



November 2009

Volume 1 - Issue 5

In this edition:

- [Leading Horses to Water](#)
- [Turning Unity into an Actualized Value](#)
- [The Basin and the Towel](#)
- [WEALI.com facelift](#)

Did You Know?

Unity and building partnerships are strongly held values concerning the National Alliances and their constituents.

Leading Horses to Water

A frequent learning barrier the educator faces is the gulf between perceived and real training needs. The old adage “you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink” holds true for every teacher. Sometimes, the chasm between what one needs to learn and what one wants to learn is simply a problem of lack of awareness. John Pearson frequently reminds us, “the first step is getting past the *I don’t know what I don’t know phase*.” While engaging in conversations about the Leadership Institute with my European colleagues I was surprised to encounter a strong assumption that Europe is already resourced with adequate leadership training. The same could be argued for North America. Yet, there are no available off-the-shelf training modules that address the training needs of those managing or leading networks, associations and alliances. This is just one misperceived area of need.

This edition of WEA-LI Imagine introduces readers to the important topic of Partnerships. William (Bill) Sunderland works with [Visionsynergy](#) promoting Kingdom partnerships around the world. He collaborated with Phill Butler delivering the WEA General Assembly work shop on Partnership in Pattaya, Thailand (GA08), and facilitated a Partnership discussion workshop with the European Evangelical Alliance in Barcelona (EEA-GA-09).



According to the WEA Leadership Institute Research Project:

- When asked to Identify up to three National Alliances that had been of concrete help and encouragement , nearly 67% listed at least one other NA, and 57% mentioned two NAs . 43% could identify three National Alliances that been of concrete help and encouragement.
- When given the opportunity to express National Alliance goals, 92% of respondents chose Unity and cooperation among local churches as a goal for their National Alliance.
- When asked to choose and rank five areas of training believed to be important for their constituencies, 28% of respondents indicated their first choice was "Training in how

Horses drinking water.

Building Strong Partnerships is one of the core courses in the Certificate for Association Leadership offered by the WEA Leadership Institute because network, association and alliance leaders will find themselves addressing typical association leadership needs like uniting the membership, building consensus, and developing strategic collaborative initiatives.

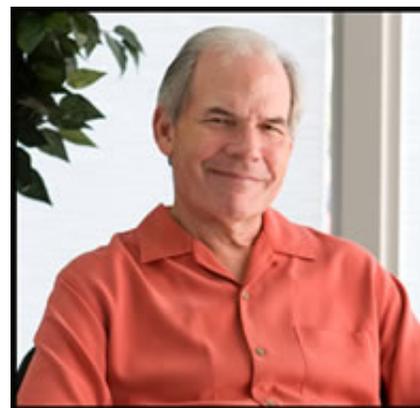
I believe this topic is of critical importance for our National and Regional Alliances and I trust you enjoy this article by Bill Sunderland.

[Back to the top](#)

Turning Unity into an Actualized Value

By Bill Sunderland

Jesus presented his followers with an unparalleled partnership vision captured in John 17:21: "...that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me". Plainly speaking, this grand Jesus-prayer seems oddly ill-served by the vast majority of churches and ministry organizations that continue to act independently – often oblivious to one another if not competing against each other. And so we observe that while most affirm partnership as a core value for their organization, in practice things often work out quite differently.



Bill Sunderland serves with Visionsynergy casting a vision for collaborative partnerships for the Kingdom of God.

to unite our membership and constituencies” and the strongest second choice was “Training in how to create effective partnerships” at 19%.

- One quarter of National Alliance respondents chose "Uniting" as their first choice out of six possible training areas.

For more information and benchmarks, download the survey results at www.weali.org ([click here to read more about this research and how to download the results](#)).

[Back to the top](#)

The challenge then is in turning the idealized value of partnership into a present-day lived-out value. How can we embed the practice of partnership in our organizational culture so that we live it out naturally at every level?



Partnership small group session during the European Evangelical Alliance General Assembly in Barcelona - April 2009.

A natural divide exists between what we want to do and what we know how to do. This can be called "The Will/Skill Divide."¹ People may have the will to collaborate; we may want to work together. So far so good! But if we don't have at least some basic collaboration skills in order to partner in ministry successfully, then we will very likely run into the common roadblocks to partnership that stymie so many attempts.²

A good first approach to embedding the practice of partnership into a ministry culture is to fall in love again with the idealized value of partnership. View partnership first as a value the organization truly wants to actually live by.

The Leadership Institute has heard from the National Alliances that the practice of partnership is crucial in becoming an effective voice for the Gospel in their specific contexts. Because of this, several of the core modules will deal with the principles of developing effective partnerships. One Module, "Creating Strong Partnerships" will specifically deal with the creation of a partnership culture within an alliance, how to develop long term partnerships amongst a wide variety of constituents and stakeholders, and how to implement partnership processes that will allow an alliance to strengthen the Body of Christ in its region.

A national alliance will learn how to comprehend the big picture while fostering the creation of strategic alliances for holistic outreach.

Organizations that do embed partnership in their culture gain a platform for accomplishing new levels of impact that makes them stand out from the crowd.

Churches, denominations, nonprofits and ministry groups casting their gaze externally are so committed to realizing their goal that they pursue it through actively connecting with partner organizations where that partnership advances their common cause. They see their cause as more important to them than their organization. As a result a unified front that speaks for the Church and represents the Kingdom of God is established in the midst of many other worldviews.

Creating strong partnerships is not easy. It takes time to build trust and develop relationships even among believers. Learn the key principles to effective partnership building, follow the process, pray and you will see God pour out His blessings on your efforts. Satan wants us to be separated. God desires us to be one with Him as he prayed in John 17:21.

[Back to the top](#)

About the author: William h. Sunderland has a diverse background including industrial sales, sales management, the development of sports ministry partnerships in the USA and Asia, and sales consulting. He and his wife lived in Korea for three years and coordinated the evangelistic outreach surrounding the 1988 Olympics. This experience led to his involvement in developing joint ventures and strategic alliances in china, Taiwan, and Papua New Guinea. He is now part of the Visionsynergy team - a new start-up which seeks to accelerate world evangelization among the neediest and most unreached by empowering the global church's commitment to kingdom collaboration. The small team of associates at Visionsynergy assists in the development of collaborative, working networks within the global church.

End notes to :

1. A fuller explanation of the Will/Skill Divide can be found at <http://powerofconnecting.net/node/126>
2. View a list of common roadblocks at <http://powerofconnecting.net/node/87>

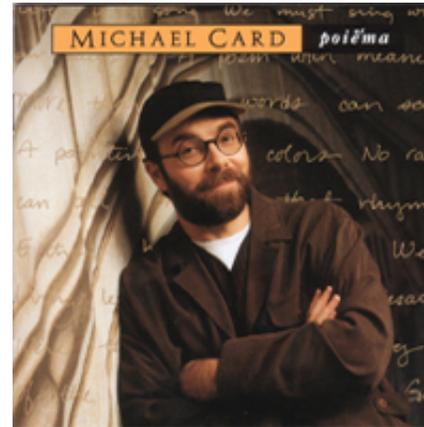
[Back to the top](#)

The Basin and the Towel

By Rob Brynjolfson

What does a basin and towel have to

do with building strong partnerships? Before we get to that, let me ask another question: What does a servant's attitude have to do with partnerships? The answer to this question starts with the lyrics of a contemporary troubadour and wanders back through nearly 2000 years to the "living parable" of a real servant. Michael Card is our modern balladeer, and of course, Jesus is the real servant. This singer/song writer describes the narrative of the Lord washing the disciples' feet in John 13 as a living parable because, as it turns out, John never recorded any of the Lord's parables in the fourth gospel.



Pictured is [Michael Card](#) on his [Poiēma](#) (1994) Album cover.

In discography terms, it is [Poiēma](#) ([poiēma](#) 1994). The third track title merely reads "The Basin and the Towel." Even though I have been listening to this song for fifteen years I am still overwhelmed by the power of the imagery he creates. Of course Michael Card's depiction is powerful because the narrative upon which he builds is extraordinarily commanding.

*...so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. (5) After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. **John 13:4,5***

Here are some of the words to *The Basin and The Towel* by Michael Card.

And the call is to community

*In an upstairs room
A parable Is just about to come alive
And while they bicker about who's best
With a painful glance He'll silently rise
Their Saviour Servant must show them how
Through the will of the water
And the tenderness of the towel*

*Chorus: And the call is to community
The impoverished power that sets the soul free
In humility to take the vow
That day after day we must take up
The basin and the towel*

I know the disciples were working hard to figure Jesus out. He was an

amazing paradox and most of his agenda was truly shocking to his followers. We like to think of ourselves as much more learned and aware of God's unfolding plan, but there are still many things we just don't get. Unity of the body and working in strategic collaborative initiatives for Kingdom advance is one of those areas in which we simply do not excel. Here, there is much to learn.

One paradox of this passage is the concept of impoverished power. This undoubtedly refers to the voluntary self-limitation resulting from the incarnation. But it is more than just the emptying of himself (Philippians 2:7), it is a description of the truly humble servant leader. This servant leader knows himself, with a realistic appraisal of position, character strengths, personality traits and gifting (Jesus knew his authority, where he came from and where he was going, John 13:1, 3). More significantly, this servant leader sacrificed those very strengths to serve His community.

The basin and the towel are two great metaphors portraying a theoretical foundation for partnerships. At the core of unity and partnership we find the qualities of humility and self-denial. Many agreements are set, covenants amended and contracts signed, but true partnerships are characterized by a spirit of generosity and a desire to ensure the other party also wins. This is the attitude reflecting limited self-empowerment and it frees us to serve the Kingdom in much more fruitful ways than when we keep letting the "self" get in the way.

[Back to the top](#)

WEALI.com Gets a Facelift and More

The WEALI.com website recently experienced an overhaul. This redesign was intended to provide an integrated platform that serves as a resource and information base for the World Evangelical Alliance - Leadership Institute, as well as direct access to the online learning platform "mycourses."

Visit the site by clicking on the link found on the header bar of this e-zine or [click on this link to go to weali.com](#).

Browsing the mycourses e-learning section is accessible to registered users of weali.com.

Enjoy!

[Back to the top](#)

WEA-LI IMAGINE is published by the WEA Leadership Institute of World Evangelical Alliance. Rob Brynjolfson, Editor. Material may be reprinted if credit is given. Editorial and

circulation offices: World Evangelical Alliance, 13351 Commerce Parkway, Suite 1153, Richmond, British Columbia V6V 2X7, Canada. Telephone: +[1] 604-214-8620, Fax: +[1] 604-214-8621, Website: www.weali.org, Email: weali@worldevangelicals.org. Copyright © 2009, World Evangelical Alliance, www.worldevangelicals.org. For a complimentary subscription, visit www.weali.org.

For more information on WEA and WEA Leadership Institute [click here](#).

WEA-LI Imagine

News, Resources and Best Practices for WEA National Alliance Leaders, Members and Volunteers
(c) WEA Leadership Institute, 2009