



## Leadership Letter

### *Developing a value-driven culture?*

The second law of thermodynamics states that *everything swerves to rot* or put more nicely, *tends towards decline*. Mission drift is that law lived out in an organisation. Mission drift is inevitable if we are not intentional about maintaining two things: keeping a clear focus of our vision and purpose, and communicating and continually living out in practical ways our values.

We have a set of values in YWAM – it's a list of 18 items, all of which are very meaningful to us. However it's not easy to remember them all. They were developed out of clear words of the Lord to us over the years. These words of the Lord are shared, hopefully modelled and absorbed into our spirits and became values that we seek to live by. Each value gives us a true north that guides us in our day to day lives as YWAMers.

At our recent global gathering we took a fresh look at our values, linking them to a facet of God's character and then to principles of living. I would add one more aspect and that is practices – ways that we live those values out. Below I have readdressed our values using slightly different words while linking some together but still covering the content of the set of 18. Sometimes we get so used to hearing the key words of the original set of values that they don't communicate or stimulate us anymore.

As leaders it's our job to create a culture where these values become internalised as we practice them in our community life. As you read them, ask the Lord, "In what ways am I living these values out in my life, team and ministry and how could I in the future? This can be a checklist of life in your expression of YWAM. For this reason they are written in the affirmative as if we are living this way all the time. The classic values are numbered in brackets:

**Common DTS experience:** (9) There is an immediate connection as we come into contact with other YWAMers, no matter what culture they are from or what country they attended a DTS. The common strands, stories and training, links our hearts and brings a unity and sense of family to the whole tribe across the world. We have a common experience that bonds us.

**Live in a yes culture:** (5, 11) We encourage the creation of a risk environment all the time. We are open to God's ideas, crazy as they might be and our first response from the heart is 'Yes'. We are a faith movement which translated means that if we can accomplish this task, assignment or event on our own, then it doesn't take faith and is probably less than what God is asking. There is always a faith gap in our projects which is God's part and if he doesn't come through, we are sunk! Leaders roles are to serve and support others who are ready to say YES and take their faith steps.

**Gospel focused:** (2) Our success isn't based on how many staff, students or operating locations we have but how effectively we are sharing the gospel and

extending the kingdom. We measure many numbers but such a high % of our work is through partnerships where we lay down our own identity and seek to serve and extend the Kingdom of God and not our YWAM mission.

**Shared leadership:** (10,11,18) We avoid hierarchy and one-man-band styles of leadership, and instead share responsibility in plural leadership teams. Taking on a servant spirit, we share our giftedness together, prefer one another, support one another, pray for one another, communicate well and clearly, love our teams and staff and pursue the development of those we work with.

**International flavour:** (8) Whenever we become too local we lose sight of the big picture that God has called us into. Our vision includes local, national, regional and global. We seek out internationals on our staff and leadership team to help give objectivity to our national strongholds and cultural ways of thinking and decision-making. We see it as a blessing to incorporate the language, food, culture and gifts of the nations to enhance our community life and outreach message. A mono cultural team is definitely not part of our DNA.

**Personal growth & development:** (1, 12) Discipleship is the door we walk through to join YWAM and continued personal growth in God, character, devotion, holy living and commitment is the door through which we continually pass. We are life long learners. Each year we look back and see how far we have come: what things God has taught us, what themes God has given us, what fruit we have produced and how our calling has clarified and grown. Self leadership is living in integrity, where we only teach what we have experienced and lived out, and stay in accountable relationships to inspire and protect that life in God.

**Multiplication oriented:** (12, 7) We are called to multiply and we do that by mentoring and developing training courses. As soon as we see a ministry being effective, then we develop a training programme that will multiply workers and ministry. We have grown in staff numbers in YWAM in line with the growth in our training. Training is the multiplying factor. If we are going to be involved in the 'alls and everys' then there is a lot of multiplying to do!

**Youth flavour among all the generations:** (6) In order to stay relevant and keep growing as a mission, our focus is on youth - otherwise we would need to change our name. We give young people the opportunity of becoming missionaries immediately after they hear the call. We open opportunities through Kings Kids, DTS, joining staff or helping them to go anywhere in the world that God is speaking to them about. We empower young leaders and give them seats at the table on our leadership circles at all levels.

**Pioneer and visionary:** (5) There is no room for comfort zoning in this mission. We are called to do new things in new ways in new places. We lead out in faith by being strategic and doing what is possible while believing for God's intervention to do the impossible. We are a prophetic mission and we know that if we don't stay on the cutting edge we begin to lose our anointing, plateau and then die. We don't believe in half measures!

**It's not about the money:** (16) We know that when we open our wallet, it always says 'no' to any challenge. It's so easy to rely on what we have the budget to do, so we don't listen to our wallets. We know that the money doesn't come until we step out in faith and believe God for it. Living on the edge means always being in need and always having just seen a miracle of provision. We are always in faith for something, trusting God and exercising and stretching our faith & finance muscles.

**Relationships are at the core:** (7, 13-15, 17) We live in community where real life and love develop as every individual and family are valued and given priority. We love reaching out to people, inviting them for meals, welcoming them, going the extra mile and having an attitude that nothing is too much – '*Mi casa es tu casa.*' Our communities have shared values and vision and together pursue God's agenda. It might be our vision that draws people but it's our relationships that keep people.

**Culture of honour:** (8-9, 13-15) In our communities and teams we strive to develop a culture of honour where we affirm, forgive and restoring broken relationships. We connect and communicate across the globe, we network, we partner and we seek one another out. One of the best parts of any conference is meeting up with one another from the other side of the world. We give honour to everyone no matter what aspect of ministry or practical work they are involved in.

**Live by the word of the Lord:** (3, 4) We engage our spirits to hear God on every step. Unless we hear God speak to us, we don't move forward. It's not good ideas we seek but God ideas. We hear God in the midst of our worship and intercession. As we engage with God on a regular basis we listen, hear and obey. Fresh vision comes as we spend time in his presence. Clarity of direction emerges and relationships are restored.

**Unity of the spirit:** (13) We are called to love one another, work with one another and prefer one another. We are all so different in personality and gifting, background and culture but we know that as we humble ourselves and seek the unity of the spirit, God's blessing is released. The power of the spirit works in us and we see synergy take place where the output is greater than the sum of the parts. So conflicts are dealt with as quickly as possible and not swept under the carpet. Resolution is sought for as we trust God for his intervention and perspective.

If you have been challenged as you have read these values and seen some aspects of your own ministry that are not living up to these values, ask the Lord what you are to do about it. This is what value-driven leadership is all about.

A good exercise is to think of your own team and write down the culture that you experience in your team and then what you think others experience as they spend time with you. (Why not ask them if there's any doubt!)

Until next month

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P.S. The Classic YWAM values:

1. KNOW GOD
2. MAKE GOD KNOWN
3. HEAR GOD'S VOICE
4. PRACTICE WORSHIP AND INTERCESSORY PRAYER
5. BE VISIONARY
6. CHAMPION YOUNG PEOPLE
7. BE BROAD-STRUCTURED AND DECENTRALIZED
8. BE INTERNATIONAL AND INTERDENOMINATIONAL
9. HAVE A BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW
10. FUNCTION IN TEAMS
11. EXHIBIT SERVANT LEADERSHIP
12. DO FIRST, THEN TEACH
13. BE RELATIONSHIP-ORIENTED
14. VALUE THE INDIVIDUAL
15. VALUE FAMILIES
16. PRACTICE DEPENDENCE ON GOD FOR FINANCES
17. PRACTICE HOSPITALITY
18. COMMUNICATION