

## GETTING READY FOR P.E.A.C.E.

*Ellen Livingood*

*After Saddleback's May 2006 Church Briefing on P.E.A.C.E., I summarized the plan in the Interchange Postings issue for July 2006 available at: [www.catalystservices.org/resources/prep-PEACE.shtml](http://www.catalystservices.org/resources/prep-PEACE.shtml). The additional information below came from the November 2006 Agency Briefing, a follow-up conversation with Skip Lanfried of the Saddleback staff, and my own evaluation.*

### A Desire for Cooperation

At the Atlanta Briefing, there was a clear theme of appreciation for agencies and repeated statements of commitment to cooperation with the missions community—positions which many agency personnel previously had not heard articulated. Whether this represents a change or merely that this meeting provided the first open platform for it to be expressed is not important. The agency representatives I talked to came away with a strong sense from Rick Warren himself and from his team that agencies do have a part to play in the accomplishment of the overall P.E.A.C.E. vision and even in the fulfillment of various parts of the P.E.A.C.E. Plan.

As Mike Constantz summarized at the end of the Briefing, "We are learners and don't have it figured out. Help us figure it out."

The core of the P.E.A.C.E. Plan process is one local church (or its small groups) pursuing local P.E.A.C.E. and taking P.E.A.C.E. to a sister congregation within proximity of an UEG, collaborating to reach the unengaged peoples. From the Saddleback perspective, this process does not necessitate the involvement of a mission agency or a missionary. In their words, "P.E.A.C.E. is not agency dependent." Having so said, they are eager for agency involvement at just about every level of the process.

The ability and freedom of the local church are high values of Warren and Saddleback. If churches choose to lean on agencies in the process, they are not opposed. However, they would object if an agency tried to derail a P.E.A.C.E. church from their desire to reach the unengaged. Saddleback also is committed to building into this online support system, i.e. the database, the best from every

possible source and then to turn around and make it available to every entity involved in global outreach and in as many languages as possible. The potential benefit of that training and information database for every agency is huge. It will be a great gift to those committed to the growth of the kingdom.

### The Timing of the P.E.A.C.E. Wave

Important for agencies considering the potential impact of P.E.A.C.E. is the issue of how quickly churches will be recruited and then how fast they will ramp up into global P.E.A.C.E. initiatives.

**P.E.A.C.E. Promotion in North America:** The Saddleback team is gearing up for Church Briefings to be held across the country beginning in 2007. In addition, Saddleback's 2006 Christmas service is being broadcast by the Fox network, and that service will highlight P.E.A.C.E. in some way, further fueling interest. The Saddleback P.E.A.C.E. team also is beginning to work with various denominations and groups of churches, taking the P.E.A.C.E. message to their conventions and association meetings.

To date Saddleback has recruited approximately a thousand North American churches to get involved in P.E.A.C.E. Skip Lanfried, in charge of North American church recruitment, would love to see that number grow ten-fold within the next 12 months and then continue on an upward trajectory.

He estimates that the number of churches actively involved in P.E.A.C.E. initiatives will really begin to explode in the fall of 2008, 2009, and 2010.

### Implementation of P.E.A.C.E. by Individual

**Congregations:** Churches which attend the P.E.A.C.E. Summit in the spring of 2007 will be challenged to take the next six months to one year to lay the groundwork and launch the pilot phase of P.E.A.C.E. This phase involves presenting the vision to church leaders and recruiting pilot teams, then training these teams, fielding them, and finally communicating to the congregation what has been happening.

It seems logical that if churches are going to enlist mission agency help, they will do so in this first phase. While they will not be looking to send large numbers of groups to large

**We are  
learners....  
Help us  
figure it out.**

numbers of places in phase 1, they will look for one or more key sites. Early response indicates that some/many/most will want to run their pilot trips to locations where they already have a missionary or with a mission agency with which they are already connected.

The P.E.A.C.E. Plan's online support system will provide the name of a coordinator/contact person who can help churches identify a sister congregation near their Unengaged People Group (UEG). Gauging from informal discussions with church leaders who attended the earlier Church Briefing, a large number will seek some level of agency help in the process of choosing UEGs and partner churches.

The P.E.A.C.E. design team estimates that even in a fairly aggressive P.E.A.C.E. rollout, most churches which attend a Church Briefing event (such as the Summit next spring) will be approximately one year away from launching phase 2 which seeks to mobilize the entire congregation through small-group involvement.

Another factor in estimating the amount and timing of requests agencies may receive about P.E.A.C.E. Plan assistance is Saddleback's admonition to let groups begin with crawl steps, before they walk and then run (with global P.E.A.C.E. efforts representing the running stage). It is impossible to estimate how many of these groups will progress beyond crawling (one-time, low preparation service projects) to walking (ongoing and/or higher preparation commitments) and then to the point of commitment to an UEG.

**Global P.E.A.C.E. Promotion:** Meanwhile, Curtis Sergeant of the P.E.A.C.E. design team is already aggressively challenging churches in other parts of the world to get involved in P.E.A.C.E. Early efforts have focused on Korea and India, but groups of churches in many parts of the globe will be challenged to P.E.A.C.E. as soon as the database is translated into their language. It may be that some agencies' major involvement with P.E.A.C.E. will be via churches from other parts of the world where fresh missions passion may be mobilized more quickly than in the West.

## Ongoing Concerns

---

Are there still issues with the P.E.A.C.E. Plan approach? I see four major areas of concern:

**1. A Steep Hill for Churches.** The P.E.A.C.E. preparation and development process for the local church is major. The notes outline 10 steps involving lots of leadership recruitment and training, small group recruitment, and participant training as well as significant administration (facilitated by the online systems and tools). Multiply that by the number of small groups potentially involved in a medium-to-large-size church, and the weight of the

process becomes "overwhelming" (the term I heard repeated by many church leaders at the Church Briefing).

The Saddleback team strongly insists that P.E.A.C.E. isn't a program, but as envisioned, it is hard to see it as anything besides an incredibly time- and energy-intensive program. That doesn't make it a bad approach, and it is hard to simplify an effort to mobilize an entire congregation for missional involvement. But it is a sobering commitment, most attractive to churches who have little or no missions program or who have the capacity for significant growth.

**The P.E.A.C.E. design team is already aggressively challenging churches in other parts of the world to get involved in P.E.A.C.E.**

So who will buy into P.E.A.C.E.? My best guess is that younger churches will eagerly adopt P.E.A.C.E. because the hands-on approach, holistic emphasis, and sister-church methodology are all hot buttons. Denominational churches disenchanting with a disengaged, funds-only based paradigm may also buy in

quickly.

I would anticipate that congregations with some sort of current missions program will adopt pieces of the approach and utilize portions of the training resources. They will attempt to integrate P.E.A.C.E. into what they are currently doing, especially in places where they already are involved with outreach to unreached peoples and/or those highly impacted by the giants of disease, poverty, illiteracy, etc. Some have stated that they are primarily looking for a more organized, electronically based approach to organizing short-term teams.

Sustaining involvement through to goal accomplishment will be challenging, regardless of the type of congregation or the reason for initial buy-in.

- 2. The Limitations of Computer-Based Training.** While an online training system is the only way of mass distribution of a large body of knowledge, a limited percentage of the population responds well to this method of learning. The P.E.A.C.E. Plan's system of training teams also involves coaches and team leaders, but the potential for breakdown in this approach is all too familiar to those who have tried to execute a chain of one-person-trains-the-next, especially driven from an inanimate source.
- 3. The Challenge of Making the Connections.** Does the capacity exist to match P.E.A.C.E.-carrying churches with churches in proximity of the targeted UEGs? Saddleback has some coordinators for this role and welcomes agencies to suggest others. But if large numbers of churches and their individual small groups buy into the P.E.A.C.E. Plan in even a fraction of the magnitude Warren hopes, it seems that coordinators in some (but certainly not all) parts of the world will be hard pressed

to find sufficient national church partners and expedite effective connections.

Many in the missions community are concerned about how to provide what they feel is crucial preparation for the national partner churches. Who will do this and how? Many of those with a vision for such partnerships are already at capacity with the connections they are currently sustaining.

- 4. The Complexity of Cross-Cultural Issues.** Warren and the designers are determined that the P.E.A.C.E. teams (A) will carry universally transferable concepts, not an American program or formula, (B) will not create dependency by giving out funds indiscriminately and (C) will go as fellow-learners. All three are easier said than done, especially for Americans who tend to be culturally naive, generous on emotional impulse, and too often sport a well intentioned but offensive "We're here to help you become successful like we are" mentality.

Has everyone who crosses cultures had to learn many of these lessons the hard way? Yes. And P.E.A.C.E. advocates say that the potential results are well worth the messiness of this learning process. But missionaries who may have already seen too many abuses in these areas are, at best, skeptical. Particularly in areas where persecution creates high risk for national believers, the stakes are very high.

That's the bad news. The good news is that mission agencies and other Christian organizations have expertise and resources to address each of these concerns. We can stand back and criticize, or we can channel the new energy in productive directions, helping newcomers avoid painful mistakes by offering assistance at critical junctures.

## Getting Ready for P.E.A.C.E.

---

Here are 10 suggestions for how mission agencies can begin to prepare for P.E.A.C.E. efforts with churches. We welcome additional ideas.

- 1. Inventory and share your resources.** Do you have some quality, field-specific briefing manuals for short-term teams? A great video for understanding Buddhism? A person with expertise on how to establish literacy classes in refugee camps? Advice on importing medicines into a particular country? Make these resources available for the Peacopedia database.
- 2. Talk to churches already involved in P.E.A.C.E. initiatives.** Find out from them what has been accomplished and where they have needed more

The only way to explain the power of this surge is to identify it as a new wind of the Spirit.

assistance. (Watch for an upcoming issue of *Postings* that will include interviews with several churches which are already practicing P.E.A.C.E.)

- 3. Develop a quick self-test for churches** to determine if you are a good potential partner for their P.E.A.C.E. efforts. Make it available online with guidelines for the next step if the answer comes out "yes."
- 4. Set up some seamless interface web pages** that can be reached from links on the P.E.A.C.E. online system. For example, if you want to partner with churches to reach those in oral cultures in southeast Asia, develop a connector page that offers aid to those adopting UEGs in that region. Link that information through the P.E.A.C.E. resource pages.
- 5. Provide in-person training.** While the P.E.A.C.E. database will be amazingly comprehensive, there is no replacement for face-to-face training. Can you connect home assignment missionaries and other personnel who have needed expertise with local congregations moving into a P.E.A.C.E. initiative?
- 6. Continue field dialog.** The support and cooperation of field staff will be critically important. Encourage field leaders to maintain an ongoing dialog about how to maximize the value and minimize the potential failures of P.E.A.C.E. efforts in their region. (A list of questions is part of the July 2006 *Postings*.)
- 7. Define practical "crawl steps."** The P.E.A.C.E. Plan advises church leaders to encourage small groups to crawl before they try to walk, and to walk before they try to run. "Crawl steps" are small group projects that require little or no preparation and only a limited, usually one-time commitment. Use your creativity to devise simple introductory activities related to your fields or potential UEGs that whet the appetite of small groups to move to the next level of commitment.
- 8. Create a mini-P.E.A.C.E. program.** Develop a one-day P.E.A.C.E. experience which your agency personnel could coordinate or provide simple, turnkey materials for churches to use themselves. What if they adopted a particular UEG for a day, conducted a concert of prayer, practiced doing some research, and considered practical ways of involvement? By the end of the day, the experience could give them the desire and confidence to take the next step (which you help them define).
- 9. Offer regional P.E.A.C.E. Networks.** Bring together churches in a particular area who are implementing P.E.A.C.E. and adopting an UEG but who want to do so as part of a larger network. For example, you might facilitate a network in the Chicago area supporting churches focusing on UEGs in the Arabian Gulf, or in the

Orlando area you might form the hub of a network concentrating on UEGs of northern Chad.

**10. Build your capacity.** Brainstorm practical ways that your agency could help larger numbers of churches both in the at-home ramp-up as well as in the on-field effectiveness. One of the best sources of additional capacity may come from churches already partnering with you in P.E.A.C.E.-like efforts. Ask them to consider providing a staff member for six months to help your office develop some of the ideas above. Or would one of your partner churches send short-termers for a year to help a field prepare to facilitate more P.E.A.C.E. initiatives? Churches and individuals who already understand the challenges and benefits of church-to-church partnership often make great trainers.

## The Big Picture

---

The movement of the global church into proactive, hands-on Acts 1:8 involvement is not the initiative of Rick Warren. The only way to explain the power of this surge is to identify it as a new wind of the Spirit.

Whether or not you like the details of Warren's particular mobilization vision, the 21<sup>st</sup> century church already is moving out with the gospel at breathtaking speed and the pace is picking up! The concept of bringing together the resources of the church worldwide to reach the remaining unengaged has tremendous appeal to church leaders, especially those of

younger generations. Many are already deeply engaged and more are eager and ready as soon as someone shows them how.

Are we, in Warren's words, willing "to take everything we have learned and infuse it in and through the local church"?

How can we help each other do it better?



*Ellen Livingood directs Catalyst and also serves as global outreach director of Grace Point Church in Newtown, PA.*

**Be sure to read part 1** of this issue of *Postings* which presents an overview of the Agency Briefing about P.E.A.C.E. held by the Saddleback team in November 2006.

Do you have further questions or input about the P.E.A.C.E. Plan? Additional ideas about how to get ready? Share them on the Networking Forum on the Catalyst website: [www.catalystservices.org/forum/](http://www.catalystservices.org/forum/).

To subscribe to future issues of *Interchange Postings*, go to [www.catalystservices.org/resources/index.shtml](http://www.catalystservices.org/resources/index.shtml). Past issues are also available from this webpage.

© 2006 Catalyst Service, Inc.