



The Barnabas Group mobilizes Christian Marketplace Leaders in the San Francisco Bay Area to contribute their unique talents and resources to build the capacity of ministries addressing local and international needs.

SF Bay Area Barnabas

Journal Notes No. 21: April 2016 Event

Notes by Tim Hunt

KEYNOTE—Michael Chen, Superintendent of Valley Christian Schools in Dublin

Michael Chen, superintendent of Valley Christian Schools in Dublin, challenged members to leave their comfort zones and reach out to those less fortunate.

Chen, the keynote speaker, took over leadership of the schools last summer. He lives in Pleasanton with his wife, Brittany, and their two young children.

Michael described part of the journey that took him from UC Berkeley as a physics major (he grew up in Taiwan) to educational leadership at an elite academy in Boston with an economically diverse student body and finally back to Dublin and Valley Christian.

His challenge to members was how do we promote human flourishing by “putting the first last.” God created humans to flourish and steward a flourishing world, but Adam and Eve botched it. The challenges for “the last” are lack of power, isolation and spiritual / financial poverty.

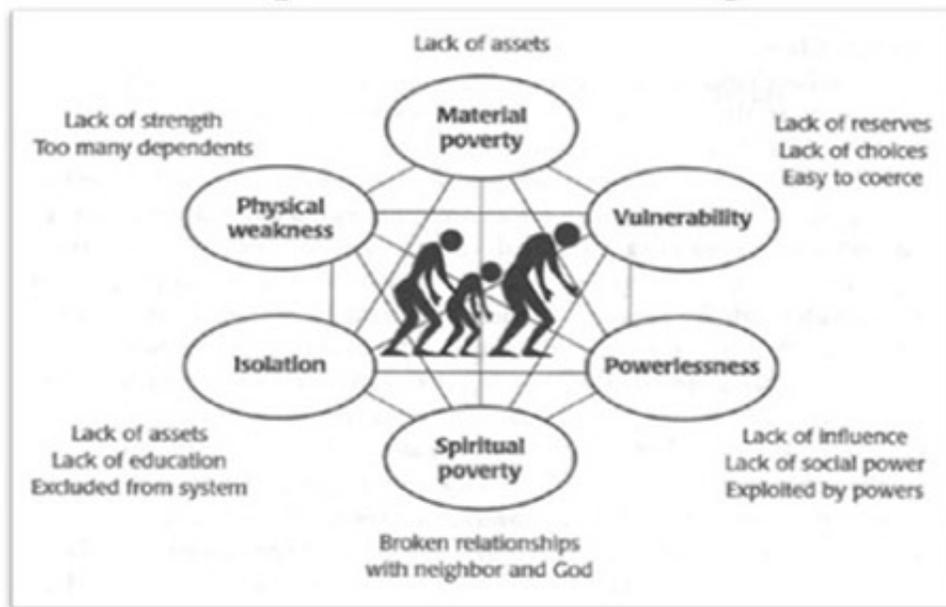
Michael and Brittany have adopted a girl from Nepal to allow her to escape poverty. They are also foster parents to a black high school student who was on the verge of homelessness because of his family situation. Tevin Montgomery flourished with the Chen family, academically as well as athletically, and had a number of offers from Division One schools for football scholarships.

At the time Tevin had graduated from high school and was preparing for college, Valley Christian approached Michael about taking the superintendent's job. He declined because it was more important for Tevin to make a smooth transition than it was for the family to come west—"the last became first."

That's the core Biblical principal (Matthew 19: 11-30) that Michael stressed to members.

If we are striving to break the cycle of poverty and powerlessness, those of us with power and authority need to step out of our comfort zone and meet the vulnerable people. We must build relationships if we are going to stop the poverty cycle.

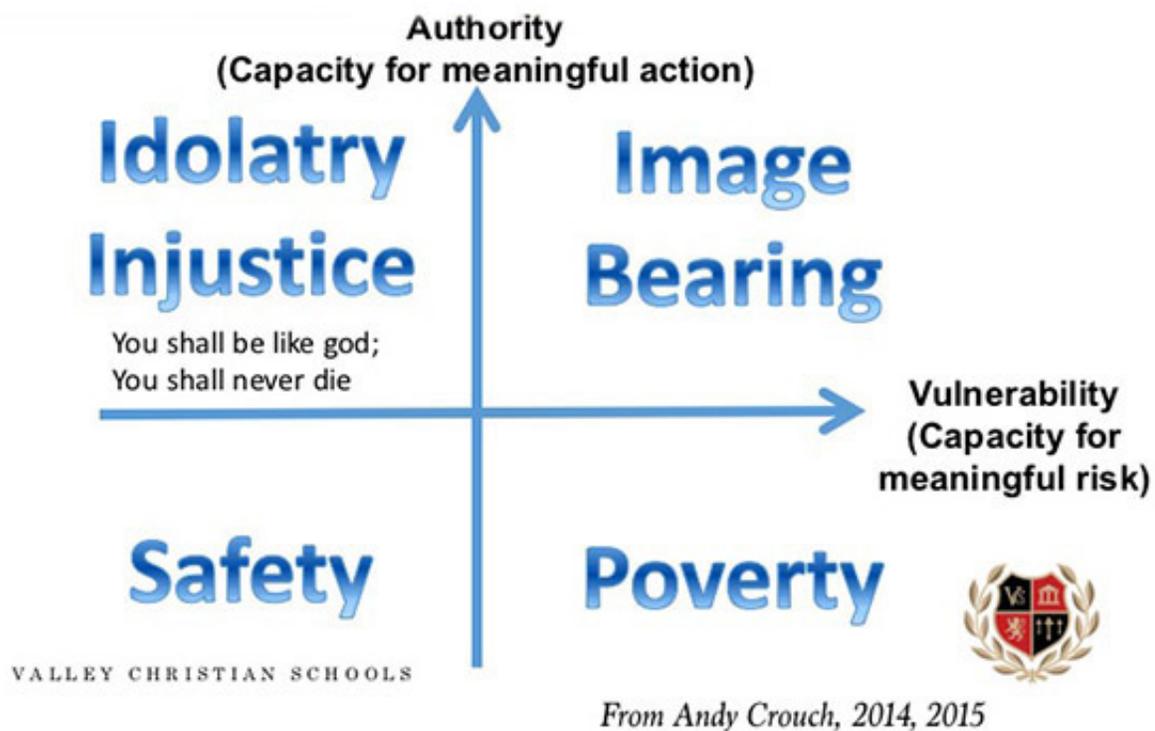
Disempowerment and Entanglement



VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

From Bryant Myers, 1999





PRESENTING MINISTRY—Operation Worship, Open Window Foundation

Jeffrey Hilliard, CEO and founder of Operation Worship , described the explosive growth of his all-volunteer ministry that sends Bibles to members of the Armed Services. The ministry had steadily been shipping 70,000 Bibles annually to military chaplains until God gave him a better idea. He added the unit’s insignia and orders have skyrocketed to 700,000 this year.

The challenge is how to expand funding and capacity by 10 times to meet this year’s orders. The ministry, with no paid staff, has operated with an annual budget of \$57,000, but is in need of \$1.3 million this year to fulfill the orders.

His ministry has been successful so he can freely contact chaplains and provide the Bibles they request.

Jeff told us about Bets Davis of Kentucky who bought two cases of Bibles and then personally wrote messages in each one to military personnel. She was in a Cracker Barrel one day when some soldiers came in. One of them, after engaging her in conversation, showed her the Bible he had received in Afghanistan. It contained her message.

Jeff also is seeking to significantly expand his three-member board to seven to nine

directors.

For more information, please see: <http://www.operationworship.com/>.

PRESENTING MINISTRY—Insight Christian School

Insight Principal Victoria Beardsley asked members how to get the word out about this fully accredited, 24-year-old Christian school that serves an ethnically diverse student body and sees God produce amazing results. Many students arrive struggling academically or with addiction. Their lives are transformed as the staff and other students pour the love of Jesus into them. The graduation rate is 100 percent and 92 percent go on to college, most of them being first-generation college students.

Victoria told members two success stories. Michael and Abdul, both came from families with high-achieving siblings. Michael, who was failing in a public high school, finally opened up to Victoria and said he did not know how to function without smoking marijuana daily as he had done so since he was 11. Michael turned his life around and now is a junior at UC Davis and his family relationship is fully restored.

Abdul's mother, a Muslim, almost begged Victoria (who interviews all potential students) to admit Abdul despite understanding that weekly chapel and Bible classes were required. It changed for Abdul the day students watched "The Passion of Christ." Late in the movie, Abdul came over to Victoria and asked if Jesus really did that for him. When she said yes, he said that in his religion, Muhammad expected Abdul to die for him.

After worship, Abdul took the microphone and said, "I woke up a Muslim today, but I am going to be a Christian."

Beardsley said that the goal of the staff is to know each student's story and minister to them.

Insight recently has formally separated from the founding church and is looking to grow to 100 students and become sustainable.

For more information, please see <http://www.icseastbay.com>.

PRESENTING MINISTRY—Firm Foundations Romania

Founder Sarah Vienna Berchtold went to Romania on a short-term trip in 2005 to volunteer at the Brasov Children's Hospital, a state orphanage. She found horrific conditions and no laughter or joy in the babies. She and her partner started buying diapers and then coming into the facility to change the babies, hold and feed them. They also sang Christmas carols to them. Eventually, the babies smiled.

Sarah is a songwriter and singer so she delivered her talk both in speech and song. She started researching why there were so many babies and learned that the dictator in the Communist regime, Nicolae Ceaușescu, had mandated that families have at least five children. She traced the babies back to a village of Romas (gypsies) who live in segregated pockets of communities that are almost ghettos. Mothers would deliver the babies and then abandon them to the state.

Sarah has targeted the Brasov village to change the lives of children. The village has 800 families with about 1,200 children. Her organization has instituted a pre-school program and an after-school program to educate Roma youngsters and give them a pathway out of poverty. In that village, 70 percent of the people are unemployed and 90 percent live in poverty. That results in a teenaged birth rate that is the 2nd highest in Europe and 86 percent of the teenaged mothers are Roma.

The goal is to use educational opportunity and the Gospel to change the lives of the Roma children and transform the village.

For more information, please see <http://www.firmfoundationsromania.com>.

Report backs

Jesus Film Harvest Partners

Development Director Mark Tilton and retired pastor Dick Sanner described their trip to Cuba and taking the Jesus film. They found little happiness among the average population—although there were some great classic cars from the 1950s. That contrasted with the churches where worshippers were joyful and spirit-filled. Mark will be leading trips to Cuba

and other destinations over the next year.

Super Bowl Breakfast

After the presentation in November, Barnabas members mobilized prayer support for the breakfast that ended up as a sellout with a powerful Gospel message delivered by Tony Dungy and our own, Brent Jones, who served as emcee. Dick Sanner and Erny Malakoff outlined the plan to build on that prayer effort so members are routinely praying for presenting ministries and others.

Erny, who is still active daily in his professional life, has limited time to participate in ideation sessions so he has built Barnabas ministries into his daily prayer life. Erny took his pastor's admonition seriously (Bible before breakfast, prayer before paper) and has done that for several years. God has deepened his prayer life and he now routinely prays for presenting ministries throughout his week.

Plant With Purpose

Plant With Purpose needed to expand its regional support (San Diego area) into the Bay Area. Since presenting at Barnabas, the organization has hired a Bay Area development person.

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