

An Overview of The P.E.A.C.E. Plan for Mission Agency Personnel

by Ellen Livingood

Rick Warren feels God has led him to launch an initiative to attack the world's five greatest problems by mobilizing local churches worldwide to get one billion Christians on mission with God. His bottom-line summary of P.E.A.C.E.: "Ordinary people empowered by God making a difference together wherever they are."

While the core principles and foundational values of P.E.A.C.E. are clearly established, much about how the Plan will be disseminated and implemented remains to be worked out. The following summary represents my interpretation of information presented at a two-day introductory conference for churches held at Saddleback Church in May 2006 and personal interactions with the plan developers. The Saddleback introduction to P.E.A.C.E. is available at www.thepeaceplan.com.

THE BASICS OF THE P.E.A.C.E. PLAN

P.E.A.C.E. seeks to simultaneously attack five global problems:

- **Planting Churches** to address the giant of spiritual emptiness
- **Equipping Servant Leaders** to address the giant of corrupt leadership
- **Assisting the Poor** to address the giant of extreme poverty
- **Caring for the Sick** to address the giant of pandemic disease
- **Educating the Next Generation** to address the giant of illiteracy and lack of education

P.E.A.C.E. is to be practiced on a three-level, Acts 1:8 model:

- **Personal P.E.A.C.E.** Every believer develops a lifestyle of P.E.A.C.E. in his/her Jerusalem—among family, neighbors, co-workers, schoolmates, etc.

- **Local P.E.A.C.E.** Small groups within the church are challenged to reach their Judea and Samaria—the local community and people living nearby who are of different cultures. The Plan suggests beginning with entry-level projects which require little or no preparation and only a short time commitment. Then participants are challenged to stretch their faith through successively more difficult ministry involvements requiring more time and preparation.
- **Global P.E.A.C.E.** Small groups embrace their role in reaching the ends of the earth, especially the 3,500 people groups who are currently unengaged, i.e. those where there are no known churches or church-planting efforts.

FIVE CORE VALUES OF P.E.A.C.E.

- **Purpose-driven.** P.E.A.C.E. is based on the five biblical purposes of the church which Warren believes summarize the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-39) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20):
 1. Magnification (worship)
 2. Membership (fellowship)
 3. Maturity (discipleship)
 4. Ministry (service)
 5. Mission
- **Led by small groups.** "Small groups are the best environment to help every member take their next step in mission," is the stated P.E.A.C.E. philosophy.
- **Attacks the giants through a holistic approach** that cares for the person, rather than just addressing isolated needs.
- **Networks church to church** because the local church is the only organization on earth capable of mobilizing the needed personnel and resources.
- **Sends to the whole world** in a strategic approach that concentrates on people groups that do not yet have a healthy, evangelizing, indigenous church of their own.

The P.E.A.C.E. approach seeks to rectify what its developers believe are three inadequacies of contemporary missions:

1. **Put every member on mission** rather than limit global outreach to professional missionaries and a small committee of the church. Warren believes that missions is stunted if church involvement is merely "pray and pay." He is convinced that every Christian can and should take an active role.
2. **Connect P.E.A.C.E.-carrying churches to congregations located in proximity to unreached groups.** The two congregations work directly together rather than depending on agencies or missionaries to direct the process. The efforts of one billion Christians on mission for God could never be facilitated through existing mission agencies, even if they all were fully committed to that task. P.E.A.C.E. is designed to avoid bottlenecks by teaching that a church from any nation can go anywhere, find a sister church, and work together to attack giants and spread the gospel to peoples who have no church. However, P.E.A.C.E. leaders affirm that "The P.E.A.C.E. Plan is a supplement not a replacement for what is being done on the mission field today."
3. **Focus on sustainable and reproducible models of ministry** rather than just assuming Western finances can solve all problems. There are reproducible training modules, ministry methods, and tools available to all P.E.A.C.E. churches through the extensive database. These tools are called KITS (Keep It Transferably Simple). P.E.A.C.E. developers explain that by using these resources, "Any church, any small group, any believing church member will be able to do all aspects of The P.E.A.C.E. Plan." P.E.A.C.E. also has a strong emphasis on avoiding dependency and focuses on how to be a blessing without creating a welfare system.

HOW IT WORKS

Saddleback recommends that churches coordinate and oversee P.E.A.C.E. through a missions leader, a local leadership team, a global leadership team, and a revolution team (to oversee the missions paradigm shift).

A participating church recruits a global leadership team to oversee their global P.E.A.C.E. efforts. A list of nations which are home to Unengaged People Groups (UEGs) are selected as the church's focus. Coaches are trained and several small groups commit to global P.E.A.C.E. and are trained through the eLearning system on the extensive P.E.A.C.E. database (upwards of 3,000 training modules and growing). Specific modules are required, depending on the UEG and country. Coaches and team leaders study additional eLearning modules. Then these initial teams take pilot trips.

Eventually the program is introduced to the entire church and implemented throughout the small group network. Before a small group is allowed to join the program and adopt a UEG, they must commit to sending at least three teams within three years, the first within the next 12 months. Initial trips may be led by a coach or other experienced leader. On subsequent visits, teams may tackle more challenging itineraries on their own.

The P.E.A.C.E. strategists often emphasize that "All P.E.A.C.E. is local P.E.A.C.E." by which they mean that defeating the five giants happens when local people engage significantly in the task. They believe the principle applies to the church in Wichita which rolls up its sleeves to get involved in solving local issues as well as to the congregation in Mombassa which takes on the giants in their own neighborhood.

Short-term teams bring to their on-site partner churches the principles and resources of P.E.A.C.E. "P.E.A.C.E. teams are equipped to train local churches to address the five evil giants in their community using their easily reproduced resources and tools. This allows the local church members to be fully empowered to do P.E.A.C.E. themselves without dependence on outside resources," the P.E.A.C.E. website explains. While some efforts are carried on together, it is largely the task of the on-site church to make a sustained effort to defeat the giants in their community and to carry the gospel in a holistic approach to their neighboring UEG.

On initial trips, short-term teams seek to "PILOT":

Pray on site

Investigate the people group

Look for the "giants"

Open peace talks with the "person of peace"

Test resources (for example, check whether currently available materials such as the Jesus film are understandable by the people)

They also look for resources that can be tapped (including organizations such as NGOs and mission agencies, and materials in local languages) and challenge their on-site partner church to catch or expand their vision for the unreached people nearby. P.E.A.C.E. teams are trained not to succumb to a missionary's alternative agenda nor to the pleas of nationals who seek funding for projects which would not be sustainable by the local believers over the long haul.

SOME ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The P.E.A.C.E. database provides at least one contact person for each UEG who will help churches find onsite congregations with which to partner.

- The eLearning modules and other database resources are currently being translated into Korean and Spanish. The goal is to have all of the training materials available in at least 20 major languages within the next few years.
- Mission agencies will be given access to a read-only version of the database.
- Information will be collected by Saddleback as to which churches (or small groups within them) have made a commitment to a certain UEG. This information will be highly protected. It is yet to be determined who will have access to this data.
- Churches will also complete surveys following each ministry trip and submit them online to the P.E.A.C.E. data bank. This information will also be compiled and available to a select group of organizations. The criteria for access are yet to be determined.
- A "40-Days of P.E.A.C.E." program similar to the "40 Days of Purpose" and "40 Days of Community" was tested with Saddleback's small groups in the fall of 2005. A similar program eventually will be available to North American churches.
- P.E.A.C.E. is envisioned as a worldwide program, and churches in multiple countries are being recruited to join the P.E.A.C.E. effort. Beyond the database, it is undecided what materials will be provided nor how they will be disseminated.
- Currently, to get involved and gain access to the database, churches must send a leader to attend the two-day training and recruit a computer systems administrator to maintain their customized version of the database. These requirements will likely change as the P.E.A.C.E. Plan expands. A series of introductory P.E.A.C.E. conferences for churches are being planned across North America beginning in the fall of 2006.
- The database is an open system to which more training modules and resources can be added. Saddleback is very willing to incorporate additional materials that fill gaps or improve the quality of the training provided.

THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF P.E.A.C.E.

It is impossible to predict how widely P.E.A.C.E. will be adopted. Between 30,000 and 40,000 churches participated in "40 Days of Purpose" which was almost entirely encapsulated in a box of materials provided by Purpose Driven Ministries (the Saddleback spin-off that handles resources and conferences). The P.E.A.C.E. Plan will require churches to invest far greater amounts of time and leadership, likely reducing participation. But unlike the prior programs, P.E.A.C.E. is designed to be a global effort.

Moving small groups from relatively "safe" local P.E.A.C.E. efforts to engagement in global P.E.A.C.E. will be a challenge. Reaching out to some of the most inaccessible

and hard-to-penetrate people groups in the world will take great faith, hard work, and supernatural power.

But Rick Warren is highly committed to the task of mobilizing the rank-and-file church member to make a difference. The process is expected to span upwards of 10-15 years. A multi-city tour by Warren in the fall of 2006 will begin the large-scale introduction of the program. Warren's opinions on church ministry exert substantial influence, not just in the US but around the world. Pastors now will find that Warren has become a high-profile, missions-focused role model, something the North American church has lacked.

Warren's greatest genius may be his ability to connect with the average person in the pew and communicate profound truths in everyday language. P.E.A.C.E. has incredible potential to make missions seem exciting and accessible to 21st century Christians.

When P.E.A.C.E. was presented to Saddleback's small groups in the fall of 2005, 80% of them made a commitment to global involvement. One of the church's current goals is to mobilize 500 long-term missionaries from within their congregation (they estimate that 80,000 people consider Saddleback their church home).

THE P.E.A.C.E. PLAN'S STRENGTHS

- Vast potential for mobilizing the rank-and-file church attendee, not just in North America but around the world.
- An unprecedented compilation of training resources available by computer, eventually in languages that will put them within reach of the majority of Christians around the globe.
- An influential spokesperson in Rick Warren to convince pastors that missions must be a central aspect of their church's purpose.
- A focus on least-reached peoples.
- A recognition that the exploding church around the world can partner together for nearly unlimited impact.
- A step-by-step approach that challenges small groups to reach out cross-culturally in their own region and also around the world.
- An emphasis on wise use of funds invested in locally sustainable projects.
- Training in practical outreach skills that will be employed in life-transforming, cross-cultural encounters.

SOME CONCERNS ABOUT THE P.E.A.C.E. PLAN

- If churches succumb to a "40 days mentality," it could relegate missions to a flash-in-the-pan effort that

“inoculates” congregations and individuals against a commitment to long-term involvement.

- E-Learning materials and requirements could be ignored, resulting in insufficiently prepared teams coordinated by leaders and coaches with inadequate experience.
- Short-term teams focused on delivering P.E.A.C.E. principles could easily ignore cultural differences, devalue relationships, and create chaos by their visits. If they ignore security concerns, they could jeopardize not only the work but also the lives of national believers.
- Confusion and redundancy could result if multiple churches engage in uncoordinated efforts in the same area or UEG.
- Misunderstandings and false expectations could be detrimental for on-site partner churches.

SOME OPPORTUNITIES FOR AGENCIES THROUGH P.E.A.C.E.

- Experienced, respected, Kingdom-oriented missionaries can help churches succeed in P.E.A.C.E. and multiply the speed of church growth and church planting. Most, if not all, of the concerns listed above could be avoided if a person with knowledge of the local situation provides necessary guidance.
- P.E.A.C.E. will produce a steady stream of short-termers to expand the workforce. Many will be candidates for longer ministry involvements and/or greater financial investment after they return home.
- Agency mobilizers with the skills and tools to assist churches in P.E.A.C.E. implementation will build stronger relationships, develop potential for future partnerships, and expand congregations’ ministry impact locally and globally.

- Tools provided in the P.E.A.C.E. database can improve the work not only of short-term teams but of longer-term missionaries.
- Research conducted by short-term teams can help guide field strategy.

If P.E.A.C.E. succeeds in mobilizing even a fraction of the numbers they envision, the result will revolutionize missions. Are we ready?

There is far more to be learned about the P.E.A.C.E. Plan than what is summarized here. And as was mentioned previously, many aspects of the program are still evolving. The Plan developers will hold at least two briefings specifically for mission agencies within the next six-nine months. Information about these briefings will be available on the www.thepeaceplan.com site as well as at www.catalystservices.org.

20 QUESTIONS X 3: 20 Agency-Wide Questions, 20 Field Questions and 20 Mobilization Questions are available at:

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