

HIGHLIGHTS

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Redefined
**Euroventure
Online**

THEME
BUILDING TEAMS

EBF-BWA-GBU
**Connecting with
Partners**





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Theme: Building Teams

In this edition of *Highlights* we follow up the good response from April with a theme for this edition as well. As churches have begun to meet again in person there is a need to build, or rebuild, ministry teams. In the pages that follow you will hear stories of how to identify new team members, what to consider in multicultural teams, and how to turn your volunteer list into a team. We hope that these stories will encourage each one of our readers.

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Teamwork: Not Doing It Alone

“What you are doing is not good. You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone.”
 — Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses in Exodus 18:17-18 ESV


Try to imagine with me. Moses enters the tent in time for supper. His wife says, “What are doing home so early? Our sons are going to be happy. Go call them!” It’s been a month since his conversation with his father-in-law, and Moses has suddenly discovered that he has time for a lot more of life than he used to have. He still rises in the morning and heads off to meet the line of people waiting for him to mitigate their disputes, but the line is much shorter than it used to be. When he thought that his wisdom alone was indispensable, days never seemed to end nor the problems resolve. How had he fallen into such a limiting mindset? The best thing for Moses these days was the satisfaction of seeing so many people, who had been sitting on the sidelines watching him work, in action. Moses had built a team.

Exodus 18 is a chapter to which we often refer for a good model of leadership. Moses was a capable, proven leader. He obviously benefitted from wisdom, so much so that his father-in-law found him overwhelmed with people who sought his intervention to settle their disputes. Yet Scripture holds up Moses’s example as negative. Personal capability can become a roadblock to God’s work through His people when they try to do everything themselves instead of building a team.

Imagine Nehemiah trying to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and guard against the enemy at the same time, building alone “with a sword strapped to his side” (Nehemiah 4:18). It is a preposterous thought; however, the failure to build teams is possible for any leader. Conversely, God’s work can grow exponentially when God’s people are empowered, equipped, and released to make their own contribution by the power of God’s Spirit.

Building a team is not optional for leaders in the local church. Building a team reveals a mindset that no one is indispensable, rather everyone is a steward. Building a team reinforces the responsibility of the entire community for edification and of the leaders to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12). Building a team also allows new opportunities for those who are maturing as disciples and disciple-makers. They get to see themselves filling roles that they never imagined for themselves as the leaders move from being ministry practitioners to ministry mentors.

The times that we live in require leaders who are mentors, not just practitioners. At the beginning of COVID-19, leaders in the churches of the International Baptist Convention were tired from trying to figure out how to do church online. During the pandemic they were frustrated that they didn’t know who they were serving, since they could not see them. As COVID restrictions ease they are feeling overwhelmed as they try to recruit volunteers and build teams to re-engage in the activities they did before the pandemic.

As they do, these leaders will not only respond as they should in the current situation, they will be following the example of our Savior and Lord. Jesus knew what both Moses and Nehemiah did not. Jesus knew that He should not work alone. When He relocated to begin His ministry, one of the first things He did was to seek His Father’s guidance and then set out to build a team. May God help us to do the same! By His grace may we empower, equip, and release a multitude of disciple-makers to reach our communities with the gospel, leading people to Jesus and bringing them to maturity in Christ! 



by Tim Faulkner
General Secretary

The 5 C's



by David W. Fresch
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Churches are desperate for good leadership and not just pastoral leadership. Leaders come in all shapes and sizes, and good leaders are needed throughout an organization, not just at the top. In many ways the role of the senior pastor is primarily to train up other leaders to fill various roles throughout the church and to constantly be supporting and challenging them.

Those other leaders must be the unique fit to fulfill the individual role they are called to while also being the right fit for the organization at large.

It is easy for us to want to find other leaders who are like us because that feels comfortable, but the reality is that a church will be better off with a variety of leaders with different strengths and weaknesses that reflect the makeup of the congregation. At the same time, we must ensure we have the right people on the bus, that each person is in the correct seat, and that there is consistent understanding of where they are headed and why they are headed there (vision, values, and mission alignment).

One way I have found helpful in ensuring the above is using the 5 C's Tool. The 5 C's are *character, calling, chemistry, competence, and communication*. All of these are critical factors for success in any role, not just in ministry. The person or people tasked with filling a vacancy within an organization should be familiar with how to evaluate candidates in these five areas. This provides a rational way to organize thoughts on different candidates and compare them to one another, allowing us to be more quantifiable than qualifiable in our approach while still giving plenty of room for the Spirit to guide us in the process.

The following descriptions provide guidelines on how to evaluate each of the 5 C's. If you are filling roles with a team, I suggest you distribute and discuss these 5 C's with the team before beginning to review potential candidates. A description could be prepared stating what is specifically required for each C in relation to the role being filled. If everyone who is part of the recruitment process has aligned expectations before candidates are considered, then it is much easier to choose the right candidate because everyone involved will be more objective in their assessments. But if the following are not clearly defined upfront, then there is the risk that each person evaluating the candidate will have their own subjective ways of evaluating that often include unconscious biases.

C CHARACTER/CHRISTLIKENESS

No one is perfect; we are all on a journey to become more Christlike. But we want to ensure that each leader we raise up within our church is a person with a heart after God's own heart who is clear-

ly striving to grow and already at a point of maturity suitable for the position they are being considered for. This term "suitable" is key here because someone who is leading our 3-5-year-olds on Sunday morning and teaching them Bible stories does not have to have as much maturity and biblical depth as someone on the preaching team. It is very tempting to find a capable person who is not spiritually mature and want to put them into leadership hoping the spiritual maturity will follow. However, the Bible expressly forbids this, saying that they are likely to become prideful and instead must first develop spiritually and then be put into a place of leadership (1 Timothy 3:6). It is better to have a leadership role left vacant than it be filled by an inept or ungodly leader.

Ask the questions: Is there anything about their character that makes me uncomfortable? If the people this person leads become more like them, is that a good thing?

C CALLING

This can be one of the trickiest ones to evaluate. First off, calling in this case does not refer to whether or not they are called to this specific job, as that is what the entire tool is designed to help you determine, but rather whether they are called to this type of ministry at all. This should not be based simply on them saying they are called to the role but whether or not you can see evidence of it. For example, if they say they are called to youth, but then you bring them to a church event and they spend most of their time with the adults, you should question that call. If someone tells you they feel called to teaching, but you know you get bored after talking to them for two minutes, then you should question that call as well. We often want to avoid being discouraging to people in the church, so we let them sing even if they are off key or teach even if no one wants to come to their class or Bible study, but the reality is we are doing no favors to anyone by being less than honest. We who are already in church leadership are called to helping others truly find their calling from God and not merely being satisfied with those who are faithful to a calling yet truly unsuited for it.

Ask the question: Do we see evidence that this person is called to this type of ministry outside of what they have told us in the interview process?

C COMPETENT/ CAPABLE

This is often where secular employers start, though they would be wise to look at candidates through the lenses of the first two C's before getting to this one if they want to build strong, long-lasting organizations. You will find that failure among leaders in ministry and the secular workplace is often not due to competency but due to one of the other four C's. Keep that in mind when evaluating candidates and be careful to not get too excited when you find a capable candidate before you evaluate the other C's. The needed competency varies widely based on the position of course, and it can include a host of things. If they are leading training online, can they operate the technology? If they are preaching, are they any good at preparing and delivering sermons? If they are going to run children's programs, are they organized and capable of creating systems for check in and check out? If they are running the website, do they know how to update websites, do SEO, and the like. Hopefully those recruiting for the position know what is needed in this area and can evaluate accordingly.

Ask the question: Is this person capable of doing the job we would place them in?

C COMMUNICATION

This includes both internal and external communication, and while the level of necessary communication will vary according to position, it is important to consider for every position. Internally (communication within the leadership team or the organization), you should consider if this person will respond promptly enough to emails or in online chat and communications. Also, is this candidate capable of making themselves clearly understood? When they are asked to present plans or ideas for ministry, are they able to explain their ideas in a way that is helpful? Can they receive constructive feedback in a healthy manner? These are all things to consider about a candidate's communication abilities regardless of the area of leadership. For those higher up in leadership, are they able to cast vision,

to get people on board with their ideas, to be pastoral (regardless of if they are officially a pastor) in their communication as they represent the church?

Externally (communication with the church at large, visitors, or within the community), the requirements vary considerably. A candidate to run the preschool ministry might be great with kids (calling), of high character, and extremely competent, but if they cannot explain the check-in process clearly to parents making newcomers feel confident in your church's care for their child, then they should not be the one leading this ministry (or they need to have someone co-leading who brings the necessary communication skills). Someone being recruited to be the teaching pastor of course needs an even higher level of communication that might even include communicating with the media or public officials. All church officers, whether deacons, elders, or council members, must be able to communicate about the church with newcomers, be good at conflict resolution, be able to keep confidence (not over-communicate), and bring clarity to situations when they speak.

Ask the questions: What level and types of internal communication are expected from someone in this role? What level of external communication do we expect someone in this role to have and who might they need to communicate with outside our church?



CHEMISTRY

The reality is that even very godly people sometimes do not work together well. Paul and Barnabas were both servants of Christ, but there was a point where they split up over John Mark. When it comes to building your team, it is essential that you make sure the candidate you are selecting will fit in well. This is not to say that we want everyone to be just alike; we most certainly do not! But if the candidate just gives some of the team members a bad taste in their mouth, then that should be a serious red flag. It is wise to have other members of the team talk with the candidate, and then listen to their feedback. The candidate may be a great person who checks the requirements for the above 4 C's, but you do not want to allow any division into your church. If you are not certain they will fit into the culture, it is best to keep looking for another candidate – sometimes saying “no” is the best way to serve your church, the candidate, and the Kingdom.

Ask the questions: Would I want to hang out with this person outside work? Would they be a good addition at a get together with the rest of the staff or volunteers?

There is no guarantee when selecting new team members that you will always get it right, no matter your process. And sometimes we have no choice but to bring on someone with some rough edges that we might prefer to avoid, but God often has a purpose in this, wanting us to experience some spiritual sandpaper, for our growth and theirs.

But using the 5 C's can help us to avoid some negative experiences. And in other cases, using the 5 C's can identify areas of growth for the candidate you pick. Lastly, using this tool can help set clear expectations for everyone on the team of what is expected of them, which helps to define culture and create unity in the midst of a shared vision.


And above all, bathe all of this in prayer, as we need spiritual discernment both to properly evaluate the 5 C's and to sense God's leading in building His team for His church. 

photo by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay



Building Multicultural



by David Packer

The ideal of multiculturalism is precious to all those who serve in and attend international churches. As the old hymn proclaims, “In Christ there is no east or west,” and it is a precious biblical truth that God has only one true church comprised of the redeemed in Christ of nations around the world.

Yet the reality of working together can often be challenging. People from different nations have different perspectives of life, and churches formed in different nations have worked out ways to do church in their nations that make sense to them. And when we are put together in a multicultural church, we discover many challenges of building multicultural ministry teams. As a pastor with more than 25 years of leading international churches overseas, I am keenly aware of these challenges and have the scars to prove it.

Every church deals with diversity to some degree, but multicultural congregations do it to a much larg-



Ministry Teams

er degree. All churches must deal with personality differences, and there is good training available today to help leaders do this. Personality is how God made us, and culture is how society taught us to value and act. Culture is a system of values and perspectives of a certain people group, the secrets of survival that are passed down from one generation to the next. Culture is shaped by geography, climate, history, epidemics, wars, tragedies, dynamic personalities, religion, and everything that has happened to a certain people, and it is still morphing and changing as times change. Each culture is always based on the past, what things worked and what didn't, and is conveyed by parents, teachers, neighbors, songs, stories, and wise sayings.

All Christians and all churches are to seek to follow Christ. For the Christian and for the church, the ethics and the culture of the Kingdom of God – to be transformed into the image of Christ – are to be our ideal. Committees or ministry teams in multi-

cultural churches should all strive to live and serve by the power and in the fullness of the Spirit. Yet different cultures will prioritize these matters differently. The churches of all nations work out their faith in their own cultural context, and it makes sense to them. Of course, even within the same nation, there are differences between the old and the young, the urban and the rural, the rich and the poor, and the educated and the uneducated, making churches in these diverse cultural settings function slightly differently from each other.

In the international church multicultural setting, cultural differences are even more pronounced. We all assume our cultural values and perspectives are normal and right, and everyone else's are strange and maybe even wrong. We each tend to think that "back home" we did church right and often do not understand why people see things differently. For example, all would agree that we need both harmony and progress, but which of these is more important to

A Servant's Commitment

International Baptist Church

Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body... grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.
Ephesians 4:15-16

I am partnering with others in my service for Christ. I am making a formal confession of my faith in Christ Jesus and a pledge to my fellow servants at International Baptist Church.

Confession of Faith:

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who has come into the world to redeem sinners.

I believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead.

I have personally repented of my sins and trusted in Christ for my salvation.

In my service I will endeavor...

- To serve the Lord Jesus faithfully in my position or responsibility
- To maintain my personal spiritual growth through private devotions
- To pray for the leadership of the church and to work cooperatively with them
- To work in accordance with and not contrary to the doctrinal stances of the church
- To be an example of Christian love and church unity in the church family
- To serve cooperatively with others who are also serving
- To financially support the church and its programs
- To be quick to seek and offer forgiveness when necessary
- To regularly attend worship at IBC

PASTOR AND ELDERS' COMMITMENT

We will endeavor...

- To provide volunteers with adequate training and orientation.
- To support each team member in prayer and by providing adequate supervision and assistance.
- To remain actively informed and engaged with the ministry teams as they meet, discuss, and perform their tasks.
- To hear suggestions and recommendations from ministry teams and support their decisions.
- To be quick to correct misunderstandings and to forgive and ask for forgiveness when necessary.

us? Westerners tend to value progress over harmony and are quite willing to jeopardize peaceful co-existence or to ruffle some feathers for the right cause. Non-westerners, however, tend to value harmony over progress and are willing to jeopardize progress for the sake of unity and group peace.

Often leaders of international churches are blind-sided by concerns raised by a certain group in the church – concerns that they had no idea anyone would even have. Here are some of the cultural differences that I have experienced over the years. (You may have seen others.)

- Is the ministry-team-based form of church organization something that they are familiar with? Or does the national church they come from use a different form of organization, such as simply appoint leaders to make decisions?
- Respect for leaders: do we follow the leaders unquestionably, or do we expect regular updates and question-and-answer times? Do ministry teams outrank the senior pastor, or do they pass along their decisions merely as recommendations? Do leaders retire and pass the baton to others (western Europeans), or do they maintain control behind the scenes as long as they live, even if they give up their official positions (eastern Europeans)?
- Self-confidence: do people feel empowered to speak up and give their opinions in a committee setting? Some cultures encourage individual speaking up (the USA for example) and others encourage being quiet. Remember the Japanese proverb: "The nail that sticks up gets pounded."
- Is planning wise, necessary, and helpful (Germans for example)? Or should we remain flexible and do less planning (Latinos for example)?
- Are there some church practices that some ethnic groups insist are mandatory?
- Do team members come to meetings ready to listen and to share with other team members and make decisions? Or do the members meet first with the members of their own ethnic background and come with a message from them for the ministry team or the church leadership?
- Do we speak directly, say what we mean and mean what we say? Or do we speak indirectly, or remain non-committal, vague, or quiet? (Sometimes language is a problem, that people are not confident in speaking English, for example.)
- Are the goals of the ministry team measurable, specific, and clear? Or do some members consider them immeasurable or perhaps unspoken?
- Do some team members feel insecure and unaccepted by other nationalities in the group?

The more empowered people of a certain culture feel they are, the more they emphasize perseverance and direct communication. The less empowered a people feel they are, the more they emphasize endurance and indirect communication. Cultures that have been traditionally marginalized and disenfranchised are often hesitant to speak up. Here are some practical suggestions that have worked in my own churches, that might work in yours.

- See ministry teams not merely as tools to achieve something for the church. See them also as the church achieving important goals of fellowship and understanding when they meet, as well.
- Teach and follow the biblical qualifications for church leadership.
- Teach and follow the ethics, values, and culture of the kingdom of God.
- Personally model a humble servant spirit. Be ready to listen to and to forgive others.
- Seek to build culturally balanced ministry teams, but avoid putting spiritually unqualified people on ministry teams.
- Seek to create atmospheres in ministry teams where honest discussions can be held. Encourage teams to pray together, talk together, listen to one another, be honest with their ideas and their concerns. Be sensitive to the team member who is quiet. He may have valid opinions and concerns but feels insecure about sharing them with the whole ministry team.
- If ministry teams are making major decisions that have a large impact on the church, survey the whole congregation for their input and preferences.
- Seek to have both unity and progress. Teach and practice patience and grace.
- Build good relationships with the influencers in your church from different cultural and national groups. Seek out their perspectives and opinions and concerns.
- Do not let problems or conflicts between leaders fester, rather seek to make peace quickly. Do the work of a peacemaker.
- Be careful about rushing things that might cause problems. On major decisions it might be better to make small unified steps than taking big divisive leaps in church programming.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate with the church body.


I have introduced to international churches that I have pastored a servant's pledge that we have asked all our volunteer workers to abide by. In addition,

the pastors and elders also have a pledge to our volunteers (see sidebar).

There should be a seamless sameness for all spiritual leadership, flowing from Christ's example, through the apostles, through the pastors, and to and through all church leadership. John Stott in his book *Calling Christian Leaders* emphasized that Christ should always win out over the culture.

"Our model of leadership is often shaped more by culture than by Christ. Yet many cultural models of leadership are incompatible with the servant imagery taught and exhibited by the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, these alien cultural models are often transplanted uncritically into the church and its hierarchy. In Africa it is the tribal chief, in Latin America the machismo (exaggerated masculinity) of the Spanish male, in south Asia the religious guru fawned on by his disciples, in East Asia the Confucian legacy of the teacher's unchallengeable authority, and in Britain the British Raj mentality, the overbearing pride associated with the period of British rule until Indian independence in 1947. It is easy for Christian leaders to assimilate one or other of these models without realizing it. But we need to determine that there is no place in the Christian community for the guru or the Confucian teacher, for the African chief, the British Raj mentality or Spanish machismo. These models are not congruous with the spirit of love and gentleness."¹

The final thing that I have sought to put before all our volunteers and ministers is the prayer of Francis of Assisi:

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy.
O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled, as to console,
To be understood, as to understand,
To be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.* 

¹ John Stott, *Calling Christian Leaders: Biblical Models of Church, Gospel and Ministry*, (Leicester, England, Inter-varsity press, 2002), pp. 129-30.

Discovering Your SERVE Profile

ministry – the thing that makes your heart burn. The question to ask yourself is – What area of ministry has God burned in my heart the enthusiasm in which to serve Him?

With all the transitions within our IBC churches, we are always looking for new people to lead or to work within the ministries of our churches. But how do we go about discovering these people, matching them to the needs of our church, and equipping them for service?

Several years ago, I discovered a study called *Jesus on Leadership* by Gene Wilkes. It focuses on teaching leadership principles in the way Jesus led, discovering the leader within you, equipping people to serve, and forming teams for ministry. One of the key things that Wilkes focuses on is the SERVE profile of each person. What is a SERVE profile? SERVE stands for five elements that make a person's service profile.

S stands for spiritual gifts. These gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to all believers. Each believer has a gift, and it is his or her responsibility to discover and use the gift given. Spiritual gifts include teaching, prophesying (or preaching), administration, leadership, hospitality, giving, wisdom, knowledge, evangelism, and apostleship. The question to ask yourself is – What spiritual gifts has God given me?

E stands for experiences. Everything that has happened in our lives – both the good and the bad – God can use to teach us something. These are our experiences, and they mold who we are. The question to ask yourself is – What experiences has God allowed me to have to guide me for His purposes?

R stands for relational style. Relational style is how you relate to other people; it can also be known as your personality type. Wilkes uses the DISC model in his book. Each person has a tendency to relate to others in one of four ways: dominant, influential, steady, or conscientious. The question to ask yourself is – How has God created me to relate most often to others?

V stands for vocational skills. Vocational skills are those things that enable you to do your work in the “real world.” These skills, when thought about, can be applied or adapted for use within the church or ministry context. The question to ask yourself here is – What vocational skills has God given me the opportunity to develop that can be used for His service?

The final **E stands for enthusiasm.** Enthusiasm is probably the hardest one to define. It is the identification of the thing that you have a passion for in

Still not sure what I'm talking about? Let's use the example of Paul's life. Paul's spiritual gifts were prophesying, teaching, and evangelism. His experiences included his study as a Pharisee, his conversion experience on the road to Damascus, and his call to ministry to the Gentiles. Paul's relational style was strong; he was a D (dominant personality, works toward achieving a goal, active, task-oriented). Paul's vocational skills before his conversion affected his ministry afterwards; he was a Pharisee where he first learned to interpret Scripture, and he was a tentmaker which enabled him to “fund” his ministry. And Paul's enthusiasm, his passion, was for all people to know Jesus. That is what kept him going through beatings, imprisonments, and shipwrecks.

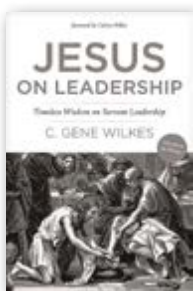
Take a moment and consider your SERVE profile. Consider the questions for each of the letters. How has God equipped you to serve in the church where He has placed you? Are you serving where you should be? If not, talk to your pastor or other leader in the church and get involved. *Now* is the time!

A few years ago, I led one of the small groups at my church, Converge International Fellowship, Darmstadt, Germany, through this study. As we got to the end of the SERVE profile section of the study, I asked the group how they planned to serve. We had the normal answers of “I want to serve in children's ministry” or “I want to work with the youth.” Then a young Chinese student said, “I want to return to China and share the gospel with my country.” What is remarkable about this is that this very student walked into our church three years earlier to practice his English, having never been to a church before and having never heard the gospel. Having first given his life to Christ, he now knew how to serve.

If you would like to explore more about your SERVE profile, the study *Jesus on Leadership* is available through Lifeway. The IBC has a discount available for IBC churches (contact admin@ibc-churches.org). Gene Wilkes will also be the speaker at the Europe Ministry Leadership Conference, 25-29 March 2022 in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Watch for more information coming to your church. Finally, Wilkes has a self-paced online course on *Paul on Leadership* through B.H. Carroll Theological Institute. Visit: ibc-churches.org/empowering-leaders/bhcarroll for more information.



by Judith Lynn Maxwell
Highlights Editor and
Developing Resources
Core Strategy Director



Turn Your Volunteer List into a Team

I recently attend the Engage One Day 2021 online conference where speakers and seminar leaders talked about ways to re-engage church members as they began to return to church. One of the best seminars of the day was presented by Tracy Yantzer, Guest Experience Director of First Christian Church in Canton, Ohio (USA). Yantzer shared three ways to turn your volunteer list into a team. Enlisting volunteers is much more than placing a warm body in an area, Yantzer said. It is about showcasing their talents for God's Kingdom and making everyone who walks through the door feel seen and welcomed.

One of the first ways to do this is to forget the list and create a team. See the volunteers on your list as not just a name on a list but as an individual. Focus on the people. Get to know each person individually. Communication is key. Don't just communicate what needs to be communicated but also encourage them in their day and ministry. Do what you can to make team members feel comfortable and confident.

Next, learn how to identify your volunteers' strongest skills and talents. Create a gift assessment for all people interested in serving. Find out what gifts they have (see the related article on page 10). Think about if any volunteers are uncomfortable where they are. Reach out and check in on them. As your list becomes a team, ask yourself "Are my team members playing the position they should be?"

Finally, set up a workflow for your volunteer team. These simple eight steps will help you see how follow-up is important in the process.

1. Make gift assessments accessible to everyone in the church. Help everyone understand they have a gift.

2. Create an "Interested in Serving Form" for all ministries in the church. This will help people narrow down where they are gifted and willing to serve.

3. Have a follow-up email ready to go when someone fills out the serving form for your team. Introduce yourself and thank them for their willingness to serve. Go over all the serving roles that are part of your team.


4. Create a short, specific follow-up form and include that with your email. This form should include a short detailed description of each role on your team (where they can check where willing to serve) and their availability to serve. Be sure to add the option "Not sure. I'd like to talk more about this."

5. Put them on the serving schedule. But don't stop here!

6. Add new members to your communication group. Use this to keep them in the loop about your (team) vision and how they can be a part of that vision. Updates and housekeeping items are important but always include encouragement. Repeat this step over and over. Making your team members feel seen and loved is a never-ending cycle.

7. Train your team. Meet your new team member and show them the ropes. Have new members shadow an experienced person until they feel comfortable on their own. Work with each individual differently. Do not be stuck on just one way of training.

8. Invest in your volunteers outside of Sunday. Use Step 6 as a way to also individually connect with team members. Get to know each person for who they are. Your team is a community. Ask how you can pray for them and then do it.

Are you willing to take up the challenge – take your list and turn it into a team? Invest in your team, and they will invest in you. 

Judith Lynn Maxwell



Photo by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

Bremen, Germany

THE PANDEMIC and all the restrictions it has brought with it has not stopped a group of International Baptist Church, Bremen, Germany, students from reaching out with the gospel to the people of Bremen. Armed with masks and a passion for the lost, they have faithfully gone out onto the streets for a couple of hours each Sunday before our services at 16:00. Spearheaded by Marge Hintze and supported by Pastor Paul Grinyer and some of the “older” members of our church, they have shared with anyone they meet about the love of God in Christ Jesus.

As well as sharing the gospel from person to person, one of our students, James, in particular, sensed a real burden from the Lord, that the gospel must also be preached and declared. After much prayer and seeking God about this, a month of open-air services were held in the very heart and center of the city each Sun-

day in June. What a joy and challenge it was to sing, testify, and preach the gospel in such a public place and see the various reactions to this message. While some would prefer us to be silenced, it was a privilege to interact with those who hung around listening and to even pray for some who came expressing needs.

Spurred on by the conviction that all men and women need to hear this gospel of grace and greatly encouraged by the recurring verse given “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking ... I have many people in this city” (Acts 18: 9-10), the students continue to go out doing this very needed work. And the open-air services will be held again in the month of August. This time, we’ll move to the main train station – much prayer needed for this opportunity!

Nicola Münster



San Jose, Costa Rica

One of the highlights for our church is when we have people profess their faith publicly through baptism. As part of their baptism, we ask them to prepare and then share their personal testimony. On 25 July, we baptized four people. All of them shared very powerful testimonies, and it was a very inspiring time for our church. I felt it would be good for the larger IBC family to hear these testimonies to encourage us in our work. Below are the four testimonies of those we recently baptized.

Paul Dreessen



ALEX MAJANO

Before I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, I was living a very sinful life. I didn't care about anything but living the way I wanted. I had everything this world can offer, yet I was

not happy; I was lost in darkness.

One time God tried to speak to me through a friend, who came to me and said, "Alex, God is calling you!" I answered: "Tell God to call me later because I don't have time right now." Four to six weeks later, all the bad things I was doing got me into trouble, and I almost lost my freedom. I was alone, not even my family could do anything to help, so I called upon His name and His answer was different than mine. He didn't say, "I don't have time." He said to me, "Don't be afraid because I am with you!"

Jesus showed me His mercy and love. He opened my eyes and ears. He took me out of the darkness and saved me. I believe Jesus is Lord, the Son of God. I believe He

died on the cross and paid for all my sins, and I believe He was raised from the dead the third day.

Jesus saved me. I've been saved by His love and mercy. And as a step of obedience, today I am getting baptized and I am a new creature in Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17). I do not want to live any longer as I please, but I do want to live as Jesus commands us to.



ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ MENDOZA

My path to Christianity has had ups and downs; I still consider myself a work in progress. Even though I was brought up with great moral values, went to Mass as a kid

and tried to do good, I guess I never really found the Lord or had that close relationship with Him. I always wanted to get closer to God and really feel His presence in my life.

It wasn't until my sister passed away seven years ago in an accident that I had to

face two options: either fall into a resentment with God and get myself lost in bad decisions or hold onto Him to find guidance and for His love to fill that void. Losing my sister (or having this separation for now as I have come to understand) was like losing part of myself.

Sometime after she passed, I needed to find more of Jesus in order to deal with the pain; that is how I got to IBC. That situation made me want to be more like Jesus, follow Him, fall in love more with Him every day. By surrendering control of my life to Him, and having Him guide me through life, I have found that I am becoming a better person, better daughter, sister, and friend. My life is better and happier (even with all the pain that life has to offer).

I want to continue growing closer and closer to Jesus and serve Him using the gifts He has so kindly bestowed upon me. He has blessed me so much in so many areas of my life, simply just by surrendering control to Him. I want to continue doing so. Life with Jesus is better, fuller, and I cannot wait to become the person He



always planned for me to be.

MIRANDA JIMÉNEZ

I was born in a Christian family where my parents always talked and taught me about God since I

Bratislava, Slovakia



AFTER NEARLY seven years at Bratislava Faith Community Gerhard and Joan Venter have retired from full-time ministry and returned to South Africa. On their final Sunday, 27 June, a picnic lunch was held in the church garden following the morning service, and suitable words and gifts were given. They have only managed to get to their home this week having been detained in Johannesburg because of the high Covid incidence in the Jo'burg area.

In a virtually seamless transition (thank you Lord) three Sundays later we wel-

Nick Gagnon (c) is installed as Bratislava's pastor.

comed Nick Gagnon from the U.S., via Hong Kong to be our pastor. Unfortunately, daughter Julia was unwell and so Nick's wife Amanda and Julia had to wait a week for their formal welcome. Nick's induction was carried out by the General Secretary of the Slovak Baptist Union Ben Uhrin. A pre-recorded message was also sent from IBC General Secretary Tim Faulkner. As is usual in our Baptist circles another picnic lunch in the garden was held!

We continue to look to the Lord with excitement as we anticipate what He has in store for us.

Pete Miller

was little. When I was 11, I started to take God's Word and Jesus more seriously, and I started to feel more curious about His Word. I remember asking my parents for a Bible and getting really motivated to learn God's Word.

I remember one night where I was in my room by myself praying, and I asked the Lord to please help me understand the Scripture because I was having trouble actually understanding it. And that was the best day of my life, I felt His presence and I knew He was there!

A few days later I decided to give my life to Jesus. When I prayed, I asked Him to come live in me – that I needed Him. I told Him that I believe what He did on that cross and I accepted Him as my God and Savior. That was the best decision I could've ever made!



TRIXIE KROMMER
Raised in a Christian family during my early years, I remember going to church and Vacation Bible School. At about eight years of age, my Mom and Dad's lives got extremely busy with college attendance and work so our church attendance suffered and then stopped.

My life as a teen and young adult not following the Lord led me down a dark path in which my identity drifted to an

ungodly lifestyle filled with loneliness, feeling unloved, and searching for love and acceptance through wrong friendships and self-medication.

Having grown up in the 60s, I was involved in using drugs and alcohol and started seeking alternative paths involving new age-ism and occult practices. These activities led to a whole host of self-destructive behaviors, a spiraling downward in my emotions. I became very depressed in my young adult life and after many years of psychiatrists, psychologists, and group therapy, I was diagnosed with major depressive disorder due to a chemical imbalance.

In 1989 I was prescribed an antidepressant that gave me hope from my suicidal thoughts, and I began to experience a positive shift in my mental attitude. My emotional state became more stable, but I still felt empty in my heart and alone in my relationships. It was a continuous struggle to hide my emotional pain, and I still had bouts of depression.

Late in my life, August 2011, having lived in Costa Rica for over nine years, I learned that some friends of mine, Joe and Mayela (members here at IBC) planned to start a small Bible study group in the Grecia area. I was asked to see if I had an interest in attending, and I immediately said yes.

I had no idea that my life would be turned around with a thirst and hunger

for God's Word and His saving grace to change me with the love, joy, and peace I was missing all those years. Ten years of Bible study and fellowship with Christians for the first time in my adult life led me to a spiritual renewal and a life dedicated to following Christ. I have had many blessings and came to realize that God had protected me from my self-destructive behavior and He rescued me and gave new life.

I continue to thirst for God's Word and to trust and obey Him as He leads and guides me. I know my life has purpose, and I am here Lord to continue my growth through your Word. I feel blessed in so many ways and would like to share one of my favorite verses: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 4:32–5:2).

I am so very thankful for my husband Ingo and how he fully supports and loves me in my Christian faith and walk. May we share together in your love and grace. I am also so very thankful for my parents that provided the Christian foundation I needed.



Sao Paulo, Brazil

ON 31 JULY, Nathanael, Julie, Ethan, and Micah Fawcett gathered with Calvary In-

ternational Church's congregation in São Paulo, Brazil, to say good-bye. Nathanael



is leaving Calvary after being on staff for 19 years, 11 as associate pastor and eight as lead pastor. It was Nathanael who encouraged Calvary to become a member of the IBC and to get involved in its ministries. The farewell service was filled with tears and laughter as friends from various stages in Calvary's life shared about the impact that the Fawcetts had on their lives. We are sad to see the family leave, but we are also excited to see what God has in store for them as they continue to serve the Body in a different location now. Please join us in praying God's richest blessings and guidance over this precious family.



Oberursel, Germany

ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS of our church calendar happens on a football pitch in the middle of the school holidays. For five days in July, 50 volunteers from International Christian Fellowship in Oberursel and from our local community came together to put on a football camp for 85+ children between the ages of 8 and 15. The camp, “Champions in Life,” exists to display God’s goodness to the community by ministering to and building relationships with local children and their families.

The camp originated in 2017 at the height of the European refugee crisis. Our hope was (and remains) to give immigrant children in our community a chance to feel like a champion and to learn some life skills that will help them integrate into German culture. It was completely free of charge, and football techniques were taught progressively throughout the week, so common barriers like nationality, wealth, and skill could not stop anyone from taking part. The only thing needed was a willingness to join in, have fun, and learn. ICF’s Laura Meller, the mastermind behind the camp, works hard all year long to network and nurture relationships built over the years.

This is the fifth year ICF was able to organize this community outreach. There were several ways in which ICF members were able to participate in Champions in Life. Some were physically present at the camp; others interceded for the team in prayer; our youth group packed 500 bags of snacks; some baked cakes and prepared prizes; and many were involved in other ways such as food shopping and transpor-


tation. Those that signed up to help physically were in one of two groups: “coaches” and “volunteers.” The coaches spent each day with the campers on the pitch, training them in football skills and preparing them for a tournament on the last day. Many of these coaches were young men who had previously participated in the camp as children and have since stepped up to take on leadership responsibilities.

The group of volunteers, too, was made up of both ICF members and individuals from the local immigrant community. Some families that had been served in previous years by Champions in Life and by ICF’s outreach/integration ministry now took on serving roles themselves. A refugee who has been attending German lessons at our church could be found teaching the rest of the volunteers how to slice watermelon. Although we might have predicted communication difficulties between internationals with limited German and refugees with limited English, the Lord showed His grace by allowing conversation to flow and new friendships to be formed.

The Lord has also used Champions in Life to forge and foster a very good relationship with local businesses and authorities. The city of Oberursel and football club SC Eintracht Oberursel both partner with ICF to organise and fund the camp, and this partnership has strengthened the relationship that we as a church have with those in local government. Nearby businesses – including a pizzeria, an ice cream café, and a Turkish supermarket – supplied the food, and a number of shops and schools hung posters up in their windows.

All glory to God for doing His work and blessing us in this way. We pray that these relationships will continue to flourish and that, through them, many from our community will come to know Jesus.

As well as being trained in football skills, children were also taught how to be “champions” in their daily lives. Each day one of the football coaches gave a short talk to all the children on how to grow in areas such as helping others, not giving up, setting goals, using encouraging words, and learning to listen, in order that they might be team players both on and off the pitch. The children were visibly engaged and some could even recall talks from previous years.

The volunteers, too, had morning and afternoon devotions. These were prepared by a different person each day who also facilitated a time of open prayer. Among the leaders were a 13-year-old girl, the grandfather of one of the children at the football training, and a mother of five. Among the attendees were at least a handful of Christians, a number of Muslims, and some others of undetermined faith. At the end of the camp a Muslim friend commented, “We don’t pray together like that. The way you are with each other is like a family.” Our prayer is that these Muslim friends and others in attendance who don’t yet know the Lord will have had a hunger for truth awakened in them through the love of God tangibly displayed during Champions in Life and that the Holy Spirit will use this to lead them on to saving faith in Christ. 

Naomi Brown



Coaches for Champions in Life



Children learn to be champions in their daily lives too.