As we consider why the church should care about information communication technology, or ICTs, I think it is crucial that we understand what the task of the church is. I do believe that biblically we are charged with embodying Jesus Christ by doing what He did and what He continues to do through us. This is done by declaring, in both words and deeds, that Jesus is Lord and is He is concerned about righteousness, justice, and peace. And as the church, working to reflect Jesus Christ in our global community, it is imperative that we do this where Jesus did it; among the blind, the lame, the sick, the outcast, and the poor.

In the New Testament, the church is to be a reflection of Jesus, as the body, bride, and the very fullness of Jesus Christ.

"Thanksgiving and prayer for this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all." (Ephesians 1:15-23 ESV)

"But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,…" (Ephesians 4:7-13 ESV)

"This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:32 ESV)

In their book "*When Helping Hurts*", authors Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert wrote, "Although the Bible teaches that the local church must care for both the spiritual and physical needs of the poor, the Bible does not indicate that only the local church must care for the poor. There is evidence in Scripture that even in simple societies, individuals, families, and even governments have responsibilities to the poor. Of course, in the highly complex societies of today, a wide range of parachurch ministries is capable of ministering to the poor as well. While the parachurch should never undertake tasks that are exclusively given to the church, the Scriptures indicate that care of the poor is not an exclusive task of the church."[i] Unfortunately, the church has abdicated its responsibilities for the social side of the gospel to the local government or international civil societies. It is time to make a change in this perspective, and for the

church to reengage in social ministries in partnership with individuals, governments, and civil societies, where they can do this without compromising their basic beliefs.

As the church engages its global community, it is critical that they utilize whatever tools available to them to accomplish this goal, being the hands and feet of Jesus to those individuals and communities they come in contact with. ICTs are but one of a number of tools available for long-term sustainable development; however, it is a tool that if used properly, can multiply the church's impact on the ground exponentially. For example, the use of broadband connectivity is already proving to be a game changer in underdeveloped and underserved communities. Once there is access to the Internet, an entirely new paradigm can be introduced for evangelism, as well as both theological and general education in these areas. Furthermore, newer computing devices such as iPads or android tablets, which are being used more and more to connect to the Internet in remote areas, are becoming less expensive and more durable. These new devices are powerful tools that can include Chronological Bible storying sets, The Jesus Film in multiple languages or other similar evangelism tools which can be preloaded on the tablets to provide the necessary assistance when either doing personal evangelism or training other evangelists. Likewise, counseling tools, theological education, and pastoral care tools and library access can be accessed by the connectivity of the tablets, not to mention additional development and empowerment programs these tools can help individuals and communities access. Some examples of these include eBusiness, eMedicine and eGovernance.

In order for the church to make the most use of ICTs as they engage their global community, there is going to have to be a fundamental shift in the way development arms of faith-based organizations and secular organizations manage themselves. This is going to require an organizational transformation that can, in many cases, be very intimidating. In order to make the greatest impact with the people they are trying to reach and serve, organizations must be prepared to make this transformational change internally in its management structures, but also be willing to look outside their own reorganization and be willing to be part of collaborative efforts. This can only be successful when those engaged in any partnership or collaborative development program are more concerned about making a positive and sustainable impact on the individuals or community they're working with more than they are concerned about who gets the credit. I believe we could achieve so much more if we didn't care who got the credit.

Recognizing that the discussion about organizational transformation is less about all of the internal structural and cultural adjustments that have to be made than it is about the end goal of working together in high quality partnerships with other organizations and individuals who are experts in their various disciplines. However, it is critical that a few things are considered as organizations look at their internal systems, so that they may be poised to be able to act quickly, and decisively, and with the greatest impact when given an opportunity to be a part of any collaborative effort. These include:

1. What do you want to do differently?
    a. Make more effective use of ICTs to bring about greater change in the areas your organization is working?
    b. Reach out to a broader audience via emerging social media tools?

      c. Shift from a traditional membership model to one that encourages broader participation from a wider network?

      d. Consider a multi-sector partnership?

2. Why do you need to make this change?

      a. How is this change going to help your organization to better advance its mission, vision, and values?

      b. What is the message that is going to be communicated which will drive your organization to do things differently at all levels?

3. How can you take the first steps to make this transformation within your organization?

      a. What information do you need?

      b. How are you going to get this information?

4. Who is going to be the primary driving force for change?

      a. Is this going to be a volunteer or a paid staff person?

      b. What level of authority will this individual need in order to influence change?

5. When and how are you going to assess the progress and the effects on your organization?

      a. Is it achieving what we needed?

      b. Have we made the process of partnership and effective development easier or more complicated?

As with anything, change is never easy and it is seldom fun. External change can be overwhelming, but we recognize that internal change can be rocky as well. Starting with the basics of walking through the questions above will help any organization develop a plan of action that puts the organization on a trajectory for success. Transforming a nonprofit organization is not just an exercise in creating new strategies and processes to accomplish the organization's mission. It also means examining the existing culture within the organization and recognizing the areas where change needs to take place and then working to adjust the culture, as needed, in order for it to support the change. The culture is the organization's operating environment and this includes patterns of behavior, activities, and attitudes which are shaped by a shared set of values and beliefs.

Incidentally, adjusting the culture is not something that can be done by leadership dictating a new set of values or goals and then hoping everyone within the organization gets on board with this new strategy. It is important that organizational leadership is committed to a new vision for the organization's culture but most importantly, there has to be a compelling and consistent message that is communicated at all levels of the organization in which each individual feels a sense of ownership in the process.

One of the most effective organizational changes that are on the horizon for many nonprofits is shifting from a vertical to a horizontally managed organization structure. This shift means that work is being organized by processes as much as function, it is managed by multifunctional teams, which are quicker and producing long-term sustainable results, especially when there is a value placed on the inclusion of outside partners and the local project community leadership representation. Having this type of representation on multifunctional teams produces an environment which is conducive to continuous innovation and problem solving. These teams are able to make decisions that most accurately represent both the project community and the non-profit partnership.

In the past, the extreme rigidity that vertical organization structures sometimes present did not provide the necessary freedom and autonomy necessary for innovative creativity which, in some cases, impeded an organization's ability to fully recognize its mission and vision of impacting their various project communities in the most effective and sustainable way.

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[i] (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009,2012)