



Dear Friends

This month I want to inspire you through the writing of **Bill Hybels from his book 'Courageous Leadership'**.

He visited Harvard Business school to defend a case study written about his church Willow Creek in Chicago. This extract opens with a pointed statement from one of the students:

"Bill, I just don't think you should mix best management practices with spiritual stuff." He continued, "I'm really uneasy with all this leadership training, leadership development and managing for results that I see at Willow. I think that when it comes to God, the spiritual realm, and the Church, it ought to be laissez-fair. Hands off. Let go and let God. That's what I think."

*I scanned the expectant faces in that multi-tiered classroom and quickly prayed, "God, please help me explain this well." Then I directed my attention back to my challenger. "You know, I find it very interesting that you're here in one of the best schools in the history of education, learning very latest and greatest leadership management disciplines so that you can graduate from here and join a secular company to help them set records for manufacturing widgets, soap, or software. There's nothing wrong with that. People can benefit from using all that stuff so you might as well do your best to get it into their hands. **But still, it's only stuff. It isn't going to transform anybody's life in a deeply significant way. It isn't going to change the world or determine anybody's eternal destiny.**"*

*"What you have to understand is that some of us church leaders believe to the core of our beings that **the local Church is the hope of the world.** We really believe that. We believe that the Church is the only God-anointed agency in society that stewards the transforming message of the love of Christ. **We believe that the Church addresses every human being's deepest need.** We believe that the Church can lead people into a whole new way of living and loving and serving, and can thereby transform society.*

*"You also need to realise that some of us church leaders live daily with the realisation that the eternal destinies of people in our communities hang in the balance. **That's why we are so determined to get our visions right and live out our values and come up with effective strategies.** We truly believe that it matters that we attain our goals. It matters that we align our staffs and leverage our resources. **We believe that the success or failure of our churches directly affects people's lives here today and for eternity.** We believe this to our depths. We'd take bullets for it."*

This is exactly why Viva supports the building of effective networks that brings the wider Church together to be **an amazing force for change for children**, hopefully bring in technical skills and mechanisms to enhance and strengthen the work. **May God helps us all do even better in His service.**

(Also to encourage you, I attach a summary report from all the feedback we received from the Parties that networks ran leading up to Christmas. It is great to hear the individual stories and see the collective impact.)

Blessings

Brian