

## PREFACE

God has given the Church an impossible task. The followers of Jesus are commanded to go into every part of the world—including the most difficult and dangerous parts—to tell everyone the good news, persuading them to repent of their rebellion against the one true God, to accept forgiveness through the death and resurrection of Christ, to surrender their deeply-held pagan beliefs and practices, to become reconciled to God and one another, and to become followers of Jesus.

Friends may consider this task foolhardy. Societies may condemn it as intolerant. The media may denounce it as violence provoking. Governments may forbid it and religions may oppose it because it threatens their control. Extremists may torture and kill to prevent it. And the evil one fights it with supernatural power. It is an impossible task – from a human perspective.

But Jesus gave the command, and along with it he gave his authority, his presence, and his incomparably great power. As this book is going to print, the world has just witnessed the heroic rescue of thirty-three Chilean miners trapped deep underground for seventy days. No effort or expense was spared. God has given the Church an analogous urgent global rescue operation.

The task of mission is much more difficult and complex than the global marketing operation of a multi-national corporation. And the burden for sorting out this complexity, and selecting and undertaking appropriate portions of the task, falls on local church leaders.

Because church leaders are responsible for the “home office” operation as well as local, national, and international “marketing,” they often delegate much of this responsibility to a mission

leadership team. The team's effectiveness depends on their knowledge, commitment, time, and performance. It is important, but not enough, to love Christ and burn to see his work done in the world. Also required are spiritual maturity, knowledge, and skills in leadership, planning, execution, communication, and cooperation.

This book is intended to help the church mission leadership team acquire and develop the qualities, knowledge, skills, and organization it needs to lead the church in mission. If the responsibilities seem daunting, skip to the chapter on Structure and begin to imagine who can serve on sub-teams and task groups to accomplish the work. If you have multiple teams or a team with sub-groups or separate task forces, you can decide which functions and constituencies belong to each team or group.

It may be profitable to study the book together as a team, one section at a time. If you study and work through each section and incorporate what you learn as you proceed, it may take a long time to get through the book. But it will result in a more effective team that can help your church maximize its impact in the world. And it is difficult to overestimate what God may accomplish in the world through a committed church with good leadership. The potential is enormous!

May God guide and encourage you as you persevere in knowing and doing His will.

David Mays

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