all of this, they are also orphans lacking love.

That is why, when we minister in such areas as the Love of the Father, and Inner Healing, during our schools, they have such a tremendous impact on our students. However, it would be an illusion to believe that the task is complete. We are just barely beginning!

Training gives me tools to achieve a specific task, while discipleship prepares me for life, and ministry. In order to train you, I do not need to love you. I can use methods, information, and all kinds of programs. Our schools cannot be an end in themselves. We do not run our schools just because everybody else does, or to form a part of a degree in the University of the Nations; and certainly not to look for many students that could help with the financial provision of our base. Our training programs must be a response to the vision that we have for our ministry. This vision is something that we are already developing in our city, something that we want to develop and multiply in other nations.

For many years we saw young people graduate from seminary, ordained as pastors, without ever having had the opportunity to pastor others. They then looked for a church where they could forge their first weapons (as if it were fine to experiment). How sad. They should get out there and show that they can be a good pastor first. What a great pressure resting on this new pastor, and what a risk for the church that receives him or her. What will this new person do? They will transmit all of the academic baggage they acquired in the seminary to the new church.

Some churches put advertisements in Christian publications, looking for pastors:

“Our church seeks a youth pastor; dynamic, innovative and creative. No older than 30 yrs. 35 hour working week. Paid weekly.” What a shame. Pastors should not only pastor people, but also multiply themselves into more pastors; each one

according to their own.

We are the pastors that should be discipling future pastors, as they walk alongside and grow together with us. Then, when we see they have a grace to pastor others, and notice people seeking them out, listening to them, and following them, we can encourage them to begin training to help them grow in the grace that they are already exercising.

This is the same principle for base and ministry leaders who produce future leaders from among their ranks. You must give birth to them, shaping them as you walk together, serving the Lord.

Along those same lines...

We open training schools that respond to the ministries we are already developing in our midst. In other words, first we start a Counseling Ministry in the city, and later we open the Counseling School. This prevents us from falling into a vicious circle, where we train trainers so that they can train more trainers that train trained trainers. Are we training, or entertaining?

So where are the counselors amongst us that will minister in the midst of the nation? Where among us is the heart that Jesus had for his disciples? Where is the spiritual influence of the discipleship demonstrated by the Apostle Paul in YWAM today?

Staff Members vs. Servants of God

When we first began our work, I was anxious to see quick results. I wanted to show the church in Argentina that YWAM's ministry was noteworthy; I wanted to grow. YWAM was already established in South America, and I had seen all the blessings and miracles that God had poured out on other bases. I too wanted to grow. I am not sure now, that all of the motivations of my heart were so pure. I wanted to recruit new workers from all over the place. We wrote in the GO Manual: "We need this, that and the other. Come one, come all." We wrote, asking all of the other bases to send outreach teams to us. We tried to do everything that we could think of in order to grow. But teams went to Chile, and staff went to Columbia, or to anywhere else, besides Argentina!

I had a lot of projects in my Leadership Training School. Lots of organization, but with one small problem: I had no money, and there were very few workers. We also had virtually no experience in YWAM. I wanted to invite YWAM leaders to come and establish themselves here, but I was not able to convince anybody. Until I realized that I was going in the opposite direction to where God wanted me, I was building incorrectly. I was following an institutional vision.

I needed to establish foundations from the bottom up. I needed to shape and mould that which was going to be built over the coming years. Many of those that stayed on after their DTS were very young. Others had backslidden and were now reconciled with God. Some were people who were saved during our outreaches, who later came to do their DTS. Still others came from churches where their pastors wanted to get rid of them

because they were such troublemakers; so they would send them to YWAM.

During those first years we did not see any visible fruit, but the Lord confirmed to us that we needed to continue on in the same direction. It does not have to do with surviving, nor keeping what we have; but rather with how we will continue building, and with what materials we are using!

We now have fourteen communities opened in Argentina, and other countries. Of all the YWAMers serving in these communities, more than ninety percent have completed their DTS with us.

They are not just from Argentina, we have 26 nations represented amongst us. And every YWAMer that God has brought here to join us from other nations, has embraced our vision and our focus, and together we are all moving in the same direction. We have made quite a few mistakes in the process, and things have not always turned out as we wanted, but we keep on building and persevering in the vision and convictions that God has given us.

2 Kings 4:29-35 (NIV)

Elisha said to Gehazi, "Tuck your cloak into your belt, take my staff in your hand and run. If you meet anyone, do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not answer. Lay my staff on the boy's face. But the child's mother said, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So he got up and followed her. Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the boy's face, but there was no sound or response. So Gehazi went back to meet Elisha and told him, "The boy has not awakened." When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the LORD. Then he got on the bed and lay upon the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. As he stretched himself out upon him, the boy's body grew warm. Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out upon him once more. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes."

In the book of 2 Kings 4, a story is told to us about the prophet Elisha and the woman that lost her son. The prophet sent Gehazi, his servant, ahead of him with his staff, so that when the young man was touched with it, he would come back to life. But nothing happened. The prophet had to go personally, and the boy was resurrected only when the prophet lay on top of him, hand-to-hand, face-to-face: complete identification.

Staff are collaborators that are here today, and gone tomorrow. They work for a company and complete a task. They can even be a person that is very dedicated to their work, but rarely do they feel part of the greater vision. They do not feel like the owner of what they are building. They generally have a short-term projection, and it is based on their own personal development. They have difficulty in feeling like an heir, and in times of difficulty, they leave in order to follow their own path. They are just staff!

Staff cannot resurrect the dead.

However, when I see so many of our YWAMers with many years in the mission, I think these people are so much more than staff. They are giving their whole lives. They love the mission in which God has placed them. They have a heart that is passionate for God. They serve people. They are wise teachers of the Bible. They preach in the midst of the nations. They have taken enormous risks for the gospel. They are dedicated full-time to extending the Kingdom, without receiving any salary. They are servants of God.

In many of the Christian circles throughout the world, if you are not a pastor, then you are second-rate. You are not given many opportunities to speak out in the churches of the city. How sad. I preach in many events for pastors in different nations, where they look at our local YWAM leaders with such a view, completely underestimating them. When I have to introduce them publicly, I do not do it as if they were just John, Peter or Sarah. Instead,

I present them as the wonderful men and women of God that they are; Servants of God. They truly are pastoring with lots of love within our communities. Of course, no one will believe it unless you start believing it yourself first. You are a servant of God, called to be part of a wonderful family within the Body of Christ called YWAM.

I remember when I had to direct my first international outreach team during the Football World Cup in Argentina in 1978. I was only eighteen years old. I was the youngest of the fifteen members of the team, and I was the leader. What craziness. We arrived at the church where we would be working, accompanied by Wedge Alman (The father of YWAM Latin America), and when he presented me to the pastor, he did so with all the honors. He said, "This is Alejandro, the leader of our team," as if I were Billy Graham. I was overcome with excitement. Men like Wedge impacted my life!

Nevertheless, I should also admit that quite a few among us only want to be staff. They stay in YWAM, waiting for a better opportunity to open up for them, or to have an enriching spiritual and cultural experience in another country. They are quick to complain, and are always aware of their own rights. They fulfill their responsibility, and nothing more. They live under the nine-to-five syndrome, limiting themselves to working only within that timetable.

One of our YWAMers complained constantly and always had a long face.

"There is no order in this base," this person would say. "Nobody takes care of anything. It's always dirty, everything is messy." One day I stopped him and I said, "If you have something to resolve with someone, take care of it with that person, but stop polluting the spiritual environment of the base with your negative comments! If it's not a privilege to be in YWAM, no one is forcing you to stay. No one is going to take your salary away!"

Why even continue on in this place if we don't have joy and a sense of privilege? I think this is a good question to ask ourselves periodically.

Do not rush to recruit workers from all over the place when you are going to establish a long-term ministry. Some ministries grow and flourish quickly, but later, when the house built on sand caves in, the headache will be much greater, and last longer.

A few years ago, I saw a news report on television from Nicaragua. A lady who was 108 years old, was invited to a television show, along with all her family; 150 family members in total. The presenter, who sat there surrounded by this huge family, asked the old lady, "Tell me grandma, what did you do to get such a big family?" The woman shrugged her shoulders and answered ever so casually, "I didn't do anything... the only thing I did was take care of my 8 children, and they took care of rest."

She multiplied naturally through her children. Let us too, shape and form disciples starting with the DTS, so that they can carry our DNA on to the next generations.

Pastoral Care vs. Pastoral Life

In Spanish, the word, *pastor*, means both one who shepherds sheep, and one who pastors a church. In English, we use shepherd for the sheep, and pastor for the church.

In the southern part of Argentina, there are many sheep. Although they are delightful to look at, being close to sheep is not always very pleasant. After rain, when the sun dries off their wool, sheep emit a smell that is not exactly reminiscent of French perfume. You can quickly recognize any shepherd by how they smell. My dear friend Guillermo Prein says that, "If you do not smell like sheep, it is because you are not shepherding."

It is incredible to see how, just as much in Jesus' day as today, the sheep recognize the voice of their shepherd, and happily follow him. It is very natural. A good shepherd is always willing to risk their life for their sheep. That is what David did when he fought lions and bears to defend his father's sheep.

When what is natural is institutionalized, it also fossilizes.

If we have an institutional viewpoint of the church and our ministries, the same thing will happen to our pastoral work. Obviously, there are people who have a greater anointing than others for different types of ministry. We recognize this. Amongst us there are men and women who have a special grace in the pastoral area, but that does not mean that the task should be left for this group of 'specialists.' Some people also have a special anointing in evangelism, or worship, yet we are all called to worship and evangelize as a natural part of our Christian life.

The same applies in pastoral work. I am my brother's keeper.

We are all called to look out for each other, to multiply ourselves in others and to be fruitful. This is not just for projects, but also for people.

There are moments when we enter into a personal crisis, with conflicts and difficult times. What do we do when our personal struggles are against enemies that seem like invincible giants? We call emergency-911, and with sirens blaring, the base pastor or the counseling team appears, just like firemen, to put out our fire. They minister and pray for us a couple of times before they move on to other fires, as this is what they do. Thanks be to God for those who have such willing hearts, who are ready to listen, and are such a blessing to us in those critical moments.

As good as it may seem, this does not reflect the fullness of the apostolic vision which we are aiming for. The way we live in our communities and ministries, must be based upon a pastoral foundation. Discipleship does not depend on only two or three people anointed for the task. It must be disciples, who in everything they do, whether they are coming or going, serving, or ministering, or eating, are discipling those who will then disciple others. This then becomes a chain of discipleship, where the disciplined will in turn disciple others that are also discipling others, and so on it goes. It is a part of the natural growth and work of the Body of Christ.

This whole process flows more naturally when it is woven into the very fabric of our bases and ministries. It must be part of our apostolic nature. That is why the DTS is so crucial. Now is the time for change.

When I am asked by base leaders how to put this into action, I suggest they set their laptops aside, stop the meetings for a time, and start leading their DTSs. They need to get out onto the street and evangelize with their workers. It is about forming their staff from the beginning, forming disciples that can continue to be molded and shaped as they develop different ministries.

Personally, it is difficult for me to sit with people and listen to their problems. I prefer to talk about projects, ministries, statistics, nations, and good news.

Those of us who are visionaries generally have this tendency, but in our ministries it is not always about running – sometimes we are not sure what we are running towards, but we still run – but about building. Had it not been for Martha and some of our first disciples, including Jose Maria and Roxana Liste, Daniel and Norma Etchart, among others, today would have been a very different story!

Just as children teach us how to be parents, they taught me how to disciple. They taught me to not just be a runner, but also a builder. If I was able to learn to pastor and disciple in spite of my visionary nature, then others can also learn; because it is not about a specialized occupation, but about an opened, vulnerable and loving heart.

Delegating a Task vs. Passing on a Legacy

In an institution we can develop multiple tasks, and when someone comes to take our place, we delegate to them. This is the process of handing over responsibility for our tasks to the new worker. The new worker is shown how the system works, or how the machinery operates, until they feel confident enough to run it themselves. We are talking about work, tasks, performance and responsibilities, and when the process of delegating is done well, the business or organization works efficiently.

With an apostolic mission, it is different. It is much more than just a task. It is something much deeper than the effectiveness of a job well done. We are talking about people with anointing. People with spiritual authority, and character. People that love God and that walk in the fear of God, and who are men and women of faith.

It is not a textbook method. It is about passing on a legacy, depositing in others the most precious things in my heart. It is sharing my life, which has been modeled by the Holy Spirit, placing it within reach of those who draw near to me. But it is also walking together, evangelizing together, teaching everything from how to cast out demons, to resolving conflicts and making decisions under pressure through practical situations. It is the same as when Elisha followed Elijah everywhere he went.

It is not about passing my torch on to someone else either. I will continue carrying my own God-given torch, as long as He wants me to. But I will also light as many torches as possible, so that my fire will be contagious to all around.

We will make a huge mistake if we delegate leadership without

handing over a legacy. As leaders, if we are to delegate responsibility without passing on a legacy, we will be cutting off the apostolic anointing, our true DNA. And the next generation will be led by orphaned leaders.

Students vs. Disciples

The students in an institute or training center come and go. They sign up and pay a fee, receive knowledge, then graduate and leave. The students in our schools also receive a spiritual impact. Once one DTS ends, another begins. When one group leaves, another arrives... Next!

We want our students to experience a good school. If there are professors that were well received, then we invite them to teach the same topic each year. By establishing good teaching from good professors, we ensure the success of the DTS. But unfortunately, good teaching and good professors, although important, are not enough; because it is the quality of those who serve on a DTS that makes the difference.

When we work on a DTS, we do much more than receive students that come and go. We are God's servants who are here to make disciples. Those disciples are people we love, and with whom we get involved on a heart level. We are more interested in the lives of our disciples than in the success of some training program. This is how we will raise a new apostolic generation that will transform the nations.

As I mentioned before, the depth of problems in this new generation of students is much deeper. One DTS does not seem to be enough now. Perhaps two DTSs will accomplish in people today what we used to accomplish with one before. Either way, everybody is welcome, because our Lord continues to perform miracles and transform lives in every school.

There is also another class of young people out there, waiting to be called and challenged by us. Could it be that there is a place

for them in YWAM today? Looking through some of our flyers and our Internet write-ups for the DTS concerns me a little. It would seem that we are trying to sell something that is attractive, innovative, and adventurous, yet completely safe. Is this what we are?

We show a photo of all these happy faces from different nations enjoying life, as if it were a Hollywood production. In the background there is a large building to show that people are going somewhere important, or at least safe.

If we do not have a large building, we insert a beautiful scenic picture of the city. Is this wrong? Not necessarily. The question is, what are we communicating? What kind of students will our schools attract?

I remember a flyer for the training school of a certain mission organization. It declared:

“If you are willing to eat whatever is put in front of you;
“If you are willing to sleep wherever necessary;
“If you are willing to give your all for the sake of Jesus;
“Then there is a place for you with us in...”

To tell you the truth, I do not know how they went with this advertisement, or even if anybody responded. I certainly hope that many did.

Institutional Presence vs. A Mission that is Relevant in Society

The success of our ministry is not directly related to how many bases or ministries we have, or how many countries we are present in, or how many schools or staff we have, although we are very encouraged when we see our numbers grow. As a preacher from India said:

The most important thing is not how much we have, but what we do with what we have. That is where our authority and spiritual influence lies.

How can we as a mission, produce real and deep changes in society? There are many books and theories about discipling the nations, but even today, there are not that many role models that one can follow. What would happen if your base closed down today? Where would the city be? Would they realize that you are not even there anymore? Would they be sorry that you are gone? Would they even miss you? Would your absence be felt, not just with the churches, but also within the nation? How can you walk in that direction? How can you make an impact on the nation? How many of you believe that God wants to use you to cause a deep transformation in the nation?

Your leaders have killed their giants, now it is your turn to kill your own giants. Those giants lying on the ground were slain by our leaders and it is fine for us to celebrate the victory, but it is also time for us to slay our own giants; maybe giants which are bigger than the ones our leaders ever defeated. It is not just about living for the mission that God has given to our leaders. God has a greater vision for this generation, to 'do greater works than those I have done' –Jesus.

A few years ago, I was on my way to a pastors' convention in Norway, and as I waited at the airport check-in desk, I noticed that the employees of Argentina Airlines were protesting over the company's recent bankruptcy. They had even put up a tent inside the airport.

"We want to work," they were saying. 7000 people had lost their jobs, and had gone five months without getting paid. All international flights had been cancelled and from any perspective the company was ruined. The country's most important airline was looking for a solution. Months had gone by, and the employees were here trying to call the media's attention to their situation.

As I waited there to board my plane, I saw the protest, and I said to myself, Someone should do something; either the government or somebody. Then I left for Norway.

Praying for a word from God to share with the pastors in Norway, I asked God, "What should I preach?" The Holy Spirit told me, "Argentina Airlines." I felt like Peter on the rooftop; I had to preach to 400 pastors. So I prayed again, and once more I received, "Argentina Airlines."

I asked God, "What does this mean?"

"I want you to gather the employees when you go back to Argentina, and pray for them. I want to use YWAM to save this company."

I said to God, "We have Discipleship Training Schools, schools for children's ministries, Kings Kids, and missionaries. What have we got to do with this company? I don't know how to help them, they are already bankrupt!"

God continued to speak to me, "Mobilize the YWAMers. Get the employees together."

I insisted, "We have never done anything like this before." When I arrived back in Buenos Aires, I saw the tent at the airport and I was embarrassed. I did not dare go near them, and I did not know what I could do. So I went back home, and three days later I went to a pastors conference in Peru. There, while I was praying, the Holy Spirit said to me, "I spoke to you in Norway about Argentina Airlines and you are not obeying."

"Lord," I replied, "I'm fine with preaching to ten thousand pastors, but what you are asking is really not my domain. I have never done this before."

"Are you willing to enter into a new dimension of faith?" He asked me, "Do you want a revival? Then you will have to go where you have never been before."

So I went to the airport and found the leaders of the employees. I told them that I wanted to gather all of them together to pray for them. They were so desperate that they said, "Yes, yes, let's pray!" Two days later, at 7:00 p.m., we went with a group of YWAMers and several of our pastors to Buenos Aires International Airport with a sign that read, "We are praying for Argentina Airlines."

There was a crowd of employees waiting for us there; they hung our sign from the upstairs balcony. The place was packed and they even had a sound system ready for us. Then their leader said, "In this critical time for the company, we want to thank these Christians that have come to help us." He then passed me the microphone straight away.

I was praying inwardly, trying to show some confidence, but on the inside I was trembling. The employees were there with their faces full of sadness and disbelief, there was no background worship music and no shouts of "hallelujah" and the atmosphere felt heavy. I started proclaiming a prophetic word, "This company is in the situation it is in because of the

corruption of those above, in the middle, and below...”

The word was harsh for everyone.

“...but if we ask God to forgive us for all the corruption, the lies, the greed, and immorality, then God will do a miracle, and He will save this company. So I ask you all to kneel down together with me, that we may ask God for forgiveness.”

Imagine that... eighty-eight percent of the people present were not Christians, but they were all so desperate! I was the first to kneel down, with one eye closed and the other slightly peeking. Then the people began to kneel down also, and the presence of the Holy Spirit came down. There, in the midst of the International Airport, with this large crowd of people, we began to declare the Holy Spirit’s power.

Then people began to weep. We were laying hands on them, and the police who were watching on, were amazed. In the midst of that brokenness the word of God came: “It is done!”

Thirty-five days later, God started to work things out with the company. They recovered their aircraft, and their employees and a thousand new members of staff were employed. New travel destinations were added, and in the last six months of that year, the company made a profit of three hundred million dollars. All because the YWAMers, God’s people, were there with God giving us the authority to change the nations. May this anointing come upon your life too!

In 2001, Argentina suffered a major crisis, resulting in the president escaping from government house (the Pink House) by helicopter. At that time the Lord allowed us to open a National Prayer Centre, right opposite the Pink House from where we have had the opportunity to minister to many people from the government in the last six years. The Lord has been showing us new strategies of how we can be relevant to the nation of Argentina.

More recently, our president would not receive any religious leader at all. No pastors, no priests, nobody was allowed to see him. So we asked the Holy Spirit how we could possibly minister to our president. He told us that the Kings Kids would do what the pastors could not.

We asked each member of Kings Kids to write a letter to the president. Then we sent a note to the Government House to inform them that a group of children were on their way to hand the letters that they had written to the president. They were going there on National Children's Day: it is good to use holidays like these which are well publicized. Almost 400 Kings Kids wrote letters.

The day before Children's Day, they went and started to pray outside the government house. We were told that it was impossible for the president to receive the children tomorrow, as he had a very busy schedule. As a consolation, we would still be able to hand all of our letters to his secretary's secretary's secretary.

But the Kings Kids were not discouraged, and went along the next day. They were praying once again outside the government house. Suddenly, someone came from inside, and said, "we will allow forty children to enter and they will be received by an office worker." So forty of the children went in while the rest of them stayed outside to intercede.

The group that went in carried with them all of the letters. They were first received by a secretary, and then by another, and another. All of the children were praying that the president would receive them, but they were told it was impossible because he was meeting with the President of Panama, and then with the global president of Hewlett Packard, and so on it went. What those people did not know is that we have a direct connection with the King of Kings!

All of a sudden, one of the big doors opened up, and someone approached them, saying, "You may come in; the President will receive you now."

The forty Kings Kids went in and met with the President, and taking hold of his hand, they told him, "We have a word from God for your life!" They began laying hands on him, and praying for him, and they read out one of the letters:

"Mr. President, I'm nine years old and I am praying for you, if you repent of your sins and give your heart to Jesus, the Lord, who loves you very much, He will forgive you..." and the president, well... they were kids, he could not get upset!

Another child ministered inner healing to him: "Mr. President, God wants to remove the roots of bitterness that you have against your father, so that you can forgive him." The President was there with the Kings Kids for twenty minutes; something no religious leader had ever achieved. Our Kings Kids were there to bless the nation. Hallelujah!

Along with the opportunity of Argentina Airlines, in the midst of a crisis with violence, death, politicians resigning, unemployment and factories closing down... God began to transform the nation, and we had the privilege of having one of the leading roles! As we pray, God opens doors to proclaim His justice and repentance, and to reach out to the government.

God allows us to enter key places: the Government House, the Supreme Court, the National Congress, in order to minister to public dignitaries, union leaders and ecclesiastical authorities. Preaching the gospel of reconciliation and peace, in historical moments, where there is a public outcry for justice.

Children are also part of this crying out for the nation. With 24-hour prayer vigils in front of the Government House or other key places, with meetings of worship and intercession, we celebrated the Lord's Supper in the open air with young people

from different countries.

‘If my people, who bear my Name, would humble themselves, pray and seek me, and abandon their evil ways, I will hear from the heavens, forgive their sins and restore them’ – God

Openings, Opportunities, and Urgency

Young David was in charge of watching over his father’s sheep. What he did not know was that the military and political events of his time were about to change more than he could have ever known.

We too, must ensure that we are aware of the times we live in. Social, political and economic changes are not outside God’s timing and purposes. They actually show us His times.

In 1 Samuel, Chapter 17, we see Israel at war against the Philistines. There was grief and fear as fathers sent their sons to battle alongside their King Saul. David’s brothers were also sent to the battle. David was too young to be in the Israelite army, so his father sent him to take food for his brothers, and to return with news of how things were going.

David left his daily activities to go on the mission his father had given him, and take food to his brothers on the battlefield. There were two very clear tasks for David; to take the food, and to return with news. On returning, he would go back to his regular task of watching over the sheep.

His father had said that his brothers were already fighting the Philistines, but when David arrived it was a very different scene.

The two armies had been facing each other for over 40 days, but they had not yet entered into battle. This was very unusual, as the armies of this time normally started fighting after 7 days, a time that allowed them to set up camp.

When David arrived, the armies were armed and facing each other, with the Israelite army shouting their war cry. The war cry was part of a military strategy to scare the enemy. It was a show of their courage, and desire to fight. The cry, was in effect saying, "We are going to cut your head off. We will cut you down into little pieces". They wanted to make the enemy tremble.

As David watched the army, the ground started shaking. There was a Philistine giant stepping forward to defy Israel. When the Israel army saw the giant, they all ran away in panic.

David had arrived on the scene, and when he sees what is happening, he thinks, "Oh, this is not what my father told me it would be like. The battle has not even started and everyone is afraid of the giant!"

Israel was good at their war cry, and in a battle, shouting is important. Gideon and his army also used a war cry to their advantage. It is important, but it is only one part. After the cry, you need to pull out your sword, run against the enemy, and cut their heads off; chasing them down until the end. Shouting is good, it needs to be done; but its purpose is to declare the battle is about to start. There are other steps that follow. In the same way, we all need to be good intercessors, but this is not enough. We must also enter into the enemy's territory, with a sword in hand.

While David had seen the army's reaction, he also heard them talking about something extraordinary; as mentioned in verse 25. He began listening to the heart of the people, and they were asking each other something like, "Did you hear what the king will give to the one who defeats the giant?"

The king had offered:

- Honor and riches
- To become part of the Royal Family and government, by taking the king's daughter in marriage
- Exemption from taxes for the victor and his family forever

The king was so desperate that he had offered everything.

David heard what the people were saying but he wanted to be sure, so he verified it, by asking, "What shall be done for the man who kills this [giant] Philistine...?" He then went to another group to confirmed this. He now had important information about what was happening in his country. He had discovered the need: "What is the king doing? Are you sure he is saying that?" He went to others and asked the same thing and they responded the same way; honor and wealth, marrying the king's daughter, and tax exemption.

With the need discovered, David declared to the king, "I will go. I will fight against that uncircumcised Philistine." Picture David when he said, "I will..." He had already been taken to King Saul. He had direct access to the president, just like our Kings Kids. His direct access was made possible by the chaotic and fearful situation.

Imagine all of King Saul's generals searching for strategies over those last 40 days. One would say, "I think we need to attack immediately after lunch," while another voices, "Our attack on the Philistines must occur before dawn." They were all talking about how to transform their nation. Many will be talking about how to transform your nation too. They will be discussing how to transform China, and many, many other nations.

Even though there were some good strategies and ideas, the days were passing, and nobody was doing anything. In the middle of all of this, a seventeen-year-old boy appears, to declare, "I am here to cut off Goliath's head!" How they all must have stared at him.

They probably responded, "Who on earth are you? Be quiet! You are too young, we are the ones who know how to handle this situation! We have been planning this for 40 days now, so keep your mouth shut!"

“No!” retorts David, “I have come to inform you that I will cut off this giant’s head! Nothing else!”

Saul looked around, and found no other volunteers. He would have thought, “Is this the best we can find after 40 days? Well, the least I can do is give this little guy my armor, so that he can die with honor. His death will be with my armor, the armor of a king.”

After David had put on the armor, he could not even walk. I can see the generals laughing at him. “Ha! He wants to defeat Goliath, and he cannot even walk in the armor!”

YWAMers, the anointing that God gave us, does not require armor. God will use the stones that He has placed in our hand to impact the nations. David could not walk with the armor, but he knew what he had to do. He said, “Allow me to do it my way. I can do this, if I can do it my way.”

David had found an opening in this situation. It was a position that nobody else could (or would) fill.

They were in the middle of a war, but nobody was daring to challenge Goliath. Many were shouting out war cries, and the leaders had many good ideas, but there was none willing to enter the arena and fight.

For us, we found an opening with Argentina Airlines. There was an opening there for us to make a difference. Today there are also openings in your nation, waiting for somebody to step up and take the challenge. There are other openings too, which the Holy Spirit wants to show you. In every nation that our teams go, there are openings, places that nobody has entered, activities that no one is doing.

One of our leaders discovered that there are more than forty Asian churches in Buenos Aires. There are Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese churches but the people

in these churches did not know each other. They were each working on their own. During a time of intercession, God showed us that we needed to unite them, to produce a bridge of friendship amongst all of the different churches.

It is a story that takes time to tell, but basically, we traveled around to all of the Asian churches in one day, inviting them to prepare a stand, where they could share typical foods and art from their culture. We invited both Christians and non-Christians. A Buddhist art group came, and many other non-Christians, with the result that there were almost one thousand people gathered. We were the only non-Asians present, but it was such a great privilege!

The pastors that were present, asked me to speak to the gathering, so I started to talk about reconciliation of the nations. The Holy Spirit started to move, and people started giving their lives to Christ. Then the Japanese came forward, and asked for forgiveness from the Koreans. This happened thousands of kilometers from Korea and Japan; in Argentina!

There are thousands of Japanese, Koreans, Chinese, and Taiwanese living in Argentina. We have already had two large encounters like this. We found an opening, and are now seeing many Chinese coming to Christ in Argentina. They are now giving us offerings, to go and preach to their relatives on the other side of the world. All because we were willing to fill this opening.

We can do anything when guided by the Holy Spirit. Many times we cry out for revival, praying, "Lord, Lord!" It is as if we are trying to convince Him, to twist His arm. We are saying, "Come on God!" Yet we do not have to convince Him. God is already convinced, He has already said "Amen!" God is the first one interested in bringing a revival to the nations, but a revival is not something automatic. It comes through a working collaboration between the Holy Spirit and us. It is a partnership between God

and His people.

Revival is very simple. We all love the stories of David and Goliath, Elijah on Mount Carmel, Moses and the Red Sea. Suddenly the Red Sea opens up so Israel can walk through and when Pharaoh enters, the sea closes over.” Hallelujah, how amazing. What would it be like though, if you were there instead of Moses, or Elijah, or David, before the miracle? Would you really like to be David when the giant was standing right there in front of him? Would you like to be in those places before the miracle actually happened? That is when your legs shake and you stutter, when you feel a knot in your stomach. Whenever you feel like that, you are on your way to seeing revival. Our problem is that we all want to see revival from where we are, in our comfort zone. So we sing, wanting to see God’s power appear in the world that we know. Here, we are in control, it is what we have experienced, it remains within the limits of our finances. Here, we feel safe, because we are doing the ministry that we have always done. From this position I ask God, “Lord, send your power. Revive us!”

This will not work. The Glory of God is never found in our protected and safe place.

How many want to see the Glory of God in their lives, in their ministries? How many want to see the power of the Holy Spirit flowing through their lives? Do you really want it? Are you sure? Do you really want to see the power of God?

You will not find it in what you know and can control. Every man and woman of God found in both Old and New Testaments of the Bible, every one of them that produced transformation and saw revival, did not do so from their comfort zone. They had to leave their land, leave their place of safety.

Do you know where your revival is? Do you know where you can find the power of the Holy Spirit? Do you know where the anointing for your ministry is? It is in the “Twilight Zone,” the

“Risk Zone;” where what you know is not enough, what you have is not enough, where you feel like an apprentice, where you feel weak.

This is where you must be prepared to enter to see the Glory of God. You must do what you have never done before, go where you have never been before.

David discovered that there was a way to see God’s Glory when there is:

1st - An opening

2nd - An opportunity

3rd - An urgency

You must be in that risk zone where its challenges go beyond your capabilities and knowledge.

The ministries in YWAM are the expression and product of the gifts of our YWAMers. As leader, I had never considered the need of a ministry for deaf people in Argentina. One year ago, God spoke to one of our staff about starting a ministry for deaf people. She said to me that it was not fair, that although we have translation for the deaf, they always have to stay seated. She was convinced that God will raise up the Christian deaf people as a missionary force. She also declared that, “We will be able to change the country’s laws for handicapped people.” She wants to prepare many Christian deaf people, so that they can rise up as prophets to the nations.

This lady is now leading a project of national transformation for all the deaf people in the country. Lord willing, in July 2009, we will have our first Discipleship Training School for deaf people. Hallelujah! Imagine that! Sign language is a little different in each country, but many of the signs are similar around the world in every language. So with a small group of people, she is planning a DTS using international sign language. That would mean that we could have everybody in the same DTS without translation; we could have Koreans, Africans, Latinos, Europeans,

all together! This transforms a difficulty into a blessing.

I do not know how many deaf people there are in Korea, but we can raise up Koreans, and Chinese, and Argentines, all together serving God. Imagine having deaf-mute preachers that can minister in the hearing world to those who hear. Why not? This is YWAM.

We are talking about openings, opportunities, and urgency!

When David saw the whole army together, he could have reacted in a very different way. He could have said, "that is not my problem, it belongs to the government and King Saul." He could have been indifferent, and decided to go back to his life and the things that he knew. He could have criticized the situation, responding, "See! It is Saul's fault. I knew we would have a problem because we have a bad king!" David could also have reacted with discouragement, saying, "Oh no, we are all going to be annihilated." He may have wanted God to do it all instead, declaring, "We are doing so bad, may God help us all."

Instead, he said, "I will be a part of the solution. I will be the one who brings the transformation."

Sometimes we believe that our governments should be the ones who have the answer for everything. Instead, we should be looking at ourselves. The best solutions for the most serious problems will be found with God's people. It is too easy though, for us to say that it is not our problem, and to think that somebody else should do it.

When John F. Kennedy took over the government in January 1961, he said, "My fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country." He set a new paradigm; that this country would be what you make of it. YWAM Asia will be what you can do for YWAM Asia. YWAM Africa will be what you can do for YWAM Africa. Your base and your ministry will be the result of what you can do for

your base and ministry.

It is very easy to criticize our leaders. It is very easy to get discouraged. It is very easy to be indifferent and decide to do nothing. But if you want YWAM to be more spiritual, it is you who needs to be a part of that change. If you want your country to see revival, it depends on your choices. If you want to see more missionaries out there, you cannot say, "here I am, send him." It must be, "Send me, I will go."

In 2006, the mayor of my town and I met together to pray and talk, and he said to me, "Alejandro, the environment in the government building at the Town Hall is oppressive, because the people, our workers, have many problems." The government employees were plagued with many health and family problems.

There were about 900 people working in the government building when he asked me what we could do. He placed an opportunity before me, so I asked the Lord what we should do. I needed to know what the key was, to make an impact in this place. We had never done anything in the government before. When I asked God, He told me, "Open a Pastoral Center inside the Town Hall, an office where YWAMers and pastors can go every day to minister to government employees."

When I shared this with the mayor, he thought it was a great idea, and began explaining how he saw it working, "So when you enter the Town Hall, and at the reception you mention that you are struggling with a problem, the lady at the desk can tell you that there is a Pastoral Center down the hall to the right, where you can go for prayer and help." Now you can go to our City Hall and every day you will find YWAMers and pastors ministering to the government members there.

God has given YWAMers this anointing, to see and discover these sorts of opportunities. We are now working on having the same prayer centers in all the airports of our country.

We want to see YWAMers at prayer tables in all of the airports around the nation. That way, they can pray for the people that are traveling, and for the families waiting for their family members to arrive.

You can do it too. In fact, you have the opportunity to do it much better than us. You have been prepared in areas that we have not, and the Lord wants to anoint your life so you can give birth to new ministries that nobody has seen before. My prayer is that you receive the same anointing as us, and that God gives you an even greater anointing than He has given us. Do you want this anointing?

The third way that God prepares the way for us, is when there is an urgency somewhere. Sometimes we want things to be planned and organized, and although planning is good, there are many circumstances that appear when we are not prepared. Yet in that moment, we must respond or we will lose our opportunity.

That is why we need to be discerning with the things that are happening in our nation, and around the world. When you watch the news or read the newspaper, ask the Lord to speak to you and tell you what is happening from His perspective. Remember that the political, social, and economic events are not separate to the spiritual. Ask the Lord to allow you to see the news with His eyes, and hear it with His understanding, so that you will be able to discern the urgency of each situation.

Philip left large crowds to go into the desert and speak with just one man (Acts 8:26-40). We must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit at all times.

In 2004, Diego Maradona, the famous Argentine soccer player, was admitted to hospital and almost died as a result of the effects of drugs. He was a great soccer player who gained fame for leading Argentina to a World Cup victory in 1986, but a 20-year struggle with drugs almost destroyed his life. He entered the hospital in a critical state, at a clinic very close to one of our YWAM bases.

There were so many people coming to see him, and standing outside the hospital to hear news of his health, that the police erected a barrier almost sixty meters long. The main television stations were there twenty-four hours a day, including CNN and stations from many other countries. Everybody wondered if Maradona would live, or die, it was so close.

Close by, we had a DTS running. They were in the middle of their classes and could have continued with the school program, but they had also been taught to hear God's voice. During one of their intercession groups, God spoke to them. He told them, "You have to do something for Maradona. The whole school needs to go and pray outside the hospital clinic."

This was not a part of our school. It was not something that we had planned. We already had our plans, our program. God was speaking something different. We wanted to keep going with our regular activities, but the Holy Spirit said, "Go! Go there now!"

We protested, "What are we going to do when it is full of police officers, and covered by television cameras? What could we possibly do?"

The only thing the Lord would say was, "You have to go."
So we asked, "But, how?"

The Lord showed us. Do you know what God showed us? To go dressed in jerseys from soccer clubs all around the world. Manchester United, Barcelona; soccer jerseys from soccer clubs from many nations.

Can the Holy Spirit speak these things? Yes. Yes, He can. Are you open for the Holy Spirit to speak these things to you?

The whole DTS went to the hospital wearing soccer jerseys from all around the world. They carried a five-meter wooden cross with them from their base, and a poster that said, "Diego Maradona, we are praying for you." When they arrived in front of the fence, they hung the poster from a nearby tree, and started praying.

Maradona was so ill that no one could visit him, not even family members. The withdrawal symptoms from the drugs were too strong. The DTS students started praying, extending their arms upward. I was at home watching television when I received a surprise call from Brazil exclaiming, "We are watching the YWAMers on TV!" When I changed channel to CNN there they were, our YWAMers, with 10 cameras focused on them and radio stations interviewing them. Everybody wanted to know who they were, and from which church they had come. They replied, "It does not matter what church we are from. What matters is that we have come here to pray to God for Maradona's life." On television they were showing the poster that said, "Diego Maradona, we are praying for you."

The students left shortly after that.

The next day the mayor asks me, "Alejandro, I am a friend of the director of the clinic where Maradona is staying, would you like to come with me visit him?" I went with the mayor that day.

We entered the clinic and passed through the police control. The clinic director, Maradona's personal doctor, and the psychiatrist were there waiting for us. The mayor tells them, "Well, Pastor Alejandro is with me...."

The psychiatrist looks at me and asks me, "Tell me pastor, do you have anything to do with the young people that were here yesterday, the ones that were praying in front of the clinic?"

I did not know what to respond, "Well yes, I know them...."

And the man stares at me and says, "What they did was wonderful. I wanted to thank you so much. I saw on television how they were praying for Maradona."

Maradona's personal doctor then told me, "The only thing that can help Maradona is a miracle from God. Thank you for sending those young people!"

I felt so proud of our people and replied, "Yes, I am the director,

for all of them. I am their pastor.”

They said, “We need your help, please! Can you help us save Maradona’s life?”

After that, I returned to the hospital 22 nights in a row.

When I started going, Maradona did not react to any stimulus, and was greatly sedated while he went through the detoxification process. I went into his room, and started praying and laying my hands on his chest and head, rebuking the spirit of death. God started to touch the nurses, and they would kneel down at the door of the room, and He started to touch the psychiatrist too. Maradona started to recover, until he reached the point that I was able to speak with him. So I preached the gospel to him. He did not give his life to the Lord, but he now knows the gospel and has been given the opportunity to respond.

The largest television channel in Argentina started to look for me, because I was the only one with access to Maradona’s room. They wanted to know what the room was like, what he ate, what he did, how he slept. I had the press right behind me, because they wanted news. Now was my chance to be super famous. But the Holy Spirit warned me, “Do not expose yourself. Be discrete.” So I told them that I would only give them information if it was off camera; because the Lord had warned me to guard my heart.

Maradona’s life was spared by a miracle.

God has called YWAM to enter places where nobody else goes, and to do what nobody else has done, but we must be ready to respond quickly in the moment of urgency.

In Argentina, there are two million Bolivians. Not long ago there was a huge crisis in Bolivia, so the Bolivians living in Argentina protested outside their Embassy for the deaths that were occurring there. As my wife watched the news live on the television, the Holy Spirit told her, “you have to go there and pray for them.”

Martha leads a national ministry called Women of Faith for a Different Nation. Their goal is to transform and influence key areas of society. Each woman in their group wears around their neck a light blue handkerchief, similar to that of the Boy Scouts, to identify them when they go to pray.

Immediately, Martha gathered some women together, and they drove to the Bolivian Embassy in downtown Buenos Aires. There were hundreds of people protesting there, so Martha, and the women with her, stood to the side and started praying. Ten minutes later, one of the protest leaders realized that these women were not Bolivian. He approached them and asked them who they were, and what their reason was for being there; because everybody else was Bolivian. Martha replied that they had come there to pray, for them and their country, that God would bring peace to it.

They were so impacted by this, that one of the leaders said, "Everybody, we have a group of Argentine Christian women here, who have come to pray for us during this difficult time. We are going to give them the microphone, so that they can speak to us."

The people applauded as they gave my wife the microphone. Only one hour before, my wife was watching this event on the news. Now, she herself was making the news; only one hour later. With microphone in hand, she began to pray. As she prayed she started to prophecy, saying, "I declare that this unjust government which is running Bolivia today, will fall in Jesus' name." The people cheered. They were not Christians.

It was only 48 hours later that the government fell. There is a prophetic anointing upon YWAM, and that anointing is upon you.

These stories that I have told from the last few months and the last 5 years, are not just to tell you stories. They are here to show you how we can put the principles that we teach in our YWAM schools into practice. They work, today!

God has anointed YWAM so that we can produce great

transformation. After the event with Kings Kids and our president, I was invited to have a private meeting with the President of the Nation and some dignitaries. The mayor of my town was also present, since he is a personal friend of the president, and there were seven or eight other people.

At one point in the conversation I commented, "Mr. President, the System of Prevention and Rehabilitation for Drugs in Argentina is a system that does not work, but we Christians have the answer to this problem in our country." The President had one of his Ministers seated beside him, and he turned to the Minister and told him to arrange a meeting between the National Director of the government ministry, Fighting Against Narcotics, and Pastor Alejandro. That was on Friday.

The following Monday morning at the National Prayer Center our phone rang. It was the National Director of Fighting Against Narcotics. He said, "I am calling on behalf of the President of the nation and I would like to know when Pastor Alejandro can meet with me, because I have instructions to meet with the pastor.

We arranged a meeting, and when I had the chance, I started to talk to him about the transformation of the entire nation in the area of drugs. The Director then turned to me and asked, "Well, tell me pastor, what do the evangelical churches need?" "No, no, no!" I said. "This is not about what the government can do for us. It is about what we can do for you."

I then explained to him how we wanted to help the government. We could help them change their whole structure and policy on drugs, using a biblical perspective. So we got together all of the directors of Christian organizations where they are working in the area of drugs, and we started to have a series of meetings with the government, to help them change their whole structure.

There is a similar story with the Detention System. Today we have many churches inside the prisons, but the transformation

that God has been doing is so vast, that the government has given us our first Christian jail, directed by Christians.

The prison is called, Cristo Salva (Christ Saves), and the director as well as all the guards, are Christian. When the Justice Minister visited, he exclaimed, "The bathrooms are cleaner than McDonald's!" This prison is causing an embarrassment for the government, because it is operating on half of the expenses of other prisons, due to there being no corruption of state resources.

The five hundred inmates in this prison are all Christian, but not all arrived as such. They became Christians while inside. The inmates are so productive in their work in the jail, that they support themselves and their families. With the tithes and offerings they give, they are supporting both a children's home and a soup kitchen. The government is amazed, they cannot understand how this could happen.

Now we are in the process of opening a Discipleship Training School inside the prison, because we want to raise missionaries in this jail who will go to other jails around the world. We want them to enter the prisons of many different nations, and bring transformation there too. One of the main pastors on the inside, who is helping and pastoring there is Korean, a lawyer.

God is doing big things! The anointing is on YWAM. Are you going to take a hold of it, or will you let this chance pass by? The anointing does not come from our zone of understanding, from our comfortable, safe zone. It is here, in the zone of risk, the zone of the unknown.

As a dear friend of mine says, God loves to show his power in public, but these manifestations occur when His people are willing to act.

Mark 16 tells us the signs that will follow those who believe. It says that these signs follow somebody who is moving. They

respond to those who obey, and are moving in faith.

We enjoy God's presence in all of our activities, but if we want a revival we have to go up to our Mount Carmel, face to face with the prophets of Baal, and in the midst of the whole nation.

Key Places, Key People, Key Moments

During the crisis of December 2001, in the midst of all the social violence that the country was suffering, the Lord spoke to us about mobilizing ourselves on the Saturday before Christmas. It would be on the 22nd of December that we were to set up prayer tables and evangelize in some of the key areas of the city of Buenos Aires.

Some of our friends suggested that we hold prayer meetings inside their churches, as outside it was very dangerous and insecure. We prayed again, but God's word remained firm.

Finally, around 400 churches got involved with our call to action. On that Saturday, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., we had set up 1150 tables in front of hospitals, malls, parks, town centers, trains stations, and wherever else it seemed right.

Without spending any money, each group prepared their table with their sunshade, chairs and literature. That day, around 77,000 people approached us, asking for prayer, and after blessing them, we proclaimed the gospel. More than 20,000 made a decision for Jesus! Can you imagine? Without money, without any time to prepare: A multitude coming to Jesus! Key moments.

Solomon's Gate was a key place in Jerusalem, a great megaphone, if you will. It was a covered walkway with columns, which was the hub of the city's social life. It is the same place from where Jesus drove out the merchants. Multitudes flocked there on a daily basis. Acts 3:11 tells us the story of what happened when a man crippled from birth was healed, "While the beggar held on to

Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade." (NIV)

In Acts 5:12, we are told that the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people; and all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Porch. What are the Solomon's Porches of our cities, and where are they? If you want your city to know about something, then ensure that it happens in your Solomon's Porch! We, as YWAMers, need to be where the people are.

Key people can be governors, artists, athletes, or business people; but it is not limited to people like this. The man, who was crippled from birth, had no high status, but everyone in the city knew him, and his healing revolutionized all of Jerusalem. The same thing happened with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. Key people are those that can produce a strong, swelling wave of change around them, and who have great influence through their lives. We have seen it with the transformation of guerrilla warriors, drug traffickers, and prostitutes. I encourage you to make a list of the key people in your city, and to begin to really pray for them. You will see how your paths will begin to cross.

It is interesting when we talk about a harvest. One must bear at least two important factors in mind: The right place, and the right time. For example, the Rio Negro Valley in southern Argentina is very famous for its apples and pears, and they are exported all around the world. However, if I go to Rio Negro to harvest apples in July (winter), I will be frustrated, because I will not be able to find any apples. I can go to sow, but I cannot go expecting to harvest simply because I do not understand the correct time for harvesting apples.

Know your times. Know your Solomon's Porch.

Ministerial Activities vs. A Vision to Follow

I remember the first few times I tried to set up a tent. First I laid the roof out onto the ground, but the wind caught it and it blew it away. Next, I tried driving in the stakes without stretching it out; but the tent caved in. Finally, I learned that I had to do these two things simultaneously! Stretch, and strengthen.

Isaiah 54:2-3 (NIV)
“Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities”.

If our vision is not carried out in the same way, we run the risk of falling into deep imbalances: a mysticism that isolates us from people; or an activism that separates us from God. May we have the vision to stretch outward, and may we have the depth to build on solid foundations.

Some do not want to begin with a certain project or ministry until there is greater holiness in their lives. But there they are, still waiting. I just say, “What a pity.” Others dive into ministries and activities of all shapes and sizes without walking in holiness. Again I say, “What a pity.”

Why do we live between the one or the other?

Both of these two elements must go together simultaneously. Holiness and action. Do not wait for the special day of; anointing, revival, and sanctification before you stretch and move outward. Sanctify yourself today, and walk in the vision that God has given you.

When I have the opportunity to visit our YWAM tribes around

the world, I am always curious to know what they are doing, and what they are projecting for the future. I usually ask each leader the same questions:

“What is the vision of this base?”

The most common answer is, “well... here we have four DTSs per year, one Counseling School, and we send teams to Morondongo and Curuntungo. The Kings Kids have their annual camp, and on Thursdays we go out and hand out food to the poor at the train station.”

So I ask again, “But what is the vision? Where are you heading?”

Again, the response is something like, “Well, uh, we are planning to open another Counseling School, and the School of Worship. Ah... and a seminary for married couples.”

“Maybe my question is not entirely clear,” I respond.

If we end up chasing after events, programs, and activities, without having a clear vision of where we are going, or what we are building, then we will end up burnt-out, discouraged and frustrated; like one who runs round in circles, or a dog that chases its tail. We will not be getting anywhere, but we will surely be tired.

Why do we do what we do?

It is very healthy to ask ourselves these kinds of questions; to reformulate our mission in every city and country in which we are serving. Are our programs and ministries responding to God’s expectations for the place in which we are currently? Or are we simply doing it by repetition, because it is part of the YWAM system or tradition? What is the vision of the kingdom that we want to see established in each nation?

When we have a deep conviction and somewhat of an idea as to the direction in which God wants us to go in our lives and ministries, then we will be able to establish things more intentionally: what kinds of schools, programs and activities are

going to help us on the path, heading in that direction. It is just like constructing a building. There are blueprints, architects, builders, masons, materials and an order in which to do them all. What are we building? Where are we going?

Several years ago, my brother, Ricardo, would continually say: "Vision without commitment is illusion!"

If we have anything in YWAM, it is vision. Many of these visions come from God, while others come after having eaten too much the night before. They are wonderful dreams (although some of them turn into nightmares), but they do not always become a reality, because we do not have the determination or the perseverance to carry them through. They end up as an illusion in a colorful cloud that seems to be there, but when you go to touch it, it vanishes into thin air; it is not real.

If vision without commitment is illusion, then:
Commitment without vision is frustration.

That is why I mentioned our tiredness and frustration earlier. We love Jesus, we serve him with all our strength, and we even sacrifice ourselves, continually making an effort. But the thing that exhausts us the most, is not the amount of work we are doing, but rather it is rowing and rowing without knowing in which direction we are going; without knowing what we are building.

Three builders were working on a building under construction. The three were mixing cement when someone came up and asked each of them, "What exactly are you doing?" The first answered, "I'm just preparing some cement." The second said, "I am just building a wall." But the third, who was doing exactly the same thing as the other two, answered, "I am constructing a huge building!"

That is why we say: Vision + Commitment (is necessary).

When we have a vision, or when we want to develop a new ministry, we usually go to our leaders and tell them that God is guiding us to do a certain thing. We formulate a project, and ask what we can do to accomplish it.

Fine, but if we have a vision: are we willing to pay the price of that vision?

To our upcoming leaders, I ask, "What are you willing to sell or sacrifice to go forward with this project?" Some of us are already used to giving up our refrigerators, cars, furniture, and all the money we have, in order to start and develop the dreams that God has given us.

Sometimes, as spiritual parents, we deny our children the opportunity to become men and women in life. We make everything easy for them, and they do not mature because we give them everything served on a silver plate. It cost us a great deal, and deep down in our hearts we do not want them to struggle in the same way, so we try to make the path easy for them; in this way they do not mature, they do not develop.

The responsibility is ours, because we have not allowed them to slay their own giants; just as we who have been in YWAM several years have had to do, and continue to do.

We must not cut them a deal, so that they have less to pay. We all must pay a just price, whatever the price tag says; without any discounts. Sometimes, the established leaders want to give significant discounts to the new generation who are rising up as leaders. But that lowers the bar, and we lose our edge. What we need in the new generation of leaders, is for them to be even sharper than those, who were our fathers and mothers in the faith!

Bound to Money vs. Depending on God

Look at the first expression, "Bound to Money." It talks about our present being fixed to the past: limited, restrained, and governed by money. The second expression does not talk about our past, or about the miracles that have taken place in our history, but rather it talks about having a continuous present: depending. It requires continuously walking, moving, seeking and renewing.

When people say, "Our church is a renewed church!" They contradict themselves, as no such thing exists. A renewed church is past tense, it no longer is being renewed. If we are not in a dynamic and permanent process of renewal, then we are dying out.

I recognize that many times I have lost sight of this continuous present of depending on God in my life! Today we need to keep growing in the ways we are depending on God. In the beginning we did what we could with what we had; we were a little out of control. We would dive into crazy projects, and were continually surprised by God, although through our lack of experience we also made some mistakes. We abounded in generosity, even though sometimes we only had just enough to eat, but we had an abundant joy just like that of which Paul spoke in 2 Corinthians 8 regarding the church in Macedonia.

The years have gone by, and now we are better organized: in almost all of our bases we are now registered with the authorities, and comply with the local laws. We have our accountants and a budget that tells us how to move, and what we can and cannot do. We are already much more established, and with a certain irony I say... "We are more normal".

What am I saying is, are we worse off now? Not necessarily. It depends on the foundation that we are laying... the bases upon which we are building... the materials that we are using.

Budgets are good, but they should never govern the decisions of our ministries. They help us, but they do not govern us.

One of the weaknesses of those who have much, is the fear of losing what they have. For example, the fear of losing our financial support, or of losing the support of those who give toward our projects. There is the fear of losing the reputation of YWAM, and the good name that we have gained through so much effort; in each of the cities and countries we are in. But we will talk more about that later.

Fear paralyzes, it clouds vision, it binds us to the past, and limits us in our present. It hinders us from walking by faith. It extinguishes our creativity. It holds us in the "status quo." It binds us to a level of control that needs to have everything within arm's reach, without uncertainties. In a nutshell: everything is under control.

It seems as though the first thing an accountant says, just as much in YWAM as in the greater Body of Christ, is, "There is no money!" They look at it as being necessary to protect us, providing us with an assurance today that we will be protected in the future. Savings for a rainy day.

Let us not forget that we are people of faith!

When I think about our training schools around the world, I ask myself, "Why do we give money to our teachers?" I could point out to you some of the bases that pay a lot, and others that pay less; even how much they pay per day. Of course, some will protest, saying that it is already part of the school's budget. So what happened then, to our YWAM generosity?

If we are going to pay fees to our teachers (assuming they are

YWAMers), then let us also give payments to those who work in the schools, those who work in maintenance, those in the offices, our cooks, and the base director! Obviously it does not work that way.

One time I was told, "We are going to give you this amount as an honorarium for the days you have taught."

I think it came to about \$750 for the week. I replied, telling them that the honorarium was not set by them, but rather by me; and that if I set the amount, it would be much more expensive than that. However, if they had been blessed by my teaching, and wanted to express their love through an offering flowing from a heart of generosity, then no matter how much it was, a little or a lot, it was more than welcome.

"But the honorarium is already included in the amount that the students pay," they protested.

May we teach, and demonstrate generosity in every sphere of life. May we express generosity, not only from one person to another, or from individuals to our ministries, but also from our ministries to individuals! We must not have prosperous ministries alongside of impoverished ministers! Let us not honor just those who preach or teach, but everybody who puts their whole heart and strength into serving us every day.

On the other hand, for those of us who preach here and there, let me ask this question:

Where have we placed our trust? In the honorariums we receive from conferences and schools, or in God who has called us to do what we are doing?

I remember once when I went to preach at a church many years ago, one that had always been very generous with their offerings to me. I made the great mistake of putting my trust in the generosity of that church, and I began to spend the offering in my head

beforehand. I told Martha that after church we would go to eat at a specific restaurant and then go shopping. I was presuming upon the abundant offering that they had always given us. Inexplicably, that day they did not give us any offering. We had to modify all of our plans for that night. What a disappointment. The Lord was exposing what was in my heart, and I did not like what I saw.

Where am I putting my trust? Upon whom am I depending?

Equality/Equity

There are some ministries and workers who are suffering economically, while others, who have been here for longer, have more recognition and more financial stability. There are two important points to note here:

1. those of us with more need to develop a greater sensitivity toward those who have less; both on a personal and a ministry level.

2. Second, those who have less, should not compare themselves with those who have more. If we do, we will suffer and become discouraged, blaming ourselves, or even blaming others. Comparison is torture.

Each new ministry will have its own pioneering stage, growing from humble beginnings and from few to many helpers. This develops a greater identity, conviction and spiritual strength in those who are working on the fledgling project. We have to allow that ministry to grow gradually.

In some places we have amazing buildings, but barely have enough people to maintain them. That is where the problems start. We give vehicles and computers as offerings, and we have everything except the most important: people; and a clear vision of where we are going.

I remember during the first few years of our base, when it was very small, that even though we had been able to purchase the

property, we were not growing very fast. I would watch the other bases, such as the one in Santiago, Chile. They received so many offerings of all sorts, and even though they were very generous toward us, I kept wondering why they were able to build so fast and we were moving along so slowly.

God had His purposes: every time I compared our situation with others, I would always lose, and would end up suffering.

The base in Santiago was sensitive to the Lord, and they helped many other bases, including us. But they did not take from us the privilege of developing our own faith muscles. To gain these muscles you have to work at it, you have to go to the gymnasium two to three times a week; and the muscles do not develop overnight, you have to practice. It is the same with the development of a ministry, but we do not do it alone. Instead we work together next to... each other, building the wall in a spirit of love and commitment to one another; all the while understanding that our timings and ministries can differ.

I remember when Wedge and Shirley Alman, after 25 years in YWAM, came to live for a time in Buenos Aires. The Lord gave them a beautiful house with a pool and lovely yard. They were renting it at a very cheap rate.

I was driving my car, accompanied by a student from the Frontier Missions School, when we drove past the front of the Alman's house, and he said to me, "Oh! Look how good the missionaries have it, huh?"

An indignation came upon me, both a holy anger and the other kind as well, so strong that I jerked the car to a stop. I said to him, "Before you keep speaking, I am going to tell you who Wedge Alman is; and after you have had to live in a tiny bedroom for 20 years like he and his wife did, serving so many people, only then can you speak!" The poor young man turned white.

I embraced him and told him, "I am so happy that God has honored the Almans with this beautiful house, because

when they lived in such tiny cramped places, they did it with an enormous joy for having the privilege to serve God!”

Equality is a frame, a photograph. It is stationary and without variables. We all have the same. Everything is the same for everyone. Like laws, which should be equal.

Equity however, relates to the principles of justice, and is not always the same as equality. It is giving the same opportunities to everyone, so that even from different starting points and different worlds, each person has the same possibility as every one else; for progressing and developing in all areas of their life and ministry. Do all of our YWAMers really have this same possibility?

Different policies for different people.

A while ago I was in England, and some of the leaders of the Harpenden base consulted me on the following point, asking: “Look, we have some Latin students here who are in different schools, and we have a problem. Some of them are not paying their monthly expenses and we would like to hear your opinion to know how we should act.”

How can one be sensitive, how can one be just, how can one do the right thing in the midst of these kinds of situations? There were two different cases.

“The first”, they told me, “are people that owe money, but that come once a week and bring what they have. We realize that they are making an effort. On their free days they try to do some odd jobs to save some money, and they come once a week with what they have.”

The continued, “The other case is different. These people do not ever come. Each month we have to go and find out if they have any money with which they can pay us, and when we ask them how they think they will be able to pay, they tell us that they are waiting for a miracle, or for an offering, or a sign, or

something like that. Then, later on, we see them drinking coke, going out and going to the movie theatre. It seems as though they have money for other things, but not to pay their expenses in the base.”

Therefore I told them, “I have two suggestions to give you. We are dealing with different people who act differently, and therefore we need to deal with them in different ways.

1. Those who have made an effort, who have been faithful, who have worked, who come and bring all they have, if you can, show mercy and forgive them their debt or part of it, because they are acting with faithfulness and responsibility.

2. For the others, make them pay it all, plus interest, and if they do not pay, tell them that they are welcome to move on and go their own way. Ciao. Goodbye! They leave. You pray for them and bless them, and they are gone.

You are so hard on them Alejandro! Yes.

In YWAM there should be no room for lazy people, or rather for people that are too comfortable; who do not want to take on responsibility, who are not faithful with what they have in their hands. Allowing this lowers the bar, and takes the edge off who we are and what we do in YWAM.

That is why in an institutional vision, the only thing that really matters is that we pay our staff fees. This means that it is easier for those who have a better income, because it does not matter if they make an effort, or if they are lazy, or whether they are faithful or not. Nor does it matter if they are committed to our vision and values or not; as long as they have the money to pay their staff fees, then it is enough.

The Apostolic Vision however, does not work that way. It is much more than paying a monthly fee. It is getting involved with my finances; blessing people and ministries joyfully, with a heart sensitive to being part of God’s answer for the challenges that lay ahead of us.

Amongst us, and within each and every YWAM base and ministry, we have very different economic realities. There are those who are supported by their churches, family members and friends. And there are also those who do not receive any type of support whatsoever. How can we work and live together with such distinct situations?

Some of our YWAMers do not know what they will eat tomorrow, both on a personal and ministerial level. Sometimes the one who has more, or who has received a financial blessing does not have the freedom to tell others, "Oh wow! They gave me an offering of \$2,000 dollars!" This is because they know that the other person has nothing, and this could produce friction or make the situation uncomfortable. How can we act in this type of situation that honors both parties?

In the history of missions a vicious, and perverse, circle has been formed; especially between foreign and native people. The one who has money, has control. Money talks.

If I supply the money then I say what is to be done: how, when, where and with whom. You may be my co-worker, or part of my team, but you will never be my leader, because I have the money. I am the one who travels to represent the ministry in international events. Since I have the resources, I have the freedom and the opportunity to start a new project or ministry. As you have no money, you are more limited and cannot travel as much as I do, and in order to have representation, you must be personally present.

Now, this spiritual bondage of Mammon, attacks those who have and those who have not. It attacks those who have more, and those who have less.

If I have more... I control you

If I have less... I use you

You control me, and I use you.

If you have more, then I try to find out how I can take advantage of you. I look for how I can get the upper hand, how I can invoke pity, or make you feel guilty so that you feel forced to give to me.

Some missionaries have told me that they have felt used, when in certain countries, and it is true. We must break off this demonic yoke.

Many times we have acted in one way or another, controlling and using people, without being aware of our attitudes. This is a blind spot. I may supply the money, but they have also used me; and at times, I have used others as well.

I remember when I was invited to speak in a national YWAM conference in India several years ago. There were more than 600 people present, half were Indians and the other half, foreigners. The Lord led me to give a message called, "The Spiritual Power of Money". In order to close the message, I said that we needed to put it into practice, therefore we would raise an offering.

To the surprise of many present, we did the opposite of what they were expecting. We asked all of the YWAMers from India to seek out a foreign YWAMer, and to bless that person with an offering. Whatever they had, however much it was, would help to break the spirit of Mammon. Through this act, we would all be free, so that those who had money would not have the control, and those who had none would not be using those who had. Everybody was crying, what a beautiful blessing it was.

We may be thinking that we all have to be equal for there to be no injustice. But God's justice does not come through equality. It comes through equity.

1 Timothy 6:10 (KJV)

"The love of money is the root of all evil".

Does it say that the love of money is the root of some of our evil? Or that the love of money is the root of a lot of our evil? Or that the love of money is the root of most of our evil?

Just like your Bible says, whether in Greek, Latin, or Hebrew: all means all, nothing left out, all-inclusive. The root of absolutely all evil in our country, in the body of Christ, in YWAM, in our families, in our bases... is the love of money. That is what the Bible says.

But you might say, "I do not love money. I am not, kissing and hugging my money!"

The love of money is the influence that money has over my life. The love of money is the influence it has over my emotions, my decisions, and my ministry. It is the influence that it has on our bases. The love of money is related to influence. What effect is it having on my priorities, on my ministry decisions?

I may have to go on a missions trip. I may have to build. I may have to start on a project of faith. Should I, or not? I ask the Lord, "Do I do it, or not?" Do I feel secure, or insecure? Am I afraid to do it? The love of money is something that influences our lives and weighs over our relationships.

Did you know that the best property purchase that you can make is a property with a joint inheritance? The reason why is because there are several siblings who fight amongst themselves to see who gets what. In the end, just to get quick cash, they sell it quickly by lowering the price. This is how we bought one of our bases. They were siblings, but they fought amongst themselves because of the influence of money; their love of money. Their inheritance ended up destroying the relationship between them.

We cannot lose good workers because of money.

What I would like to share with you now, is simply the experience of some of our bases. You do not have to implement these ideas, but they may help you, and if they do, feel free to use them.

We have some YWAMers who have been with us for years.

They are responsible, faithful, hard working, and honest. They love the mission, and they have a deep commitment to Jesus and the Great Commission. If these people have been with us for more than six years, and have struggled during this time with their finances, then we release them from their monthly staff fees. They no longer have to pay. It is our way of honoring them in the effort that they have made. This is not a law, nor is it written in any book (well, except this one). It is just a small act of justice.

We do not do the same with every person that has been with us for six years or more. Please understand that this is not given because of the time they have spent with us; it is for their faithfulness, their commitment, and for the heart that they have for the mission. Sometimes we feel that our YWAMers are giving everything up for the mission, and that we were not giving back to them enough. This has produced a lot of discouragement, so this small act is just one way we encourage them.

Something else we do, that is also not a rule or policy, is shared here so that you may discuss it with the Lord.

Sometimes we have had prosperous and rich ministries, but our workers are without any funds. All of the money raised goes towards the project or ministry, but those working in the ministry do not even have enough for their basic needs. We see this as being unjust, but the workers cannot touch ministry money because that would not be just either.

This is where the founding partners of the mission, the apostolic leaders, and the community pastors can help. They are there to recognize what is just, and to identify good workers. After one of our summer outreaches where we had worked very hard to organize everything, the event had left a surplus of eight thousand dollars. Just when we were about to send the money to the office, we felt the Lord tell us to recognize those that had made an effort and worked very hard. So we set aside some

money for the office, and began to share the rest as an offering for those YWAMers who had worked hard during the event. When they received the money they were very encouraged, and it was a help for each one.

It was not a lot of money, but it was the attitude of honoring and recognizing our YWAMers. The way of missions is both giving and receiving. Some of our good workers around the world have felt that YWAM requires surrender, passion and commitment; yet in times of need, we have not been there for them.

We are talking about a very delicate topic here. I am sharing this, not from a perspective of what should be done, but rather to help us examine and consider the ways in which we are handling such a sensitive area.

There are ministries in our midst that are not very notable or attractive: those that work in the kitchen, the office, or in construction or maintenance. Who wants to give an offering towards one of these ministries? Maybe there is money to buy kitchen equipment, computers, or tools, but who is going to give to a missionary working in one of these areas? People give mainly to work with Muslims or Hindus, to the poor, or to some other pioneering ministry that attracts them. How many give to those that work in the kitchen? When people ask what ministry they are working in, if their reply is that they are the cook, or they work in hospitality, or in administration, who is going to give an offering to these people? Perhaps they do not follow the common image people have of what a missionary is or should do, but these people are faithful men and women of God. We could not continue in our work without them. We do not want to lose them, nor should we; they have a heart for God and the mission.

It is in these areas that we need hearts of justice and recognition to flow. If we are receiving provisions for the running of each ministry, yet those that serve do not have enough even for their

daily needs, what should we do?

First of all, we need to teach generosity amongst ourselves. Each one of us must learn to be sensitive to the needs of our fighting companions, including taking up love offerings, and giving recognition to those that are the least recognized. As ministries we must learn to bless our people, but not with something set in stone, or done monthly, and not with anything that is based on percentages. In other words, nothing formal. Each action should be a small expression of love, honor, or encouragement.

In YWAM we have always said, and we really do believe, that people are the most important. Therefore, if our people are the most important, we cannot allow ministries to prosper while our missionaries remain in need.

We have been talking about this from the ministry side, but if I am reading this as a YWAMer, I might read what is written here and say to YWAM, "Give me! Give me! Give me!"

If your thinking is like that, then you have not understood what I am trying to say. This sounds too much like Proverbs 30:15, and you should read it if you are curious. What I have been saying is not here so you can use it to demand or force anything from anyone. We are all giving our lives for this work joyfully; it is our privilege!

In an Institutional Vision we prioritize the institution, while using people as a means to an end. In an Apostolic Vision we love and prioritize people, and as a community we work together toward a determined purpose.

I would like to add one more thought on the topic of equity. Some of us come from a very impoverished background, while others come from the middle class or wealthier backgrounds. We have each started from different points, yet today as we look back we can see how God has both prospered and blessed each and every one of us.

Equity is greater than equality!

Equity means that we can all grow. If you are a person who is faithful, if you are responsible, if you walk in integrity, if you are loyal with your tithes, and show generosity, then you will grow. If for some reason you are not growing, then the body of Christ around you, the YWAM community, will help you grow. That is our commitment of love that we have made with each of our workers. Once again, this is not saying that we should all be equal, or that we shall all be equal. Each one of us is growing and maturing.

Injustice comes when, even with equal effort, equal integrity, and equal faithfulness, some are allowed to grow and develop, while others cannot.

On Authority...

On this topic, there is much that could be said, and there is already a lot of good teaching available to us. Therefore I would like to mention only a few brief, clear points.

I mentioned earlier, that to gain support, one of the key ingredients is being able to be there in person; in international conferences, regional meetings, workshops, training sessions, and anywhere else that there is a gathering of people. If you can attend and there are only a few, or perhaps no other people from your country or region, then it is very likely that you will be asked to be some kind of representative.

But what happens if you do not have the money to get there? Who represents you? Obviously, it will be those who are able to pay for their journey! Once again we must ensure that money does not lead, govern, or have the last word in our ministries.

Even though YWAM has improved greatly, we still have very few international YWAMers who are able to attend our international events. I am not talking about foreigners who go to represent

the nation in which they are working, but rather native-born YWAMers from these nations. What are we doing about this? This is also the reason that many of our YWAMers still mistakenly refer to YWAM International as if it were based only in Hawaii, or some other far away place on the earth. It may as well be on planet Mars as far as many are concerned. They do not understand that each one of us form part of YWAM International. The truth is that YWAM International would not exist if you and I were not a part of it.

Many dear friends, both in and outside of YWAM, have written wonderful books and given seminars and conferences in many nations on a large range of subjects including; church planting, leadership, discipleship, counseling, and more. They have accumulated great knowledge and their information is solid, but if you ask them how many churches they have planted, or where their disciples are, or even if there are leaders that they have raised up; in other words, where can we see with our own eyes all the marvels that they are teaching us? Many times you will find only silence.

They may invite you to their next conference, or to read their next book, but amongst all of the ideas presented to us, there is a great absence of role models to follow.

We want other people to apply in their ministries the ideas that we ourselves have not yet put into practice. They are like professors without a laboratory, or factory workers without a factory. Theorists, ideologists, and observers, have their place and are important if they can inspire and walk alongside those who are leading and making decisions. Their authority is not based on their ideas and opinions, but rather on their ability to apply these ideas to real life situations.

If you have theories and ideas without any practical examples, there will not be any real role models to follow.

In an Institutional Vision, authority is gained through what we know, and what we have.

What we have is not only limited to money, but I would like to emphasize how significant it is when you have money:

- When I have the resources and the contacts to begin a project, then I will surely be the leader.
- When I can be in all of the international events, then I will surely be better connected internationally than others.
- When, by being better connected, I become a mentor and international speaker, write books and have had the opportunity to get some kind of university degree on top of everything else, then bingo! I am the man!

How can we teach something that we have not put into practice ourselves? What is our authority to teach and lead based upon?

In an Apostolic Vision, our authority is established through how we respond to God with what we know and have, whether it is a little or a lot; just like the poor widow who touched Jesus' heart with her offering (Mk. 12:42-44). This was something that others had not achieved even when they had given such great sums of money. The widow gave so little, but she gave of what she did not have; while the others gave so much, but they gave from their abundance.

Then there was the woman who poured her perfume over Jesus. (Jn. 12:3) Where was the example for her to follow? Where was the true authority here? What do I mean? That we have to be poor all our lives? That we do not need any training? That we have to resign ourselves to what we currently know and have? Not at all!

In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), more was given to the one who had the most, not because of the fact that he had so much, but rather because of his faithfulness with what he had received. "You were faithful with a few things, I will put

you in charge of many things.” It is based on our faithfulness, and how we respond to God with the things that He has given us.

What would have happened if the one who received five talents had hidden them, and the one who received one talent had multiplied it? Surely the five talents of the first servant would have been given to the latter. However, the servant that had received one talent placed the blame on the Master (vs. 24-25) “Master, I knew you to be a hard man, ... I was afraid.” It is so easy to place the blame on others. It is very easy to claim, that it was just that you have no financial support. You may think that if you had the money, you would do something with your ministry, but since you do not have it...

It seems as though some of us YWAMers are too comfortable waiting for our leaders to take the initiative – beware or your talent will be taken away.

Others wait for foreigners to give them money – beware or your talent will be taken away.

If all you have is one talent, use it, and you will be placed in charge over many things. If you feel like a widow with very little oil, then borrow jars and not just a few, and you will see what happens (2 Kings 4:2-6). If you feel like you are just a small boy with his hamburger and fries, use it and you will see how thousands will eat because of your decision (John 6:9-13).

Our authority is not established by how many buildings we have or by the number of years we have had our ministries. It is not measured by how many books we write, or by the number of international conferences we preach in. It is not sustained by our degrees, or by the resources or contacts that we might have. But rather it is by our simple, daily responses to God, by our walk with Him, our dependence on Him, the giving of ourselves over to Him, following Him, and faithfully multiplying everything that He has placed into our hands.

Matthew 25: 23 (NKJV).

“Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things”

Closing and Challenge

In summary, it is both normal and healthy for any organization to go through critical evaluations; taking time to look back and project forward. YWAM is no different. God has been speaking to YWAM about re-alignment through the 40 Days of Prayer and the ongoing monthly fasts, through the international leadership, and through Godly men and women outside YWAM.

We are in a time of re-alignment, which must include the apostolic DNA so graciously infused by God into our family more than 40 years ago. As a mission we are constantly striving to be relevant in a changing world, yet this must never affect our original DNA. Our apostolic principles and calling must remain core to all we do, and we must maintain our resistance against conforming to this institutionalized world. Rather, we must continue to be transformed by the Holy Spirit in the renewing of our mind as individuals and as YWAM as a whole.

To the YWAM leaders who have begun to pass their leadership of YWAM onto the new generation of leaders:

What role model are we providing for these new leaders? Are we leaving them an inheritance of instructions, the ABCs of an institution, or a set of footprints in the sand that they can walk in; footprints that follow God's idea of leadership and influence in today's society? Is our focus on methodology or relationship? Are we giving them a hierarchy or foundation on which they can build?

To those within the YWAM family who are just beginning to develop their God-given calling and long-term vision:

Be careful how you build on the foundation that you are inheriting. May God give you the grace and guidance to continue in the apostolic spirit, following that which has been His will since the very beginning.

If what you have read on these pages has bothered you, please be merciful with me. If it has blessed you, please encourage me. However, one thing I do hope is that what you have read would not be met with indifference on your part. May it challenge you to seek God, to look at where you and the mission are, and where you are both heading. May it also encourage you and confirm all the amazing things that we are doing as a ministry. But most of all, may you be shaken in every area that must be renewed in your life and ministry.

I have not tried to cover every aspect of our mission around the world, nor am I able to do so. This is just a beginning, shared within the knowledge of my own limitations.

May we allow the Holy Spirit to break up everything that has hardened our hearts. Let us not conform to the pattern of this world, but may we be transformed by the renewing of our mind, that we may be able to test and approve the will of God for our lives and for YWAM. His will is good, pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:2 NIV)

Surely this message will encourage us to seek even greater things. If there is something I am sure of, it is that God loves us deeply and that He still has many secrets to share with us about this vision and this YWAM family that were conceived in His heart.

Together in the Great Commission,
Alejandro Rodríguez

