

What Do We Mean by Student-Led?

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Maybe you are asking, "What do we actually mean by Student-led?" or "What are the implications for our ministries?" This article is designed to give greater definition to "Student-led", the nature of our Student-led vision, and the driving principles behind it. If we ever hope to see our vision and mission fulfilled, we must understand the nature of what it means to be Student-led and how to pursue that vision.

In Mt. 9:37, Jesus states that "the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." We are reminded of this today as we see God working powerfully to bring in this harvest, but we also continue to experience the reality that compared to the greatness of the needs and opportunities, the people to respond and ably lead in God's harvest are far too few. After 60 years of ministry, we are still on fewer than 10% of campuses worldwide. Even in places where we have existing ministries, they are often staff-led, not challenging and empowering students to lead. For a variety of reasons, staff are often not entrusting leadership to students. The ramifications of continuing on in this pattern are staggering. Not only will we never move far beyond 10%, but if students do not own the mission while at the university, how can we expect them to become fruitful laborers after graduation? For these reasons, it is critical that we grasp and implement what Student-led really means.

Our CCC Context

In defining "*Student-led in CCC*" we must hold our values and distinctives in view. "Student-led in CCC" must reflect our core values of faith, growth, and fruitfulness and be closely connected to movements. A movement may be defined as "*God working through a team of like-hearted disciples to Win, Build and Send toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Over time, people in prayerful dependence on God's grace will take action, resulting in the following four characteristics: connecting lost people to Jesus, life-changing discipleship, multiplying leaders, and generating self-sustaining local resources.*"

Central to the definition is **God working**. In John 14:26 Jesus told us about "the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, [who] will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." **Do we truly believe at a heart conviction level, that God is working through, speaking to, leading, empowering, guiding, convicting, and using this generation of college students to fulfill His purposes?** How we answer this question will determine the extent to which we are willing and able to pursue a Student-led approach to ministry and movement building. If we don't believe this, our students will smell it from a mile away.

Common Misunderstandings

When talking about Student-led there are often a number of common misconceptions – so let's clarify what Student-led IS NOT:

- Student-led does **not necessarily mean the absence of staff**. Full-time laborers and other leaders have a significant role to play in Student-led models of ministry.
- Student-led **does not just mean just having students in leadership**. Students can be controlling and fail to give away ownership of the movement just like any person.
- Student-led does **not mean CCC staff are passive or unimportant**. Staff must always be highly committed and very engaged. While Student-led will affect **how** staff engage, relevant leaders are never disengaged from reality. Any leader must be mindful of words, attitudes, and actions that stifle ownership.
- Student-led is **not the absence of CCC distinctives**. Student-led will include core CCC distinctive such as initiative evangelism, multiplying discipleship, the Spirit-filled life, and transferability.
- Student-led is **not equal to "catalytic" ministry**. Certainly catalytic movements should be Student-led, but even they can become leader-dominated ministries. ***Student-led is broader and encompasses the vision of seeing teams of students owning the Great Commission from their hearts and trusting God to multiply spiritually.***
- Student-led is **NOT about the name of the campus ministry**.

The university ministry will have many names around the world. Instead Student-led movements reflects our vision - ***it reflects who must own and lead the mission.***

The Essence of "Student-led"

Within the context of CCC, there are five key aspects of Student-led. This paper outlines them and briefly comments on each.

1. Dependence on God.
2. Student (Volunteer) ownership
3. Spiritual multiplication
4. Sustainability (local resource generation: money and manpower)
5. Team

1. GOD DEPENDENCE! God has promised to exalt His name among the nations! Before and after we show up at a new university, He is working to build His kingdom! All other things such as student ownership, team, spiritual multiplication, and sustainability are only possible when students are knowing, loving, hearing, following, obeying, and experiencing God through devotion to Him in the Word, prayer, fasting, and living with an eternal perspective. Student-led happens as students respond to God and begin to dream His dreams and enter into what He is doing in their university. It is only God himself who can cause growth in the lives of people, give power to witness for Him, and multiply His glory among nations.

Remember, Jesus said, "apart from me, you can do nothing" Jn 15: 5. The Holy Spirit is given to help us fully depend on Him. The "-led" paradigm can be truly effected by God alone as students respond to Him in faith and obedience.

2. Student (Volunteer) ownership: The success criterion for us as an organization is at the volunteer level. We ultimately celebrate most what God is doing through teams of like-hearted students who respond to God's work in their hearts by *choosing* to own the mission on their campus or in their country.

At the core of "choosing" is the matter of "ownership". Ownership is about students knowing in their hearts that God is calling them. A conviction that the Great Commission among their peers is THEIR calling from Him! Consider for a moment the significance of this kind of ownership.

Student ownership of the mission is key in unlocking creativity and initiative to reach the campus. Students have an amazing level of energy and insight, which they will willingly devote to people and activities which are important to them and that they are responsible for. Combine this with students' "insider" status and the possibilities are enormous. But such qualities will not be unleashed unless students choose and are empowered to fully own the task.

3. Spiritual multiplication: Student-led is not running activities or events; it's about seeing generations of transformed lives winning, building, and sending as a way of life.

It only takes one generation not imparting to the next to kill the movement.

Therefore it is imperative that we raise up students who are committed to not only lead the movement, but who ensure it is passed on to the next. Their role before graduating shifts from being the leaders to becoming the coaches of the emerging leaders of the next generation.

4. Sustainability is essential, not only for growth and development of a country,

but so that the world can be influenced. Sustainability involves the **generation of local resources** and people power. It infuses a movement with momentum when students pray for and see God provide resources. Ministry that is perpetually sustained by outside funds and resources is less likely to be locally owned. The generation of local resources significantly impacts the long-term results.

5. Team/s of like-hearted disciples who own, plan, lead, and multiply the movement are essential to Student-led. The goal is not to build the super individual leader or student working alone in ministry, but rather many teams that work together to accomplish what no one individual could accomplish alone.

"A team is a group of interdependent people committed to a common purpose who choose to cooperate in order to achieve exceptional results" (From *Building Powerful Ministry Teams*).

A team isn't primarily dependent on experience, age, race, sex, or educational qualifications. Instead, within CCC, teams are made up of people who respond to God's call and choose to cooperate with others as they trust God for movements on their campus and beyond. Practically, a movement team owns the vision, responsibility, and will do the work of building a movement in the target area where they are called to focus. Members of a team could be CCC staff, students, lecturers, pastors, graduates, and even people living outside the country who participate through technology. CCC doesn't mandate a category of leaders with which to begin. Rather, we are concerned about trusting God for supernatural results. The key question is not, "What can we do?" but, filled with faith in God who is building His unstoppable kingdom, we ask, "What is it going to take to fulfill our mission?"

Ultimately, we must see large numbers of student teams choosing to take the lead in building new movements in order to see our mission accomplished within any significant scope.

Staff Roles in Student-led:

Finally, we want to make a brief comment about the role of CCC staff. In the *Student-led Movement model* staff roles vary. They may be launchers or pioneers. But they may also work alongside the student leaders. The staff's focus is the growth, development, and multiplication of student leaders. They model, teach, challenge, entrust, and coach with the vision of seeing students walk with God out of deep personal convictions, own God's calling in their lives, and embrace the need to step out in faith and trust God for themselves.

Obviously the role of the staff is affected by the phase of the movement, but even from the first day staff approach a new campus, they do so with a vision to see the students owning the vision of fulfilling the Great Commission. It is clear that the staff are there to propel the students to reach their generation, their peers, and their campus for Christ. They are intentional in all they do to prepare and equip students to do this.

Conclusion

Student-led movements are vital for the fulfillment of our mission and vision. It must be our practice in staffed and catalytic campuses. Likewise, in the virtual arena, it is Student-led movements that must be the goal. Student-led will involve dependence on God, student (volunteer) ownership, spiritual multiplication, sustainability (local resource generation) and working in teams.

There are many questions unanswered in this paper. Here are two that our team (the authors) often discussed. After these there are two case studies presented to help illustrate Student-led movements.

Questions for further discussion:

What are the unique challenges of full-time workers/staff in Student-led?

Student-led assumes that God is able to raise up students that can be captured by God's vision for the world and actually lead. What are the obstacles or issues you face in finding and leading these kinds of students?

Case Study 1: A Staffed Campus in New Zealand

The campus ministry began in Christchurch, New Zealand, 7 years ago. From the beginning, the US stint team, led by Justin and Heather O'Malley, had the vision for student ownership. At the beginning a key question asked of the students was "*how are you going to do evangelism and reach YOUR campus?*". Students responded and took great initiative and part of this fruit has been that almost 50 students a year have become Christians. Also the campus now has full-time workers raised from that campus with the US ministry no longer giving any resources.

How else was ownership taken by students? Key to this was that students owned the vision because they saw it in scripture. Another factor was that the students had great friendships and worked closely in teams around the campus. Some parts of the campus such as the residences, the law, and the engineering faculties have distinct audiences and defined groups of people.

In these focus areas, teams of students have quickly owned the vision and been able to plan, finance, execute, and evaluate the vision of win, build and send. Staff have modeled and coached leaders of small groups and bible studies well so that students could easily lead on their own. Student leadership teams have numbered about 30 with a similar number attending domestic and international projects each year.

Over the past two years there have been two major team changes on campus and now the assessment is that the university is current more staff-led than Student-led. Justin comments that "new staff and leaders sometimes struggle to give ownership away." He observes that there seems to be a process whereby inexperienced leaders need to learn how to do the work and engage in Christian service before they can coach others in the process and give over ownership to students.

Case Study 2: A Catalytic Campus in the Philippines.

In November 2006, Jason & Jen Baldueza began Catalytic in Metro Manila. They were believing God for the impossible, to raise up movements in 250 Universities. Previously they had worked in the one university (University of Santo Tomas) with around 40 students involved. But now, faced with the scope of 250 Universities, they knew that unless God raised up key volunteers and teams of students, they could never get beyond their limited resources and time. By January 2007, they began reaching out in new universities and found key volunteers in 8 other campuses and partnered with Korea CCC who were then in University Belt Manila doing campus work. If anything were to happen in those

Universities, the student volunteers would have to do it. Jason and Jen could train and coach and model, but the students would have to own and lead the ministry.

Today with a team of 5 staff, 6 volunteers and 3 Korean staff they have ministry presence on 55 campuses. Overall, there are more than 700 students involved with 110 students who lead other students and 26 multipliers (those that lead others who lead others). The students are not only committed to reach their campus, but even their generation for a lifetime.

What do the students do? Though the 55 campuses are in various stages of development, the students in these 55 campuses are making the decisions for what is happening on their campuses and they are in the process of training up the next generation of students. In each location they are seeking and believing God for a movement on their campus and leading the charge in prayer, evangelism and discipleship, weekly fellowships.

What do the staff do? The staff take the lead in coaching and developing student leaders in each campus and in continuing momentum for launching and growing new movements and developing new partners. They challenge, equip, train and coach key volunteers and student leaders to build movements on their campuses and work to build growing synergy as they trust God for the remaining 200 Universities in the Metro Manila area.