Plan for Distance Leadership in Young Life in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

This ministry focus paper entitled

PLAN FOR DISTANCE LEADERSHIP IN YOUNG LIFE
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Written by

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and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

has been accepted by the Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary
upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:

Date Received: November 16, 2017
PLAN FOR DISTANCE LEADERSHIP IN YOUNG LIFE
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

DOCTORAL PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROGRAM
FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

DANIEL JESSUP
NOVEMBER 2017
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PART ONE

MINISTRY CONTEXT
INTRODUCTION

Carolina Pujols is a mom of four kids, and wife to a traveling salesman who volunteers as a pastor in the small riverfront working community of Corrientes in northern Argentina. She is an amazing woman of faith and courage, and she serves as the regional director for Young Life in the Patagonia region of Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay in South America. Her calling is to help develop the Young Life ministry in the four countries closest to her by training, encouraging, directing, and supervising the paid staff and volunteers.

The ministry is growing in her farming community, and she meets regularly with her local team in Corrientes, Argentina. As with many healthy missional ministries, it is organically growing and expanding to the nearby towns of Resistencia, Formosa, and Misiones. It has also grown to the capital of Buenos Aires and to the nearby state of Rosario. Carolina can drive with her husband to the northern cities in Argentina while he works his sales route, but to get to Buenos Aires and Rosario, she must travel by bus, train, or airplane.

Carolina also oversees the ministry in Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay. The work in Asuncion, Paraguay has been struggling terribly. The staff person became involved in an issue and needed to be removed from his position, which was then filled by a young woman, who lacked many of the leadership skills needed to thoughtfully develop the work throughout Paraguay. Since Asuncion, Paraguay is a drivable distance from her home in Corrientes, Carolina gets together monthly with Gladys and speaks weekly to her on the phone.
Carolina also talks to Gabriel, the staff leader in Rancagua, Chile, on a video call every week. Gabriel is a young, eager, new father who is passionate about developing the Young Life work in Chile. For Carolina to get to Chile, however, she must fly to Buenos Aires, travel over the Andes Mountains to Santiago, Chile, and then take a one-hour bus trip down to Rancagua.

Carolina comes from a heritage of strong leadership. One of her uncles is author Dr. Juan Carlos Ortiz and another uncle is Latin evangelist Luis Palau. However, with all her God-given talent, the task of giving leadership that encompasses local work, country work, and ministry in three neighboring countries is daunting. Clearly the leadership strategy Carolina employs in her home city of Corrientes needs to be adapted as she leads via long distance in Buenos Aires, Rosario, Chile, and Paraguay.

Carolina’s closest working peer in Young Life is Enrique Vargas, who lives in Lima, Peru, some 2,049 miles away. Like Carolina, Enrique supervises both the local work in his hometown as well as the growing work in the rest of Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, and Venezuela. He too must learn to lead staff members who are spread out across five countries in South America.

In my role as Senior Vice President for Young Life in Latin America and the Caribbean, I provide leadership to our growing work in twenty-six countries south of the United States. My senior leadership team is composed of twelve exceptional senior leaders like Carolina and Enrique, who are spread throughout Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, all the way up to the Bahamas and Bermuda. There are four primary languages spoken in this division: Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian-Creole, and English.
I consistently get asked two questions by my friends in the United States: “How’s your Spanish?” and “Why do you live in Colorado when your work is in Latin America?” The second question highlights the unique leadership challenges of distance leadership. The linguistic challenges are obvious; distance is far more problematic. Where should one live when giving leadership to staff spread over one and a half continents? If I lived next to Carolina in Corrientes, it would take me two days to get to our staff in Bermuda. If I lived in San Jose, Costa Rica, it would take me one if not two days to get to the rest of the divisional leadership team. The reality is that my leadership will have to be distance leadership regardless of where I live.

Every one of our senior leaders began his or her leadership journey by leading ministry in a local community. However, when leadership roles expand, there is a compelling need to change our leadership strategies to match the responsibility that the Lord is requiring of us. It is the focus of this project to design a leadership development plan for effective long-distance leadership. This challenge will require a thoughtful analysis of the Church’s historical teaching of leadership as well as the teaching of the Young Life mission. Young Life has been extremely effective historically when working with people in physical proximity, but it must be expanded and developed to be effective in leadership at a distance.

There is no specific training in Young Life for our senior leaders who do not live in proximity to the rest of their team. Not only is there no training in the mission of Young Life for non-proximal leadership, there is almost no training for distance leadership in the Church at large. As this project examines, most of the significant leadership paradigms come from a Christocentric theology of leadership. Jesus chose to
twelve to be with him. The model of rabbinical leadership was to watch, listen, and learn from the master. This, by definition, required proximity. Most of the teaching of the Church on leadership has, in one form or another, a proximal component.

However, distance leadership is not new in the kingdom of God by any means. The Apostle Paul has given the Church a solid roadmap for developing a theology of distance leadership and a practical outline for effective apostolic leadership. Much has been written on Paul’s missional journeys, however, very little has been written on the leadership challenges that Paul employed to address a growing Church spreading throughout Asia Minor and Europe. The effectiveness breadth of Paul’s travels is legendary, but this project also considers the various other strategies Paul employed in growing the New Testament Church.

One of the obvious challenges to be addressed is the lack of available theological writings on this topic of distance leadership. To counter this, I have gleaned input from two industries that have extensively dealt with distance leadership: the military and business. Both industries have not only effectively dealt with the challenges of non-proximal leadership, but they have written about it as well. With the obvious differing issues of motivation and power/control being understood, there are some key insights that can be learned from the military and business industries.

Developing and implementing a distance leadership plan that spans the massive geography of Latin America and the Caribbean will be a challenge from a tactical aspect, but also from a leadership and fiscal aspect. Good leadership is expensive, and since generating the needed funds to implement the mission of Young Life falls on my shoulders as well, the aim is to balance opportunity, need, and good fiscal stewardship.
There are approximately one billion teenagers in the world, and 150 million of them are spread throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Any missional plan to begin to reach these young people must address the challenges present with non-proximal leadership. This is not an issue solely germane to Young Life; in fact, many church and parachurch leaders are currently grappling with the concept of distance leadership. Denominational mission boards, as well as a wide variety of parachurch ministries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), are dealing with the challenges of distance leadership, yet surprisingly little is written on the topic.

It is my hope that this work will help to further the thinking, theology, and implementation for a wide variety of kingdom initiatives. Most importantly, this distance leadership development plan is critical to the mission for which I am currently responsible. This plan provides thoughtful, biblical leadership to my team of servant leaders in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is my hope that the scope of this project will be helpful in reaching and discipling many more kids in the kingdom of God.
CHAPTER 1

THE SCOPE AND MISSION OF YOUNG LIFE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Young Life

The mission of Young Life began in 1941 with the big idea that every kid has a right to know Jesus Christ.\(^1\) Towards the end of the WWII era, a Presbyterian minister living in Texas named Jim Rayburn had a passion for disinterested teenagers. Rayburn stumbled upon a few key principles that established the mission of Young Life as a vital ministry to young people who were not active in the local church.

Perhaps the most foundational principle was the need to “win the right to be heard.”\(^2\) Jim knew that kids would not listen to an adult because of the adult’s position, credentials, or age; rather kids listen because an adult has earned the right to be heard, building a genuine friendship with the teenager by spending time with them in their world. The word for this activity by the Young Life leader is contact work. The adult

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leaves his or her rightful place (whether office, church, or home) and walks into the lives of teenagers.

The second principle is to “walk in wisdom toward those who are without.” This means that when talking to a young person, leaders must always keep in mind that they are talking to a teenager who is not active in the church. The Young Life leader must be a student of the teenager, the culture, the needs, dreams, and hurts of kids.

Rayburn also was noted as saying, “If you want kids to come, don’t have it on Sunday and don’t call it school.” Rayburn knew that the non-church-going student could be intimidated just showing up on a church property. This principle developed into a strategy of having Young Life meetings at kids’ homes, in parks, in places where teenagers tend to feel more comfortable than they might in a church facility.

Finally, Rayburn wanted young people to enjoy being kids. Kids by nature are adventurous, they love being together, and they love to laugh. Hence, Young Life is a mission of hospitality, adventure, and humor. Central to the growth of this mission is that it is a volunteer-driven work, not a professional, youth-minister mission. This has led to an explosive, cost-effective, scalable ministry that works as well in suburban Dallas as it does in inner-city Chicago or the bush in the Congo.

Young Life is a relational mission that cannot be accomplished from a distance. It must be done by boots-on-the-ground Young Life leaders, building relationships with

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3 Ibid., 49.


5 A portion of this section has been adapted from a paper from Dr. Bob Logan’s class OD786 Transforming Your Leadership Development, 2016.
teenagers and their families, earning trust and respect through countless hours of walking the barrios, playing soccer, having meals, doing chores, and anything else to meet kids on their turf. The mission of Young Life is not easily understood by historical church-goers in the United States, who are far too quick to say this mission is about camps and having fun. People tend to see the programmatically, highly visible aspect of the Young Life mission and assume they understand our missional objectives. Young Life is about authentically sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with teenagers and then discipling them into the next generation of spiritual leaders. Many ministries claim to be relationally based; they claim to focus on getting to know the kids who come to their church programs. The simple brilliance of the mission of Young Life is that we build relationships with kids who are not coming to any program. Real Young Life is about intentionally moving into the world of teenagers and proactively meeting and building relationship with kids who are disinterested in Jesus.

Young Life International

The mission of Young Life began in Gainesville, Texas, a small rural community some seventy-one miles north of Dallas. Unlike Compassion International or World Vision, which were intentionally international, Young Life started as a suburban ministry to non-churched teenagers in the United States. The first movement to the international world was more incidental than strategic.

With no specific strategy, Rayburn began to ponder what Young Life might look like in other countries.6 In 1967, the mission of Young Life helped to facilitate new work

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6 Sublett, The Diaries of Jim Rayburn, 428.
in Brazil. There were many who believed that Young Life was best suited to continue as a suburban ministry in the United States. However, the leadership of the mission made several strategic decisions that paved the way for a slow-starting global movement.

One of the key decisions was to intentionalize work in the inner cities of the United States. There were several challenges to this decision that had significant implications to Young Life. With the move to the inner city, the mission had to rethink how they would reach kids who were less connected to a local high school and more active on the streets. The availability of volunteer leaders was an issue, and the safety of the kids and leaders was a concern. Urban kids had very little money to pay for a Young Life camp, and the urban communities had few resources to pay for a staff person. If Young Life was going to work in the urban setting, it must be willing to adapt and rethink much of its operational strategy. We knew that our theology and methodology could work in the city, but the impact would be slow, complicated, and expensive.

The cultural issues in America in the 1960s were consuming the mission, and one of the hottest topics was the role of women in the workforce and in Christian ministries. Once again, the leadership made a bold move (and for some a not-too-welcome move) to allow women on the paid staff. Today that may seem like an obvious move, but at the time it was groundbreaking. Young Life’s move to the inner city, along with the move to hire female leadership, paved the way for Young Life to begin to rethink when, where, and how the work could continue outside conservative, suburban communities.

\[7\] Ibid., 477.
Young Life was now loosely planted in Brazil, France, and the Philippines, and over the next thirty years the international mission of Young Life slowly began to grow. There were a number of reasons for the slow growth. One was the lack of a passionate, unified vision of the need for Young Life to engage internationally. Many felt that since Young Life was born in the United States and was effective with North American kids, Young Life should focus its efforts to reach the many unreached kids in our own country. Another key obstacle was financial. The work in the United States had become primarily community funded, meaning the communities where Young Life existed paid for the work. As stated, this model was challenged by our inner-city work, which required a new funding model to be developed, bringing outside funds to bear to reach urban kids. Once again, the advancement in our urban work inadvertently paved the way for better thinking internationally.

It was in 2006 that then president Denny Rydberg made a bold move to strategically change the intentionality of Young Life’s international work. Up until 2006, it would be fair to say that the international work was not considered to be as vital as the domestic mission. However, in 2006, Rydberg asked two of our most successful senior leaders to move from their domestic positions to international positions, commencing a new international initiative in the mission of Young Life. I am not sure that anyone fully knew the coming impact of this leadership decision, but eleven years later, the impact upon Young Life’s international work could not be more pronounced.

In 2009 (three years after the decision to significantly focus on international kids), Young Life was impacting 145,495 kids globally, with 32,230 attending weekly meetings and 8,558 involved in Bible studies. In 2016, those numbers swelled to reaching 824,798
kids globally, with 140,137 attending weekly club meetings and 45,427 in focused Bible studies. That is an astounding growth of 467 percent in seven years (see Appendix A).

Not only did Young Life move two top-level leaders into the international work, these leaders shifted Young Life’s international strategy to a clear and unified vision to develop national leadership. Up to this point, much of Young Life’s international strategy involved sending Americans as missionaries. This shifted to a strategy of developing national (indigenous) leaders. In 2016, Young Life International was consolidated under one leader, Marty Caldwell, who formed five international divisions: Asia, Africa/Middle East, Former Soviet Union, Greater Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Each international division is led by a senior vice president.

Unlike the geography of Africa or perhaps Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean (hereafter, LA/C) has an ambiguous geographical structure. Africa is a continent, as is Europe. Latin America, however, has a relatively undefined geography. It is not strictly an area of either the northern or the southern hemisphere. It is unclear whether Mexico is considered part of Latin America. The truth is many are unfamiliar with the geopolitical structure of the real estate that lies south of Texas.

LA/C is comprised of countries in both the northern and the southern hemisphere. LA/C is comprised of countries in North and South America, as well as the islands that are commonly known as the Caribbean, along with the Bahamas and Bermuda. This means that my jurisdiction includes the ministry work in twenty-six countries where we have active Young Life work: Mexico, Central America (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Belize, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama), South America (Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil), the Caribbean.
(Jamaica, Grand Caymans, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, and St. Croix), the Bahamas, and Bermuda. Also included now is the developing work in Bolivia.

Because Young Life did not have a unified strategy for developing its international work from 1967 through the late 1990s, a number of legal structures have developed along the way, significantly complicating the legal ownership, leadership authority, and use and flow of fiscal resources. When the president of Young Life made the leadership shift in 2006 related to international work, a preferred legal plan was developed. Since that time, all legal entities have been directed under one global legal entity called Young Life. This of course has its strengths as well as its challenges, but it has proven to be a good structural move in our effort to reach more teenagers with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**Young Life in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Since Young Life in LA/C is a multi-national mission, the complexities of leadership and culture cannot be overstated, but must be thoroughly analyzed and understood. One of the obvious challenges is the diversity of languages. The primary language spoken in LA/C is Spanish. However, it is important to note that the Spanish dialects vary even within one country, let alone the multiplicity of Spanish-speaking countries in LA/C. For example, in Peru, the Spanish used in the city of Lima is very different from the Spanish-speaking, indigenous Inca tribes of the Peruvian Andes region. Many Spanish words spoken in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico mean something quite different in the Amazon jungle region of Puyo, Ecuador. Thankfully, these differences
are not prohibitive, but they must be noted and handled with care. Portuguese is spoken in Brazil, and Haitian-Creole is spoken in Haiti. Almost all Young Life work in LA/C is done in local (non-English) languages.

Culture

The diversity of LA/C goes far beyond linguistic differences. One of the most challenging and prominent examples of diversity is the religious tension present in LA/C between Catholics and Protestants. According to the 2014 Pew research poll entitled “Religion in Latin America,” 84 percent of Latin American adults report they were raised Catholic; however only 69 percent consider themselves practicing Catholics.\(^8\) This of course is a significant number, but is not specific to the teenage population.

According to our Latin staff, most Catholic young people (who were born into a Catholic family and finished their parochial training through confirmation) abandon their religion by the time they enter middle school. In Latin America, most Catholic priests and practicing adults are staunchly invested in the vitality of their historical religion and filled with a good dose of intolerance with the competing, growing movement of non-Catholic churches or parachurch missions. Young Life does not keep active statistics on kids’ religious affiliation. A good estimation is that Young Life’s staff and volunteer leaders are approximately 60 percent Protestant and 40 percent Catholic.

The other primary religious movement in Latin America is Evangelicalism. Appendix B shows that unlike the dwindling percentage of practicing Catholics

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compared to those who were raised Catholic, the Protestant religion is trending the opposite direction. With 9 percent of Latin adults claiming they were raised Protestant, currently 19 percent say they are practicing Protestants. This of course is a disturbing reality for the Catholic leadership, but an encouraging reality for the non-Catholic world. In the United States, we primarily identify non-Catholics as Protestants, but this is not true in Latin America. The Pentecostal religion is far and away the leader among non-Catholic churchgoers, as nearly two-thirds of Protestants (65 percent) identify as Pentecostal Christians, or as they are called in Latin America, Evangelicals.\footnote{Ibid.}

Also at play, specifically in the Caribbean, is the pervasive influence of some form of voodoo. The Caribbean is a unique cultural mix of Latins (most Catholics) from Spain, Portugal, and Italy, as well as the African slave trade traffic from West Africa, where voodoo is thought to have originated. Voodoo is a blend of ancestral worship and animism—“a religion that sees a spirit of spiritual force behind every event, and many objects of the physical world.”\footnote{Bible.org, “World Animism,” accessed April 18, 2017, https://bible.org/article/world-animism.} During the slave trade of the 1500s-1800s, slaves from West Africa were brought to the islands of the Caribbean and held for sale. Voodoo was particularly practiced among the slaves in Haiti and Cuba, as well as a number of other smaller islands. As the years passed, voodoo was mixed with various Catholic traditions. Most notably among these various cultic mixtures of voodoo and Catholicism is Santeria.

As we scale the Young Life movement in Latin America, it is crucial to be aware of the religious cultural realities that kids, families, and staff will encounter. Young Life
is unique in that it is not tied to one specific church or denomination. As a result, Young Life leaders must handle these issues with great sensitivity. In most communities in LA/C, there is real tension between the Catholic communities and the Evangelical communities. When coming from a predominantly western mindset, where many churches and ministries at least try to be ecumenical, good natured, and mutually synergistic, one must be aware that this attitude is not replicated in LA/C. In many communities, but clearly not all, there is not only tension between religious structures, but there is outright hostility. Again, there are exceptions, but negative feelings are unquestionably the norm.

For many in the West, Latin America is known for its culture of violence, drugs, and corruption. In fact, in a World Atlas report of the fifty most dangerous cities in the world, all but eight of them are in LA/C.¹¹ There are a myriad of reasons for the uncontrolled violence in LA/C, but top on the list is the tremendous flow of legal and illegal drugs, coupled with governmental corruption that seems unable and unwilling to deal with the chaos within. Obviously, this affects the teenagers in LA/C in a significant way. With so many families living in poverty, the drug industry is a convenient, albeit dangerous, way to help one’s family financially. The majority of Young Life’s ministry work in LA/C is with kids from poorer families. Young Life does work with kids in the wealthy international schools in Costa Rica and some wealthier neighborhoods in Mexico, but the vast majority of our ministry is done among the poor. Poverty, violence,

gangs, and drugs are commonplace in every barrio or community where Young Life has a presence.

Another major cultural reality is the diversity of cultures, with kids who live in the barrios of the major cities, those in rural communities, and the indigenous communities of the Aztec, Mayan, and Incan villages. It is true that Young Life has little work in the mountainous villages of the indigenous communities. One day perhaps this will change. However, it is important to note that when these families migrate down into the rural and central cities, they are always considered to be outcasts. It is easy for many in the United States to think that our culture is very prejudiced and intolerant of people of different cultural backgrounds. While there is certainly still prejudice in the United States, it does not compare to the prejudice I have experienced throughout the developing world. People in the United States generally look down upon bigoted behavior, but outside of the United States, bigoted thinking is not necessarily condemned.

Young Life’s ministry in LA/C also works with a broad diversity of teenagers and their families. Most kids involved in Young Life in LA/C are high school teenagers. Focusing on this age group has its challenges. Unlike the United States, where most kids in high school are between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, kids in LA/C can often be in secondary school through the age of twenty-two. Young Life in the United States has a ministry called WYLDLife to middle school/junior high kids. While we do have a few ministries to this general age bracket in LA/C, we have focused our efforts on the high school age student (and high school age non-student). Having said this, it is rare to have kids from just one age bracket show up to a ministry meeting. Like our urban work in the United States, when older siblings come, they will need to bring with them most of their
younger siblings. This is both a practical necessity (as there is no one to watch them at home) and a cultural reality (younger kids are not considered to be a distraction for older kids as they are in more developed cultures).

Another one of the more unique aspects of Young Life in LA/C is our intentional desire to have kids with disabilities come to our ministry. In the developing world, kids with disabilities are outcasts. Not only is there little public money to develop programs to deal with the complexities of kids with disabilities in schools, churches, or homes, there is not the cultural expectation that others should include kids with disabilities. Young Life has a ministry in the United States called Capernaum, where we recruit, train, and deploy leaders to specifically work with kids with disabilities. In LA/C, our strategy is to work to see and engage every kid in every ministry. We have chosen not to have special “Capernaum” clubs, but rather to have every leader in the entire division trained to work with able and disabled young people alike.

Vida Jovenes (Young Lives) is the name of Young Life’s work that targets teen moms. As one might guess, teen pregnancy is rampant in LA/C. In an article from the Deccan Chronicle specifically discussing pregnancy in El Salvador, the author writes, “Rape and incest at the hands of grandfathers, fathers, and other relatives is often the cause of pregnancies in girls aged 10 to 14.” Sexual abuse in LA/C is rampant, as is teen promiscuity. Teen moms in LA/C become invisible because they tend to stay indoors until the child is born. Even with the rampant commonality of teen pregnancy, pregnant

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teens are truly unwanted at school, unwanted in their families, and tend to hide together in someone’s home until the child is born. Young Life has again intentionalized a mission specifically to finding these girls and helping them experience life as pregnant teenagers.

Jim Rayburn said it well that every kid has a right to know Jesus Christ. In LA/C, Young Life takes this mandate very seriously. Thus far, we have developed our work to reach over 80,000 teenagers each year through relationships with 1,312 volunteer leaders and 246 staff.

Structure and Leadership

The leadership structure of the LA/C has been developed over the last six years. Currently there are twelve senior leaders on the Senior America Latina Team (hereafter, SALT). Their distinctive roles are divided into two categories: divisional leadership and regional leadership. In general, the divisional leaders have a broader division-wide leadership role in either development (fundraising), operations (legal, human resources, accounting), and training. The other roles are called regional roles, meaning they have specific responsibility to develop and give oversight to the ministry in their specific geography. A general overview of each leader’s strengths and weakness are outlined in Appendix C. All of these leaders live somewhere in Latin America or the United States and are separated from each other by thousands of miles. They are all solid, proven ministers of the Gospel and strong spiritual leaders.

I was called to this specific position by then president of Young Life Denny Rydberg and my current supervisor Marty Caldwell in 2010. My role in this mission is that of an elder, with my primary responsibilities to be a teacher, a vision-caster, and a
leader who models the core of this exciting mission. In short, I am to lead and grow the mission of Young Life in LA/C.

According to the StrengthsFinder\textsuperscript{13} analysis, my leadership profile highlights five attributes which I feel represent me well: strategic, achiever, futuristic, learner, and self-assurance.\textsuperscript{14} These characteristics allow me to move into new and complicated situations throughout LA/C and cast vision for the future. Where others may see only chaos and roadblocks, my experience in Young Life and my God-given attributes allow me to navigate wisely through a fast-moving, highly complex mission in LA/C. These StrengthsFinder attributes show up in several ways in my leadership. My practical strong suits include my abilities to build teams, simplify the complex, build infrastructure, and bring alignment and vision.

I also run into challenges in my leadership role. For example, though Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole are the three main languages spoken in LA/C, I speak English with limited (but growing) Spanish skills. When I was offered the job, I thought my lack of language skills to be prohibitive to success in the role. For me to communicate with our LA/C team, I require a translator. Obviously, this limits and dramatically changes the fast-paced verbal exchange that I had grown used to in my work in the United States. On the surface, this challenge could be a non-starter, but in fact it has led to a leadership growth curve that I did not anticipate.

\textsuperscript{13} Tom Rath, \textit{Strengths Finder 2.0} (New York: Gallup Press, 2007).

\textsuperscript{14} A portion of this section has been adapted from a paper for Dr. Bob Logan’s class OD786 Transforming Your Leadership Development, 2016.
In working through this obstacle, I have become a very good listener. I have learned firsthand what Gary McIntosh and Samuel Rima explain in *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*: “A person who must always have the answer usually does not listen well.” I have had to learn to listen to my translator, to the verbal and perhaps more importantly the non-verbal communication from the staff. This language barrier has also taught me to dive into the spiritual intricacies of listening to the Holy Spirit. Another surprise from not speaking the language is that I must slow down my decision-making and rely on those around me for their input and direction. One of our Latin American national directors, Arturo Pallino, wisely pointed out that in his opinion, since I do not speak Spanish, the effectiveness of my leadership is strengthened since I truly need our Latins staff’s assistance. This position of need moves me off my pedestal since I cannot successfully accomplish this work without my Latin and Caribbean brothers’ and sisters’ help. My disability has actually become a strength.

The second major challenge of my role is the sheer geography of responsibility. I provide leadership to twenty-six very distinct countries. This means twenty-six different national cultures, political systems, human resources/banking rules and legal issues, not to mention the cultures within the cultures: rich, poor, educated, tribal, large city, or extremely rural. I have had to learn to listen and trust my team. It is impossible to be a cultural expert on all aspects of life in LA/C; therefore I must take the posture of a learner.

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The third challenge is a lack of proximity to the people I lead. All of our staff are hundreds or thousands of miles apart from each other. No matter where I choose to live, a plane flight would still be the only way to interact in person with my staff. Therefore, I must think through my travel schedule quite carefully. It means that it is hard for me to quickly be physically present, requiring the use of various forms of technology to bridge the gap. Email is the easiest way to share structural details but a dangerous way to build community, problem solve, set strategy, or give spiritual leadership or encouragement.

The fourth challenge is that I grew up and still live in the United States, with a hermeneutic of a white, wealthy American who enjoys luxuries of traveling freely across borders, using a credit card, owning a home, and having access to good health care. My lifestyle and worldview differ dramatically from most people in the areas to which I provide leadership. This dynamic can either lead to arrogance, in which I am annoyed by other cultures’ systems; paralysis, in which I feel helpless to do anything right; or humility, in which I depend on Jesus to guide my team to reach teenagers and help them grow in their faith in some of the most extreme and severe cultures in the world.

I do not view any of these challenges as catastrophic, but rather as opportunities that have the potential to lead to Jesus-driven ministry. In fact, I am in full agreement with Bob Logan and Tara Miller, who state that “often our greatest weaknesses have a corresponding strength.”¹⁶ God is in the midst of my appointment to this mission and is the one who holds ultimate responsibility to see that the work continues in such a way as to bless his work on earth.

¹⁶ Bob Logan and Tara Miller, *From Followers to Leaders* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 2007), 161.
The mission of Young Life exists in LA/C to share the good news of Jesus Christ to teenagers, the very teenagers who have never been to church or who have abandoned their spiritual journey after confirmation. Effectively impacting these teenagers with a mission that is truly transformational is very challenging, but is precisely what Young Life has been doing around the globe for over seventy-five years. In Young Life there are no buildings, no sanctuaries, and no highly authoritative pastor to approve what should or should not be done in a community. Rather, Young Life has instead a highly trained, teenager-savvy volunteer leadership team equipped and focused on a selected community, specifically equipped to go after non-churched adolescents. We are in every way a mission.

In many ways, Young Life is invisible in a community. The impact or fruit of the mission is birthed through a “no-strings attached” relationship built by an adult volunteer Young Life leader with a teenager. Scaling, growing, supervising, and resourcing this type of organic non-liturgical mission is quite complex. It requires recruiting, training, supervising, and reproducing vibrant leadership that has the counter-intuitive core of Young Life.

Thus, the goal of this project is to create a distance leadership development program for my senior leadership team that will ensure the preservation and replication of the mission of Young Life throughout LA/C. This means developing a program that will give direction to the twelve senior, national staff who provide leadership in twenty-six countries—from Mexico to the tip of Argentina and the Caribbean, including the Bahamas and Bermuda. These twelve leaders do not have proximity to watch other leaders, nor are they in close proximity to most of the people they lead. It also means that
the program has to be relevant to each of the various cultures and in communities from the poorest of the poor to the wealthy elite of international school communities.

**Conclusion**

Carolina and Enrique are two of our most valued regional directors and ministry peers, and they live 2,049 miles apart. I live in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Ibere Meirelles, National Director of Brazil, lives in Campinas, Brazil. None of our twelve senior leaders have physical proximity to each other, and they all feel somewhat alone in their leadership, and for good reason. And yet the Lord has called all twelve to lead the mission of Young Life in LA/C. We are called to reach every kid with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the desire of my heart that these twelve senior leaders would be equipped and trained to be able to enjoy their calling to their jobs, to be effective in scaling their ministry, and to produce fruit that will last. In order for me to be effective in growing this leadership team, I have developed this distance leadership plan to bless and encourage the leaders under my care.
PART TWO

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means “God with us”).

—Matthew 1:23 NIV¹

The word of the Lord spread through the whole area.

—Acts 13:49

Incarnation

The Good News of the gospel is that God did not abandon his disobedient children, but strategically and relentlessly pursued them through the incarnation, death, and resurrection of his own Son, paving a way for a restored relationship with the creator’s creation. The children of God can now have a relationship with their Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ who came and walked this earth, took on our iniquities, suffered the penalty of sin, and bust open the doors of death through his resurrection. God intentionally came to be with us—Immanuel. This “with-ness” is central to every aspect of a relationship between the creator and his creation. It is the very essence of a

¹ All biblical references are taken from the New International Reader’s Version, unless otherwise noted.
relationship. Life on life presence. As such, the essence of biblical leadership too is based on presence. Like God’s presence with his people (Immanuel), the leadership of God’s people is based on our presence with each other.

Nowhere is this incarnation better described than in Paul’s writing to the budding church in Philippi. In Philippians 2, Paul outlines the essence of our incarnational theology made manifest in the earthly life of Jesus the Christ. Here Paul clearly states that Jesus had a rightful dwelling in heaven with the Father and the Spirit, but did not consider it vital to claim his Sonship in heaven as a reason to stay in heaven. Rather he was willing to leave his rightful home and take on the confines and restrictions incumbent in living as God/man on earth.

In his very nature he was God.
Jesus was equal with God. But Jesus didn’t take advantage of that fact.
Instead, he made himself nothing.
He did this by taking on the nature of a servant.
He was made just like human beings.
He appeared as a man.
He was humble and obeyed God completely.
He did this even though it led to his death.
Even worse, he died on a cross! (Phil 2:6-8)

Jesus was present with the Father and the Spirit within the fellowship of the Godhead. Paul tells us that he did not consider his position as part of the Godhead as preeminent to the work that the Father had given him to accomplish. Jesus left the presence of the Father and the Spirit to come and be present with God’s most precious creation, his earthly children. This is spelled out in John the evangelist’s writing, “The Word became a human being. He made his home with us” (Jn 1:14). Jesus made his home with us, or as Eugene Petersen writes, “The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood (Jn 1:14, The Message). Jesus is with his people; God is
with his people. We call this “becoming flesh” the incarnation of Jesus. Literally, God is putting on flesh and moving among his people. Here Jesus incarnates the vitality of proximity in relationship. God wants a relationship with his creation and chooses the most central condition in communicating this desired relationship—presence. God’s presence with his people, face to face, was his chosen strategy to communicate his love and his plan for redemption of his lost and wandering people. Central to this plan of redemption is God becoming flesh, the incarnation of the son of God. It is Immanuel, God with us.

The incarnation has then become the central exemplification encapsulating the theology of how God’s people are to have relationship with one another. In the past, “God spoke to our people through the prophets. He spoke at many times. He spoke in different ways. But in these last days, he has spoken to us through his Son” (Heb 1:1, 2). Yes, now he has spoken through his son Jesus and modeled God’s desire for relationship, not from a wandering prophet, but God coming to earth himself, face to face, in the flesh, life on life. The incarnation was a relational model to be followed and replicated by all who would choose to become part of the community of the redeemed. Jesus said in John 16, “As the father has sent me, I am sending you” (Jn 20:21, NIV). In other words, as you have seen me do, you do! Replicate what I do. Jesus made this crystal clear in as he washed this disciple’s feet:

When Jesus finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes. Then he returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord.’ You are right. That is what I am. I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet. So you also should wash one another’s feet. I have given you an example. You should do as I have done for you.” (Jn 13:12-15)
The incarnation was the defining moment in the revelation of God to his people of how relationships should function: face to face, Immanuel, God with us.

The calling of the twelve apostles solidifies this biblical principle of relational leadership. In Mark 3:13-14, "Jesus went up on a mountainside. He called for certain people to come to him, and they came. He appointed twelve of them so that they would be with him. He would also send them out to preach.” Once again, importance is place on the word “with.” Jesus was not teaching a curriculum-based strategy for leadership development; rather, he was living out, or incarnating. The strategy is his very actions.

This is Jesus’ Christocentric leadership model. Jesus was calling his followers first and foremost to be with him, and second to go out and preach the Gospel. Come be with me, learn from me, build a relationship with me, and then go and be my witnesses. Jesus was at the center of the narrative, Jesus was the focal point, and being with Jesus was the essence of the calling of these first disciples. Alan Hirsch puts it this way, “It was this life-on-life phenomenon that facilitated the transfer of information and ideas into concrete historical situations. . . . Jesus formed his disciples in this manner and . . . we should not think that we can generate authentic disciples in any other way.”\(^2\) It was assumed that the making of the disciples was contingent upon their proximity to the Master. It was not a curriculum; it was the life on life, day-in, day-out living, walking, and talking of twelve men now called disciples as they spent time in the presence of Jesus.

It is important to note that leadership development (preparing God’s people for the work of the kingdom) and discipleship (growing up in every way into the likeness of Jesus) are inextricably connected. If we are to develop a theology for the design of a distance leadership development plan for LA/C, it must be interwoven with a plan for discipleship-producing leadership. Hirsch writes,

The quality of the church’s leadership is directly proportional to the quality of discipleship. If we fail in the area of making disciples, we should not be surprised if we fail in the area of leadership development. I think many of the problems that the church faces in trying to cultivate missional leadership for the challenges of the twenty-first century would be resolved if we were to focus the solution on something prior to leadership development per se—namely, that of discipleship first. Discipleship is primary; leadership is always secondary. And leadership, to be genuinely Christian, must always reflect Christlikeness and therefore entails discipleship.3

Robert Coleman, in perhaps the most basic and transferable book on leadership development and evangelism called *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, underscored this principle of discipleship making and proximity. Coleman writes,

[The] time which Jesus invested in these few disciples was so much more by comparison to that given to others that it can only be regarded as a deliberate strategy. He actually spent more time with his disciples than with everybody else in the world put together. He ate with them, slept with them, and talked with them for the most part of his entire active ministry. They walked together along the lonely roads; they visited together in the crowded cities; they sailed and fished together on the Sea of Galilee; they prayed together in the deserts and in the mountains; and they worshiped together in the synagogues and in the Temple.4

The ministry training and the spiritual training were forever connected.

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3 Ibid., Loc. 2631-2635.

Clearly, in order to be *with* someone, one must have proximity to that person. Jesus’ discipleship strategy was his leadership development strategy, and they both involved the disciples being close, near, or with Jesus. Jesus expanded upon this foundational principle in the waning days of his earthly ministry, as he walked one evening with his disciples from an upper room somewhere in Jerusalem to a garden called Gethsemane. Along the way, he told his disciples to “remain” in him (Jn.15:4). Even when Jesus was gone (which would be within hours of their walk together, unbeknownst to his closest followers), they were still to remain in him, to stay with him, to be near him. Proximity was the essential to the growth of the disciples’ leadership and their conformity to the likeness of Jesus.

**Historical Church Training on Leadership**

This incarnational model of both leadership and discipleship has become the cornerstone of the Church’s historical training in almost every aspect of ministry. This is exemplified in the apostles who “from the time of their being chosen, indeed, the twelve entered on (in) a regular apprenticeship for the great office of apostleship, in the course of which they were to learn, in the privacy of an intimate daily fellowship with their Master, what they should be, do, believe, and teach, as His witnesses and ambassadors to the world.”\(^5\) However, it fair to say that the many in the Church have lost this most basic strategy of leadership development. Far too often there are classes on discipleship, and on leadership, that are focused more on content than on presence with a more mature

\(^5\) A. B. Bruce, *Training of the Twelve* (Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1871), Kindle, Loc. 662-664.
believer and personal presence with Jesus. Jesus, however, was crystal clear that physical presence in a face-to-face relationship was foundational for the development, maturity, and replication of disciples. The Church, when effectively replicating strong disciples, has fleshed out this Christocentric incarnational leadership model where proximity is mandatory.

**Young Life Training on Leadership**

Not only has the church adopted this Christocentric incarnational leadership model, so has the mission of Young Life. Jesus established his leadership development plan by being with his disciples. Coleman writes, “Having called his men, Jesus made a practice of being with them. This was the essence of his training program—just letting his disciples follow him.”

Young Life has molded its entire mission around the centrality of the theology of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Woven into every fiber of the mission is an understanding that Jesus’ becoming flesh and walking among his people was both the core theology and the core methodology of this seven-decade old mission. Jesus was Emmanuel—God with us. It is God becoming flesh, walking into the neighborhood, barrio, or school, and engaging in a ministry of presence.

There is no other way to implement the mission of Young Life but through life-on-life relationships. The hallmark of Young Life is adults building genuine, authentic relationship with teenagers. The development of the Young Life leadership training followed in the footsteps of this incarnational mandate. Leadership was about being with people, and consequently training was about presence. This was so foundational that

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Young Life established “mission communities” around the United States and the world. These are groups of adults (leadership and community members) who bond together to serve frequently, to be trained, to worship, and to pray for unreached teenagers in a community, state, province, or country.

As the mission of Young Life developed, the most foundational leadership roles became defined as volunteer leader and area director; local leaders were led by a local area director. Central to the impact of the volunteer leader was the practice of contact work. All volunteer leaders would be trained to model their actions with teenagers after the incarnation of Jesus. The volunteer leaders would leave their rightful place, be that an office, a school, or their home (Phil 2:5), and walk among the teenagers they had been called to reach. Leaders were to be present with teenagers, building friendship, trust, and community. When the volunteer leaders then got together, the area director would practice the same incarnational methodology of being with his or her leadership team. The Christocentric incarnational leadership model was the cornerstone of Young Life’s leadership model. It was the only model we had.

However, the structural and theological leadership challenges came as the mission of Young Life grew. Like the growth of the New Testament Church, Young Life grew exponentially. It became necessary to develop additional leadership to lead the area directors; these positions were roles like regional director, vice president, senior vice president, and president. As discussed, Christocentric incarnational theology is built on physical proximity. However, the regional directors often do not live in proximity to the area directors they supervise.
Clearly, this trend of non-proximity or distance leadership expands as one moves up the organizational chart. For the vice presidents, senior vice presidents, and the president, the staff members whom these leaders supervise can be significant distances from each other. Young Life, however, has not developed a theology or methodology for teaching and developing effective leadership without proximity. In my role as senior vice president for Young Life in LA/C, my senior staff are all separated by thousands of miles. Not only is there nothing written on distance leadership in Young Life, there seems to be little recognition in the Church of the need for a new theology of distance leadership and a new methodology of leading without proximity.

**Apostolic Leadership and the Theology of Distance Leadership**

Jesus’ primary leadership strategy was a Christocentric incarnational model, but the Apostle Paul implemented a slightly different leadership model. Luke writes, “The word of the Lord spread through the whole area” (Acts 13:49). The Church was growing exponentially, and Jesus’ Christocentric leadership model of proximity was about to be stretched. Paul was an apostle—*apostolos* in Greek, which literally means “sent one.”

When Paul stood up and motioned his hands for silence in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13), the Jewish and Gentile crowd had no idea the bombshell that was about to be dropped. Paul walked the attendees through a history lesson on God’s love and journey with the stubborn Jewish people, and then in conclusion he declared that God had appointed Paul and Barnabas to “be a light for the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the ends

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of the earth.” God had called and was sending Paul and Barnabas to help fulfill the great commission (Mt 28:18-20) and the heart of God outlined in Isaiah:

Here is what the LORD says to me.
“It is not enough for you as my servant
to bring the tribes of Jacob back to their land.
It is not enough for you to bring back
the people of Israel I have kept alive.
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles.
Then you will make it possible for the whole world to be saved.” (Is 49:6)

The Jews were furious, while the Gentiles applauded. Paul and Barnabas were being called by God to bring the Good News of the incarnation of Jesus Christ to the Gentile outcasts of the world. The look and breadth of the New Testament Church was changing quickly, and the leadership strategy was going to change as well from a proximity-driven Christocentric model to Paul’s morphing apostolic-leadership model.

In his article on Paul’s missionary strategy, Neil Cole identifies some of the basic adaptive principles and strategies implemented by Paul in his apostolic leadership. Cole makes it clear that most of these adaptive principles were not sought after by Paul, but rather necessary modifications to his initial ministry plan in order to accommodate effective leadership of the rapidly growing Church. First, Cole describes Paul’s primary strategy in his first missionary journey as that of traveling evangelist. Paul and his ministry companions would travel from town to town, sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and attempting to make new converts. This traveling evangelist strategy was marvelously

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9 A portion of this section has been adapted from a paper from Dr. Bob Logan’s class OD786 Transforming Your Leadership Development, 2016.
successful, but clearly not God’s end-game for the apostle’s leadership. Second, Cole points out that some of the fruit of the first missionary journey (with Timothy, Gaius, Titus, and Luke) developed into a mentoring relationship during Paul’s second missionary journey. Not only was Paul leading those he traveled with, but he was also mentoring the new converts who were joining the movement. Paul was reluctantly being molded by Jesus to move from traveling evangelist to mentor and disciple-maker. By his third missional journey, Paul was thoroughly entrenched, as Cole calls it, as a “multiplying mentor.” As Paul’s influence grew, he was involved in planting ministries in places that he would never visit, but his disciples would. Through the prolific fruit of his mentoring relationships, Paul’s disciples would carry on the work that he began even in his absence. Paul’s influence was expanded through his converted followers.

As mentioned earlier, Paul was a successful traveling evangelist. When Paul was able to move freely, his teaching, theology, wisdom, and leadership remained in the oral tradition. Paul spoke his leadership. As the distance between Paul and his planted churches grew, Paul began to write down his leadership instruction. Nowhere was this more obvious than when Paul was confined to a prison in Caesarea or Ephesus. It is impossible to overstate the impact that his writing had on the churches in Asia Minor, letters written during a long stay or during extended periods of captivity. In his first captivity alone, he penned four epistles. Oral leadership is immensely effective. The

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10 Ibid., 3.
11 Ibid., 6.
12 Ibid., 8.
13 Ibid., 15.
spoken word is powerful and able to shape countless lives. Billy Graham and Luis Palau are modern-day testaments to this leadership reality. However, Paul’s writings have shaped untold millions of lives over the course of the last two thousand years.

Paul’s leadership is truly remarkable in its depth, adaptability, and influence. To think that Paul and a few companions planted and established churches throughout modern-day Turkey and Eastern Europe is almost unfathomable. Cole summarizes Paul’s multiplication influence by asking, “How could one man effectively reach the entire Asia Minor region in just two to three years without having left the city of Ephesus? Paul effectively raised leaders for the harvest from the harvest. There is no other adequate explanation for such a prolific expansion of the kingdom in Asia.”\(^{14}\) In fact, Cole states that “it took only ten years for Paul to establish self-sufficient reproducing church movements in five entire provinces of the Roman Empire—Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, Asia, and Illyricum.”\(^{15}\) It was the humble, moldable brilliance of the Apostle Paul’s leadership that allowed Jesus to use him to plant, water, and grow a mission far bigger than seems possible for one man to create.

While examining the leadership strategy of the Apostle Paul, there are four scalable principles for leaders called to lead at a distance. These three principles are used as the cornerstone in crafting a distance leadership development plan for Young Life in LA/C. First, Paul was intentional in incarnationally mentoring of a few key younger leaders. Second, Paul engaged in strategic travel to countries and towns that he felt were

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 8.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 32.
either dependent or needing his physical presence. Third, Paul became prolific in written communication designed to be distributed and read throughout Asia Minor and Europe. And fourth, Paul was very passionate about the power and work of prayer. This four-fold strategy is key to understanding Paul’s effectiveness in his leadership from a distance and therefore foundational to this project’s leadership development plan.

Incarnational Mentoring

Easily overlooked in Paul’s leadership strategy was his proactive and intentional mentoring of a few close comrades. Paul was a schooled Pharisee and would have been thoroughly trained in a mentoring relationship by his rabbi. Paul also likely learned Christocentric mentoring skills from Barnabas. Luke tells us that Barnabas traveled to Tarsus to look for Paul and in finding him, he took him back to Antioch (Acts 25). As they grew in relationship together, Luke seems to communicate, in the way he lists Barnabas first and Paul second (Acts 13:2, 7), that Barnabas was the leader and Paul the follower. If this was the case, it is probable that Barnabas was incarnationally teaching Paul the art of Christocentric mentoring. In any event, by Acts 13:13, Paul’s leadership role becomes highlighted, and beginning in 13:42, Luke lists the duo as Paul and Barnabas. However he learned it, Paul was a master at incarnational mentoring.

As mentioned above, Timothy, Gaius, Luke, and Titus were just some of the fruit of Paul’s first missionary journey and were clearly a few of the men into whom Paul poured significant personal, relational leadership energy. With physical proximity to his followers, Paul spent considerable time grooming these men, as Barnabas had groomed
him. These men traveled the countryside with Paul, which allowed for a Christocentric incarnational model of disciple making/leadership making (Acts 16:4).

One can see Paul’s mentoring in full bloom in 2 Timothy 2:2 when Paul instructs the young Timothy as follows: “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.” Later Paul would write to the church at Philippi to continue on in his leadership not just when Paul was present but all the more in his absence (Phil 1:12). Cole restates that “the best leaders are not those who have the most followers, but those who develop and deploy other leaders. The true test of a leader’s influence is to look at what is left behind once the leader is gone.”

Paul was masterful in taking young converts under his wing and developing them into exceptional leaders. This incarnational mentoring was the Christocentric model of leadership taught by Jesus himself. Paul brought leaders to himself to travel with, teach, mold, and mentor just as Jesus had done with the twelve. This face-to-face, incarnational mentoring was foundational to Paul’s strategy to develop the next generation of leaders.

Eventually, after extended mentoring with his young converts, Paul sent out Timothy, Titus, and the others to minister in his stead. At this point when any of Paul’s disciples traveled and spoke, it was as if Paul himself was traveling and speaking, even though he was locked up somewhere in a prison cell. Jesus was using Paul to expand the kingdom through mentoring even more than through his desired strategy of traveling.

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evangelist. The great Apostle Paul ended up modeling firsthand Jesus’ teaching of “go and make disciples” (Mt 28:19).

Strategic Travel

Clearly Paul’s preferred method of leadership, especially in the beginning of his ministry, was his own strategic travel schedule; it is what traveling evangelists do. As the Church grew, Paul intentionally went back and visited those churches that he had helped to plant, specifically beginning with his second missionary journey (Acts 15:36). For Paul and his churches, there was no substitute for a face to face (incarnational) encounter (1 Thes 2:17-3:5, 2 Tm 1:4, Phil 1:8). Paul had a relationship with his people, and as such it would be impossible to overstate the power of Paul’s personal presence with the disciples and churches as they struggled with persecution, infighting, challenges to their authority, church structure, propriety in worship issues, and leadership challenges. His presence also allowed the wise handling of church members who were struggling with sin and/or theological orthodoxy and the continual battle against heresy. When Paul traveled, he brought confidence, love, compassion, and encouragement. He also brought thoughtful wisdom and leadership to the development of the New Testament community, encouraging the faithful to continue to meet together, even under persecution—to break bread together and to submit themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to prayer (Acts 2:42). Travelling the trade routes of Asia Minor was difficult, dangerous, and costly. Even when he was out of prison it was simply not possible for Paul to be constantly travelling.
How Paul made decisions regarding where to travel is for the most part unknown. We do know that he was serious about listening to the Spirit. In Acts 16:6, Luke writes that the Spirit forbid Paul to preach the Gospel in Asia. We also know that not long after that revelation, Paul received a vision at night about a man in Macedonia who begged Paul to come and help them (Acts 16:9). Clearly Paul received word from various people about what was happening in churches around the region (1 Cor 1:11). In any event, it seems fair to say that Paul had some strategy for where he chose to travel and which locations he chose not to travel. Discernment seems to be a critical piece of the effective use of strategic travel in the development of the kingdom.

Paul likely heard from every church he planted, asking or begging him to come and visit them. The clear reality is that Paul could not be everywhere all the time. Decisions had to be made regarding where he spent his time. This would have deeply frustrated some people, and they would likely have made their frustration known, not unlike Jesus, who made decision to stay in some places and leave others. In his youth, his parents question why he abandoned their trip back to Nazareth when he stayed in the temple in Jerusalem (Lk 2:48). Leadership involves making decisions, some of which are popular and some are not. Discernment is crucial in every aspect of leadership, and figuring out where Paul went in the implementation of his strategic travel would be no exception.

Written Communication

Perhaps in retrospect it was not the personal visits of the apostle himself, nor the visits of his well-mentored disciples, but the brilliantly crafted epistles that have shown
their transformational staying power in the development of the New Testament church communities and beyond. Though Paul admittedly did not feel as strong in the flesh (2 Cor 10:10) to communicate hard facts and confront difficult leadership issues, he was quite bold in writing. Having gathered intelligence from his mentored emissaries who traveled and received word about the issues confronting the various churches, and from Paul’s own listening carefully to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit, Paul could boldly give written leadership from a distance that would have millennial staying power in the work of the kingdom to this day.

Modern-day words are able to be chronicled and stored for future use through the technology available. However, two thousand years ago and up to the invention of various recording devices, oral communication was the norm. Words spoken in the oral tradition had to be memorized by scribes on the spot or they would evaporate almost as quickly as they were spoken. They might have had staying power on the hearts and in the minds of those who were present, but genuine scalable staying power was reserved for the words written on tablets, stone, papyrus, or paper. Foundational to this project is the role that Paul’s writings played in his morphing distance leadership strategy.

There are twenty-seven books canonized in the New Testament, and almost 50 percent were written by the Apostle Paul. His intentional mentoring was foundational and his strategic travel vital, but his writing was the indelible factor in his leadership strategy. Paul wanted to be a traveling evangelist, and indeed the Lord allowed him to fulfil this desire for a time. But his leadership needed to morph because the Church of Jesus Christ was growing. It was spreading either through Paul’s preaching, the preaching of his disciples, or the more organic movement of people in a given place and time. Either way,
Paul was being challenged to adapt his leadership to meet the expanding Church. What unfolded was Paul’s ability to lead people without proximity, that is, to lead people from a distance. As such, Paul is a good role model when considering the theological and strategic implications of distance leadership.

Focused Prayer

The epistle to the Galatians is the only writing of Paul’s that does not specifically have the prayers or blessings of Paul mentioned. It would be impossible to think of Paul’s written leadership and not be captivated by his encouragement to pray, or the written prayers themselves recorded in the New Testament. Ephesians 2:14-21 typifies the beauty, content, and depth of Paul’s prayers:

I bow in prayer to the Father because of my work among you. From the Father every family in heaven and on earth gets its name. I pray that he will use his glorious riches to make you strong. May his Holy Spirit give you his power deep down inside you. Then Christ will live in your hearts because you believe in him. And I pray that your love will have deep roots. I pray that it will have a strong foundation. May you have power together with all the Lord’s holy people to understand Christ’s love. May you know how wide and long and high and deep it is. And may you know his love, even though it can’t be known completely. Then you will be filled with everything God has for you.

God is able to do far more than we could ever ask for or imagine. He does everything by his power that is working in us. Give him glory in the church and in Christ Jesus. Give him glory through all time and for ever and ever. Amen.

Clearly, Paul was a man of prayer. The prayers flow from him, in what seems to be an effortless motion, almost as if rehearsed. It seems not only logical but probable that when he finally got around to writing his epistles, he was recording prayers that had become well-worn in his soul. It is important to see prayer as a foundational component of Paul’s strategy of spiritual development in the lives of his followers and a cornerstone for his strategy of distance leadership.
Oswald Chambers, in his brilliant devotional, *My Utmost for His Highest*, writes that “prayer does not equip us for greater works—prayer is the greater work.”17 Paul could continue his non-proximity leadership primarily through prayer, the greater work of the kingdom. The leadership development impact of prayer is profound and has nothing to do with proximity. This is why Jesus could say in John 15:4, “Remain in me,” knowing he was going to his death. Because of the work of the Holy Spirit, it is possible to stay connected to Jesus even in his physical absence. It is in prayer that our work can continue without proximity. Paul’s being in prison was not a barrier, and while being thousands of miles away from the people one leads is a challenge and obstacle, it does not necessitate the end of our ability to develop the work of the kingdom.

**Conclusion**

The Apostle Paul and his master Jesus had complementary yet different leadership strategies. Jesus’ model, which centered upon his becoming flesh and moving into the neighborhood, was and always will be our primary move in leadership development. The Christocentric incarnational model of pulling others together in proximity is the most basic building block of biblical leadership. This move cannot be replaced by in-depth curriculum, FaceTime, Facebook, or any other means of digital, video, or virtual reality. Required in the Christocentric model is physical proximity of follower to leader.

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However, as the Church grew, God led Paul to a leadership strategy that was both faithful to Jesus’ apprentice model and scalable to a developing global mission. Paul traveled incredible distances on his three missionary journeys and developed work in locations throughout Asia Minor and into Europe. With churches springing up from Tarsus to Macedonia, Paul’s leadership strategy had to adapt. One of the key principles that Paul developed was appointing elders in every location where the Church took root (Ti 1:5). These elders were to be local converts whom Paul, or one of his disciples, felt were capable to give leadership in his absence (Acts 14:23). Paul knew that he was setting up the kingdom in locations that he would only sporadically visit. Whether he knew or not, Paul apostolic leadership was helping to develop a strategy for giving leadership from a distance that would bless the kingdom of God.

It was not that proximity became unimportant or unnecessary. On the contrary, proximity was foundational, but leadership was able to continue when proximity was sporadic or non-existent for long periods of time through Paul’s fourfold practice of intentional mentoring, strategic travel, written communication, and focused prayer. The churches in Asia Minor and Eastern Europe looked to Paul for leadership both when he was present and when he was absent. Paul wanted to be a traveling evangelist, but God had other things in mind. God wanted Paul to give leadership not only to the churches he had planted, but beyond the first century and into the future. God had in mind Paul helping to craft a way forward for the kingdom some two thousand years after the birth of the Church. The apostolic leadership model of Paul has much to teach us today, just as it had much to offer to the churches in Lycaonia, Pamphylia, Lydia, Macedonia, and Achaia.
CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Analysis of the Literature of Distance Leadership

It is perplexing that so little is written on the topic of distance leadership in the Church. Without a doubt, the opportunities and challenges of global leadership have morphed radically in the last five decades. The two primary changes that have spurned this development are the convenience and relative affordability of airline travel and the explosion of technology. Today, global business is common place, as are global ministries. And yet, so little is being done to equip the leaders of global ministries with the distinct skills needed for distance leadership.

Challenging to leaders of these global organizations are issues of cultural distance, physical distance, emotional distance, and social distance. All have significant impact upon organizations and their leadership. In their book, Exploring Distance in Leader-Follower Relationships, Michelle C. Bligh and Ronald E. Riggio note, “given these radical shifts in what distance means for our modern organizations and our
relationships with both leaders and followers within and without them, it is perhaps surprising that the domain of leadership has for the most part ignored it altogether.”

The Apostle Paul helped craft a leadership model that could be implemented throughout the Middle East and Europe as the New Testament Church grew. Paul took the critical factors of Christocentric (proximal) leadership and developed a successful “apostolic” distance leadership model that ministries today can adapt to many leadership challenges present in a growing a global ministry.

Developing a solid understanding of distance leadership is critical to the healthy, vibrant leadership of a mission. In her book, Leading the Virtual Workforce: How Great Leaders Transform Organizations in the 21st Century, Karen Sobel Lojeski writes,

Virtual Distance is characterized by a combination of physical separation, technology mediation, and disconnected relationships. These dynamics lead to a psychological separation that builds over time. And the research documents the negative effects that Virtual Distance can have on productivity, innovation, and trust between employees and groups of organizations. This data should be of major interest to any leader trying to improve performance and advance competitive advantage.²

Distance in leadership is multifaceted; it can be physical, cultural, or it can be perceived. In some ways, every leader in any organization must deal with some form of distance leadership. It would be a mistake to think that leaders who are not leading a global mission have no need to expand their knowledge of distance leadership. Lojeski explains,

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“Virtual Distance exists in many instances among people who sit right next door to each other as well as between geographically dispersed individuals and teams.”

The writing that has been done on distance leadership often refers to the issue of leading virtual teams. This project defines virtual based on the definition provided by Nancy Settle-Murphy in her book, *Leading Effective Virtual Teams: Overcoming Time and Distance to Achieve Exceptional Results*; she writes that a virtual team is “any team that has one or more members working apart from the others.” She continues, “In some cases, the leader is the only team member who works physically apart from the others. Or it might be that the leader works in close proximity to some members, and others work remotely. In some virtual teams, the leader and the majority of members work physically together, and just a few work from afar.” Settle-Murphy then defines global teams even more specifically: “Global teams are a particular variant of virtual teams, where members span different cultures and often different time zones. Global project teams are a type of global team where members come together to collaborate on a particular project, and then disband when the project is through.”

In our work in LA/C, the senior leadership team is not considered a virtual team, but rather a global team that operates at a distance. The word virtual connotes a team that is not really a team, but an artificial or avatar team. The distinction is crucial. The SALT

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3 Ibid., 598-599.


5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., 319-321.
team in LA/C is a team in every way, regardless of whether we live and work in proximity. One of the primary motivators to creating this leadership development plan is to help grow the team in a relational, productive manner, taking into consideration the unique challenges incumbent on not working in proximity to each other. We are not a virtual team; we are a team.

As this chapter explores the unique issues and challenges in leading a team at a distance, it is also worth noting that this type of global (distance) leadership is quickly becoming common place. Lojeski writes,

More than ten years ago the term “think global, act local” led to the term glocalization in marketing. . . . The leader’s ability to take a balanced view of the workforce from both the global as well as local level is a different kind of glocalization that’s critical for the Virtual Distance Leader to understand. The workforce is glocalized. People live and work within the context of their local towns, cities, and countries. And yet they must somehow be ready, willing, and able to act on behalf of a worldwide mission. To motivate people to act in this way leaders need to use glocalized communications—sending messages and employing work practices that speak to both.7

Inasmuch as distance leadership has evolved in the last several decades, leading from a distance is not new; it did not come into existence with the invention of the airplane or the Internet. The Roman military had to deal with distance leadership issues throughout the Roman Empire, and Genghis Kahn employed some version of distance leadership in leading armies throughout the Mongol Empire. The various Chinese dynasties were proficient in distance leadership. The United States military has been successful in mastering leadership without proximity, and Apple Industries and Amazon have refined modern-day, non-proximal leadership. The Apostle Paul was a distant leader.

7 Lojeski, Leading the Virtual Workforce, Loc. 2077-2081.
The pace of change in leadership responsibilities has never been greater and is not going away anytime soon. This chapter explores some of the literature that is available on distance, or as some authors say, virtual leadership. One very present challenge is that there is no specific literature available on distance Christian leadership. This seems almost unfathomable, since the Church has been actively engaged in missional (distance) leadership for centuries. The majority of the literature explored in this review comes from the secular business community, as these leaders have grappled with this topic for a number of years. The military and governments have also dealt with non-proximal leadership. Literature in the military venue is interesting but not particularly helpful for this project. The motivation, styles of leadership, and the place of authority and accountability in the military arena are somewhat opposed to the servant leadership values of followers of Jesus Christ. Even in the business environment there is surprisingly little written on distance leadership. The selected literature is that which is instructional and adaptable to developing a distance leadership plan in LA/C.

Realities of Distance Leadership

Settle-Murphy outlines eight specific issues that are present in the leadership challenges of distant leadership that a leader must take into consideration when providing leadership to an organization. Many of these challenges are obvious, while others are more insightful. Each of the eight challenges is presented below, followed by a brief discussion of how it might be experienced in the SALT leadership context.

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The first challenge is the absence of face-to-face time. This means less socializing, less time getting to know each other, less time getting to know how to work together, and less time building trust, shared experiences, and life. It is face-to-face time that has historically been the cornerstone of spiritual growth, discipleship, vision casting, problem solving, and team building. Face time is the primary building block of incarnational ministry. Less face time means less natural relational connectivity. Time in someone’s presence is the most foundational building block of a relationship. Distal leadership changes how followers perceive a leader and how a leader perceives his or her team. Distal relationships naturally lack trust that is more easily built with proximity; this changes the dynamics of all relationships. This means that “proximal leadership is more experience-based and distal leadership is more image-based. Distal leadership is therefore more likely to be based on attributions, projections, and other construal processes.”

Limited face time means distance leaders must find other ways to develop trust, community, and commonality in their teams.

The second challenge is that of differing time zones. The practical reality of multiple time zones narrows the options for convenient, real-time phone or video conversations. This challenge is one of the easier to overcome, but nevertheless it factors into the communication plan of any distance leader. Significant time zone variance can be a huge challenge for any relational connection. In LA/C this is less of an issue since there are only three times zones at play in our entire division.

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9 Boas Shamir, “Notes on Distance and Leadership,” in Bligh and Riggio, Exploring Distance in Leader-Follower Relationships, 41.
The third challenge is that of cultural and language differences. These are two of the most critical and complicated aspects of distance leadership. A ministry or organization based in the United States will by default be more American-centric in its leadership in the way it thinks about every aspect of the ministry. Good distal leadership will spend considerable time working to understand the values, history, economics, religious challenges, and oppression in the countries they lead. One of the most common mistakes leadership can make is to assume that other countries are basically the same as the United States but speak a different language. This perception is fatal to a mission. Joshua Lewandowski and Timothy C. Lisk write, “The greater the cultural distance between a host country and a home country, the more difficult it is for an organization to conduct its business.”

Understanding multiple cultural contexts and proficiently navigating between cultures takes significant cultural intelligence. Dr. Livingston’s book on the topic is a must read for any who are leading a work across cultures. The cultural differences are one of the biggest challenges in distance leadership.

The fourth challenge is that of different holiday schedules. Settle-Murphy points out that working with multiple countries means having to juggle multiple holiday schedules, decreasing the available times to pull the entire team together. Not knowing the values of another culture opens the door to catastrophic relational failure. Not all countries celebrate Thanksgiving as we do in the United States. To some, Mother’s Day

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10 Joshua Lewandowski and Timothy C. Lisk, “Foundations of Distance,” in Bligh and Riggio, Exploring Distance in Leader-Follower Relationships, 32.

11 David A. Livermore, Cultural Intelligence: Improving your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2009).
is the biggest holiday of the year. Many countries have far more holidays than we do in the United States. Again, this limits a team’s availability to do business.

The fifth challenge is an uneven playing field. Team members inevitably come from radically diverse economic, cultural realities even within their own countries, let alone the distal realities present in multinational work. Different cultures have a wide variety of issues that relate to finances, access to resources, proximity to people of power, and attitudes about upper and lower class citizens, just to name a few. Money changes everything, especially in Christian ministries. This affects setting budgets, managing revenue, accounting practices, setting salaries, evaluating goals, healthcare, retirement, the list goes on.

The issues of an uneven playing field are not simply economic. When a person is born into poverty, he or she tends to have a scarcity mentality, and it significantly affects the person’s worldview, the way that person treats people (often for the better), his or her work ethic (often for the better), and many other aspects of life. Likewise, those born into prosperity have a radically different worldview, and a different attitude toward resources, people, poverty, opportunity, problem solving, and so on. Those born into a historically Communist culture tend to view people, authority, and leaders in a very different light than do those raised in a more capitalistic culture. Those with darker skin often do not see the world through the same lens as those of a lighter complexion. Those who speak English can see the world very differently than those who speak Haitian Creole. The point is that grappling with the realities of people who come from uneven playing fields is a huge challenge for multinational distance leadership.
The sixth challenge is that it is harder to tell if people are out of alignment. With casual conversations being next to impossible, distance leaders must intentionally work at assuring their teams and staff are in alignment with the goals, mission, methodologies and values. It is very difficult to tell when distal teams are out of alignment often until it is too late to correct the problems. This is one of the most critical aspects of distance leadership. Far too much information, for distance leaders, is acquired through basic newsletter and email updates. Although helpful, newsletters, like Facebook posts can make the worst ministry sound and look amazing. Careful attention must be given to accessing good real information on missional issues and leadership alignment. Significant time must be applied to peeling back the cultural issues and working to discover is alignment is real, or just present when the “big boss” is in the country. Empirical data can help this conversation but is not the only way forward. Good relational connection, trust building, shared experiences are all part of helping to assure that distal teams are really in alignment.

The seventh challenge is that performance reviews and giving feedback are more difficult. Shamir writes, “While performance cues affect all leadership relationships, they are likely to have a greater effect in the case of distant leadership due to the relative lack of more directly observable cues about the leader’s attributes and behaviors.”12 The lack of opportunity for observable data between the supervisor and the staff person makes garnering accurate data crucial. In an organizational culture like Young Life, where there is a tendency to allow staff room to be creative and unstructured, finding the balance

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12 Shamir, “Notes on Distance and Leadership,” 44.
between clear, concise, and written directive feedback and a more loosely held structure can be challenging. My experience has confirmed that most of our leaders in this mission want good, clear, consistent written feedback. Yet our Young Life leadership tends to resist this kind of corporate analysis. This tension is real stateside. Internationally, we must structure a review system that is scalable and implementable on a consistent basis to assure that international leaders understand the missional goals and are making progress. This is not simply helpful, but it is vital to the mission of Young Life, and it is also desperately wanted by Young Life’s international staff.

Finally, the eighth challenge is that there are fewer opportunities for cross-pollination of knowledge and informal learning. Cross-pollination is a key component to innovation and shared learning. With little proximal access to other team members, distance leaders must work creatively to help their people to avoid becoming stagnant and satisfied with the status quo. The challenge here is cultural, fiscal, and it relates to finding appropriate use of staff times out of the area of their primary leadership responsibilities. As challenging as providing opportunities for cross-pollination can be, this is one of Young Life’s more strategic ingredients in the development of the global work. The distance gap must be addressed if Young Life is to continue to be a cutting edge, innovative mission. It is amiss to think that these cross-pollination experiences must be experienced with similar or comparable cultures. Although helpful at times, even experiences in radically different cultures can ignite the brain’s creative juices.

This list of eight distance leadership challenges from Settle-Murphy are helpful in setting the stage for effective distance leadership. However, it is important to add one more obvious challenge—technology. The proliferation of technology and the relative
affordability and accessibility of the Internet have allowed for a growing number of opportunities for distance leaders to be effective even when separated from their teams by thousands of miles. Lojeski writes, “The most successful of today’s leaders understand how to use technology in a more socially adapted way to impart vision and inspire others. This skill is called techno-dexterity because it involves an understanding of and competence in using the right technology to successfully convey the right message.”\textsuperscript{13}

Even in the most primitive developing countries, the Internet is highly accessible, albeit not always reliable or fast.

With the development of the smartphone and email, voice and text messaging have become relatively easy, cost effective forms of communication all over the world. Now with the advent of video calls on platforms like Skype and ZOOM, a “face-to-face” call can happen almost anywhere in the world, anytime of day. For LA/C these ZOOM calls have become the cornerstone of our distance leadership plan. There is nothing digital that can replace good, well-planned face-to-face time, but in the interim between apostolic visits, taking full advantage of video calls is a cornerstone of the development of effective distance team building.

However, with the upside of technology being so prevalent, there is a significant downside as well. Technology can be used to connect those far apart, but it can also be used to distance those who live and work in proximity to each other. Bligh and Riggio explain, “Paradoxically, technology modifies and enhances other types of distance as parents and managers alike bemoan their waning influence on followers who increasingly

\textsuperscript{13} Lojeski, \textit{Leading the Virtual Workforce}, Loc. 1661-1664.
turn to smartphones and social media rather than to immediate leaders for daily guidance.”

With digital communication being so accessible, it can distract people from being present and focusing on the work at hand.

It can also create a false reality of relational connection. Having one thousand friends on Facebook can seem like people are relationally connected to one another. The opportunity to create a digital life on social media is real, but it may have little to do with reality. Technological connectivity can mask relational isolation. Prudence and discernment must be used in accessing technology in distance leadership.

The most common form of communication when dealing with distance leadership is email. Again, the upside is as profound as the downside. Quick, speedy, trackable email communication is fantastic in helping keep a large mission well informed. But there are two issues that distance leaders must keep in mind when using email: wasted creativity and fragile emotions. Marjorie Sarbaugh-Thompson and Martha S. Feldman caution, “Increase in email communication and less face-to-face interaction . . . [means no] unplanned casual conversations, which are valuable for facilitating work and social cohesiveness in an organization.”

Especially poignant is the lack of unplanned and casual conversations. Even when practicing good distance leadership, the lack of unplanned conversations is almost impossible to fully compensate for when building a relational team. It is possible for Young Life leaders to be checking email regularly, be in constant digital communication with the team and their staff, and not do their job. For

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senior leaders, it is best if they are with people face-to-face whenever possible, on a call, or on the streets. They should take time to think, ponder, pray, analyze, critique, and problem solve. Constant email contact can actually work against a strong leader’s ability to lead if he or she is not careful about usage.

Also noteworthy is the impact of positive and negative words when communicating via email. Surinder S. Kahai writes, “Specifically, senders of electronic messages suffer from egocentrism and don’t appreciate that their audience cannot perceive the emotions or tone that they are trying to communicate (Kruger, Epley, Parker, & Ng, 2005). The challenge in conveying emotions and tone in electronic communication is further compounded by receivers seeing positive messages as less positive and negative messages as more negative than intended by the sender (Byron, 2008).”

Email is magnificent for details, calendars, lists, reminders, and quick touches. It is not as helpful in problem solving, seeking to resolve conflict, and building relationships.

Clearly these are not the only issues that an apostolic leader must be aware of when leading from a distance. But they do begin to lay the ground work for crafting a leadership development plan that has transformational power across the diversity of cultures represented in the twenty-six countries in Young Life in LA/C.

**Apostolic Leadership Focus**

Building a relational and productive team is one of the most foundational components of distance leadership. As stated in Chapter 1, relationships require a

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proximal experience. There is no way to ever fully replace face-to-face, life-on-life encounters in building authentic, productive, meaningful relationships. However, according to Lojeski, there are three related types of behaviors that characterize authentic distal and proximal relationships: 1) transparency, openness, and trust; 2) guidance toward worthy objectives; and 3) emphasis on follower development. 17

It is possible to build authentic relationships at a distance through a combination of occasional proximal interaction and good, thoughtful distance connectivity. Good leadership will be poignantly aware of the relational challenges present in distal connectivity. Since most connection is done using technology, not face time, transparency, openness, and trust can tend to be synthetically digitally manufactured. Staff can be conveniently unavailable with little accountability. Setting goals and working to achieve those goals can be complicated since the supervisor does not live in the culture of the staff person. The staff person, lacking integrity, can use this reality as a reason he or she cannot or will not work toward the common, agreed upon goals. It is easy for some culturally distant staff members to simply claim that their supervisor really does not understand their reality.

Similarly, Debra Dinnocenzo, in her book, How to Lead from a Distance, presents three foundational “bridges” that the distance leader must cross; trust, communication and performance. 18 The simplicity of Dinnocenzo’s assessment is helpful. Clearly, building trust is crucial to distance leadership. Likewise, developing good communication

17 Lojeski, Leading the Virtual Workforce, Loc. 887-890.

18 Debra Dinnocenzo, How to Lead from a Distance (Bedford, TX: The Walk the Talk Company, 2012), Kindle, Loc. 29-31.
is absolutely critical in distal leadership. Finally, understanding, reviewing, and assessing the performance of the leadership must be prioritized.

**A New Way of Leading without Proximity**

It is clear that excellent distance leadership is possible if leaders are prepared to learn a new way of leadership. This new way combines what they have learned over the years through solid proximal leadership, with adjusting and expanding their skills and praxis to address the unique challenges present in distance leadership. In synthesizing the material above, the following principles will guide this project’s distance leadership plan for Young Life in LA/C.

The first principle is to prioritize well-planned, face-to-face interactions. There are two types of face-to-face interactions: group and individual. Finding the right amount of face time is crucial and involves a number of issues. All face-to-face times require significant fiscal resources. There is also a significant relational and ministry cost for a staff person to be out of his or her country, or for me to visit them in their countries. As a good rule of thumb, whenever people leave their country and travel for a meeting, the week prior and the week following the trip should be spent preparing or readjusting.

There is a vital tradeoff between time spent building the team and time having our staff do the mission they were called by God to do. In their book, *Big Book of Virtual Teambuilding Games*, Mary Scannell, Michael Abrams, and Mike Mulvihill contend that “meeting in person twice a year is ideal for a virtual team.”³⁹ With this in mind, the LA/C

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senior leadership team will meet as a group twice a year. In addition, I will visit with each staff person once a year in his or her home country. These face-to-face meetings will also be augmented with monthly video conference calls.

The second principle is to slow down the pace of leadership. Due to the beautiful and complex nature of providing leadership in twenty-six countries, and given the language and cultural realities that are at play, I must be intentional in slowing down the speed of my leadership to give time to think, listen, and discern. Dinnocenzo states, “As a distance leader, you must ‘listen to see’ – using your ears rather than your eyes for picking up on subtle cues that indicate a problem, concern, or opportunity to provide needed coaching. Think about how easily you facilitate face-to-face meetings; getting as good at leading virtual meetings is your new target.”20 This involves constantly checking my historical leadership experience with a new multi-complex reality of cultural and language issues that will require me to slow down, truly listen, and filter all data points carefully.

The third principle is to focus on DNA. One of the most crucial aspects of this leadership development plan will be to condense the content of what is communicated as much as possible. This will be done by primarily focusing on the core of the Young Life mission, that is, the organization’s missional DNA. In condensing the content of leadership, the SALT will spend considerable time teaching, processing, practicing, and evaluating the core aspects of the mission of Young Life that are kingdom principles, and as such will spend considerable time adapting the DNA to various cultural settings. This

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20 Dinnocenzo, How to Lead from a Distance, 55-57.
will focus the team’s dialogue on how the DNA of Young Life can be scaled in various cultures and will help create alignment in the mission.

The fourth principle is excellent communication. Both verbal and written communication will be a focus of the leadership development plan. With confusion across cultures being the norm, it will be important to document conversations and meetings in order to eliminate as much confusion as possible. This includes providing clear written goals and clear and systematic written evaluations.

The fifth principle is working through prayer, which is one of the most vital aspects of distance apostolic leadership. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Apostle Paul modeled a magnificent prayer life. Prayer can take place either distally or proximally. Prayer is effectual in leadership in crafting and molding a missional movement, not only because it pleases our Heavenly Father, but it also unleashes the power of the Holy Spirit to change people’s lives when leaders are not present. In other words, prayer is leadership work. In the past, I prayed because God called us to pray and lift up our hopes, dreams, concerns, intercessions, and thanksgivings to him. However, while considering distance leadership and asking the question, “What can I do when I am away from the people I lead?” the clear answer is to pray. I can shape the mission of Young Life in the LA/C through prayer.

**Conclusion**

Crafting a leadership development plan that scales the mission of Young Life throughout Latin America and the Caribbean is a monumental undertaking. It requires a thoughtful shift from proximal Christocentric leadership to a distance apostolic leadership
theology. It also requires learning from the best thinking and writing there is on the topic of leadership at a distance. Unfortunately, there is little writing on distal leadership in Christian literature. Garnering good thinking from the business world has helped to highlight some vital aspects of distance leadership that are pivotal in designing a plan that will be useful in leading Young Life’s work in the twenty-six countries of LA/C. Leadership from a distance is critical for every aspect of missional leadership. Bligh and Riggio write, “Distance, therefore, is not merely an attribute of one particular type of team or organization, but is inherent in all contexts to a greater or lesser degree.”

PART THREE

MINISTRY PRACTICE
CHAPTER 4
A PLAN FOR DISTANCE LEADERSHIP IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The kingdom of God will continue to expand on earth until the final coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, which means that distance leadership is here to stay. Previous chapters have determined the need for non-proximal leadership within the Church, built a solid theological foundation for distance leadership, and explored most of the critical literature encompassing the topic of virtual or distance leadership as practiced in the business realm. This chapter assimilates this material into a unified plan for distance leadership within the mission of Young Life in LA/C.

The leadership of the Christian Church has for two thousand years taught leadership from a theological perspective of presence modeled after Jesus’ calling of the twelve disciples to come and be with Jesus and then to be sent out to preach the Gospel (Mark 3:14). Virtually all Christian leadership literature is predicated on proximity. Interestingly, proximity is rarely named, but rather assumed. When Christians talk about leadership, they mean leadership with proximity. This is a Christocentric, incarnational theology of leadership, characterized by the phrases, “Come be with me,” life on life, in
the flesh (incarnation), and “Learn from me and then go out and do the work of the kingdom.”

The Apostle Paul was schooled in the leadership principles of presence through his rabbinical education and the mentoring of Barnabas. However, as Paul’s call unfolded and as the Church grew, he was encouraged by the spirit to adapt this Christocentric incarnational leadership model into an apostolic model—a missional leadership praxis that would be effective without proximity. This leadership model included an incarnational mentoring component (incarnational), but it expanded the leadership of presence to allow Paul to continue to provide effective leadership to churches, whether in his presence or in his absence.

The leadership development plan (hereafter, LDP) set forth in this chapter draws heavily upon the apostolic model of leadership modeled by the Apostle Paul. It has been designed for each of the twelve senior regional leaders in Young Life’s ministry in LA/C. This plan is specifically crafted to empower these twelve leaders to give oversight, leadership, and spiritual direction in order to grow their ministries.

**Fourfold Theological Strategy of the Apostle Paul**

Chapter 2 presented the theology of the Apostle Paul’s distance leadership, which incorporated four basic building blocks: incarnational mentoring, strategic travel, communication from a distance, and leadership through prayer. This chapter discusses both the structure and content of the LDP using this fourfold structure.
Incarnational Mentoring

Each senior leader must have a specific plan to develop leadership through his or her own proximity-based mentoring. This component is not simply for the SALT team to practice, but for me to model as well. Like the Apostle Paul, I will identify a few key younger leaders who have significant leadership potential, and I will develop a plan to mentor these key leaders. This will be a combination of leadership through presence and distal leadership. It is not necessary for the all of the people whom I choose to mentor to live in proximity to me, however, most of them should. This relationship will involve both discipleship and leadership development. It is clear that good discipleship cannot be done completely at a distance. There must be a presence aspect for each of these developing leaders. If I do not have proximity with these folks, they will need to find additional mentors who can augment my leadership with proximity and presence.

Far too often in the Church, it is believed that there is one mentor who can provide all of the mentoring needed for a specific disciple. However, in many cases (perhaps most), it can be quite helpful to have multiple people mentoring the same disciple in various aspects of his or her life. This has been called a constellation of mentors—specific mentors who give leadership in particular areas of one’s spiritual, emotional, or leadership development. In any event, it will be crucial to identify those whom I plan to mentor, and for all SALT members to identify the folks they will be intentionally mentoring. Once they have identified these folks, they must develop a plan for each one of these younger disciples.
Strategic Travel

Clearly one of the most notable aspects of distance leadership is the need, opportunity, and critical nature of strategic travel. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Apostle Paul traveled extensively during his three missionary journeys. Little is known about how he made decisions about when and where he traveled, but it is clear that the distance, intervals, and time in each city varies greatly. Paul provides a marvelous picture of the effectiveness of being present with people for various periods of time.

The SALT team will gather in person twice yearly, once in February and once in August. The August meeting will include the twelve SALT members only, with the location moving around the entire division. The February meeting will be called SALT+, and it will include the twelve SALT team members as well as other leaders from each region. Both the SALT and the SALT+ meetings will be times of fellowship, training, and planning. These two events will be scheduled far in advance and will be mandatory for all members of the SALT team.

One of the most common mistakes leadership can make in distance leadership is to schedule the majority of strategic travel around event-driven gatherings. The group events are fantastic at maximizing face time with a broad diversity of key staff. They are good for training, vision casting, building team unity, and alignment. However, they are woefully inadequate in helping build intrapersonal understanding, trust, intimate knowledge of the other’s personal leadership style and family systems, or heart connection with Young Life’s key senior leadership. In order to accomplish these more intimate connections, I must be with my senior leaders in a one-on-one connection, or one-on-a few.
This is one of the more challenging aspects to distance leadership; it is time consuming and cost heavy, but absolutely vital. My job is to give leadership to my senior staff. Without this more intimate connection, my attempts to provide leadership regarding the many complex issues that our senior staff contend with may be intellectually or logically helpful, but practically irrelevant. Distance is not simply physical, but cultural as well as emotional. Often members of the SALT team will give me only some of the information needed in problem solving, not holding back details intentionally, but simply not knowing that certain details are vital in arriving at an implementable solution. The more I know life in another culture, the more I comprehend their world and the resources and challenges present. Thus, the more likely it is that I will be able to help them craft strategic leadership for healthy ministry development.

Achieving this more intimate connection requires some challenging maneuvering. Whenever possible, this means staying at the home of the leader, not in a hotel. The hotel provides a comfortable setting for my lifestyle, but it can put distance between me and my staff. This also means going to church with them, eating meals with their families, walking their dog together—doing things that give me time to get to know the real life of the senior staff person.

Working hard to understand what is really happening in a country is critical for good leadership. When I attend a conference, I get to see the best of the best of the ministry in a country, but not the way the ministry is performed on a daily basis. When I travel, people are always trying to put their best foot forward, show me the best club, the best camp, the best leadership meeting. However, oftentimes their best does not need to be improved; it is already the best. No one needs my insight on what they do well; they
need my insight on what they are struggling with. Quite frankly, getting good information on what a ministry is struggling with is very difficult and must be an intentional process. On these individual visits, I want to spend time with the spouses of the SALT leaders, working to assess the health of the marriage, the rhythm of the family calendar, their use of Sabbath, and their work as parents. Critical to this is working to have quiet times together. Learning how SALT leaders spend time with Jesus is vital to the overall health of the ministry.

When I travel, I want whenever possible to do the most basic aspects of the mission of Young Life with the local staff. I want to see leaders doing contact work. I want to see a Bible study with kids, a leadership meeting, and a planning meeting. I want to see a regular Young Life club. I want to attend church and meet the pastor. The better the rapport that I develop with the SALT senior leader, the more effective their leadership will be.

Also vital to my intentional travel is my use of money. There is always a temptation to spend too much cash, making money appear more prevalent than it really is. Our staff live on very little and run their ministry on shoestring budgets. They are taught to watch every peso. Buying expensive meals, doing special events that the local people would never do, renting cars when others can drive, going to special entertainment events, and so on, can easily give the impression that I have a lot of money to spend when I am traveling, but that I am not generous enough to give it to my senior staff for them to spend. It is easy to communicate that the supervisor has access to an endless source of fiscal resources. Our attitude toward money and how we spend it is so important in helping everyone know how precious every dollar is in our mission. Caution must be
exercised to make sure that I am not seen as being a wallet, but a friend, a leader, and a mentor.

Another challenge when traveling is to be cautious in holding the tension between teaching and listening. Whenever I am in a country, SALT team leaders will always invite me to teach or speak. This can be quite helpful in casting vision and developing unity of mission around the division. I am the senior vice president, and all of our staff want to please. It is right at times for me to be upfront and give leadership. However, foundational to the effectiveness of my leadership is to learn to listen more than to talk. Since almost all of the conversations need to be translated between Spanish, Portuguese, Creole, and English, the pace of conversation is slowed. This is good. It allows people more time to think, process, and not speak so quickly. I am learning to take full advantage of this as a gift from the Lord. It helps me to improve my listening skills, quickening my words then when I do speak.

It is always a difficult decision to decide how long each strategic visit should be. There are a number of factors at play that must be considered when choosing the length of the visit. One often overlooked aspect of travel is the impact that my time with them will have on their lives and their ministry. The host senior staff leaders are extremely busy. They travel to all of the countries that they oversee. They have fiscal obligations that require a significant portion of their time, and they have their own calendar of events that they host in their country or other countries. They have teams from the United States who come for short-term mission trips, and they have camps and trainings that they host. They have family obligations, parental obligations, other community and church obligations that connect them to their local communities, and their continued education.
Their lives are overflowing with ministry and life. My presence brings interruption to their schedule, no matter how welcomed and helpful I might be.

Given the realities of my senior staff’s schedule, I must exert caution in order to avoid becoming too big of a burden. This is further complicated by the fact that every one of the key staff leaders love it when I spend time with them. Because our mission innately creates deep roots of community and fellowship and there are few others in their lives who understand their call in ministry, visiting the national staff members is always welcome. This might not be able to be said for all supervisor/supervisee relationships, but when working together, the enjoyment factor of being together is rich and welcome. Also, due to the cross-cultural nature of the work, these SALT leaders rarely tell me if I am being a nuisance or that the timing is poor. The Latin and Caribbean cultures are deeply rooted in service and a subservient spirit. Their answer is almost always “yes.” This makes good decision-making on frequency and length of visits quite complicated.

Loneliness is a reality for the SALT leaders. They live thousands of miles apart from one another and from me. Being together is one of the great joys of our work, even if it raises the anxiety level or significantly complicates one’s calendar. As one staff member from Haiti said this past August, “Being lonely is like being in prison.”

Loneliness weighs heavy on all leaders in the LA/C. It is part and parcel to a call to any leadership position, but even more so when given a call to distance leadership.

The other issue to be considered is my capacity to travel. Since I supervise twelve senior leaders who give leadership to over twenty-six countries, it is impossible to be with each person as much as I would like. My available travel dates are chosen taking into consideration my marriage, my bandwidth, and the opportunities and challenges
present in the ministry, as well as the calendar of events that I am expected to attend as a senior leader in the global mission of Young Life. I have had this position now for six years, and have historically been gone from my home 50 percent of the time. Some travel is with the senior staff, other travel is for leadership commitments in the mission for Young Life, some is for funding opportunities, and some is for family. Since my wife is now able to travel with me, we have agreed that she will come with me on half of my trips as able. Even if I traveled 100 percent of the time, many in the LA/C would feel like it was not enough.

This is a strategic travel job, but I must consider my own health and family as I implement this LDP. Oddly, with this LDP I am working towards lowering my travel to eighteen to twenty trips per year. This will include the two major group events—SALT and SALT+—and trips to be with each senior leader at least once per year.

The Apostle Paul stayed in some places just a few days and in others a few years. Being single, he was able to travel without the challenges of a marriage and children. There does not seem to be a theological mandate for a length of time to spend in each location. My children are grown and out of the home, so I too do not need to factor in my parental responsibilities.

There are huge advantages to staying in one location for a full week or more, however the breadth of this work does not often allow for this option to be exercised. For both SALT and SALT+ the conference will span five to seven days each. My personal one-on-one travel will likely span three to five days. This will allow me enough time to be with our senior staff and still allow me to attend to all twelve senior leaders of the SALT team.
Communication from a Distance

The only form of distance communication available to the Apostle Paul was a written epistle, hand delivered to a specific person or church community, then passed on and read throughout a region. The indelible staying power of Paul’s writings is legendary. It is arguable that the Church might be better off if more leaders in the Church would communicate less verbally and be more intentional in their writing.

However, with technology at my disposal, I have a number of options available to help me develop a communication strategy for this distance leadership plan. I have not included email communication in this LDP. Email is very effective in communicating schedule details and broad-based general communication, but has little to negative value in developing leadership. Because of the ease of use, far too much time is spent by the senior leaders writing and responding to relatively useless email. Email is a part of everyday life for most people around the globe, but it is not strategic to the growth and health of Young Life in LA/C. I absolutely do and will use email to communicate facts, reminders, and scheduling details, but I will work hard to not use email as a tool for leadership development. I will use three primary modes of communication from a distance: video calls (ZOOM), individual coaching calls, and written communication.

There are any number of internet-based video conferencing platforms available. Skype is without a doubt the most widely used for staying connected personally. GoToMeeting is often used in a business or educational setting because of its broad-based application options. The ZOOM platform provides a good cross-section of intrapersonal interaction and screen-sharing capacity, coupled with instant messaging that allows for simultaneous language translation. ZOOM is also very cost efficient.
The SALT team will meet monthly for a ninety-minute ZOOM call. The basic structure of these calls will be devotional time, prayer, personal updates, urgent leadership issues, scheduling/planning, and training. For everyone on the call, it will take some getting used to being relational on the ZOOM video call platform. With a little practice and a good attitude, these calls will be the next best thing to being face-to-face. For these calls, I set the agenda and I run the meeting. This is my time to give monthly leadership to the division from a distance.

The ZOOM calls will be augmented with one-on-one coaching calls with each SALT member. The frequency of these will vary slightly depending on the needs and issues present in the mission or in people’s lives. At a minimum, I will have coaching calls monthly with each senior staff person lasting about an hour. The major shift from the ZOOM calls, besides the number of people on the call, is that in the coaching calls the senior staff person sets the agenda. I will likely have my talking point to address as well, but the major windfall in the coaching call format is that each staff person must come with the issues he or she wants to address. This will encourage the senior staff to give forethought to our time together as well as allow them to give more leadership. Since leadership development is our primary task, these coaching calls are a vital piece of the overall LDP.

The last piece of my communication from a distance will be a written letter that I will send to the senior staff. This will be an attempt to capture some of what we have seen be effective in Paul’s writing. Having a more thoughtful, theological, provocative piece that people can digest over time, pray over, and use at their disposal will help us build leadership across the division. The frequency of these publications is yet to be
determined, but the current plan is to begin with two per year. I will write them in English, but they will need to be translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Creole. I have no plan for ongoing content. I will allow the Spirit to lead me as I travel and talk to the senior leaders to see whether there are a few themes that begin to surface. It is my hope that these epistles will encourage me to listen at a deeper level to the voice of Jesus as I travel and talk to others around the division and ask the Lord to highlight for me the most critical, poignant topics to address. If these epistles seem to have merit, I will consider writing a few more per year. The hope is that they will have a more lasting stickiness to the longevity of the global mission.

Leadership through Prayer

The last component of the LDP is the awareness and focus on the power of prayer in distance leadership. A focused prayer strategy is critical to the leadership development of staff. By definition, prayer is not bound by proximity nor distance. Prayer is always done through the presence of the Holy Spirit who is not bound by any means, whether physical or spiritual. This enables prayer to be seamlessly shared by our staff leaders who are spread across one and a half continents.

Prayer is leadership development. Prayer is distance leadership. Prayer shapes people’s lives who are not living in close proximity. Prayer joins hearts separated by distance. Prayer allows the intercession of one person’s prayer to impact the lives of another. Prayer shapes the lives of those praying and those who are being prayed for.
Overview of the Distance Leadership Development Plan

The chart in figure 1 gives an overview of the four components of apostolic leadership, the experience associated with each of these four components, the timing of implementation, and the objectives in terms of how they fit into the overall LDP. The left-hand column lists the four basic apostolic components of the LDP: incarnational mentoring, strategic travel, communication from a distance, and prayer. On the top of the chart are listed the six basic categories of the LDP that are crucial in laying out a distance leadership plan for the division: apostolic leadership, experience, components, timing, objectives, and outcomes.
## Distance Leadership Development Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apostolic Leadership</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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| Incarnational Mentoring | Mentoring  | *Scripture*  
*Personal Sharing*  
*Journal*  
*Tree*  
*Map*  
*List*  
*Prayer* | Weekly | Develop the next generation of leadership capable of taking my place. Growing in wisdom. | *Deepening love for Jesus*  
*Growing in confidence*  
*Spirit of joy, hope and courage* |
| Strategic Travel | SALT Conference  | *Worship*  
*Community Building*  
*Prayer*  
*HOT*  
*DNA*  
*Competencies*  
*Tree*  
*Map*  
*List* | Annual - August | Collectively set vision, build mission community, model good relational ministry and adventure, cross pollinate, skills development. | *Deepening love for Jesus*  
*Spirit of joy, hope and courage*  
*Crystal clear vision of the mission of YL and the direction of the LAC Division*  
*Clarity of how they should lead*  
*Connection and partnership with the team*  
*Hope in the next generation* |
| Strategic Travel | SALT PLUS Conference  | *Worship*  
*Community Building*  
*Prayer*  
*HOT*  
*DNA*  
*Competencies*  
*Tree*  
*Map*  
*List* | Annual - February | Share vision with younger staff, worship, build mission community, HOT Training, skills development. | *Deepening love for Jesus*  
*Spirit of joy, hope and courage*  
*Crystal clear vision of the mission of YL and the direction of the LAC Division*  
*Clarity of how they should lead*  
*Connection and partnership with the team*  
*Hope in the next generation* |
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<th><strong>Objectives</strong></th>
<th><strong>Outcomes</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Travel</td>
<td>Individual Visits</td>
<td>Walk, Talk, Eat, Pray</td>
<td>Sporadic</td>
<td>Encouragement in Jesus, life, marriage. Problem solve, build relationships and trust, gratitude and joy. Get a real picture of the real world of the senior staff, their joys, struggles, hopes, dreams and challenges. PRAYER.</td>
<td>Deepening love for Jesus, Relational/heart connection with supervisor, Understanding of life/cultural context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication from a Distance</td>
<td>SALT Zoom Call</td>
<td>Devo, Updates, Address Major Issues, Scheduling, Training, Prayer, DNA, Competencies</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Clarity vision, tell miracle stories, pray, discuss strategies, immediate problems, calendar and administration details, scheduling, relational connection, prayer, devotional, DNA training and competencies.</td>
<td>Deepening love for Jesus, Connection of the team - you are not alone, Planning, calendar and administration, Hot Topics - needs in the division, problem solving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication from a Distance</td>
<td>Individual Coaching Calls</td>
<td>Individual Coaching Calls, Staff Sets Agenda, Questions and Answers</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Talk through issues that are important to the staff.</td>
<td>Deepening love for Jesus, Questions and Answers, Understanding and mutual respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication from a Distance</td>
<td>Written Communication</td>
<td>Written Communication, Cast Vision, Theological Clarity, Hope</td>
<td>4x/year</td>
<td>Words of correction and encouragement, remind of divisional strategy and agreed upon goals.</td>
<td>Deepening love for Jesus, Create an indelible chain of encouragement, vision, connection and hope, Root system for YL in LAC Division.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Journal, Map, Tree, List</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Connect my heart with the mission in LAC, Lift up specific challenges, needs, praises, miracles</td>
<td>Honor Jesus with our prayers, Intercession, Honor Jesus with our prayers, Humility as a mission, Declare dependency on Jesus, Enjoy intimacy with Jesus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Sharing, Intercession, Petition, Praise</td>
<td>Anytime we are together</td>
<td>Celebrate the miracles, Intimacy through prayer, Work of the Kingdom</td>
<td>Honor Jesus with our prayers, Humility as a mission, Declare dependency on Jesus, Enjoy intimacy with Jesus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Tipping Points of Distance Leadership

Our highest value in leadership growth of the global Young Life work is the development of the national leaders. As a mission, Young Life has made significant strides in shifting from a United States-heavy international staff to a strategy of nationals leading nationals. This is a good, logical strategy, and Young Life is making good strides globally in the implementation of this strategic commitment.

In LA/C, most of the staff in the division are nationals; however on our senior leadership team (the SALT team) only 58 percent (seven out of twelve) are nationals. Young Life has an aggressive and thoughtful strategy to continue to develop its key national leaders into senior regional leaders, but this strategy will take time. The staff is, for the most part, home grown. That is, Young Life raises up its national leadership from within. The development of mature, strong, wise, and strategic national leadership will take years. As the percentage of nationals increases and the percentage of expat staff decreases, Young Life will be nearing its most valued tipping point in leadership development. As this shift occurs, the distance of the distance leadership program will continue to shrink. Therefore, national leadership development is tipping point number one. Young Life will have more national leaders, and these leaders will be closer to the ground level leadership. This is a much-anticipated tipping point for the divisional leadership development plan.

The other much anticipated tipping point will come when the next senior vice president (my position) does not live in the United States, but rather lives in Latin America or the Caribbean and is a national. Central to my leadership development strategy is to develop the next senior vice president who will replace me. There may be a
two-step process: first, hiring a senior vice president who lives in LA/C but who is not a national, and then in time, hiring a national as the next senior vice president. This vision is a complex and forward-thinking plan that requires significant leadership on my part and a buy-in from the rest of the division, both expat and nationals, to work towards this goal. Although many of the national senior leaders might desire and enjoy many aspects of my role, the complete role, as it stands right now, is not one that many attain to. One major reason for this is the fundraising burden and management responsibilities incumbent upon the senior vice president.

Currently there are no international senior vice presidents within Young Life who are not United States born. Likewise, Young Life has yet to have a president who is a non-United States resident. However, that day will come. There is no one in the mission who does not aspire to the goal of having the leadership of the mission of Young Life be as global as the work of Young Life. The organization currently has a very aggressive and proactive president and board who are moving the mission in this direction, but this transition will take time. It will be a huge tipping point in the mission if the first non-United States-born senior vice president is appointed in LA/C and/or if the first non-United States president of the mission comes from LA/C. Few outcomes would honor the success of this LDP more than to know that it succeeded in aggressively developing national leadership for the mission of Young Life at every level of the global mission.

**Infrastructure**

The development and implementation of this LDP requires a number of shifts to the divisional structure that began a few years back and are just now being completed.
When I began to restructure the division, I did not have a completed LDP plan in mind, nor did I know I needed one. Through my Doctor of Ministry studies, it has become clear to me that I needed a comprehensive plan to develop the leadership that the Lord had provided.

Like many calls to ministry, when I took this job I knew not what the real job would entail. What I thought the job would be and what the job became has evolved over these past six years. Originally, the division was one large structure with only one regional director living in Costa Rica. It became clear that to grow the mission in this large of a geography, I was going to need to find and develop more national leadership who lived in the countries/regions throughout LA/C. The development could not come from one location, whether in LA/C or in the United States. I settled on dividing the division into six regions: Mexico, Central America, three regions in South America, and one in the Caribbean. The cleanliness of my original vision has been complicated by a dose of reality: the Caribbean is not going to become one region. With twenty-six separate countries in the Caribbean alone and no unifying geography or culture, the Caribbean is going to remain somewhat of a hodge-podge structure for the time being.¹ For the sake of this LDP it is considered as a unified region, but in reality, the structure is far more fluid.

Over the past six years, I have developed and hired a regional director (or similar position) in each of these regions. Gerald Garcia is the developer of Young Life in Mexico; Kevin Suwyn is the senior regional director for Central America; Hollman Mendoza is the regional director of Nicaragua; Enrique Vargas is the regional director for

¹ This is explained in further detail in Chapter 5.
the Amazon region (Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela); Carolina Pujol is the regional director for the Patagonia region (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay); Ibere Meirelles is the national director of Brazil; Julie Scott is the developer of Haiti; Rafa Alejo the regional director in the Dominican Republic; and Scott Hamilton is the regional developer of the English-speaking Caribbean. Rounding out the SALT team are the three senior staff who comprise the divisional leadership team: Stephen Mueller is the divisional developer, Danny Sharpe is the divisional operations director, and Scott Miedema is the divisional trainer. Appendix C presents my assessment of the strengths and growth areas for each of the twelve SALT members. This list is my personal assessment and will serve as the guiding document as I work to develop each of these key staff members.

Content

All of the basic content of the LDP for LA/C is outlined in figure 1. Much of the content is self-evident. The conferences will involve both joyful worship (song and Word) and prayer. This project will not explore these components in detail, as the teaching of the Church has been sufficient on these topics, however at times poorly implemented. It will be common to take a day or part of a day in each conference specifically for prayer. It is part of Young Life’s DNA, culture, and praxis.

In leadership development, less is more. Leaders who try to focus on too many things end up confusing people and diffusing the strength of their combined leadership capacity. In *The Forgotten Ways*, Alan Hirsch provides the definition of DNA according to the Encyclopedia Britannica: DNA is an “organic chemical of complex molecular
structure that is found in all organic, living cells and in many viruses. DNA codes genetic information for the transmission of inherited traits.”

2 It is vital to understand that the DNA composes all of the genetic information needed to begin life and to replicate life in an organism. This is not only true in biological life; it is also foundational in the living organism of an organization.

J. R. Woodward, in his book, Creating a Missional Culture, writes, “The apostle Paul begins Ephesians 4 by addressing our attitudes. Then he talks about our common creed, reminding us, though we are all different, we are all made from the same cloth, the same DNA.”

3 It is critical for an organization to know and to preserve its DNA to assure that the core of the work can be scaled. Young Life has a specific DNA that makes it unique from other organizations, not better or worse but distinctly unique. It is the DNA of Young Life that shapes the mission, sets the culture, and defines the style and attitude of the ministry. Hirsch explains,

The concept of DNA is therefore perfectly suited to be a guiding metaphor for the “genetics” of missional movements for the following reasons:
- DNA is found in every living cell (except the simplest viruses).
- DNA codes genetic information for the transmission of inherited traits beyond that of the initiating organism.
- DNA is self-replicating.
- DNA carries vital information for healthy reproduction.
- When DNA mutates, it affects the integrity of the whole system.”


The DNA of Young Life is what must be replicated from location to location to assure that the new work started is indeed the real work of the mission of Young Life. In order to articulate and develop a “fully reproducible system built on simple, easily embedded, and transferable ideas,” the LDP must focus on preserving and scaling the DNA of Young Life. Appendix D outlines the twenty-five core DNA components that the LDP focuses on. As noted in figure 1, it is imperative to teach, evaluate, critique, and strategize based upon the Young Life DNA. This list of DNA was developed from a number of sources in the mission of Young Life.

One primary source is the Young Life “Mission, Vision, Values, Methods” document found in Appendix E. This is a public document developed by the senior leadership of Young Life and made available for the entire mission of Young Life as a guiding and shaping document. Another source is John Miller’s book, Back to the Basics. John Miller was a senior leader in the mission of Young Life for decades, and his book serves as a helpful historical tool for the development of the Young Life mission. A third source is my own thirty-five-year history with Young Life. A number of the organization’s most critical components have been passed down via oral tradition rather than in written form. This document proposing the Young Life DNA attempts to provide an aggregate of the most critical components of the mission.

In a multi-national, cross-cultural ministry, assuring that the DNA of Young Life is known and taught throughout the twenty-six countries of LA/C is one of the highest values that the senior vice president can have. The DNA is beautifully transferable in a cross-cultural setting. The ministry may look different in different countries, but if the

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5 Ibid., 1135-1136.
DNA is consistent, the mission will be preserved. This will be an important aspect of conferences and meetings. The team will discuss and digest these DNA core components. They will also be required to be proficient in understanding these DNA principles and in passing them along in their subsequent leadership training.

Another component outlined in the LDP chart is hands-on training (hereafter, HOT). The goal is to move away from a classic classroom style of training and to morph into a HOT style. This is a significant paradigm shift in the training program. Like most of the developing world, the style of training expected in LA/C is that of a collegiate classroom experience. Desks, chairs, a whiteboard, lectures, note-taking, exams, conversations, and diplomas are the norm. However, this is not the most effective way to pass on the core DNA, training, and proficiency of the mission of Young Life. Thus, training sessions are now almost entirely experiential and hands on, followed by a debrief session and journaling.

Appendix F outlines the thirteen core competencies for senior staff that will be focused on in this LDP. It is important that our senior staff know and have some degree of proficiency in these competencies as the mission of Young Life grows in the division. While the DNA speaks to the culture and flavor of the mission of Young Life, the competencies speak to the character and competency of the senior staff in the division. The senior staff of LA/C live and work in relative isolation. They have community where they live, but not supervision in close proximity. It is critical to preserve the integrity of this mission and the integrity of the lives of Young Life staff. Senior leaders hire, train, and dismiss other staff. They are responsible for managing significant sums of money.
They are the face and the voice of Young Life around the division. These competencies are meant to be a guide to everyone involved as we grow this global mission.

Young Life is both an evangelistic mission and a discipleship mission. It is often said in Young Life circles that “you cannot grow wide without growing deep and you cannot grow deep without growing wide” (Young Life DNA #6). The two are critically connected. The best tool that is currently in use in the LA/C for measuring and evaluating growth is our annual statistics collection. Statistics are collected and analyzed twice yearly and published once yearly.

The best way to assure depth is the use of the leadership tree, or simply, the Tree. The Apostle Paul’s strategy of mentoring leadership is instructional. Therefore, this LDP has been developed to focus first and foremost upon my intentional discipleship of a few key, high-capacity people whom I believe could one day take my position. In their book, *The Leadership Baton*, the authors state that the task of a leader is to “empower every leader to be on the lookout for his or her replacement. Train your leaders to develop prospective leaders through coaching, mentoring, and encouragement.” This Leadership Tree (*Arbol de Lideres*) has been exceptionally helpful in assuring that the staff thinks not only about discipleship and replication but also about leadership development in LA/C.

The basic principle is quite simple. It is based on 2 Timothy 2:2 and outlined in part in Coleman’s *Master Plan of Evangelism*. As the top leader in this division, I am

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6 A portion of this section has been adapted from a paper from Dr. Bob Logan’s class OD786 Transforming Your Leadership Development, 2016.


8 Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. 

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always thinking about who I am developing to one day take my place. See Appendix G for my personal Leadership Tree. This requires me to be constantly thinking about the people I lead and interact with and then to intentionally spend time with, develop, and encourage their leadership capacity. Many would call this discipleship. The scalable power of the tree is be intentional about who I am developing as a young Timothy and then to make sure that my three primary branches are developing three of their own young leaders. Then each of these leaders is developing three leaders as well. Clearly this was Jesus’s point when he commanded us to go and make disciples (Mt 28:18). The tree provides a place to put the names of these developing leaders. All senior leaders on the SALT team have their own leadership trees. In fact, one of the goals in the division is that this year, all staff and every volunteer leader would have their own leadership trees.

The power of the tree as a tool for discipleship and leadership development is that every time we get together as a SALT team, and every time the regional directors gather their teams, they take time to pull out their trees and go over the progress of the developing leaders on everyone’s tree. This simple exercise is a magnificent tool for helping leaders to be intentional discipleship and leadership development. It is likely that the Apostle Paul had a vision map. Clearly there is no record of his hand-drawn map or any record of a historical geo-political map that he used. Nevertheless, it is clear from his three missional journeys that he had, either in print or in his mind, an understanding of the geography of his missional impact. Paul’s missional journeys are referenced in the book of Acts and the epistles. It is not the purpose of this project to scrutinize the basic analysis of his missional travels, rather the point here is to highlight the fact that there was a plan guiding his geographical travels. Appendix H presents a diagram of Paul’s
travels and the cities where he was engaged in ministry. Whether or not this particular map is accurate, the point here is to highlight the fact that there likely was, in one form or another, a vision map that the Apostle Paul used to help direct his ministry.

The vision maps created by Young Life leaders in LA/C are simply vision maps of the ministry in a particular geography where current ministry is taking place. These maps take note of the locations where leaders believe the Lord is leading them to begin ministry in the future. Appendix I is my hand-drawn LA/C divisional map. Also included in the appendix is a map from Rafa Alejo, one of the regional directors in the Dominican Republic (see Appendix J), which he uses to give intentionality to the development of his ministry.

The guidelines for these maps in the LDP are simple. First, the map must be hand-drawn rather than digitally created. The reason for this is that anyone can download a digital map of any geography in the world without knowing anything about that location. When a leader draws a map by hand, it is unpolished and unrefined, but it comes from inside the soul of a leader. The leaders must know something about the geography, must internalize the locations of their ministry responsibilities, and have thought and prayed about where the Lord might lead them next in their ministry growth.

Second, the map must annotate where current ministry is taking place and then note where the leader believes the Lord might open the doors for future work. This is critical to help the leader have a heart for the unreached of the world. Far too often, leaders become content with those they currently lead. Christian leaders could spend their whole lives ministering to those whom the Lord has given them. However, the DNA of a Young Life leader is that he or she is always on the lookout for the next kid, the next
leader, the next school, the next barrio, the next community, or the next country. This is woven into the very heart of the mission of Young Life, and the vision map is a simple way to help scale and teach this principle of leadership development.

In Matthew 9:37, 38 the Scripture says, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” Truly, the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. The only solution to this challenge is to pray. The growth strategy for Young Life in LA/C is to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send laborers into the harvest fields. The strategy to reach the next kid is to pray for the next leader. It is that simple. We pray. Appendix K presents my personal prayer list for the expansion of the Young Life mission around the LA/C. All SALT team leaders are required to have their own written prayer lists that they will use to pray for the expansion of their ministries.

This LDP is designed to be marvelously simple and crystal clear on vision and implementation. Like me, every SALT member will have a map, tree, and list. Likewise, every staff and volunteer below them will likewise have a map, tree, and list. These tools are not for show; they are for daily use. They become a clear, scalable strategy to reach teenagers with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and help them grow in their faith. The power in the plan is to focus on a few things and then assure that they are implemented

**Funding**

Without funding, there is no LDP. In the mission of Young Life, every leadership body is fiscally responsible to develop the funds necessary to implement the vision of the
ministry in their area of responsibility. This means that as the senior vice president of LA/C, I am responsible for an annual 5 million dollar budget.

The proposed budget for the LDP annually is approximately $60,000 USD (specifically for the SALT, SALT+ conferences). This cost is rolled into the overall annual budget of the division, but it also comes from a variety of sources. There are certain fiscal partners who have a passion for the training of the LA/C staff. There are also funding streams that come from other leadership sources in the mission of Young Life. As in all things in this mission, funding is a team sport.

Outcomes

The specific outcomes for each of the apostolic leadership categories in the LDP are presented in figure 1. There is a very intentional overlap in outcomes. As stated throughout this project, less is more. As a leader in a multi-national mission, it is impossible to provide leadership in every aspect of every ministry under my leadership. The power of this LDP is in its simplicity, focus, and ease of implementation.

Incarnational Mentoring

The outcomes for incarnational mentoring begin with the most repeated desire in every appropriate category, that of our staff developing a deepening love for Jesus. The mentoring process should help people grow deeper in Jesus. The closer we get to Jesus, the better we will be as children of God, parents, servant-leaders, and ministers of the Gospel. All of the components in incarnational mentoring point, either directly or indirectly, to the spiritual journey of the Young Life staff person.
One of the most significant aspects of a mentoring relationship is that of the mentee becoming more like the mentor. During the time spent in prayer, talking about our lives in Jesus, processing our ministry, sharing about our joys and struggles in life, reading Scripture together, both the mentee and the mentor are changed and molded more into the likeness of Jesus. During this process, it is one of my most desired outcomes that the mentees would grow in confidence in their call to this mission and their security as children of God and in the love of their Heavenly Father.

The final outcome is the growth in a spirit of joy, hope, and courage. These three attributes are modeled by all of the best leaders in LA/C, and they are absolutely vital for a senior leader in the mission of Young Life in LA/C. All mentoring should seek to encourage these qualities.

**Strategic Travel**

In both the SALT and the SALT + conferences, the desired outcomes are similar. However, in the individual visits there is a sizable redirect of outcomes due to the radically unique purpose of the individual visits. As with incarnational mentoring, the first outcome for the SALT conferences is a deepening love for Jesus. As we work our way through the various components listed on the LDP chart (see figure 1), and if the staff’s heart is yearning for this, a deepening of their love for Jesus will be possible. Also consistent with the outcomes in incarnational mentoring is the outcome of developing a spirit of joy, hope, and courage. These attributed are contagious, and when the SALT team gathers, this will overflow into the lives of all who attend.
The next three outcomes are specific to both SALT conferences. The third outcome is a crystal clear vision of the mission of Young Life and the direction of the LA/C division. All of the components of the conference will play into this outcome as well as the clarity of my verbal leadership from up front. The fourth outcome is clarity regarding how they should lead. This will come from the processing of the content presented and from dialogue with me and other SALT members. The SALT team loves to get into deep, real, challenging conversations. They know they are free and safe to confront each other and challenge each other’s precepts. We work hard to foster this open spirit. The fifth outcome is deepening their connection and partnership with the team. All of the shared experiences in the conference will help add to this outcome. The cost of the conference is significant in time and money. This teams understands this and everyone will come at great sacrifice to their schedule and family back home, with a spirit that the Lord is going to do something big in their personal lives and in the collective life of the SALT team.

The outcomes for the larger SALT + conference are the same as the SALT conference except for the added sixth outcome of hope in the next generation. Leadership development in the lives of teenagers as well as in staff and volunteer leaders is taken seriously at Young Life. The leadership tree is a perfect example of our intentionality of the next generation of leadership. The whole point of the SALT + conference is to identify the next level of senior leadership and bring them together with the current senior leaders to cast vision for the next generation of leadership. It is the SALT team plus the next level of leaders. This outcome will be realized as the younger generation walks alongside the current generation of senior leaders.
The individual visits have a distinctly different purpose that the two SALT conferences. These visits are designed as times of encouragement and friendship building. They are times to connect me with the real world of the Young Life staff, to understand their culture, and to honor their lives and families. As such, the three outcomes that follow from these visits have less to do with the development of the mission and more with the development of the leaders personally.

The first outcome is a deepening love for Jesus. The second outcome is a relational/heart connection with their supervisor. This will be a natural outcome accomplished from the relational time we spend together. I will work hard to not allow all of the time to be focused on strategy and problem solving of Young Life ministry issues. This is more difficult than it might sound. Since face time is a rarity in distance ministry that covers twenty-six countries, our staff always want to maximize the time we do share talking about issues crucial to their work. My goals are to make sure the leaders are aware of what the outcomes are for the individual visits and to work to limit the “shop talk” in favor of more intimate conversation.

Communication from a Distance

The first apostolic leadership category in this area is the monthly video calls via ZOOM. These monthly calls are essential to building a mission of good communication, shared vision, timely problem solving, and deepening alignment. Video is never as good as being face to face, but in distance leadership, face time is always limited. These calls are supplemental to the time we spend in each other’s presence. Of course, the first outcome of these calls is a deepening love for Jesus. We will accomplish this by opening
Scripture every time we are together and allowing the power of the Word to shape and mold our lives. Our time of collective prayer will also help us to accomplish this outcome.

The second outcome will be to make sure that everyone feels connected to the team and that they are not alone in their call and mission. All leadership is lonely, distance leadership all the more so. The power of seeing everyone’s face on the screen is so much more significant than most would believe. The jovial laughing, bantering, and joking can be hilarious and joyfully team building.

The third outcome of the monthly calls is alignment on planning, calendar, and various administrative issues. With the screen sharing function, it is easy to accomplish this outcome. The key to success on this outcome is the preparation placed in making sure everyone one is ready for the call and has what they need to make the call a success. My preparation and organization is crucial to completing this outcome on every call.

The fourth outcome is to cover various hot topics that are issues in the division and require simple problem solving. A group phone call is typically not the place to address complex problem-solving issues, but it is a great place to help bring alignment and discuss various training or leadership topics. This can be a leadership training exercise.

The second apostolic leadership category in this area is the individual coaching calls. These monthly calls are significantly different from the monthly team calls in that each staff person will set the agenda. On the monthly ZOOM calls, I set the agenda and the content, and I run the calls. For the coaching calls, it will be up to the staff to come up with their talking points and I will respond to their leadership.
As always, we will work toward honoring Jesus and deepening our relationship with him. Since I am not leading these calls, this will more than likely come from the spirit of the call and the answers to the questions and issues at hand. Nevertheless, I will do all I can to make sure that the name of Jesus is lifted up and that our leadership and problem solving are in alignment with the kingdom of our Savior.

The second outcome is obvious: to assure that these calls are driven by questions and answers. They should not become a monologue or a teaching platform. Clearly, some teaching may be appropriate, but that will all depend on the direction of the issues that arise. Again, vital to the accomplishment of this outcome is the clarity and buy-in from the team on the purpose of these coaching calls.

The third outcome is making sure the coaching calls are developing a good amount of mutual understanding and respect. This mandates that the tone and style of the conversation stays positive and constructive. History has taught me that calls like this can often be centered around problems that the teams have in their ministries or in their impression of my leadership. Needless to say, this can create a contentious conversation, or worse. Generally, this will not be an issue, but achieving this outcome on every call will take some intentionality and self-discipline.

The third and final apostolic leadership category in this area is written communication. The Apostle Paul was the quintessential distance leadership writer. His epistles have had a monumental impact on the children of God for two thousand years. They have helped establish the Church, rooted its theology, shaped its culture, and preserved its orthodoxy. While my plan of written communication is not quite this lofty, I do hope that in some small way these writings will have a lasting impact on the mission
of Young Life in LA/C. I will focus these quarterly epistles on encouragement, reminders of the vision of the mission of Young Life, words of correction or challenge, agreed upon goals, and the like.

The first outcome is to help deepen our love for Jesus. This is a theme in the entire LDP, and this platform will be used as another way to draw the staff to the foot of the cross. The second outcome is to create an indelible chain of encouragement, vision, correction, and hope. The key here is indelible. With digital data being so easy to create, it is equally as easy to delete. While my written communication will be sent in a PDF format, senior staff are encouraged to print and secure these documents into a notebook of some type and keep them in their regional offices. It is hoped that this easy extra step may help them see it as important and a way to preserve our history. It is unlikely that I will personally write all of these epistles. Once the tradition and vision is established, I will likely ask a number of my other SALT team members to share in the opportunity to write.

The third outcome will be to allow these epistles to become a root system for the continued development of the mission of Young Life in the LA/C division. This outcome is going to take some time to evaluate. Since ministry roots take years to develop, this outcome will be years in its development. It is hoped that the staff would use these epistles in their leadership training in their regions, in the encouragement of their staff and volunteers, and with the churches in their communities that might have questions about the vision and mission of Young Life.

Prayer
It would be impossible to not include prayer as a crucial aspect of distance leadership. Prayer is completely removed from proximity issues. Prayer is the work of the kingdom, it molds and transforms people and issues, it encourages and empowers people, it unlocks governmental restrictions, and it protects, shapes, and nurtures ministries and individuals. Prayer pleases the heart of our Heavenly Father, aligns our spirits with his, and encourages the one praying. There are three specific tools that will be used in shaping my personal prayer time: the map, the tree, and the list.

The first outcome for this apostolic leadership action is to honor Jesus with my prayer. Through my personal prayer, I bless the heart of my God and honor Jesus. The fact that I pray will complete this first outcome. The second outcome is intercession. Specifically, the tree and the list are my de facto intercessory prayer tools. The tree is a visual list of the key people under my leadership. I will use the tree to bring to mind and heart the names of the senior leadership of the division. Since I have monthly phone calls with everyone on the SALT team, I will be up to speed on the immediate needs and issues that my staff are dealing with. Likewise, the list is explicitly a prayer list. I will use it to lift up key people who could become involved in this mission or who are in the process of becoming connected in some way.

As noted on the LDP overview chart in figure 1, prayer is slated in almost every aspect of the ministry plan in LA/C. When we gather, either on a ZOOM call or face to face in a conference, corporate prayer will be a cornerstone of our scheduled time together. One common practice will be to bring the country flags from every country to each conference to help remind us of our brothers and sisters in every country and to serve as guideposts to pray for the work of every country.
There are four outcomes from our corporate time of prayer. The first is honor Jesus with our prayers. Because leadership always cascades down (as well as up), when I schedule times of corporate I am teaching the rest of the team to schedule corporate prayer as part of their gatherings in their regions. As said above, prayer honors Jesus. The fact that we stop to pray brings honors to our Savior.

The second outcome will be to model a spirit of humility before each other and our Heavenly Father. The SALT members are strong, highly capable leaders in the kingdom. Our passion to stop, get on our knees, and pray for our mission is an act of humility, saying that we know that we are dependent on the power, grace, and provision of our Heavenly Father to accomplish anything in this mission.

The third corporate prayer outcome is to declare utter dependency on Jesus. We come as humble servants, declaring that we are nothing without our Savior. We will live out the words of John the Evangelist when he recorded Jesus’ teaching on the vine and the branches, saying, “apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5, NIV). We will not give lip service to this reality; instead we will beg Jesus to give us all we need to be his disciples in this mission.

The last outcome of corporate prayer will be simply enjoying intimacy with Jesus in prayer. Prayer is a two-way conversation; God speaks and we listen, and we speak and God listens. Prayer builds intimacy with Jesus. One of the joys of the kingdom is that it is in prayer that we enjoy Jesus.

**Conclusion**
As the kingdom of God expands around the globe, distance leadership is not only unavoidable, but should be embraced, trained for, and celebrated. Since Young Life in LA/C engages people and cultures in twenty-six countries, the staff must learn to navigate leadership without the gift of proximity. This chapter has outlined the move from a Christocentric leadership model to an apostolic leadership model shaped after the morphing leadership of the Apostle Paul. Quantifying Paul’s leadership into four basic leadership strategies has provided a framework for a four-fold model of distance leadership based on incarnational mentoring, strategic travel, communication from a distance, and prayer. The implementation of this LDP has been in the making for years, enabled by the restructure of our entire ministry structure. This has allowed for this newly crafted LDP to be implemented and scaled throughout the immense geography of the LA/C division.

The vastness of the mission has also been distilled down to the most basic DNA level, and the core competencies that all SALT team members should possess are identified. This chapter has also presented the most basic building blocks of ministry: the map, the tree, and the list. It is hoped that this plan will allow the unique gifts of the senior national leaders to develop as they give leadership to their respective regions of responsibility and work to scale and grow their areas of ministry.
CHAPTER 5
IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

The implementation of this distance leadership development program is fluid and dynamic. I have been in my current leadership position of senior vice president of Young Life in LA/C for six years, and my leadership of the division has evolved as my experience and understanding of the countries, staff, geopolitical complications, and unique cultural realities has developed. Clearly, any leader could pour their entire ministry into any one of these countries, let alone a region or an entire division. When leadership is given in an organization or church, with the appointment come instant responsibilities and obligations. My leadership in this division came when I was appointed some years back. Since that time, I have been fully invested in understanding my position and in leading the LA/C division.

In many ways, portions of this LDP began when I took the position. Any yet, it was not until I took Bob Logan’s class on leadership as part of my Doctor of Ministry studies that I began to analyze the most pressing challenges presented to me in the leadership of a multinational mission. The reading list was impressive, but much of it was less relevant that I would have liked in my particular missional context. Honestly, I had
never even thought about the topic of distance leadership in my previous three years of leadership in the LA/C division. I thought I was simply supposed to lead, in one form or another, in the ways I had been taught. Incarnational ministry and incarnational leadership is the core of Young Life and was the only way I knew how to lead.

As stated at length, life in Latin America and the Caribbean is unique, and my leadership paradigms were being challenged. Much of what I was taught was simply not possible without proximity. I found myself slightly agitated that everything I was taught about leadership had to do with a number of unspoken assumptions. The most obvious of these, albeit never specifically identified, was the necessity of proximity with those I was leading. The Young Life leadership DNA was well ingrained into my soul: cast vision and build a team through building community and weekly training. This model involved meeting weekly with leaders, having coffee often, calling people weekly, eating in their homes, or inviting them eat in mine. It involved spending consistent time with them where they work, alongside of them in ministry. All these things are central to earning the right to be heard and to the type of discipleship described in 2 Timothy 2:2. Proximity was a given. And yet, as I began to analyze my current role as senior vice president of Young Life in LA/C, proximity was the one essential reality that was absent.

In Bob Logan’s class, one required book was Neil Cole’s *A Fresh Perspective of Paul’s Missionary Strategies*. This book caused an epiphany experience as I realized that Paul did not have proximity to the churches he planted in central Asia. As I began to research other organizations and businesses that dealt with leadership at a distance, it became painfully clear that there was no credible writing on the topic of Christian leadership without proximity. The angst that I had been experiencing had to do with the
challenges of non-proximal distance leadership, but I had not even acknowledged that this existed or that I was called to this amazing class of spiritual leadership.

Knowing that the leadership skills with which I was familiar were being challenged and found wanting, I began to experiment with distance leadership before I knew that was what I was doing. In truth, the implementation of this project began before I knew that non-proximal leadership existed. This doctoral project has pushed me to research, experiment, and then to develop a comprehensive leadership development plan that will help scale my distance leadership.

The rollout of this LDP project consists of a five-step process that has already begun and will take about twelve months to fully implement. Since I started working on the writing of this project, I began the sweeping process of implementation prior to the writing being completed. The first step (as mentioned in Chapter 4) was an infrastructure re-organization, moving from a division with one region, to a division divided into six separate regions. This restructure has been unfolding for the past two years. With these regional leaders now in place, I have the structure and leadership to implement this LDP with confidence that the leadership is in place to execute the vision. Clearly, funding is a major concern. While the funding is not secured, I am confident that over the next six months I will have enough funding to pay for the two annual SALT and SALT + conferences.

Step two is the identification of the men I believe that the Lord is wanting me to mentor. First on the list is Kevin Suwyn, my regional director from Central America. I have been developing his leadership for six years, and because of this project I am more convinced than ever that he is the primary leader on whom I should focus, from both a
structural leadership and a mentoring perspective. Kevin is on my leadership tree. I am also looking for someone with whom I have proximity to enter into a mentoring relationship with. This will take time, but with intentionality, I am confident that the Lord will bring this to fruition.

The third step is to train my SALT team in this LDP process. In June 2017, I engaged in a conversation via a ZOOM call on the topic of distance leadership. It was received quite well, and I decided to use our SALT conference in Haiti (August 2017) to be the primary time to roll out the LDP chart with its content and structure. The time was fascinating and well received. It was also instructive in that our staff were able to better see my thinking in the leadership and developing of the entire division of Young Life in LA/C. This was a perfect setting to talk over the LDP and to begin to have each of them see how the pieces that we have begun to implement fit together.

Step four is to execute the full LDP with the SALT team. As mentioned, the incarnational mentoring is being done. The strategic travel began in August with the SALT conference in Haiti. The SALT + conference is scheduled in Costa Rica in February 2018. The individual travel has begun to take shape as well. In September 2017 I will travel to Lima, Peru to be with the regional director Enrique Vargas and his bride Nana. While this is not just a personal visit with Enrique and Nana, as we will be attending a conference that he is leading with his region, it does fit in the LDP. The SALT team comes together twice a year (SALT and SALT +), and this is Enrique’s annual conference with his leadership team. I also have an individual travel time planned specifically with Kevin and Michelle Suwyn for November 2017, and I am working on the travel calendar for spring 2018. The monthly ZOOM calls are in progress, as are the
coaching calls. I will write the first written epistle in December 2017. Likewise, the personal prayer time is in progress, and the corporate prayer is happening during the monthly ZOOM calls and in Haiti for the SALT conference.

The evaluation process will be a dynamic engagement of annual review and on-the-fly adjustments as input comes to light. There will not be a final review since the project will be ongoing. The first annual review will be conducted at the SALT conference in August 2018. Appendix L will serve as the evaluation tool. The annual review document is divided into two parts. Part one is a review of the divisional LDP. Part two is an assessment of how individual SALT members have or have not implemented an LDP plan of their own in alignment with the basic tenets of the divisional LDP project. These annual evaluations will be distilled by the director of operations, and we will discuss the results on the monthly ZOOM call and make adjustments as needed.

In addition to the evaluation input of SALT members, I will use the statistical analysis of our ministry to provide a more empirical snapshot of the growth, health, and impact of the LA/C division. The third data point in the annual review process of the LDP will be my impression and evaluation of the LDP plan. These three sources of review will allow me to make a good assessment of the health of the division. The bottom line is not the perfection of a distance LDP, but rather the growth and health of the ministry of Young Life in LA/C. The LDP is meant to assist and give leadership structure and guidance as to how I think about and lead the multinational ministry of Young Life in the LA/C division.
It is my job to lead the mission of Young Life in LA/C. It would be easy to lead by simply following the leadership structure of those who have gone before me. Good leadership always recognizes the shoulders that we all stand on. The ministry of the LA/C began in the early 1960s and has been growing and developing ever since. The Lord has brought many great and mighty leaders to help take the baton and carry on the mission in this part of the world. I have the privilege of being one in a line of strong, humble, and capable leaders, and for this I am very, very grateful.

With the growth of this mission in size and scope, it has become clear to me that a time for more structure and a deliberate leadership development plan has come. In the 1960s there was ministry only in the country of Brazil. Soon to follow was work in Peru, and after that Costa Rica. At that time, the leadership structure could be quite fluid and unstructured. There are few things more destructive to a budding cross-cultural ministry that to over-structure the budding ministry. As this mission grew, as leaders were recruited, new countries opened, properties were purchased, bank accounts were opened, legal structures of countries were engaged, and the ministry of LA/C had to adapt to the growing complexity. There is always a tension created by too much structure, internal procedures, and a wide-open freedom to create, adapt, innovate, and think outside the box.

It has been a high priority in the development of this LDP to steer clear of those structural constraints that might lessen the courageous missional spirit and still bring structure and intentionality to the growing work. I am confident that there will be many adaptations to this LDP; this is great news and to be expected. I am hopeful that with thoughtful development of an LDP, careful implementation, and a solid plan for review,
the work in the LA/C division of Young Life will not only remain vibrant and
meaningful, but will grow and impact the lives of teenagers and families for decades to
come.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Distance leadership is not a new concept, but the spiritual study and biblical analysis of it seem to be. For the orthodox believer, Jesus is the central character, the central focal point, the beginning and the end of the conversation, and the one from whom all relationships, theology, and praxis stem. The centrality of the person of Jesus Christ is the abiding and overarching principle of all Christian leadership models. Jesus’ leadership is explicitly built on proximity; he called those he wanted to come be with him (Mk 3:14 NIV). Modeling Christocentric leadership has been the foundation of the leadership development in the Church for two thousand years. “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” (Jn 17:18 NIV). In other words, believers are to do what Jesus did.

As the Church grew, the challenges of church leadership grew. One of the most critical challenges came with the geographical challenges of the spreading kingdom on earth. The Apostle Paul met these challenges head on, albeit in perhaps a reluctant way, in his three missional journeys and in his epistle writing. God was using Paul to give leadership to a growing, cross-cultural Church as it spread across Asia Minor. This new adaptation to Jesus’ leadership is referred to in this project as the apostolic leadership model, leadership without proximity, or distance leadership.

Upon careful analysis of Paul’s apostolic leadership, it becomes clear that it was not a divergent leadership praxis from that of Jesus, but it was indeed an adaptation that combined both proximal leadership through incarnational mentoring with strategic travel, distant communication, and leadership through prayer. These four components have
become the backbone of this distance leadership development plan for Young Life in LA/C.

I lead a ministry that spans twenty-six countries with thousands of volunteer leaders, reaching over 100,000 teenagers. To accomplish this, I work with twelve senior leaders who comprise the SALT team. This project has focused on the design of a leadership development plan that would preserve the mission of Young Life in LA/C, grow the ministry, and maintain health and vitality in the staff and volunteer leaders in the division. The four components of apostolic leadership—incarnational mentoring, strategic travel, distance communication, and prayer—are the backbone of a comprehensive leadership development plan that will be culturally relevant and scalable to the entire division.

The content of the training to be implemented in this LDP has been built around the basic principle that less is more. In order for this material to avoid being restrictive, which might thwart creativity and adaptation across multiple cultures and economically diverse regions, the LDP is focused on a few basic principles of the Young Life mission that make up the Young Life DNA. We have also made a strategic decision in the LA/C division to keep our mission focused on the integrated connection between depth and growth—the idea that one cannot grow wide without growing deep and one cannot grow deep without growing wide.

The mode of implementation for this content will be distributed throughout the strategic travel and the distance communication components of the LDP. With a varied strategy of conference and individual travel, we will do our best to reflect the apostolic leadership of the Apostle Paul as he traveled in his missionary journeys and as he wrote
on the road or from his prison cell. The central component of the entire LDP is the priority and use of prayer as a strategy for spiritual leadership. Prayer knows no proximity; prayer is not distal nor proximal. Prayer moves beyond the confinements of this world and propels us into a heavenly leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Son of Man, and our Heavenly Father himself. This LDP is not a plan to implement for someone else; it is a plan for me to use in my own life as guide the SALT leaders throughout the division. Leadership begins with me, as I model what I profess to believe as a spiritual leader in the kingdom of Jesus breaking into this earth.

The kingdom of God on earth will not shrink, but will continue to grow until the *kairos* moment when Jesus comes back in all his glory and takes us all to be where he is, in the blissful eternal presence of the triune God. This means that the need for good theological thinking, practical help for distance leaders, and resources on distance leadership are crucial for the current and next generation of spiritual leaders. I am confident that there are countless leaders currently giving excellent distance leadership around the world who do not even know that what they are doing is distal leadership. To them, they are just leading. And yet, there are far too many global leaders who have been called to a position of distance leadership who are frustrated with either the lack of fruit from their leadership or the emptiness that can come with the realities and challenges of distance leadership. These leaders likely grew up leading with proximity and have been promoted or elevated to positions of spiritual significance that involve distance leadership, but they have have never received any training on the biblical principles at play or the cultural or intrapersonal issues that must be addressed for effective, fruit-producing distance leadership.
All strong leaders know that health breeds health in any leadership venue. When strong Christian leaders, who have been leading for their entire lives with proximity to those they lead, are suddenly asked to give leadership without proximity, there is a strong likelihood that they will end up frustrated, lonely, confused, and exacerbated. The spiritual world cannot afford more unfulfilled Christian leadership. It is hoped that the conversations around distance leadership will grow. It is hoped that others who are engaged in distal leadership will begin to develop and distribute resources that can help them maximize their continued potential as ministers of the kingdom of God on earth.

The concepts presented here on the topic of distance leadership in LA/C are not complicated. In fact, they are quite basic and to some may seem simplistic. Hirsch writes, “The ideas which are here expressed so laboriously are extremely simple and should be obvious. The difficulty lies, not in the new ideas, but in escaping from the old ones, which ramify into every corner of our minds.”\(^1\) Likewise, embracing the wonderful challenges of distance leadership principles will require a relearning of the simple principles of proximal leadership and adapting them to the realities of distal leadership.

As Jesus was being pressed on questions of fasting by the Jewish elite, he challenged the Pharisees with a parable of placing new wine in old wineskins (Mt 9:17). Jesus was telling the Pharisees that their way of understanding was an old wineskin. It had already been stretched by the expansive fermentation process present in the production of new wine. Attempting to put new wine in an old wineskin would produce disaster, as the fermentation of the new wine would burst the old wineskins, ruining both the new wine and the old wineskin. What is needed is to put new wine in new wine skins. Jesus was the

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new wine, the Pharisee’s theology and thinking was the old wineskin, and the two would simply not work together.

The time has come for the Church to address head on the issues present in distance leadership. With so many in churches engaged in missions as well as global organizations like World Vision, Compassion International, CRU, Living Waters, International Justice Mission, Esperanza, and so on, the time has come to expand the tent pegs of leadership training. It is unacceptable that there are not more resources written and developed for the distal leader. In a season where the world is ripe for the joy and redemption of the in-breaking kingdom of God, we must recognize that our historical theological leadership training is leaving many significant spiritual leaders grasping for help.

The Church needs a new way to think about preparing distal leaders for their positions of distance leadership in a manner that will allow for their skills and passions to grow with the uniqueness of their positions. The Church needs new leadership training wineskins that coincide with the realities of the challenges and opportunities of the global Church. Distance leadership is here to stay, and those engaged in this vital work need help.

Carolina and Enrique live 2,049 miles apart, yet they are contemporaries and partners in their work as regional directors for Young Life in LA/C. Carolina gives leadership to Young Life in Corrientes, Argentina as well as to Buenos Aires, Rosario, Paraguay, and Rancagua, Chile. She has very little proximity to those she leads. Enrique lives in Lima, Peru and gives leadership to the work in Peru as well as Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia. Not only does Enrique not have proximity to those he
leads, he does not have proximity to those who are his partners in mission, to those who best understand his unique challenges and trials. I live in Colorado and give leadership to all twelve of our most senior SALT team members spread over a continent and a half. I do not have proximity to any of the SALT team members. My leadership is distant leadership. Attempting to lead a mission without proximity with the same strategies that one used for proximal leadership will be unfulfilling both for the supervisor and for those being led. It will create expectations and obligations that cannot be fulfilled nor sustained. Sadly, the result will often be either the loss of the significant leader in the mission, or the gradual dissipation of a vital global ministry.

This project presents both a theology of and a praxis for distance leadership. It combines a proximal leadership strategy of Christocentric presence with a distal strategy modeled after the Apostle Paul. This is a new way of leading that I hope leads to a new way of thinking. Hirsch writes, “We cannot continue to try to think our way into a new way of acting, but rather we need to act our way into a new way of thinking.”² A new way of thinking is needed, but it begins with a new way of acting. This LDP is a new way of acting for me, and I pray that it creates a new way of thinking for others who are challenged with non-proximal leadership. It is my hope and prayer that this distance leadership development plan will translate into thousands more teenage lives being transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout LA/C.

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APPENDIX A

INTERNATIONAL GROWTH CHART, YOUNG LIFE

International Growth Chart
2009-2016

- 1,00,000
- 90,000
- 80,000
- 70,000
- 60,000
- 50,000
- 40,000
- 30,000
- 20,000
- 10,000
- 0


- Kids Reached
- Kids Reached
- Kids Reached
- Kids Reached
- Kids Reached
- Kids Reached

- Average kids at club weekly
- Average kids at club weekly
- Average kids at club weekly
- Average kids at club weekly
- Average kids at club weekly
- Average kids at club weekly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average kids at club weekly</th>
<th>Campers</th>
<th>Kids in bible study discipleship</th>
<th># of Ministr</th>
<th>Kids Reached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>32,230</td>
<td>23,486</td>
<td>8,558</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>145,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>36,764</td>
<td>29,116</td>
<td>9,845</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>169,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>45,717</td>
<td>36,039</td>
<td>11,894</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>202,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>59,248</td>
<td>48,890</td>
<td>14,435</td>
<td>1,129</td>
<td>264,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>76,758</td>
<td>63,915</td>
<td>21,469</td>
<td>1,375</td>
<td>371,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>101,604</td>
<td>73,543</td>
<td>29,562</td>
<td>1,573</td>
<td>527,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>113,005</td>
<td>89,269</td>
<td>32,853</td>
<td>1,842</td>
<td>683,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>145,137</td>
<td>88,269</td>
<td>45,427</td>
<td>2,059</td>
<td>824,798</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

SHIFTING RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN LATIN AMERICA

Shifting Religious Identity in Latin America

% of the region's adult population raised in each religious group vs. % currently identifying with each group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Raised</th>
<th>Currently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QCHREL, OQURREL

Results based on aggregated survey data from 18 countries and the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico, taking into account differences in the population size of each country/territory.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
APPENDIX C

SENIOR STAFF STRENGTHS AND GROWTH AREAS

The following is a very short synopsis of Young Life leaders within Latin America and the Caribbean, including their areas of strengths and places where I want them to grow.

- Enrique Vargas - Regional Director Amazon Region – Born in Lima, Peru, has been on Young Life staff for 30 years as an Area Director, National Director, and Regional Training Director for the Andes Mountain Region, and now Regional Director for the Amazon Region.
  - Strengths
    - Faithful
    - Long missional pedigree
    - Servant leadership
    - Courageous
  - Growth Area
    - Developing new work
    - Financial oversight, lack of frugality and poor fundraising
    - Struggles saying the hard things
    - Spiritual leadership and biblical knowledge
- Ibere Mireles - Regional Director Brazil – Born in Campinas, Brazil, been on the Young Life staff for 40 years, is the only National Director Young Life Brazil has ever had.
  - Strengths
    - Long history with Young Life
    - Knows intimately the issues in Brazil
    - Very relational, good spiritual leader
  - Growth Area
    - Fearful to move into new dreams
    - Trouble leading younger staff into senior positions
    - Not a “divisional” team player – meaning, he does not have a vision to be part of the entire division’s collective vision
    - A tad prideful
- Carolina Pi - Regional Director Patagonia Region – born in Corrientes, Argentina, married to Eduardo and a mom of four. She began the work in Argentina, is the niece of Juan Carlos Ortiz and Luis Palau.
  - Strengths
    - Humble and teachable
    - Tremendous visionary
    - Courageous
    - Team player
  - Growth Areas
• Confidence
• Knowing how to lead staff vs. leading a team of volunteers
• New to the Regional Director Role

• Kevin Suwyn - Regional Director Central America – born in Grand Rapids, MI, has lived in Costa Rica for 15 years. Married with 4 kids, speaks incredible Spanish, the strongest player on the divisional team and heir to my job.
  o Strengths
    ▪ Knowledge and experience in developing work in Latin America
    ▪ Very smart, quick learner
    ▪ Courageous
    ▪ Frugal
    ▪ Very teachable, eager to be led
  o Growth Areas
    ▪ Healthy delegation – tends to give away and then stop leading
    ▪ Rhythm – Jesus, family, mission, community
    ▪ Fiscal courage
    ▪ Keep thinking aggressive “missional” growth

• Hollman Mendoza – Regional Developer Nicaragua – Hollman was born in Esteli, Nicaragua and has been on the staff for 15 years. He is married and has two kids, and is the youngest and one of the brightest of all our upcoming divisional staff.
  o Strengths
    ▪ Fearless and courageous leader
    ▪ Strong management capacity
    ▪ Fundraising
  o Growth Areas
    ▪ Strong Nica, warrior spirit (always challenging)
    ▪ Moody – can shut down
    ▪ Rhythm – Jesus, family, mission, and community

• Gerald Garcia – Regional Developer Mexico – Mexican American born in Texas, speaks Spanish, long history with domestic Latino YL, but new to Latin – Young Life.
  o Strengths
    ▪ History with YL, good missional DNA
    ▪ Loves people, wife loves people….lover of people
    ▪ Fundraising
    ▪ Big vision
  o Growth Areas
    ▪ Big vision, little ability to implement plan – needs to think things through A-Z
    ▪ Unorganized
    ▪ Limited international experience, but not always as aware of how his domestic experience does or doesn’t translate.
• Julie Scott, Regional Developer Haiti – long Young Life family, mom of grown boys, first time she has been a senior leader of Young Life. Family began the work in Haiti.
  o Strengths
    ▪ Gentle, thoughtful, long history in Haiti
    ▪ Female leadership in a male chauvinistic culture, strangely very helpful.
    ▪ Crafty
    ▪ Courageous
  o Growth Areas
    ▪ Knowing when to speak a challenging, visionary word
    ▪ Ability to see opportunity and lead towards it
    ▪ Thinking strategically vs. simply making things incrementally better
• Rafa Alejo – Regional Developer Dominican Republic – Born in La Vega, DR, Rafa is a 20-year veteran of YL in the DR, father, husband and man of joy and prayer.
  o Strengths
    ▪ Visionary
    ▪ Pastor
    ▪ Creative thinker
    ▪ Starter of new ministry
  o Growth Areas
    ▪ Over-extends himself and his people
    ▪ Lack of fundraising confidence
    ▪ Tends to think short-term vs. long term leadership
• Scott Hamilton – Regional Developer Caribbean – Has been one of our very best domestic regional directors for over three decades. Had a serious health issue a year and a half ago, which has permanently limited his capacity.
  o Strengths
    ▪ Long-term senior leadership in the mission
    ▪ Strategic thinker
    ▪ Man of prayer
  o Growth Areas
    ▪ Learning the difference between domestic and international
    ▪ Learning what the new normal will be for his life
    ▪ Willingness to encourage his people to more than what’s comfortable
• Scott Miedema – Divisional Training Director – born in USA, has lived for 13 years in the DR, speaks excellent Spanish.
  o Strengths
    ▪ Excellent teacher
    ▪ Organizational skills
    ▪ Very teachable
  o Growth Areas
- Has been out of direct ministry for too long
- Doesn’t like to make people feel uncomfortable
- Not a strong strategic thinker

- **Stephen Mueller – Divisional Development Director –** senior staff in USA for decades.
  - **Strengths**
    - Senior staff, good ministry development
    - Funding, vision casting
    - Written and verbal communication
  - **Growth Areas**
    - Learning the international world
    - Balancing his responsibility with Puerto Rico and his primary responsibility to the development of the division
    - Little heavy on the “people pleasing”

- **Danny Sharpe – Divisional Operations Director –** Born in the USA and has been a pastor in his first career. He and his bride have sent the past 8 years living in Managua doing operations for Nicaragua.
  - **Strengths**
    - Creatively strategic in problem solving
    - Teachable and adaptable
    - Has learned the Nicaraguan culture and the language
    - Loves details
  - **Growth Areas**
    - Learning to manage people
    - Keeping the big picture in mind
    - Spanish
APPENDIX D

25 CORE DNA COMPONENTS IN YOUNG LIFE

The terminology of DNA does not exist in our official training manuals but I am confident that our collective history, training, conventional oral traditions will substantiate this list of core principles for the mission. Most of them come from our official Mission, Vision, Values, Methods document. The rest come from John Millers book Back to the Basics as well my 35 years of history doing the mission of Young Life around the world.

1. Jesus – the center, the end and the beginning of everything
2. Prayer is the work of the mission
3. Jesus and lost kids - The next kid, the next barrio, the next community, the next state, the next country
4. Enter their world – no strings attached
5. Every kid – YL is for all kids
6. Deep and wide – Evangelism and Discipleship, you can’t have one without the other
7. Walk in wisdom towards those who are without – Col 4:5
8. It is a sin to bore a kid with the Gospel
9. Know your audience
10. Earn the right to be heard
11. Mission community - Build teams
12. Adventure, laughter and hospitality
13. Listen more than you talk
14. Ask great questions
15. National leadership
16. Leadership Development in everything – 2 Tim 2:2
17. Be un-offendable
18. Cultural excellent in everything
19. YL is a team sport – local teams, local church, local vision, local ownership
20. Servant Leadership
21. Make it look easy
22. Humble courage
23. The Scriptures have supremacy
24. The messenger is the message – integrity and grace abound
25. The best Young Life is yet to be done
## Young Life Mission, Vision, Values, and Methods

### Mission
Introducing adolescents to Jesus Christ and helping them grow in their faith.

### Vision
Together we have set our eyes Forward, joining in a movement that compels us to go deeper in our walk with Jesus while helping young people grow deeper in their faith; to welcome a diverse team of men and women to all levels of leadership; to innovate new ways to reach and teach; and to grow — building relationships with more young people all over the world.

### Values
1. The Gospel — Living according to and communicating the whole gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Scripture — Acting under the authority of Scripture and relying on the Holy Spirit to empower our ministry.
3. All Kids — Reaching adolescents of every ability and all economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds through innovative approaches.
4. Ecumenical — Collaborating with followers of Christ from various traditions and local churches worldwide.
5. Diversity — Welcoming those whom God calls to our mission — men and women of all ethnicities and abilities who are committed to the common purpose of introducing adolescents to Jesus Christ and helping them grow in their faith.
6. Health — Encouraging our staff and volunteers in their personal and spiritual health so we may minister out of a consistent and growing relationship with Christ and His followers.
7. Stewardship — Observing the highest standards of stewardship of all the resources placed in our trust.

### Methods
1. Praying for young people.
2. Going where kids are and building personal relationships with them.
3. Earning the right to share the good news of Jesus Christ.
5. Inviting kids to personally respond to the good news and walking in friendship with them regardless of their response.
6. Preparing kids for a lifelong relationship with Christ and a love for His Word, His mission and the local church.
7. Working in community alongside like-minded adults (volunteer leaders, committee members, donors and staff).
APPENDIX F

SENIOR STAFF 13 COMPETENCIES
YOUNG LIFE LA/C

1. Proven replication capacity showing the ability to impart the vision of YL and the capacity to train their people
2. Timely communication
3. Ruthless fiscal integrity
4. Excellence in supervision
5. Winsome capacity to clearly communicate the Gospel and kingdom theology
6. Good reputation with outsiders
7. Godly discernment
8. Love for Jesus, discipline walk with their Savior and a healthy rhythm of work, rest, family and community
9. Personal Biblical knowledge and integrity
10. Courageous spirit of joy
11. Integrated prayer life
12. Spirit of urgency and a heart for the lost
13. Insatiable learner
APPENDIX G

DAN JESSUP’S LEADERSHIP TREE
APPENDIX H

THE APOSTLE PAUL’S VISION MAP

APPENDIX I

DAN JESSUP’S VISION MAP FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARRIBEAN
Rafa Alejo is the national director of Young Life in the Dominican Republic. This is a map that he drew in January 2016. I strongly prefer that maps are hand drawn rather than made using Power Point or some other digital media. Rafa’s hand-drawn map comes from the heart and is part of him. It is not what he does, but it is a reflection of what God is doing inside of him.
APPENDIX L

EVALUATION TOOL

Annual Review of the Leadership Development Plan
Young Life Latin America and the Caribbean

Name _________________________ Date of Review __________________

Area of Leadership ____________________________

This review has two parts. Part one has to do with the Leadership Development Plan for the LA/C division. Part Two is how you have taken this LDP program and implemented or adapted it to fit your particular areas of responsibility.

PART ONE

1. How has the LDP plan as outlined in the LDP Chart been helpful to you in your leadership of Young Life in LA/C?
2. Specific Input to the 4 sections of the LDP
   a. Incarnational Mentoring – what have you learned? What has been the impact of this in your life (if any)?
   b. Strategic Travel (SALT, SALT PLUS, Individual Travel) How has this section of the LDP impacted your life and your ministry?
   c. Distance Communication – how have we grown in our distance communication and in what area do you think we could make improvements. Be as specific as possible.
   d. Prayer – how seriously do you think we in LA/C take corporate prayer, and in what ways do you feel we could improve?

PART TWO

1. How have you implemented or adapted the divisional LDP in the areas of your personal leadership responsibilities?
2. What have you learned about distance leadership that has helped you be a more effective leader?
3. Specifically, what have you done in the four components of the LDP in your areas of responsibility?
   a. Incarnational Mentoring?
   b. Strategic Travel?
   c. Distance Communication?
   d. Prayer?

Any additional input you want to give me in regard to the impact the LDP has had in Young Life LAC?


Bruce, A. B. *The Training of the Twelve*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1871.


