



FREEDOM TO LEAD INTERNATIONAL®

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Serious Questions for Serious People

In the halls of churches and in the homes of friends, I often get asked, *"When is your next trip? I will be praying as you share the gospel with these people."*

I appreciate the prayers. **More often than not, however, it is *they* who share the gospel with *me*.**

Freedom to Lead cultivates competent Christ-centered leaders. But it's more than about imparting "our wisdom" onto these men and women. **It's about inviting them into a conversation about serious issues for our times.**

We don't need to teach them about sharing their faith with their neighbors. They are already doing that. Neither do we need to host a seminar on how to plant churches or how to lead a bible study or explain the doctrine of atonement or how to preach. They are already doing that. Frankly, they are doing that a lot better for their contexts than we ever could. There is a reason that the world's fastest growing church is in the Global South.

But what they do need is to be invited into a serious conversation as they lead this current generation into the future God has for them. They need the North American church to take them seriously as co-laborers of the gospel.

For the past month, I have been in both Ethiopia and Kenya working with leaders from throughout the East Africa region who are doing the hard work of ministry. Whole days have been dedicated to discussing questions such as:

- What does the biblical response of stewardship look like as they generate local resources to sustain local ministries when their communities are experiencing hardship?
- What is the cooperation between God's faithfulness and our obedience as we look toward ministry outcomes and sustainability?



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- What does true partnership look like as we begin to shift from a dependency on outside resources to a new relationship of interdependency?
- Knowing the sobering statistic that only 1 in 3 Christian leaders finish well, what are temptations in my culture that could keep me from “finishing well” as a Christ-centered leader?
- How do leaders come alongside people in their churches during a leadership change? How do I identify a guiding coalition to lead change in a healthy way?
- How do we mobilize our young church to embrace an Acts 1:8 mindset from Day 1?
- What does being a peacemaking leader look like when the possibility of a literal war is inevitable in their communities? Even more so, how do they promote a culture of peace among two families in the church that have been in conflict for several *generations*?
- How does one’s understanding of the gospel – in whole, not in part – inform the way he/she plans for ministry and defines mission and purpose?
- In what ways do I need to be more intentional as I mentor someone based on their perceived needs?
- When I am receiving pressure from my superiors, how do I serve as a buffer with those I am responsible for?
- How do I facilitate a shared vision instead of forcing my leadership agenda on others?
- How do I lead a team when various members have competing agendas, when it would simply be easier if I applied a top-down approach?
- How can I follow Jesus’ example of sacrificially meeting people’s deepest needs and helping them to reach their highest potential?

In isolation, I certainly can’t answer these questions sufficiently. But I undoubtedly have much to learn as others contribute to the great task of developing leaders in the church around the world.

At the same time all these discussions were happening this month in East Africa, just across the ocean in California *these same kinds of questions* were being discussed among North American executive leaders of mission organizations by other members of the FTL Team. The content applies across the board.

Serious questions for serious people.

Whether we are with North American executives in Orange County, California, or among ministry leaders residing in Torit, South Sudan; one principle is consistently true: **all of us is smarter than any one of us.** And there is certainly something we can learn from each other.

My understanding of the gospel, the global church, and the Lord is much richer for having interacted among our FTL ministry partners this month in East Africa. I am grateful for the experience.

Today, I invite each of you into this same experience. **Partner with Freedom to Lead** and witness what God can do as we each work together and learn from each other.

 *Michelle Jensen*
CEO, Freedom to Lead International

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