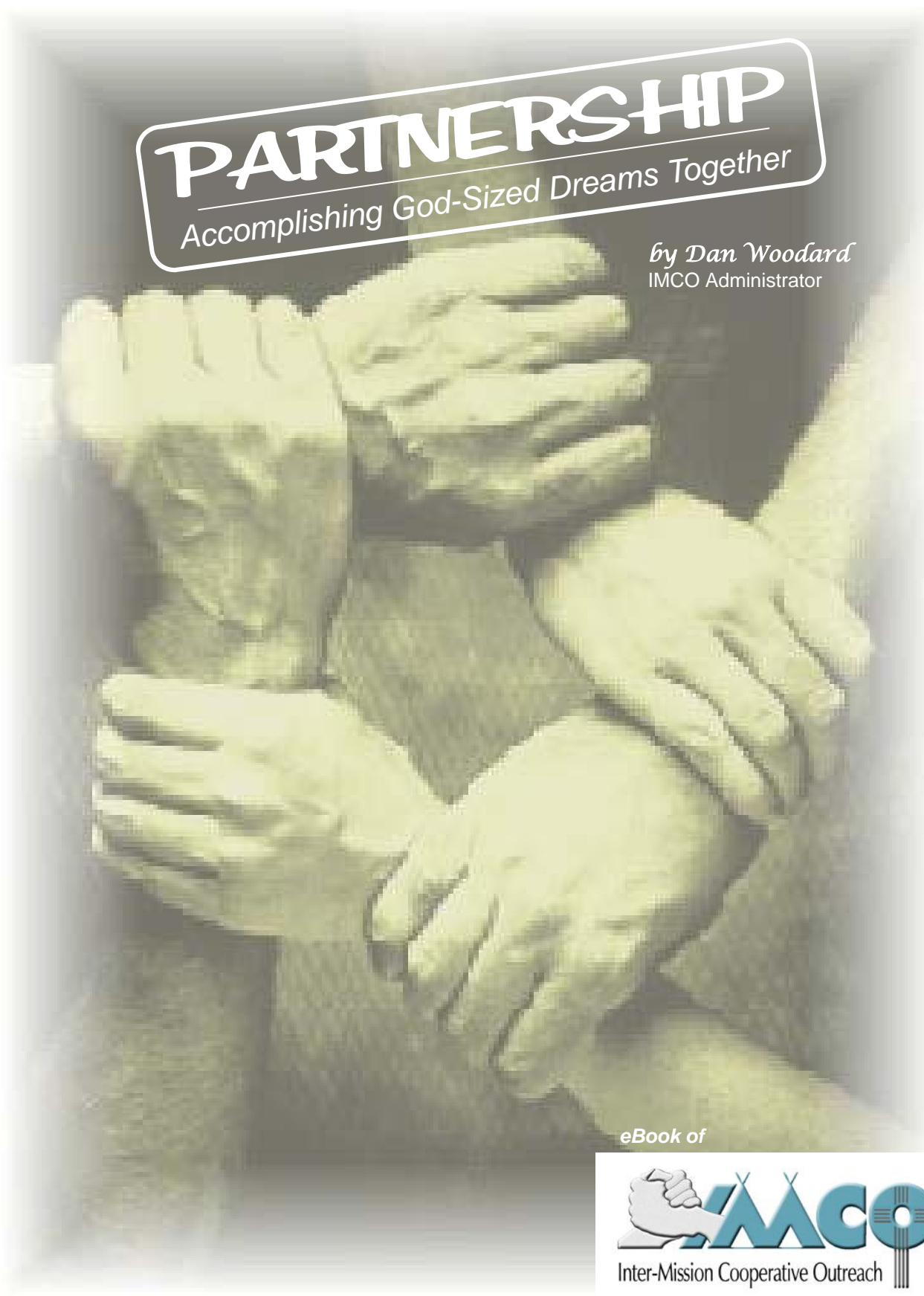


PARTNERSHIP

Accomplishing God-Sized Dreams Together

by Dan Woodard
IMCO Administrator



eBook of



Inter-Mission Cooperative Outreach

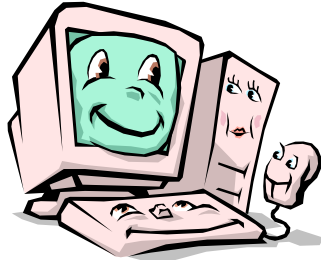


PARTNERSHIP

Accomplishing God-Sized Dreams Together

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ON NEW YEAR'S DAY IN 1939, William Hewlett and David Packard formalized their partnership with a coin toss to decide their new company name. Starting a company during the depression wasn't easy, but Hewlett and Packard shared two basic beliefs about leading a company:



- 1) Admiration for individual creativity and initiative, and
- 2) High trust in their employees.

Their commitment to these two principles produced a partnership that pioneered our world into the computer age.¹

In the business world partnership often means a legal contract entered into by one or more persons in which each agrees to furnish a part of the capital and labour for a business enterprise. Each person shares a fixed portion of the profits or losses.

What is partnership in the Christian context?

In the Christian community, partnership is used in a much broader and less formal context. It usually means cooperation between two or more individuals or organizations.

In the context of the Christian community, partnerships are usually intended to enhance ministry effectiveness and efficiency. A partnership may be entered into with a formal document, but in most cases they are informal, often based upon a conversation, a handshake, and perhaps an e-mail to summarize the agreement.



Most ministry partnerships are not formed on paper. They are shaped in the hearts of spiritually mature men and women who trust each other and desire to make a maximum impact for God's Kingdom. Ministry partners commit their very best to each other for as long as it takes to accomplish a mutually agreed upon purpose. Partnerships take a shared vision from a dream to a reality.

What's the difference between networking and partnering?

Some people like to use the phrase, *we like to partner*, when what they really mean is *we like to network*. There's certainly nothing wrong with networking; most partnerships begin there. Networking helps us personally and adds value to our ministry and to others' ministries, but one can network and not partner. Perhaps this was the greatest lesson I learned from Pastor Larry Wilson during my years of

serving alongside him in Winnipeg (1993-99). Moving from networking to partnering involves one key issue: relationship.

True partnership involves relationship. Relationship assumes that we're communicating openly and honestly with one another. Some folks may not click with us for whatever reason. That's okay. Building relationship can be difficult work. Just as my father-in-law cultivates his Kansas fields, tilling, adding nutrients, and turning on the irrigation system for the highest yield, so we must nurture relationship. The harvest may be later on the calendar and an unexpected storm can hinder that relationship from growing. However, we must persevere by caring and investing time to cultivate and build relationship.

For relationship to grow, we need to create an environment of respect and trust. Each party in the relationship must take responsibility for creating this environment. Healthy partnership will be built on relationship where there is awareness and sensitivity of power and control dynamics. In any partnership, those of us who are part of the mainstream culture will more likely be out of touch with power dynamics because we have more power than others. We use our power to either manipulate and maneuver, or we can use it to serve and empower in healthy ways.

Why was IMCO born?

After nearly two decades of ministry among Native peoples, IMCO founder Bill Lottis came to the firm conviction that partnership is vital to the completion of the Great Commission. He had seen far too much competition and duplication of ministry in communities. He became fully convinced that when people and their organizations work together, the likelihood of significant accomplishment is greatly enhanced. Based on this belief, he began contacting various mission directors to explore the possibility of mutual sharing of fellowship, ideas and training resources.

IMCO was born for the following reasons:

- 1) Effectiveness: *the greater the effectiveness, the greater the results of establishing Aboriginal church movements.*
- 2) Efficiency: *the greater the efficiency, the better the use of energy and resources.*
- 3) Empowerment: *the greater the empowerment, the greater the preparedness and mobilization of people with their gifts and abilities.*

A key reason for the IMCO partnership is we really do need each other. The IMCO directors are convinced that a God-given vision for ministry is always too large for people to accomplish on their own. No individual or organization possesses all the talents and resources necessary to accomplish the task of establishing Aboriginal church-planting movements. God-sized dreams require the help of God and the help of others.



What are some key principles of effective partnering?

- 1) *Partnerships are based on trust.* For a partnership to last, there must be integrity. Trust involved character and competence, Often a handshake will mark the launch of a partnership.
- 2) *Partnerships are formed to accomplish a shared goal or purpose.* Partnerships are established to meet real needs in the lives of people we serve.
- 3) *Partnerships always involve process.* Building trust and establishing guidelines and healthy structures for ministry together will not happen instantly.
- 4) *Partnerships are formed around the strengths of each partner.* Each partner compliments the other, bringing needed expertise and/or resources to the table.
- 5) *Partnerships are about multiplication.* Partnerships multiply skills, energy, creativity, resources and results.
- 6) *Partnerships function best with long-term commitment, with open and regular communication, generosity, flexibility, and focus on the big picture.* The priority of meeting real needs overshadows pet projects and personal preferences. Logos and egos are laid aside for the sake of the Kingdom.

What's the difference between an organization and an association (partnership)?

IMCO is an association of missions and ministries (comprised of Native and non-Native partners) who have a common goal (the establishment of Aboriginal church movements). It may be helpful to identify the differences between an organization and our partnership –

ORGANIZATION	The IMCO ASSOCIATION / PARTNERSHIP
Corporate based	Volunteer based
Registered with the government, sometimes with charitable non-profit status	Not registered with the government
Operates with a charter	Operates with a purpose statement
Looks like an institution, often with hierarchy	Based on relationship, with little to no hierarchy
Offices may include President, VP, Directors, maybe Administrator or CEO	Offices limited to Chair, Coordinator/Administrator
Funded by donations, fund-raisers, dues	Funded by dues only
Staff/Employees	Volunteers/Members
<i>IMCO is an association of numerous organizations</i>	

How did Jesus endorse partnership?

Jesus gave us the living word picture of a body in describing how He wanted his church to work together. He intended for His body to be pieced together, joined and held together by every supporting ligament ([Eph. 4:16](#)). In His prayer to His Father He combines the theme of partnership with the issue of His glory and the Great Commission ([John 17:20-23](#)).

Clearly –

- 1) *Partnership unifies the body of Christ.* It requires us to focus on God’s agenda, not ours.
- 2) *Partnership purifies the motives of leaders.* We can’t take credit for accomplishments. God receives the credit and the glory.
- 3) *Partnership is a noticeable testimony to the world around us.* Jesus prayer of John 17 is answered.
- 4) *Partnership intensifies our commitment to each other.* It destroys barriers and fences that prevent unity in the body of Christ.
- 5) *Partnership pleases God.* It binds us together in a relationship in which we unselfishly give our best to the other. It is the “more excellent way” in action.
- 6) *Partnership multiplies the effectiveness of ministry.* It minimizes or eliminates duplication, competition and waste.²



Did You Know?

There isn't a single person in the world who's ever made a pencil all by himself! The wood may come from a forest in Alberta, the graphite from a mine in South America, and the eraser from a Malaysian rubber plantation. Thousands of people cooperate to make a pencil!³

Sources

¹ http://www.stanfordalumni.org/news/magazine/1998/julaug/articles/founding_fathers/founding_fathers.html

² Carter, Doug. *Partnership: Accomplishing Big Dreams Together*. Several sections of this webpage have been adapted from Dr. Carter’s exceptional booklet which can be obtained through www.iequip.org or calling 1 (888) 993-7847. Used with permission from the author.

³ http://www.econedlink.org/lessons/EM397/Documents/pencil_resources.pdf