

# Word Partner's Training: The Why, How and What

## WHY?

What's wrong with the world? Does God care? Is He doing anything about it?

Since the fall of God's creation, He has been working to rescue His world. He is gathering a people who, by faith in Christ, claim Him as their God and whom He claims as His people. They will enjoy the rich benefits of living in relationship with Him forever. John, Jesus' disciple, describes it this way:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne say, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:1-4).

Can you imagine that moment...that place...that release?

God has been working through time and in all places to bring about His purposes. How? The preeminent way He does so is through His Word by the power of His Spirit, and He calls us to partner with Him in this work.

### **We believe...**

- God's Spirit empowered Word brings life, abundant and eternal.
- Christ is building his Church through His Word, gathering people from every nation.
- The local church is God's instrument to advance the movement of His Word through lasting gospel partnerships.

### **Our Vision**

The vision of Word Partners is couched in a grand and sweeping desire. ***"We long to see the Word of God flow powerfully through every church to every nation."***

How do we know this vision is being fulfilled? We know when we see a growing desire. We know when that desire has concrete expression in the life and ministry of both pastor and

church. What do we mean? What does it actually look like? It means that each pastor and local church prizes and promotes values that uphold the vision.

## **Values that Uphold our Vision**

### **1. TEACH THE WORD**

Clear confidence that God's Spirit works through His Word to bring life, pursuing to proclaim the transformational intent of Scripture and shepherd people with it.

### **2. GLORIFY GOD**

Intentional desire to exalt and display God's glorious nature and ways, leading people to magnify and enjoy Him in this fallen world and forever.

### **3. CULTIVATE AFFECTION**

Nurtures an environment where God's beauty attracts and leads a person to love God with all his heart, soul, strength and mind and to love others as self.

### **4. PROCLAIM CHRIST**

Sees the Scriptures as God's eternal plan and unfolding story to rescue His creation through Jesus, beheld in all His glory and proclaimed as the focus and fulfillment from every part.

### **5. MINISTER THE NEW COVENANT**

Understands the new covenant surpasses the old and how the nuances of that message shape the spiritual growth and ministries of the church.

### **6. CELEBRATE GRACE**

Promotes an environment of God's favor while calling people to repent and believe the good news of Jesus and walk by the Spirit with profound gratitude, freedom and forgiveness.

### **7. STIMULATE GROWTH**

Eagerly listens to the Word of God and speaks the good news of Jesus as they make and multiply mature followers of him.

### **8. SERVE THE CHURCH**

Model the humble heart of a servant as they make and multiply disciples of Jesus.

### **9. PARTNER IN THE GOSPEL**

Delights in God's wisdom and design for partnership in the gospel, leading them to strive with others for its advance throughout the world.

### **10. TRUST GOD FOR MINISTRY**

Advances the gospel while resting in God's time, way and results, confident He will orchestrate all things to the praise of his glory.

These are the values we prize and promote. The vision is being fulfilled as these values are expressed.

# How?

A few years ago a dear partner from another country was asked about Word Partner's vision for a movement of God's Word. He exclaimed, "*Vision? This is not just Word Partner's vision, this is our vision. We own this vision.*" He then articulated the fruit which gave ample testimony to his claim.

Hearing that testimony, another friend challenged us with a question: Why has this training been so transformative? What has led to such a level of ownership? The simple answer? God's Spirit by the power of His Word transformed their hearts so that they grew in their love for the Lord and confidence to proclaim His Word. They then multiplied that to others. Reminiscent of the story of the early church in the book of Acts, it started small with a few then grew big through others. It continues on to this day. We delight in this. We want more of it, training and developing people who can participate in and lead a movement of God's Word.

As we said earlier, God has been working through His Word by the power of His Spirit to bring about His purposes. From "let there be light" (Gen 1:3) to "now the dwelling of God is with man" (Rev 21:3) He expands the movement of His Word through time and to all places.

As we also said earlier, God calls us to partner with Him in this work. By His grace, we work at a movement of His Word in our time and place. In this sense, a movement of His Word is a visible expression of and local participation in what He has been doing through the ages. The Bible and world history are full of movements where there is a fresh discovery, understanding of and commitment to the Word.

Our strategy and hope is to nurture such movements of His Word. What would that look like? A *movement* is something that goes beyond us and outlasts us. A *movement of God's Word* is a growing proclamation of His Word that results in the spread of God's life throughout the world.

There are two successive stages to our work. First, the Core. Then the Advance.

## **The Core for a Movement of God's Word**

### **Definition/Purpose**

Definition of Core Training: This is the first stage of our training. It is the foundation for our desire to see a movement of God's Word.

Participants: Pastors/Leaders

Purpose: 1) Transformation of the participants preaching, priorities and ministry 2)  
Multiplication of that transformation by discipling other Pastors/Leaders.

### **Characteristics/Function**

How does this actually happen? First, it is built on partnership in the Gospel and Selection. Then it involves an intentional process and approach.

#### Partnership in the Gospel

It begins here. Partnership is our life blood. God accomplishes His work through the church and lasting Gospel partnerships. Paul expressed this to the believers in Philippi when he wrote:

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:3-6).

We look for partners who share our conviction and vision. They want to commit themselves to nurturing a movement of God's Word where the life-giving news of Jesus is at the center. They don't need to understand everything about the process and approach, but they do need to desire and commit to it. We are looking for deep and lasting relationships centered around the gospel itself. This process may take up to two years.

#### Selection

With our partners we desire to work with a small group of pastors who are eager to become better preachers of God's Word and to see that Word flow through their church and out from it.

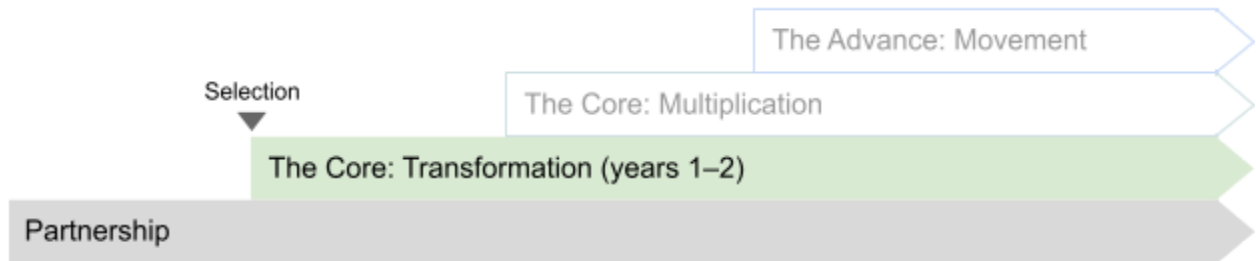
What do we look for? Paul wrote to Timothy, saying, *"You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also"* (2 Timothy 2:1-2). There is a heart component. We look for pastors/leaders who demonstrate a humble dependence, drawing their strength from the Lord. There is a character and skill component. We look for those who are faithful (character) and able to teach (skill). Both are necessary for the cultivation of a movement.

The process of partnership and selection take time...perhaps 18 months or more. Getting the right partners and the right selection is critical to a successful outcome.

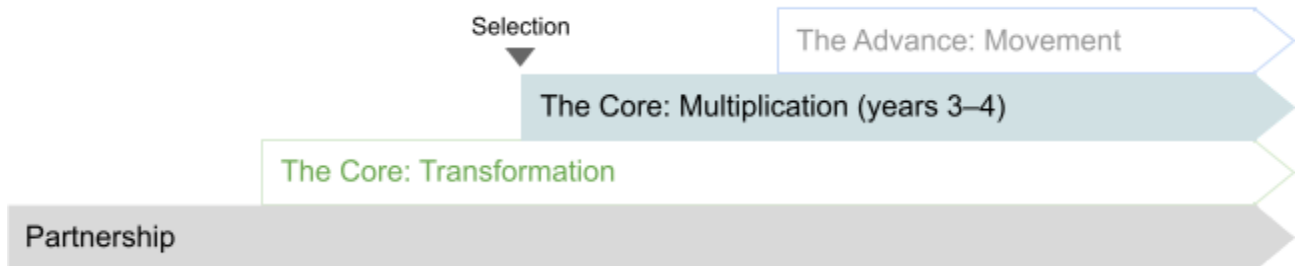
### **An Intentional Process**

Once partnership and selection are complete the process of Core training unfolds in two phases. The first is focused on transformation and the second on multiplication.

**Transformation** is emphasized in years 1 and 2, but continues forward. At the end of this period, we and our partners evaluate and agree whether to move forward to the next phase. The evaluation considers whether transformation is evident in the lives, preaching and ministries of the participants. Tools we have designed help us with the process (See Appendix: Types of Transformation).



**Multiplication**, while already encouraged, takes hold in years 3 and 4. At this time, we also select, deepen and utilize the strongest participants to help lead the training. Selection is based on those who have demonstrated they understood the training, have multiplied it, and hold potential for leading a movement. Participant evaluation and selection for advanced training utilizes the Moving to the Right (M2R) tool.



Both phases of the Core training involve...

**Immersion in the Word**

- Teach a new book of the Bible from a different genre each time we meet
- Learn & practice key principles that help us understand and teach the Bible well
- Focus on the transformational intent of each book
- Consider how that transformational intent challenges and speaks into the prevailing framework of thinking.
- Listen to God’s Word so as to be changed in our hearts and to bring that change to others.

## **Relationship Matters**

We come as servants, pastors to pastors, not experts to pastors  
Small group of 10-15 key pastors/leaders  
Same experience over 4 years (meeting at least two times per year)  
Strong group interaction  
Encourage moments of discovery and growth  
Shepherding care

## **Engaging Methodology**

Simple yet profound  
Conversational approach  
Powerful Questions  
Focus on the why, as well as the how and what  
Learning through different methods (Demo, Dig/Discover, Do)  
Repetition and layering  
Meaningful Visuals and diagrams  
Lots of Doing and self-discovery  
Challenge that leads to growth

## **Learner Focused not Syllabus Driven**

Discipleship focus not just content delivery  
Lessons adapted to meet need of the moment  
Learning by doing  
Disciples making disciples  
Immediately transferrable  
Contextualized for varied languages and cultures

## **Time**

Time is our friend. It takes years to grow pastors/leaders who are effective to proclaim the good news and nurture a movement of God's Word in their own region/country. But not a moment is wasted. With time and care a movement emerges that grows strong leaders and brings much fruit and joy. Over time our relationships develop as pastors, trainers, mentors, coaches, partners and friends.

## **An Intentional Approach**

The process over time is important. Equally important is the way that process is carried out. We seek to work in such a way that models a trust in God to do His work through His Word and to do it through His people. It is characterized by shepherding and also a counterintuitive nature. Often these qualities are overlooked, but they contribute significantly to the uniqueness and power of the training.

## **Shepherding**

Rely on the transforming power of God's Word

A servant-leader mindset

A pastoral approach with each group

Look for opportunities to grow participants

We are making disciples, more specifically...

- Whose preaching, priorities and ministries are transformed
- Who are multiplying that transformation to other pastors/leaders

## **Counterintuitive Nature**

Less is more

Simple yet profound

Bigger isn't better

Focus on a few to get to the many

Go slower to go farther

Go deeper to go wider

They must increase, we must decrease

Leaders develop leaders

Encourage failure so learning can take place

It's not about what I know/can do

It's not about our curriculum/material

Their work/practice is more important

Time is our Friend

## **The Advance of a Movement of God's Word**

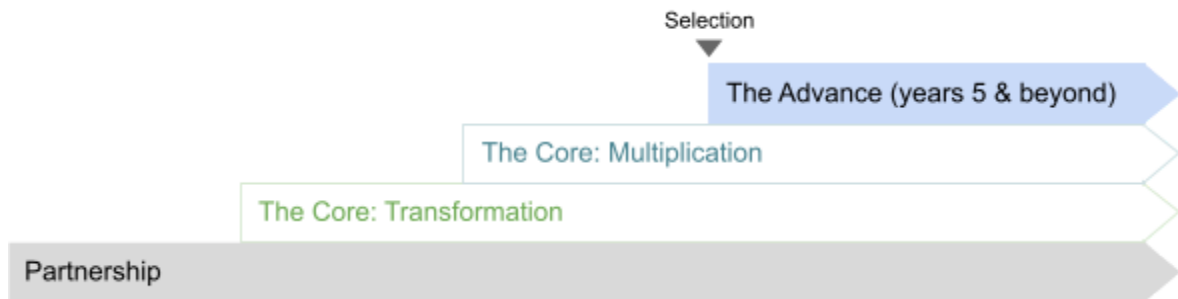
### **Definition/Purpose**

Definition of Advanced Training: This is the second stage of our training. It is the next level where we focus on developing leaders who own, develop, sustain and grow a movement of God's Word.

Participants: Pastors/Leaders

Purpose: 1) Develop Strong Leaders 2) Develop National teams, Regional Strategy Teams and a Global Leadership team.

By God's grace and through strong partnerships, God has used this work to grow Movements of His Word in many countries around the world. The following visual shows the process by which it happens.



This pattern has played out over and over as God plants the seeds then grows a movement of His Word. The Advance stage does not leave that work, it deepens it. From the participant's vantage point there is a shift from recipient to leader. From the leader's, a shift from direction to influence.

### **Characteristics/Function**

How does this actually happen? Again, it is built on partnership in the Gospel and Selection. Then it involves key ingredients.

### **Partnership in the Gospel**

We and our partners evaluate and mutually agree to move forward into this stage. That decision is based upon what has developed in the Core training and the potential for it to lead to a movement of God's Word.

### **Selection**

Selection is key. It is based on a refinement of selection in the Core training phase. We evaluate potential participants according to conviction, commitment, confidence, competency and capacity. We utilize the Moving to the Right (M2R) tool. It helps us evaluate the potential participants according to the goals of carrying out a movement of the Word.

### **Key Ingredients:**

Here we ask a key Question: What are the ingredients that will cause this movement of God's Word to flourish? Dependence on God through prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit are vital throughout. Beyond that there are three essential ingredients.

1. Develop Strong Pastors/Leaders
2. Develop Interconnectivity
3. Develop Additional Partnerships

### **Develop Strong Leaders**

We need to develop Pastors/leaders who will be "next level" thinkers and practitioners. Those who go beyond what is immediate and obvious. They dream about what could be and work hard to discover the best path to get there. They see the transformational intent



in the Scriptures and utilize it to challenge and reshape the existing frameworks so that a movement of God's Word will flourish.

A participant in Advanced training is a pastor/leader who is qualified (or shows strong potential to be) and committed to being part of a team that grows and leads a movement of God's Word within his/her country.

### **Qualifications**

One who demonstrates marks of transformation in his own life, shows desire to see the Word grow and multiply the training with great effect, and show the gifting and ability for the task.

### **Commitments of a participant**

Willing and able to...

- be part of a team and engage in a process where transformational growth in Word work, program work and shepherding is intentionally sought and expected (see Individual and Team M2R documents).
- attend all MT intensives
- multiply the training in at least one 1st generation setting.
- multiply training that focuses on expositing the Word and shepherding participants to effectively pass it on to others.
- work with the team to grow and lead a Movement of God's Word in his/her country.

### **How do we develop them?**

Developing them in the Advance stage assumes and is built upon the Core stage. Now we just need to ask about what makes the development of leaders in the Advance stage distinct?

### **An Intentional Process**

- Follow the life cycle of the Core Stage (4 years, etc.)
- Involves participation in an on-going intensive training (2-3 days, 2x per year) that focuses on Word work, Program work and Shepherding.
- Participants also lead at least one As 1st generation group (2-3 days, 2x per year). Strong coaching and evaluation is provided throughout the life cycle.
- Other Developmental approaches tailored to the need.

### **An Intentional Approach**

- The Core Stage tends to be more content driven, the Advance Stage more development driven
- The Core Stage focuses more on the "What and the How" of the training and Movement of the Word, the Advance Stage ramps up the "Why."
- Focus on Coaching, good listening and powerful questions
- Learn what they know then strengthen where they are weak

- Engage in Word work and Program work exercise that create teachable moments
- Coach them through a 4 year cycle where they lead a 1st generation group that is in the Foundation stage.
- Grow character, conviction, commitment, competency and capacity.
- Strong on-going evaluation of the group through tools that help lead them towards the goal of leading a movement of God's Word.

## Develop Interconnectivity

We need to cultivate an interconnectivity between our various partnerships around the world so, like the body, the parts will be strengthened by the whole and the whole by the parts. We are strengthening a global partnership for a Movement of God's Word

### National Teams (NT)

Definition/Purpose:

A National Team is composed of developing national leaders who develop a strategy and process to advance a movement of God's Word in their country. How do we know when a group of leaders has become a national team?

Characteristics/Function:

- Demonstrate a high level of ability...
  - To lead Word Work within the goal of M2R tool
  - To lead Program Work within the goal of the M2R tool
  - To shepherd participants within the goal of the M2R tool
  - Demonstrate the ability to evaluate the progress of others with the M2R tool
- Understand and utilize the full implications of varied roles within a team.
- Demonstrate strong progress towards sustainability
  - Leaders constantly ask questions like: Where are we now? Where do we want to be? What do we have? What do we need?
  - Leaders engage in specific evaluation through the M2R tool and questions like:
    - Leadership Piece:
      - Without LRI leadership could the current MTs identify and raise up leaders who can cast the vision for and sustain the future of the movement?
      - Do the current MTs have the ability to work on a national and international level with other partners?
    - Biblical Piece:
      - Without LRI leadership can the current MTs confidently create an effective workshop from any book of the Bible to help other pastors preach and pass on the training?
    - Financial Piece:
      - Without LRI financial inputs would the work be sustainable? To what degree?

- What resources do they currently have? Where are those coming from (in-country/international)?
- Do they have the mindset, skill and ability, to develop partners for the future of the work? What evidence is there? If not, have we helped them develop it?
  - What will it take to reach the goals expressed here? Development? Personal Growth? Group Growth? Time? Intentionality? Tools?
    - Develop an indigenous identity or an In-country organization
    - Discern and develop the right kind of partnerships that help grow the movement
- Demonstrate the ability to develop a country-wide training strategy that is comprehensive and scalable.
  - Local Training
  - Area Training
  - National Training
  - International Training
- Collegial fellowship
- Shared resources and ideas

How do we partner with these Teams?

- Initially, Word Partner staff has a directive role to help develop leaders into a national team.
- Over time this role moves from directive to influence as coaches and mentors
- We want to identify “Next Level” Thinkers from among them and free them to lead the national growth process

### **Regional Strategy Teams (RST)**

Definition/Purpose:

A Regional Strategy Team is composed of National Leaders (NL) who collaborate with RD's and National Leaders to develop a strategy and process to advance a movement of God's Word within and beyond their nations.

Characteristics/Function of the Team

- Demonstrate ability to advance the vision beyond their locality
- Demonstrate ability to build partnerships beyond their context
- Understand, desire and demonstrate the ability to lead in an interconnected way
- Proficiency to communicate in English
- Collegial fellowship
- Shared resources and ideas
- Grow quality RSTs

How do we partner with these teams?

- Recognize RSTs want more...
  - Relationship with us and international partners.
  - Directive conversations about Developing the movement with leaders from other countries
- We have these relationships and a broad experience
- Word Partner Staff should be "Next Level" Thinkers & Practitioners that can lead that conversation.
- We want to identify "Next Level" Thinkers from among them and free them to lead the regional growth process

### **Global Leadership Team (GLT)**

Definition/Purpose:

A Global Leadership Team is composed of several Regional Leaders who are responsible to promote the global vision and standards, best practices and resources to advance a movement worldwide.

Characteristics/Function:

- Made up of "Next Level" thinkers and practitioners who have been proven within the Regional Strategy Teams.
- Share Vision, Core principles and Ministry Ethos
- They consider...
  - What is the global vision and the standards that best support it
  - What are best practices and how to promote them
  - What resources are available and how they could benefit others
- Strategic Thinkers with goals, tactics and plans that transcend organizations and cultures
- Take the vision into areas where Word Partner's staff will not take the vision

How do we partner with these teams?

- Word Partner's is a key influencer and leader in this team
- But we are seeking a high level of collaboration among the global leaders on the team

### **Develop Additional Partnerships**

Developing more and the right kind of partnerships can strengthen the sustainability of the movement of God's word in a country or region.

Our next level leaders need roots that grow deep. We are unable to provide everything needed for that growth. For instance, these leaders often need help developing church ministries that Word Partners does not address. Or, they might benefit from a more

extensive Biblical training that Word Partners does not provide. Or, they might need help planting and sustaining an influential church. The longevity of each movement is dependent upon growing influential churches.

Where there are partners who hold our vision, principles, ethos and approach for a movement of God's word, we should consider and seek how we might partner together for the sustainability of what God has begun.

- What is the Relationship between WP Staff and Other Partnerships?
  - Shared Vision, Core principles or approach (the Word) and ministry ethos
  - Next Level Thinkers & Practitioners
- Partners provide people, skills, insight, finances, influence, aspects of the movement Word Partners has not been able to develop.
- Wisdom will be required to discern why we should partner, and how.
- Partnerships develop through thoughtful relationships established over time.
- Leadership must be capable of influencing without direct control.
- Strategic thinkers with goals, tactics and plans that are collaborative.

## **What**

We nurture movements where God's Word is proclaimed with His transforming power.

## Types of Transformation

Over the years, time and again, by God's grace we have seen *transformation*. Like a seed the Word of God is planted, grows, buds then blooms into full flower. What exactly have we seen?

### Personal Transformation

- A desire to grow through God's word. Participants have come to see that studying God's word is not simply discovering information, but hearing the transformational intent of the author and being changed by it.
- We observe many with a newfound hunger and thirst to know God more deeply, to be holy, to grow in grace, and to feed God's people with the glory of God as opposed to their own agenda.
- A maturing humility to have his frameworks challenged, by placing oneself under the Word (as servant) rather than over the Word (as authority)
- Regularly we here trainees say things like... *"After studying Jonah this week, I realize I am worse than Jonah. Please pray for me that I would have God's concern for the worst of my enemies." Or, "Before coming I was ready to give up, but God used 2 Timothy this week to rekindle my passion for Him and the gospel. I can now go on serving Him."*

### Ministry Transformation

- A desire to grow as a preacher/teacher of God's word. Participants have come to see that preaching/teaching God's word is not simply conveying information, but proclaiming the transformational intent of the author so others may be changed by it.
- A desire and commitment to see every ministry in the church be rooted in and flow from the Word
- Preaching/Teaching God's Word challenges frameworks in order to shape the priorities and programs of the church with the transformational intent of God's Word.
- Preaching/Teaching moves from topical to an expositional approach
- Preaching/Teaching concerned with developing mature followers of Jesus Christ (not just getting the text right or teaching good information) and a vibrant community of faith.
- Training leaders and shepherding God's people become priority.
- Reaching the lost with the gospel is seen as imperative (evangelism and church planting)

## Partnership Transformation

- **Collegial/Fellowship**

- Mutual strengthening that occurs when leaders are brought together (like warm coals gathered together rekindle a fire)
- Less competition and more concern for other pastors and churches
- A desire to do gospel ministry together

- **Organizational**

- Partners rethink approach to church planting to include raising up leaders to lead after church planters have left.
- Partners are strengthened to confront false teaching within their denomination/mission.
- Partners asking for more and deeper level of engagement from us