Core Value #6—Interdependence

The seventh installment of our Missions Essentials series deals with interdependence. This entry is written by Timothy Fink, who serves with his wife Sandy as the Director of Bibles International, the Bible society of BMM. Tim and Sandy have also served in Romania with BMM.

Aspen trees are fascinating. When these 80-foot trees grow in “clonal colonies,” they are connected by an underground root system. The U.S. Forest Service tells us that one of the largest and oldest colony of trees is in Utah, called the “Trembling Giant.” On the surface they look like a large group of individual trees. However, underground they share one single root system. The Aspen trees are interdependent – mutually reliant on each other as one unit.
Core value #6 of Baptist Mid-Missions is Interdependence.

BMM believes that, “Servant leadership results in vertical and horizontal teamwork.” It can be defined as two or more people who are mutually reliant on one another. Interdependence is not to be confused with “independence,” meaning someone dependent on no one, or with “co-dependence,” meaning someone who is completely dependent on others. Interdependence recognizes the uniqueness of each individual and his traits, gifts, and skills; yet, he needs mutual collaboration, cooperation, and reliance upon others. He is a team player.

In I Corinthians 12:12-26, Paul teaches the following interdependent missionary principles:

1) Interdependence requires a team. Paul states that there is one body (the church) with many members. Each member of the body is unique and different in its purpose, yet dependent on the others. The eye is different than the ear, but each recognizes its need for the other. The members are a team working together. As church planters in Romania, our missionary team had four families – each different and uniquely gifted. Yet we needed one another for a healthy, productive, growing team.
2) **Interdependence requires a Head.** Paul highlights one thing that unified all the members of the body – the singleness of their Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Just like the single underground root system of the Aspen trees, the team members (missionaries) become unified by the singleness of their Head, Jesus Christ.

3) **Interdependence requires the team’s submission to a single Head.** The Corinthians were reminded that they were individual members of the Body of Christ, but placed in the body to do God’s will alone. My father had MS, a disease that affects the brain and spinal cord. A hard sheath called “myelin” is attacked in a way that hinders the communication lines between the brain (the head) and the rest of the body. In the same way there must be clear communication between the team members (the body) and Christ (the Head), or the mission team ceases to be unified.

4) **Interdependence requires mutual dependence upon one another.** Paul taught that every member was significant, relying on one another for the body’s health and function. This requires humility, self-denial, and servanthood. The Bibles International team represents many missionaries and nationals in 18 countries. Each member is different, but all are needed in order to function effectively as a unified team.
The future of missionary work will be as strong as our team. We are interdependent, and Christ is our Head. **Are you looking for a team ministry?** Come join our team at BMM!

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