

Paul's Missionary Band as Metaphor

by Dr. Dan Reeves - IMLT Strategic Consultant

Easum, Bandy & Associates 2002 Coaching Seminar Forum Messages Part 2

PART SIX OF A SIX PART SERIES

Easum, Bandy & Associates (www.easumbandy.com) is a Christian based organization that continually shares with the EBA Community the new insights they are learning in the field.

EAB hosted a series of **2002 Coaching Seminars** for its members. The seminars were led by members of the EBA staff as well as regular guest hosts from a variety of backgrounds. These were opportunities for the EBA team to share their experiences and insights with the community.

Below is a partial list of the monthly 2002 coaching seminars:

April

8-14: **Reconstructing Ministry Around Paul's Missionary Band: "How do Christian Commando Units Operate in a Post Christian Age?"**

with [Dan Reeves](#).

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[IMLT](#) is directed by R. Daniel Reeves, a veteran missiologist, who has been leading cross-cultural missional teams and coaching pastors in team building for more than twenty-five years.

February

4-10: **Creating Missional Communities: Implications of Re-Hearing the Church's Story** with [Todd Hunter](#).

18-24: **Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix** with [Brian McLaren](#).

June

24-30: **An Unstoppable Force** with [Erwin McManus](#)

August

12-18: **The Role of Senior Pastor in Leading an Equipping Church**

with [Susan K. Mallory](#)

- * - Partnership with the Director of Equipping Ministry
- * - Building the Culture

26-September 1: **The Language of the Emerging Church** with [Len Sweet](#)

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Below is collection of forum messages edited from the above seminars – Part 2:

From: Dan Reeves

Date: 04 Apr 2002

Time: 19:12:54 -0500

Hello and welcome!

Here are a few things to keep in mind as we start our discussion of the PMB metaphor and how commando units operate in a post-Christian age.

What does a Christian commando unit look like? How do they operate?

1. Members are willing to die for an eternal cause, to lay their lives down for others. (See I Jn 3:16).
2. Members are able to infiltrate their spheres of influence with revolutionary love. This might be at work, at play, in specific community service, or hanging with their neighbors. Their sweet aroma can be manifested by radiant joy in serving others sacrificially (See II Co. 2:14-15).
3. Members are able to breakthrough in power encounters with the forces of darkness. In some cases this means destroying speculations and strongholds, not warring against flesh, but principalities (See II Co. 10:4-5).
4. Members are able to shift seamlessly from a civilian mode to a soldier mode. They can move immediately from being intimate with God or intimate with family, to suddenly engaging in intense, even dangerous activities aimed at reaching lost persons with a captivating, word and deed presence (See II Tim 2:2-4).

This framework clearly builds upon the understandings and metaphors provided in other recent coaching seminars by Mark Driscoll, Todd Hunter and Brian McLaren.

Mark in his gospel and culture session, for example, gave us a helpful reminder of how the gospel as biblical text moves through particular faith communities and missional contexts. He explained how the the gospel works its way through culture to form communities of believers called the church. These communities then organize to manage their growth and health. I particularly enjoyed his definition of countering culture as “the goal of God’s people who must resist syncretism and sectarianism, which either remove the gospel from the culture, or remove the culture from the gospel.”

Todd contributed further insights by introducing the metaphor of missional communities(MC). Members exchange the kingdom of self for the kingdom of God. A MC is a missionary movement which could be called “The Sacred Order of the Towel.” To join is to become a participating partner. Missional people are intent on learning the new languages and customs of post-modernity/contemporary society. They are willing to listen first with authentic, vulnerable openness. They are willing to give up any sense of privileged position. All of this would be intuitive if one were going to a foreign land. A “foreign” culture has now come to our nation, with massive demographic shifts and worldview shifts. Each missional community maximizes natural opportunities that are all around them. Todd also provided six excellent examples of how this sometimes plays out, from the three ladies who work at the same hospital to four women and two men who all work in the same high-rise downtown.

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Brian McLaren in his emerging culture session offered both clarity and caution for those of us who use the term postmodern. For example, many overreact to modernism by completely abandoning terms such as planning. A more realistic view, according to Brian, is to plan with a margin for spontaneity, rather than with the modern proclivity towards control and technique.

All three of the primary authors recommended for this current session describe specific ways congregations are reaching this emerging generation through activating missional teams. George Hunter instructs us from Celtic Christianity, which was in sharp contrast to the more dominant Roman version. Wayne Cordeiro introduces fractal teams as a highly refined example of missional teams in the postmodern setting of Honolulu. Erwin McManus shows how missional teams can help congregations shift from friction to traction.

I could be wrong, but I believe we are in the early stages of a huge missionary wave, which:

- resembles an earlier wave with Chuck Smith and the Jesus Movement
- is already infiltrating the emerging postmodern tribes effectively with an indigenous gospel.
- will be heightened and sustained by incorporating fractal teams, and multi-site expansion strategies.
- will eventually impact other churches and movements and become an unprecedented force in cities and counties.
- will allow for serious issues, such as contextualization and the authority and use of Scripture, to be addressed with less fragmentation and divisiveness than in previous waves.

For those who desire to delve deeper into the PMB metaphor, I have made available six downloads at the top of this seminar introduction. One topic will be emphasized each day, beginning Monday, April 8. I have also included some daily discussion questions in this next section.

Day One (April 8) – [Backdrop for the PMB metaphor](#) (click on links for Word documents). How does this initial description of the metaphor resonate? What questions does it raise?

Day Two (April 9) – [PMB Biblical description](#). What are the implications of these specific texts for postmodern ministry? What other biblical examples can you cite?

Day Three (April 10) – [Historical examples](#). What can we apply to our current North American reality from these particular examples?

Day Four (April 11) – Laboratory One: Mosaic – Los Angeles

Day Five (April 12) – [Laboratory Two: New Hope](#) – Honolulu

What do these two laboratories on the current edge of a PMB style ministry have in common? What are your initial impressions of New Hope and Mosaic, based upon this sketch? What questions do they raise?

What other laboratories should be included in a short list of leading edge, missional teams innovators?

Day Six (April 13) [New Hope's PMB Advances](#). How much of New Hope's impact is unique to Wayne Cordeiro and Hawaii? How much of this approach can be contextually adapted to the diverse ministry settings in North America?

Here are some basic definitions to help us get on the same page right from the start:

What is a missional leadership team?

Missional is a word that has become widely used. During the last decade missional has been adopted by numerous ministries and movements. Like other words before it, such as mission, missiology, missionary,

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evangelism, and church growth, missional has evolved with multiple meanings. I will use missional in the way it was used by Charles Van Engen in *God's Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church* (Baker, 1991) and by Kenneth Callahan in *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*, (Harper and Row, 1983).

Building upon Johannes Blauw's pioneer book, *The Missionary Nature of the Church* (1962) Van Engen's use of missionary people and missional practice are essentially interchangeable. For example, he uses the term missional to describe Paul and Peter's viewpoint of the church's role in the world (pp. 120-121). He further introduces the term missional in several diagrams which detail the interactive relationships between the church and the world (p. 127-128, 136-139). Van Engen later uses missional to define the goals and administrative practices in the local church (pp 133-192).

Callahan uses the term missional mostly in a strategic sense:

We need more churches committed to effective mission and fewer churches caught in the web of their own shortcomings and needs. In the years before us we need more people who are willing to be competent, compassionate, courageous, and committed missionaries, and we need fewer who are willing to be only professional ministers. That is to say, we need more persons who are willing to be active in the world in mission and fewer who are willing to be only reactive within the programs and activities of the local church.

The first and most central characteristic of an effective church is its specific missional objectives. Missional outreach is not best accomplished by developing a purpose statement or some generalized approach to a given age group in the surrounding area. Nor is mission best accomplished by the church seeking to engage in helping everyone with everything. The church that does that ends up helping no one with anything. Those churches that have been effective in missional outreach have tended to identify very specific human hurts and hopes with which they have shared their principal leadership and financial resources. Maintenance is what we do when we have worn ourselves out in mission. (Callahan, pp. xxi, 1,2)

These two descriptions correspond well with the definition of missional developed later in Darrel Guder's *Missional Church* (Eerdmans, 1998, pp. 11-12). My definition of missional leadership teams incorporates and builds upon all of these missional themes.

First, let's define what missional leadership teams are not. They are not athletic squads, military platoons, or corporate teams. Missional leadership teams are anchored in the biblical approach initiated by the Apostle Paul's first century missionary band. This catalytic approach enabled Christianity to spread beyond its Jewish origins and quickly become the most influential belief system in western civilization. The diverse and turbulent culture of first century Christianity closely resembles our postmodern environment, in which Christians are seen as a minority voice. Credibility must be earned from the dechurched or unchurched through frequent interaction with Christians, not as isolated individuals, but as members of missional communities. What matters most to skeptical postmoderns is this perception of a powerful collective witness that presents itself as exceptional and attractively distinct from the dominant culture. Hence Paul's strategy of being a Greek to the Greek.

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Every team has one or more leaders with a clearly defined mission. The leaders pour their lives into each member of the team. Every team member is perceived as a person with gifts that can be unleashed to lead other missional teams. Members pray for one another. They demonstrate Christian care for one another. They believe that laying their lives down for others in humble service is the hallmark of Christianity. Every missional leadership team knows that building authentic relationships is a prerequisite for ministry effectiveness. They also know that rapid multiplication of teams is the primary aim, and the primary measurement for effectiveness. The indispensable skill for missional team leaders is the ability to facilitate and reproduce discipleship teams.

What are fractal teams?

Fractal teams are the most advanced type of missional leadership teams. They focus on repeatable patterns that are similar to the reproduction of cells in all plants and animals. Since the church is also a living organism, it makes sense to organize and reproduce ministry units by reproducing specialty teams. Teams constantly reproduce in the same way as cells divide in nature. First there is a single team, which soon becomes four teams, and before long it multiplies into more than a dozen teams. The most refined examples of fractal teams have been developed by Wayne Cordeiro at New Hope Christian Fellowship in Honolulu. For starters, look at Wayne's definition in Chapter 9 of *Doing Church as a team*. See also Bill Easum's description in *The Fractalling Church* on p. 12 of the complete index for this EBA Web Site.

Good morning

From: Dan

Date: 08 Apr 2002

Time: 02:54:02 -0400

Comments

Thank you for participating. I hope you had a chance to review my welcoming comments, which explains what we anticipate discussing this week. I'm looking forward to your reactions and questions related to today's initial concept of Paul's Missionary Band, and How Christian commando units operate in a post-Christian world. I am rested, prayed up, and at your service. Dan

Last changed: 04/04/02

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Re: Welcome -- GAN

From: Gary Nims (1)

Date: 08 Apr 2002

Time: 11:09:51 -0400

Comments

Hey, i' m blown away by the introductory material! can' t wait to see where the discussion leads. just a suggestion for us all, from another online seminar approach: it might be helpful as we respond to put our initials or otherwise identify ourselves in the subject line, so that we all can know immediately who the response is coming from. what an exciting time in the life of the Church of Jesus Christ!

WGH Welcome

From: W G Henry (1)

Date: 08 Apr 2002

Time: 11:47:30 -0400

Comments

Dan .. I think you are right on target. I have just finished "Fling Open The Doors" by Paul Nixon and "Unfreezing Moves" by Bill Easum. Both dance will with the primary texts you mentioned. All of this is very helpful for an old "First Church" that has just caught the wind.

I need a little help in bringing up the daily highlighted material.. I bouble clicked on the several of the daily highlight, but nothing happened.. also.. where are the "links" for word documents. I know I am probably overlooking very simple... but I just don' t want to miss these goodies.. WGH

Re: Welcome

From: Greg Wack (1)

Date: 08 Apr 2002

Time: 12:01:37 -0400

Comments

Like Gary, I was also blown away by the introductory material. I am also really looking forward the being a part of the discussion as much as I can. Initially, the PMB model speaks to my heart/vision of how ministry is both needed and hungered for. I am in a rural village setting at a quasi-multi site situation - two UM congregations, with the same pastoral leadership team, in the same village about 4-5 blocks apart. We are trying to paint a vision picture of missional team ministry. Our biggest struggle is the people' s desire to fall back into the model of do-it-all pastors and have "jobs" for everybody regardless of whether the individuals have a passion, the spiritual gifts, and personal style(Network model) for the "job." As people go through the Network course and begin to look at ministry differently they are beginning to catch on a little. This seminar comes at a very appropriate time. Thank you, Greg

Dan's Reply Can any body else relate to Greg' s falling back into the old job descriptio pattern? What have you found that would help him make more progress? Dan

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Reconstructing Ministry Around Paul's Missionary Band

By Dan Reeves

I love the EBA format with all its elevated learning and widespread rippling of seminal ideas. I also am impressed by the common threads which we've been hearing since January, particularly from Mark, Todd, and Brian. Several bushels of what Bill would describe as "clues" for 21st century ministry have already been gathered. Before we launch our discussion with the metaphor of Paul's Missionary Band I will try to list some of the most important concepts that we will build upon from these recent seminars.

And of course, some of the best insights on similar themes will undoubtedly follow in the months ahead from Erwin, Leonard and others. I can't wait to see how Bill summarizes and synthesizes all of this material by year end.

Fairly significant syncretism occurred during the 80's when the ceo model robbed the church of so much of her essence. What little missiological thinking was in place in the U.S. was gradually replaced by principles of marketing and management. The kingdom of God has always been advanced during various historical waves of missionary movements by creative reformulations of an indigenous Gospel, in particular places and in response to particular issues. Heart allegiance and humble service have always manifested themselves as the hallmarks of authentic radical Christian movements, spurred primarily through the power which is released by diligent study of God's transforming Word.

As Brian has pointed out, goals and plans are still acceptable, but they functioned so much more predictably in a stable world. Today we can still hold to and be confident of our destination. But we must settle for short term mapping, with enormous amounts of flexibility.

Our focus during the seminar will be primarily on relationships and reproduction within outward focused communities, groups and teams. I also concur with Brian that size never has been an issue. During the last 50 years there have been only two primary choices for healthy, advancing congregations: expand (get larger), or extend (get serious about church planting). After 25 years of trials and numerous errors, multi-site ministry has only recently emerged as the third and most favored option in most situations.

This pattern of slow, quarter of a century development is also similar to what has occurred in the reproduction of cell driven and small groups ministry. Willow Creek has invested more than most congregations in the challenging search for authentic community. Earlier this month on a CCN broadcast many of us received an update on Willow's now proven approach known as a church *of* (rather than *with*) small groups. With 18,000 participants in 2,700 groups and 200 staff assigned to nurture all of them, these autonomous outward looking fellowships sound quite similar and probably just as authentic, do they not, as Todd's missional communities.

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We will attempt during this seminar to move the discussion another step forward by asking how we can better organize and accelerate the witness of missional communities, without sacrificing authenticity, through a fractal team approach. And Paul Nixon will certainly offer additional team options and suggestions during his subsequent seminar, April 22-28.

An Introduction to the Metaphor

September 11, 2001, with its patriotic spike, seemed at first to indicate at least a temporary reversal of the deconstruction period which began picking up momentum during the mid-1960's. For congregations which are positioning to reconstruct Paul's Missionary Band serves as a useful metaphor.

The case for this concept as the heart and soul of 21st century ministry can be seen in much of the literature which I have listed in the next section. Please try to select one or two that you have not yet read that look interesting. Then please share whatever points seem relevant to our discussion.

Primary Texts: Strongly Recommended

1. Erwin McManus, *an unstoppable force: daring to become the church GOD had in mind* (Group, 2001).
2. Wayne Cordeiro, *Doing Church as a Team* (Regal, 2001).
3. George Hunter, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach The West...Again* (Abingdon, 2000).

Secondary Classic Texts

Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Pauls or Ours?*

H.G. Barnett, *Innovation: The Basis of Cultural Change*

Melvin Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*

Charles Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*

Louis Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures*

Donald McGavran, *Bridges of God*

Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*

Eugene Nida, *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith*

Edwin Orr, *The Eager Feet: Evangelical Awakenings 1790-1830*

Howard Snyder, *Liberating the Church*

Alan Tippett, *Verdict Theology in Missionary Theory*

Charles Van Engen, *God's Missionary People*

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Ralph Winter, The Warp and the Woof: Organizing for Mission

Tetsunao Yamamori and Charles Taber, Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity

Secondary Contemporary Texts

Gilbert Bilezikian, Community 101

Rodney Clapp, Peculiar People: the church as culture in a post-christian society

Jack Dennison, City Reaching: On the Road to Community Transformation

Bill Easum, Leadership on the OtherSide: No Rules, Just Clues

Randy Frazee, The Connecting Church

Eddie Gibbs, ChurchNext: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry

Dean Gilliland, Pauline Theology and Mission Practice

Michael Horton, A Confessing Theology for Postmodern Times

Robert Lewis, The Church of Irresistible Influence

Brian McClaren, The Church on the other Side: Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix

George McKinney, Cross the Line: Reclaiming the Inner City for God

Steve Sjogren, Servant Warfare: How Kindness Conquers Spiritual Darkness

Michael Slaughter, Out on the Edge

Chuck Smith, Jr., The End of The World as We Know It: Clear Direction for Bold and Innovative Ministry in a Postmodern World

Howard Snyder, ed., Global Good News

Leonard Sweet, Post-Modern Pilgrims

Charles Van Engen, Mission on the Way

Peter Wagner, Churchquake

Woodberry, Van Engen and Elliston Missiological Education for the 21st Century

Random Thoughts on PMB - SSB

From: Steve Bentley

Date: 09 Apr 2002

Time: 00:12:48 -0400

Comments

Hi Folks! A brief intro – I am a pioneering church planter in Boise, Idaho serving the community known as New Hope Christian Fellowship, Treasure Valley. My “seminary” training for this church plant was in the Army – serving primarily in special operations forces before retiring this year. I got an intensive course in missional Christianity during my last assignment on Hawaii where I was graced with the distinct honor of serving the people of New Hope, Oahu and being mentored by Wayne Cordeiro in his school of church planters. Our current mission is gathering people that understand the Gospel as a calling that can't be

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denied. We are doing that through two venues – The Gathering – which is a show venue and recording studio catering to small, local bands trying to break into the Boise music scene. And the Family Room – which is a place where meals are shared and truth is told, discussed, and discovered. I pay for the privilege of serving these people by serving in our nation's fledgling Transportation Security Administration as a member of the Screener Workforce Action Team (SWAT – cool action acrostic). We will be traveling to all of the US airports and transitioning them to a federal security force this year. Watch the news – it'll be a sight to see! Here are some of my thoughts on commando Christianity --

Commandoes are MASTERS of the ART of unconventional warfare. There is no time to discover principles - they have to discover how to APPLY principles - but the understanding of who they serve and why it is important must come first. Developing commandoes is leadership intensive. Unconventional operations are the highest art form within warfare. You must learn by serving alongside a commando leader on mission - and that leader must see your development as his primary role - second only in importance to accomplishing the mission. Commandoes are skilled in the science of camouflage. Blending with your surroundings is essential to operating as a commando team - that means we should look (hold on to your hat) like the community. Take a look at the US Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan - they have beards -- long beards, nappy hair, ride into battle on horses, fight fiercely to prove a point, not to the enemy - but to the indigenous forces whose trust is needed for the success of their mission. Do those guys have a different spirit (psyche) than the community in which they serve? Sure - but they learn to do more than just put on a camouflage suit - they artfully become part of their surrounding community in order to accomplish their mission. It is true that we are not citizens of this world - but we need to work at being in it - on mission. Commandoes know that accomplishing the mission is messy -- and couldn't care less (in fact they like it). Recently there was a dramatic display of messiness when a petty officer on a SEAL team fell out of the back of the helicopter he was using as a ride to his mission. The helo got hit by a rocket propelled grenade and amazingly stayed functional but the impact sent this guy flying and he hit the ground hard - but survived. The Predator drone fed live video of the last terrifying moments of this amazing man's life to every headquarters existing between Afghanistan and the Pentagon - it was an ugly scene. But the operation was just beginning - we grieved sure and part of the mission was taking care of a widow and an orphan child - but the operation continued. The team sent his "death letter" to his wife and in it he told her that whatever happened to cause his death -- he was doing what he loved and had no regret. Here's my point he loved the mission enough to FACE death - in fact living on the edge of joyous victory and catastrophic failure is what he loved most about the mission. Commando teams go into places and do things that are messy - people will fall - setbacks will come - but the potential of victory beyond all odds will always outweigh the possibility of defeat. Commandoes don't leave comrades behind - period. As a young ranger, I learned to live by a creed that reads in part "...I will NEVER leave a fallen comrade to fall into the hands of the enemy and under NO circumstances will I ever embarrass my country." Watch the movie "Black Hawk Down" and you will get a small taste of the depth of that conviction within the community - and the Medal of Honor earning lengths they are willing to go in order to live up to it. Now - that creed is expressed in a myriad of courageous actions, some large -- many small. I'll never forget beating a friend because he punched me while I was taking the distributor wire off

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his truck because he wouldn't surrender his keys after he drank too much at a ranger ball. I carried the guy to his house and dumped him on his lawn -- because I wouldn't leave him behind even when the enemy was himself. Commandoes have no secrets - they know each others weaknesses and check up on each other - a lot. Rodney's problem- instant idiot, just add alcohol. He stayed in the community because we didn't allow his weakness to destroy him. Now the real challenge is how you build these kinds of leaders - men that love challenge and are competent and capable of accomplishing the impossible with nothing but their hearts and commitment to a cause around the greatest mission ever given to the fallen race of man? Perhaps that is a calling worth living and dying for... Those are my thoughts - don't know if that's what you were looking for. I'm not sure what city I'll be in this week. I'll be home until tomorrow and then move to an as yet undisclosed location for a week of observing airport security procedures. I'll participate as fully as I can in the EBA discussion - I'm really excited about hearing what all of you commandoes have to say.

Re: Random Thoughts on PMB - SSB

From: Greg Wack

Date: 09 Apr 2002

Time: 12:38:11 -0400

Comments

Steve, I like what you said. There are people in the church that are, naturally, very patriotic at this time, but they don't want to carry the concepts of the military intensity into their spiritual walk. It's also mirrored in other "secular" activities such as sports and other organizations people belong to. They're extremely loyal and committed to these things, they probably wouldn't be willing to put their life on the line for these things, and they don't see our mission for God in the same light. Thanks for putting this into use. GW

Re: Random Thoughts on PMB - SSB

From: Dan

Date: 09 Apr 2002

Time: 10:08:54 -0400

Comments

Thanks, Steve. Yes, you've got the essence! Enjoy your SWAT assignment. Try to check in again as you are able. Dan