

# **Insights for the 21st Century**

*Engagement, Action, and Global Impact for the  
Christian Community*

By

**Arthur A. Boni**

*With contributions by George M. White*

**Insights for the 21st Century: Engagement, Action, and Global Impact for  
the Christian Community**

**By Arthur A. Boni**

**With contributions by George M. White**

**This book first published 2023**

**Ethics International Press Ltd, UK**

**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

**A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library**

**Copyright © 2023 by Arthur A. Boni**

**All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced,  
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,  
electronic, mechanical photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the  
prior permission of the copyright owner.**

**Print Book ISBN: 978-1-80441-201-5**

**eBook ISBN: 978-1-80441-202-2**

## Table of Contents

Preface .....	ix
Part One	
Personal Background, Perspectives, and Insights for 21st Century Christians.....	1
Part Two	
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Insights for Creating Cross-Cultural Collaborations to Lead Change: A Perspective and Case Study on a unique Christian/Muslim collaboration in Qatar .....	105
Epilogue	
A Call to Action: Blending Religion, Ethics, and Cross-Cultural Alliances.....	141

# Preface

This book is dedicated to the rationale, challenges, opportunities, and strategies for enabling and accelerating the Christian Community to focus on outreach to those in need throughout the world. We also explore the potential for exploring cross-faith alliances of Abrahamic faiths. Our intent is to provide insights and options for consideration of lay leaders and clergy as they confront the many challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, as the church faces local, regional, national, and international societal changes and challenges. And, in some instances disruptions that are significant both individually and intuitionally. We define the church herein, as *we the people* vs. *the structures* in which we worship.

**Part One** focuses on our insights and rationale for leading change and for making an impact collectively as a Christian organization. We include a personal background of the principal author, and also illustrate the challenges and evolution via personal background and experiences. This personal retrospective and perspective of a personal Christian trajectory is then augmented by several book reviews and commentaries to provide other perspectives and points of view. This section also includes personal examples of inspirational leaders and some of the key, enabling programs that they led in US churches. We then expand to illustrate examples via several mini-case studies for several of these churches, all based on personal experiences where I've been engaged in leadership roles as we faced the need for organizational transformation.

We then move to an expanded vision for a Christian community that focuses collectively on solutions to societal needs, as we consider an interfaith approach focused on serving others through a unified faith-community. We suggest that a mechanism for implementation based around coalitions, to be developed as appropriate, that are based on

partnerships and alliances – and that is explored in more depth in **Part Two** and the **Epilogue**. **Part One** also includes a summary of 7 best practices for individuals in their respective faith journeys.

**Part Two** is co-authored with Dr. George M. White. We are long-time colleagues who collaborated to develop this section of the publication. Together, we each provide our perspectives on a unique, and extensive case study that focuses on an economic development initiative that focused on providing higher education to equip the population in a Muslim country as an economic development initiative. This case describes one approach to a cross-faith, ethical outreach from the US to provide 21<sup>st</sup> century economic solutions for a Middle East, Muslim country - Qatar. So, he provides that “up close and personal” perspective that comes from full immersion into another culture. And he provides a cross-religious perspective with his deep insights into the Muslim society in Doha. And, beyond that he reflects with deep insights into the role of collective intelligence, including the emergence of artificial intelligence through chat bots and other “human level” systems that are now emerging.

The Qatar initiative has been implemented via a unique partnership with Carnegie Mellon University as one partner in a broader educational alliance developed by the Qatari government, engaging several other leading higher-education organizations based in the United States. We worked together in this Middle East, Muslim country, and we each have unique personal experiences in building and staffing this bold, new educational initiative focused on building a diversified economy for Qatar in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. I worked as a startup and early-stage leader and partner. I remained in Pittsburgh, but became a very frequent “commuter” to Qatar, and a distance participant via regular internet access. But I certainly learned a lot about the local culture and religious differences, albeit as a transient, but frequent visitor. However, George took the bold step of moving there with his family, and he

stayed on for a much longer period of time as noted in **Part Two**. George and his family had a more in-depth experience than I, as long-term residents in that culture.

In summary, our brief preview of this bold and unique initiative where we worked together with the Qatari government (via the Qatar Foundation) to launch and run educational programs from their Education City initiative is described in more detail below. Our perspective comes from the Carnegie Mellon University branch campus that was launched and located there at the invitation and sponsorship of the Qatar Foundation (along with multiple US-based top tier universities – see more detail in Part Two). Our emphasis was to create a university degreeed, 4 – year educational program with specializations in Computer Science and Business.

And we also launched and ran an executive level program focused on entrepreneurship. That initiative required additional partnerships to provide financial investments and an infrastructure for forming and growing new ventures – some high tech, some medical, and some for local businesses related to services needed in the growing and diversifying economy. This initiative included a hybrid, on-line model designed to provide both international and local participation of experts to lead the activation and progress of economic diversification – through both in-person and digital communication modalities.

My analogy for this unique Qatar initiative is the **“Doctors without Borders”** initiative. Educated professionals from the US, and elsewhere came to Qatar to provide their services and expertise to build a new economy beyond the gas industry. But we took it to the next level.

George and his family moved there and became part of their society for over 15 years, so his personal perspective on not only working collaboratively in a Muslim country, but living there with

his family is most illuminating and compelling. Through this experience, we all learned to work together, cross religions and customs to enable Qatar to transition its economy into a higher level of world leadership, and to advance economic opportunities for its population in the global economy. The presence of CMU and other well recognized US universities that set up branch campuses there catalyzed and enabled their Vision 2030. Recent evidence of success is noted as Qatar provided worldwide coverage during the recent World Cup 2022. And, also as host to regular economic forums. We leave scaling and potential replication of this unique initiative for further speculation at this time, but George comments on a few lessons learned in the process that illustrates cross-faith ethical solutions to provide expertise and education for enabling local action to improve life styles and economic competitiveness through education. "If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime." The analog here is that if you teach a population to create and partner with others, they will grow and survive in an expanding world economy. As evidence, we note the 2023 Qatar Economic Forum as quoted from a Bloomberg Evening Briefing publication: "Join global business leaders, policy experts and emerging voices in finance, technology, media and sports in Doha and virtually on May 23-25 as they identify the latest trends set to drive economic growth into the next decade".

In summary, Dr. White provides that "up close and personal" perspective that comes from full immersion into another culture. And he provides both cross-religious perspective with deep insights into the Muslim society in Doha. And, beyond that he reflects with deep insights into the role of collective intelligence, including the emergence of artificial intelligence through chat bots and other "human level" systems that are now emerging. His unique perspective on the role of education, in a religious context, with a strong blend of ethics provides an excellent complement to **Part One** and sets up our **Epilogue**.

The concluding **Epilogue** builds on the inspirations and lessons provided in **Parts One** and **Two** and, takes a deeper dive into the ethical issues that are still emerging as technological advancements are underway. We discuss how ethics and religion can be combined to work collectively to solve local and international issues where cross-faith collaboration and collective intelligence can come into play to solve societal issues and challenges. In the **Epilogue** we suggest considerations and potential direction for taking some bold next steps to explore the formation of a three-part *Abrahamic alliance of Christians, Muslims, and Jews*. One step at a time, but taken together! The purpose of such an alliance would be to take the lessons of **Parts One** and **Two** to the next level through exploratory alliances designed to enhance the power and reach of the religious community. Perhaps, we can work together collectively to solve important societal issues that are especially important not only in the Middle East, but also worldwide.

Our rationale is that the origins of these three faiths are based on our common roots stemming from the Jewish prophet Abraham. We focus on how an ethical, cross faith, religious collaboration can become a catalyst for action to drive change incrementally through bold steps framed by such a three-party alliance. We suggest that working together collaboratively to solve some of the world's toughest problems and issues could be a potential route to solving pressing societal issues, and perhaps moving a step towards world peace. It goes without saying that this hypothesis remains to be proved.

*Arthur A. Boni, Ph. D., is John R. Thorne Distinguished Career Professor of Entrepreneurship, Emeritus, Carnegie Mellon University, Pennsylvania, USA.*

*George M. White, Ph. D., is Distinguished Career Professor of Entrepreneurship, Emeritus, Carnegie Mellon University, Pennsylvania, USA.*



## Part One

*Arthur A. Boni, Ph. D. with commentary from others as  
acknowledged herein*

# Personal Background, Perspectives, and Insights for 21st Century Christians

## **Part one - introduction and overview**

We live in a complex world that is full of significant needs and challenges, and the pace is accelerating. We hear and read about them in the news every day as our 24/7 society seems to continue to unravel inexorably. Most of us are too busy, or focused on dealing with the challenges and priorities in our own lives to act more broadly. However, we should remember, that we are taught to “do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” also known as the “Golden Rule”. Or, from the Gospel of Mark, “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength; and love your neighbor as yourself”. But, how to act and prioritize our lives appropriately?

Perhaps a few motivational quotes from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream speech” might give us some motivation and insights. Consider the following for perspective and inspiration:

“Love is the greatest force in the universe. It is the heartbeat of the moral cosmos. He who loves is a participant in the being of God.”

“Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?”

Or, if you prefer, a quote from the late Fred Rogers ( a Presbyterian minister) who created the world-famous TV show Mr. Rogers Neighborhood in Pittsburgh, PA, just adjacent to the Carnegie Mellon University campus. He talked about loving your neighbor, and he demonstrated that in plain language and actions on his

famous show, and in his real life as I observed personally in Pittsburgh (we both belong to the Pittsburgh Athletic Association where he swam daily). Here is one example:

“Love isn't a state of perfect caring. It is an active noun like struggle. To love someone is to strive to accept that person exactly the way he or she is, right here and now.”

So, we define our “neighbor” to reflect all of those around us, in need, with common interests, wherever they are, or whoever they are. With the right approach for outreach, we can influence them. In today's complex society, it is important to recognize that our neighbor is defined much more broadly than those who live next door, or in our close proximity.

National and global issues such as racial discrimination, sexual identification, homelessness, hunger, gun control, etc. have no boundaries. Tom Friedman, in his recent book “The World is Flat” has spread the message that we live in a well-connected “flat earth” in the 21st Century. So, today the whole world is indeed our neighbor. We are called, and we can and should respond individually to our global and unfilled societal needs. To achieve this goal, however, we need to recognize that responding together as a broader, collective Christian community is more effective. (And, as noted we go on in **Part Two** and the **Epilogue** to suggest including all Abrahamic faiths in an alliance). Collective action is a “force multiplier” and has greater potential for impact than any one entity acting alone. Of course, we need to understand that this is indeed a very big challenge. So, once we have a broader understanding and vision of the problem, we then need to learn how to work collectively with others as part of this broader community to begin dealing with the problems. And, as we discuss later working *with a sense of urgency*. Allying with those who can and want to collaborate with us, should be both necessary and sufficient parts of our attempts at solutions.

In this publication, I have attempted to develop a collection of insights and reflections (by myself and from others) on the topic of “making the world a better place for all” and bringing *love* into the broader world community. While my perspective comes from being part of the Christian community, I consider that the magnitude of these issues involved requires broader perspectives beyond any one church, or even any one denomination (or even any one faith). The church, defined herein as *the true body of Christians* (not the physical structure itself), is a necessary, but not sufficient catalyst for change. To be more effective, consider incorporating broader alliances into the not-for-profit world, with governments, and even other faiths (as we do in Part 2). To accomplish broader objectives we need to build and leverage the power of networks, and to leverage our collective intelligence with others.

The insights and suggestions herein are based on my own leadership experiences that span multiple churches, private sector organizations (both established and entrepreneurial companies), and also include several pivotal academic teaching, and administrative leadership roles. My own experiences as an entrepreneur and educator, as inspired by others, have led me to believe that we should work to harness the power of local action to leverage the power of networks and alliances more broadly. Networks are “today’s superpower” as discussed in more detail later. Collectively, we can make a larger impact that addresses our significant social and political issues. I believe that actions, taken with a sense of urgency, and inspired by a balanced guiding coalition of lay and church leadership is the force that has the potential to power solutions for those in need, and who are being treated unjustly. These issues exist beyond the boundaries of the church (or denomination, or faith); and, in my opinion have a higher priority than what happens within the walls of any one place where we gather to worship. Along my own career trajectory, I have found and advocate a judicious and inspired use of the tool sets and models for innovation and leadership that have been developed and

validated in the academic and private sectors. These can be used to enable and power the entrepreneurial and innovative approaches that are needed. Transformations do not happen without inspired leaders, surrounded by appropriate and engaged teams, and with proven tools, methodologies, and models to guide the way.

My own experiences and leadership roles in multiple churches, and having a strong faith, have motivated me to a recent period of internal reflection and discernment, and to learn from others how to build and leverage my faith going forward. During this period of discernment, my own insights and perspectives shared herein have been augmented, framed, and inspired by the examples, publications and insights of others. I have been energized and inspired by reading 5 relatively current books, and one classic book. My brief reviews and discussions of these books are included herein as background reading, study, and reflection materials for others. But, please read the books as you can!

These authors and book titles are: Richard Stearns (*The Hole in the Gospel*), Carnegie Samuel Calian (*The Biblical Passport*); Lee Strobel (*The Case for Christ*); Mary Parmer (*Invite, Welcome, Connect*); and, Michael Curry (*Love is the Way*). Additionally, I include one classic book. This book (*Mere Christianity*) was written by C. S. Lewis, back in World War II days. He inspired a generation with his discovery of Christianity, and his works have led all Christian religions to a common ground. While this book is a classic, it is still relevant today. My overviews of these books extract and summarize their messages as an appropriate background and perspective to inform us how to lead our lives today: to love and serve God and our 'neighbors' as ourselves.

And any publication on this topic must incorporate a few, selected Bible verses interspersed appropriately. These are a few anchors that form the basis for our faith, and are intended to focus on and provide

perspectives on the issues that we face today – but sometimes their application is neither obvious, nor easy. So, to augment these readings, I also include a recent, inspirational sermon delivered by Rev. Don Callison (at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church in Napa, CA) at the beginning of Black History Month.

My personal roots, academic training, serial entrepreneurial background, and leadership of a top-tier entrepreneurship program at Carnegie Mellon University led me to combine and synthesize these reflections and readings. And, to provide perspective with specifics, I’ve included several case studies on several churches and their ministries. I chose churches that I have been affiliated with over the years, so these are based on personal experiences. And, since it is a topic not generally understood outside of academia, I’ve included a short sidebar overview on the topic of leveraging collective intelligence to develop and deploy solutions in these churches (Dr. White provides further insights on this topic in **Part Two**). Hopefully, these examples will provide inspiration for others as they follow similar paths of outreach in their own churches and lives.

My goal and motivation for developing this book is that you consider my insights and reflections on these books, Bible verses and case studies to motivate yourself to “dig deeper” in your own “faith journeys” – but, more importantly to act! Consider entering into discussions with like-minded people (and perhaps those who may not be like-minded people) as you discern your own path, and perhaps for your own church working collectively with others. As you proceed, please keep in mind: *“love your neighbor as yourself”*.

## **Personal background, perspectives, and insights for 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians**

Naturally, our own history provides perspectives, beliefs, and biases to interpret and ultimately to take actions, or not. As I read the books

cited above, and appropriate Bible verses, I reflected on my own personal life, and on my professional life in the private and academic sectors. Personally, I have been an active church leader as my career progressed and took me across the country several times – Pittsburgh, San Diego, New Haven, Boston, back to Pittsburgh, and now to Napa (with a few brief stops in Los Angeles). I also traveled extensively around the country and world (mainly Europe, Central and South America, Middle East) during my career. So my perspective is local, national and international; and in several Christian denominations (Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, Episcopal Church USA).

During my professional life I have encountered and worked with a broad cross section of people of all faiths; and some with none. The books included herein assisted me as I processed my own experiences and discerned how to turn my beliefs into individual actions, and also how to work collectively with others to pursue opportunities and to fill needs with solutions. While all of these books inspired me and educated me, I found that the “Biblical Passport” was outstanding for a personal and individual fine tuning and balance. And it reinforced the teachings of the Bible. Sam Calian is the author. Sam led the top-level Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA before retirement and then writing this book. Also, as I reflected on the state of our society today, one of the books that stood out and “spoke to me” was “The Hole in the Gospel.” Richard Stearns inspired me because both of us came to the church as leaders in the private sector. Stearns moved, after much discernment, from the private sector into his leadership role at World Vision. For those unfamiliar, World Vision is a global organization that partners with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potentials. I have a similar path to Stearns, but a little different in that I was able to augment my private sector experience, “pivot into the academic sector” along the way, and also engage in church leadership roles in parallel. This background provided me with additional tools, insights,

and the ability to engage more effectively in a church leadership role as a lay person. But one who has been informed not only by personal experience, but also by state-of-art leadership models for innovation.

Currently, as I recently “retired” and took Emeritus status from academia, I have found that in my post-retirement age, I needed to be even more strident about “rewiring” and transitioning my long-held Christian beliefs into actions by myself. But, in my career I found that by working collectively with others is the best way to help develop solutions to the many problems facing our troubled world. So, I find myself asking more and more frequently; “where can I, but working with others connect, and contribute collectively to develop transformative solutions for the significant issues facing the world”? Where can the broader church itself engage, and how? For those unfamiliar with the topic, see the brief sidebar on the power of collective intelligence. Dr. White has a more extensive discussion in **Part Two**.

### **A Sidebar on the topics of Collective Intelligence and The Power of Networks**

I use the terms collective intelligence and the power of networks frequently. Why? Because they are so essential to driving change and innovation. As an active author on these topics, they are familiar parts of my “innovation jargon”. But unfortunately these concepts are not so familiar to others in the religious sectors. While all organizations are driven by passionate leaders, religious organizations are most often led by clergy, many of which have little experience with a more shared-leadership role. Those who do excel! The following is intended to provide some perspective on the power of shared leadership and leveraging collective intelligence.



At its essence, collective intelligence can be defined succinctly as follows: collective intelligence is the ability of groups or teams to make better decisions than individuals working alone. I learned this early in my career as a Sr. VP at Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) – a unicorn before the team became common in Silicon Valley. The diversity of opinion and backgrounds enables the team to see a problem or opportunity through different perspectives. In effect, “all of us is smarter than any of us”. As we discuss later in the book, the “innovator’s DNA” consists of 5 elements: associative thinking, questioning, observing, experimenting, and networking (as proposed by Dyer, Gregerson and Christiansen in “The Innovator’s DNA”). I’d suggest that the collective intelligence of the team is more powerful than individuals, or of a team consisting only of these those with the same backgrounds.

To be more specific:

*“Collective intelligence is shared or group intelligence that emerges from the collaboration, collective efforts, and competition of many individuals and appears in consensus decision making. The term appears in sociobiology, political science and in context of mass peer review and crowdsourcing applications” Wikipedia*

*“Alternatively, collective intelligence is the process by which a large group of individuals gather and share their knowledge, data and skills for the purpose of solving their common issues, including societal issues”.*

According to theorists Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams in their book “Wikinomics”, “collective

intelligence is an outcome of group behavior, that they categorize as mass collaboration framed by four distinct principles: *Openness, Peering, Sharing, and Acting Globally*".

For an even deeper dive, the interested reader can refer to our concluding section, where we include more information on collective intelligence as it relates to a church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. But also to the book recently written by my colleague Dr. George M. White. While White's book ("*The Mystery of Collective Intelligence*", Ethics Press, 2022) focuses on business and government, there are lessons to be learned for contemporary and enlightened church leadership (both lay and clergy). So, I asked him to contribute his insights to this publication, and thankfully he agreed!). I am a big fan of "cross industry" benchmarking to learn best practices related to innovation. And the church can learn much from the private sector. Some of that can be brought by those of our members and alliance partners who have private sector experience.

## **The Power of Networks**

In today's society, another key lesson is to build and leverage the power of networks to multiply our local efforts. Networks have proven to be needed in the private sector as the economy globalizes. My colleague Mikel Mangold has just published an excellent book on this topic, and I've incorporated portions of my book overview below.

*"Today's Superpower - Building Networks by Mikel Mangold"* (New Degree Press, 2022). – "I read this book with

enthusiasm since I have worked with and studied innovation alliances and networks throughout my career in the private sector and then in academia. I met Mikel recently while he was working in Silicon Valley and co-authoring an article on networks and innovation ecosystems with a colleague of mine, Diana Joseph, who founded and runs the Corporate Accelerator Forum, and with Susan Windham-Bannister who was a pioneer in building the Boston ecosystem". We published their work in the J. Commercial Biotechnology where I served as Editor in Chief until 2022. Most pertinent to the present topic is by Arthur A. Boni, see "Keys for Building and Leading Teams for Innovation in Organizations: Three Book Reviews & Commentaries"; J. Commercial Biotechnology, Vol. 27, No. 2, pp 30-44.

Here are a few quotes from Boni on Mangold's book: "I encourage those in the not-for profit or government sectors to read this summary article, since they too play very important roles in the innovation ecosystem" These partnerships can likewise be important to make an impact globally in the religious world. And, to the emerging networks and ecosystems in various industries globally. "In that regard, the book provides a wealth of information and perspective, including an in-depth dive into the world class Silicon Valley ecosystem that spans multiple industries and market segments".

"Mangold illustrates that the essential ingredient for any successful ecosystem includes what he terms "their super power" - the *networks that are necessary to permit interactions between the parties that comprise the innovation ecosystem*. This is a book that frames the topic of the

collaborative innovation networks and ecosystems that are needed to provide the needed products and services globally in the coming decades. And, this book is industry “agnostic”, and therefore relevant to those who are interested in collaborative innovation in any industry.” I’d further add, and to close this sidebar, that the concept and framework of collective intelligence should also be considered to enhance the worldwide impact of religion as we all consider how to increase the impact of our efforts. And we do that herein – as a starter!

With that as background and perspective, a brief synopsis on my own life history and life trajectory demonstrates that I have made many contributions while working collectively with others, all intended to “better humanity”. First as an engineer, scientist and entrepreneurial leader in the aerospace industry (focused on defense and laser technology – remember “Star Wars”); and, later I had a “professional epiphany” when I decided to focus my professional time and talent by contributing to some of the pressing needs of our times; e. g. to the broader fields of innovation in emerging areas of national importance, e.g. energy, environment, and global warming/climate change, as these were becoming more of an issue; and, then a bit later by focusing on biopharma and digital healthcare technologies in the US and globally. These are significant needs that can be filled through the use of emerging transformative technologies, and I was trained well and with great mentorship to make contributions as an entrepreneur who sought new opportunities – and, along the way, “to give back”. A common goal for how I lead my own life.

My pathway, to be expanded later, resulted in considerable development of my “entrepreneurial genes” that have been “honed” through leadership roles in numerous startup, early-stage, and

emerging companies. But, it is fair to point out that my life-long history includes many excellent mentors and role models in the private and educational sectors. Then, after working with multiple private-sector organizations, I made a conscious decision (that I often refer to as an epiphany): to return to academia and devote my time and talent to educating the next generation of entrepreneurs seeking to transform the world through their innovations. What a force multiplier! And, in parallel along the way, I served in leadership roles at multiple churches and denominations, working closely with the clergy and other lay leaders. My goal has always been to recognize opportunities, and to work with others to transform organizations (including the church) to pursue those diverse opportunities. Sometimes the church is a little harder to move forward; and, for those like me who are more entrepreneurial it takes some patience! So, I have learned that patience is indeed a virtue.

Now, I'm now at the end of my professional career, but still contributing to the church and to my profession in different ways as I describe in the following. And now, during a period of personal discernment after my last church leadership role at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Napa, CA, I had another call/epiphany that led me to reflect on this important topic - what unfilled needs can I continue to fill, how to do it and to share my journey with others, and more importantly activate them to join into whatever solutions we envision collectively.

Therefore, after spending time reflecting, reading, and learning; I decided to document the process and share it through this book with a broader audience. Specifically, my goal is do more to encourage others to be motivated to be part of the solution, as the US and world situation continues to be a major challenge for all of us. Through this publication, I hope to provide an example and motivation for others to follow. In this sense, I am following Richard Stearns'

recommendation (as you will see later) - we all need to answer the “call to action” through examples from the New Testament, and as taught by Jesus. As Stearns so aptly puts it, each of us is called to fill the ‘*hole in the gospel*’ – “to reach out and serve others” through our time, talent, and treasure. This publication is my contribution for us all to hear and respond to that call, and is intended for discernment by those who choose to read the Stearns book. All is based on my reflections on the topic of a loving God, and how we can serve our “neighbors” – broadly defined.

With the above reflections as motivation and background, I have come to an opinion that our current world situation is *a high motivator for all of us not only to reflect, but to engage and become an important part of potential solutions*. And, since there is some sense of urgency, the time is now. We can no longer be separated from social justice, invasion of borders, immigrants fleeing to escape oppression, or to ignore the multitude of numerous social issues that confront our society. What does God expect from us (and specifically me) as followers of the teachings of Jesus? Here is an observation from Matthew 4:12-23. This passage was taken from a recent gospel reading at our current church (St. Mary’s in Napa, CA). In this verse, John the Baptist had been arrested and Jesus began to proclaim, “repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near”. He then began to recruit disciples to go out among the people (there was no church per se, other than the Jewish temple). This verse deals with the calls by Jesus to James and his brother John to join him “to fish for people”. This early Christian movement was made possible by the disciples that Jesus recruited and inspired, and then by Paul, and others who then joined in progressively as they all spread out from Jerusalem, westward to Rome (and beyond). And that led to the beginnings and ultimate growth of the Christian church.

But what does that mean for us today? We should all not only listen for that call, but to answer it with informed action! Be a 21<sup>st</sup> Century

disciple, and go forth to demonstrate what can be done (collectively) to solve the challenges that we face today. I see this message as a call to discipleship for all of us. The world is certainly in need of inspired leadership and commitment.

So, (in marketing language) I believe that the primary target audience for this publication is the broader multi-denominational Christian community. And, to provide a “wakeup call” or “call to arms” if you choose for all. Beyond that, segments of our target audience might include those in Christian education, and those being educated in our seminaries for service in the modern-day clergy. Additionally, existing Church leaders and lay members are called to follow these words. I have attempted to provide materials that would be suitable for Bible study and discussion groups that would stimulate serving others; and, for believers who just want to refresh their own journeys given the current world situation, i. e. to those contemplating how to understand need and engage actively in outreach.

And, thinking even more broadly, the audience could include those who are curious about the Christian faith, and serving others, even those outside our Christian community. We do have common roots with other Abrahamic faiths; e. g. Jews and Muslims. Bridging this gap might create a powerful alliance (as we cover in the **Part Two and in the Epilogue**). Further, we share our planet with other religions such as Hindus, and Buddhists. Perhaps we could eventually expand to create even more broadly defined interfaith solutions? (that would be both novel and powerful!). Imagine all working together collectively to make this planet that we share a better place for all. In any event, we each have responsibilities as world-citizens for improving our lives, the lives of others, our cities, our countries, and our planet. Each of us as individuals must hear and answer the call to reach out and to serve. But we’ll leave that contemplation for now, and focus first on what we as a

Christian community can do while engaging others incrementally and later as we go forward. One step at a time.

As noted earlier, my own background is similar to Stearns in that I am a “churched” person (as discussed later), and also one who has had significant leadership experience in private sector businesses focusing on entrepreneurial solutions for societal problems in biopharma and healthcare, and problems in national defense. But in my case, also as an academic teacher/professor, and administrator in several, top level universities. Furthermore, I have also been immersed in the global community during my career (through numerous trips and speaking engagements in Europe, the Middle East, and South America). So, I would qualify as one who has been active in serving the needs of others, including our governing bodies (national defense, energy, environment, and health). As Stearns said, the church can benefit greatly from the use of appropriate tools adopted and adapted from the private sector. I’d strongly second that opinion, and also add that leadership of innovation (and that is what we are talking about) calls for similar skills to be applied to non-profit, and philanthropic organizations, including the church. So, this publication is in response to the call that I received!

I have attempted to discern how to lead a Christian life from the Bible, written centuries ago. This is supplemented by what I have learned about leadership and change during my professional career. In addition, this is supplemented by what I have learned from other leaders via the book reviews/summaries included herein. My intent is to ignite and accelerate my own “sense of urgency”, but also to engage and partner with others to inspire their actions, and to collectively accelerate our stewardship to address compelling needs in our challenged global community.

As a preview, we end **Part One** of this publication with a “Top Seven list” of best practices that I suggest as guides for our individual and



collective actions. These “learning or teaching objectives” (jargon that we use in the academic world) are intended for discernment by readers and leaders seeking directions for impacting the local and broader world community.

## **A deeper dive into my personal inspirations, perspectives, and methodology**

To take a retrospective look and to provide a little more background on myself, as I thought about this publication I was motivated by several things. First and foremost: I needed to assess the state of my soul and relationship with God; and, second, to reflect on my “trajectory” forward, and how that relates to my current need to address issues in the current state of our troubled world. Basically, how might I engage (with others of like minds) in a common quest to address challenging world issues through our religion and beliefs. In short, my goals were: to discern the call of my heart; and, to formulate potential collaborative actions with others to answer the call collectively. As I discuss later, I learned early in my career, that “all of us is smarter than any of us”! And, that both inspiration, collaboration, and a common vision is demanded for progress to be made.

As covered later, I am a life-long Christian with an inter-denominational background that varied as I moved around the US from east to west several times during my professional life. I have been an active lay leader in multiple churches and denominations during my youth and college years; during my professional career in academia and in the private sector as an entrepreneur; and then continued during a return to academia. During my career, I have led private sector organizations, business units, academic units, served on multiple boards (for-profit and not for profit), all while serving as a lay leader in the churches we attended. I have demonstrated (as

my wife has appropriately noted) that I lack the ability to retire. So, I continually find challenges that I feel need to be addressed. For example, while I am working on this publication, I am working in parallel with some colleagues in different cities to start a new, 21<sup>st</sup> century publishing platform for global biopharma and digital transformation through collective transformation. As a colleague said, I am “rewiring” and not retiring. So, let’s go back to my youth to set the stage.

As personal background, I am a naturally inquisitive person, who was always taught to “do the right thing” by my parents (those words are imbedded into my DNA). And, from an early age I always sought wisdom from the Bible, and from my parents who had great faith as demonstrated through their own actions in our family and in our small Western PA coal and steel community. My grandparents on both sides of the family were Italian immigrants seeking better lives, and became part of the labor pool since their educations were lacking. So, everyone had to work to “put food on the table”. My Dad became a foreman in a local coal strip mining company (he was a natural leader), and my Mother stayed home to take care of me and my sister.

Also, my paternal grandmother was very religious, and that influenced all of us. She was a co-founder of a church that was not in the Catholic tradition. That Italian Christian Church still exists today, and follows more evangelical traditions. After my parent’s marriage in my mother’s Catholic Church located in an adjacent community, my father had a hard time accommodating to my mother’s Catholic traditions, and the rigidity of the local church. So, in effect, while we were “not churching” per se, we lived a life that was based on strong faith. My grandmother, who was very outgoing, had a great influence on all of our faiths and beliefs, even though my parents were not active in her church. So, as I grew up, religion was always at the center of our lives. But, my own formal religious experience started in my

elementary school years, as I chose to attend the Presbyterian church that was located several houses down the block of our small town. So, I walked for a few minutes, and followed my friends there as a regular Sunday School participant. That inspired my parents to follow, and they joined soon thereafter, and become very active members. This Presbyterian church, with an inspirational leader, motivated and inspired me to seek “translation” of what happened 2000 years ago, but to apply it to our current context, and with an intent to meet contemporary societal needs. So, I’ve always had a compelling religious base “embedded in my DNA”. I learned how to relate what we were taught and was written in the Bible; and to relate that to the challenges and issues that we face as we try to live in an ever challenged and troubled society. While life was much simpler in that era, the message is there. The challenge is to translate that message into a current context that evolved over time.

As a result, I believe in a God of love, and in the great commandments found in Matthew 22: 34-40, where we are taught that: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all your heart, and with your soul, and with all of your mind. And love you neighbor as yourself.” These are the two great commandments that lay the foundation for all of the laws and commandments that follow. And, I am also inspired by the teachings of Jesus, who gathered and enabled the disciples, and the multitudes whom He inspired. Pretty simple principles, but some are more difficult, and most can be hard to follow.

Fast forwarding into the present context, how do we as Christians rationalize the broken world in which we currently live? I believe that now is the time for us to have a sense of urgency to act as we say and believe. As was popular a number of decades ago; “what would Jesus do” (WWJD). That phrase is still relevant, but needs to be translated into today’s world. WWJD today given our current situation? We all need to develop a sense of urgency ( a common theme that we will cover later) to reach out and engage in our

communities to help those in need – those who are near us, and those not so near. Acting is harder than thinking, so we all need to chart a journey or path that enables us to understand the challenges, and prepare ourselves for action.

My current business/entrepreneurial perspective tells me that we may need to make a few “pivots” along the way, as we encounter the realities of life and its many challenges. Where to start in the world today? *Poverty, hunger, racial unrest, sexual orientation, abortion, gun control, climate change, healthcare for all, threats to our democracy, immigration – and the list goes on.* I believe these and others are issues that motivate us to take action collectively; and, that we as Christians have a call to lead the charge; and, to engage as a team to make those changes. Reflect on the following - what is your passion for change and leadership in your church, community, country or more globally? And, when, where, and how? It starts with developing sense of urgency, and engaging in (or organizing) a like-minded coalition of leaders to share the vision and to act collectively.

Reflecting further, I recall that I went to Sunday school weekly as a youth and was inspired to learn more. And, then later as a teen-ager I studied with our Presbyterian minister to earn the God In Country award in the Boy Scouts (Bible study coupled to service in the community). That complemented my Boy Scouts of America, Eagle Scout recognition (that also required community service). Recall that the Boy Scout Oath is: “On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and to my country, and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight”.

Supportive parents/family, Biblical grounding, and study in parallel with regular Sunday School attendance, provided a good background for my younger years prior to college. The Boy Scout training also provided more inspiration and engagement in

community service and leadership: as noted in the oath, duty to God is a cornerstone of the scouting program.

My educational background at a small, local high school was adequate given our “small coal/steel community” setting just outside of Pittsburgh, close to the West Virginia/Ohio border and Appalachia. And as a topper, I was awarded a full scholarship from a local manufacturing company after graduating high school. So, I was able and fortunate to become educated at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, while my friends settled for less prestigious paths to launch our careers. . That prepared me to leave PA for CA to participate in the upcoming space race as a young design and development engineer. The choice of space vs. coal/steel, was difficult since I did not want to leave my family. But the choice was to go West. My first job was as a Design Engineer at General Dynamics Astronautics in San Diego where I worked on developing technologies for the Atlas missile. The space race to the moon was just beginning and that call was compelling. Over time, I also became more highly educated, and ended up with multiple degrees in engineering and applied science in three top universities beyond Carnegie Mellon University and Pittsburgh; in Los Angeles (University of Southern California), and back to San Diego at the new University of California campus just starting there (UC San Diego). All the while, gaining more professional perspective and experience working to understand problems of national importance. That became a mantra for my career as it progressed.

After finishing my PhD at UC San Diego, I received an academic appointment at a prestigious Ivy League school, Yale University. Then, during a turbulent period in our society with Vietnam and racial injustice, I had an “epiphany” after about 3 years of teaching at Yale, and in parallel consulting at Pratt & Whitney (in nearby Hartford, CT) on jet engine technology. I decided that I could do higher impact work in the private sector versus remaining in

academia (and digger even deeper into the science and technology). But I learned that I did love the teaching and interacting with bright young students. My focus on applications (vs. discovery), led me to explore my interests in the private sector back in San Diego where I discovered my “entrepreneurial genes”, and then 10 years later, moved to Andover MA (Boston area) to pursue a continued career as a “serial entrepreneur and innovator.” I led and founded multiple companies in tech and MedTech, and as I became more aware of the emergence of the biotechnology revolution moved over into that domain of healthcare vs. defense. I thrive on exploring and pursuing new opportunities, making an impact, and on giving back. My career was capped later in life as I “retired” and returned to academia (at U. Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon) as an educator and administrator to give back what I had learned in the private sector through teaching, and coaching hundreds of aspiring entrepreneurs, relaunched a top tier entrepreneurship program in a top business school, while continuing to publish articles in peer-reviewed professional journals. I helped others to found multiple companies, served on boards of directors, and also founded an “a Bootcamp” for bio-entrepreneurs in partnership with the international Biotechnology Innovation Organization – BIO). To me, this was a way to “give back and serve others”.

And, as noted earlier, I also continued to give back to the church through my leadership skills and insights, while serving in a diversity of roles ranging from youth ministry to financial management, and/or serving on the governing bodies of these churches in senior leadership roles. I found that my business and leadership/entrepreneurial skills could be translated into the church to benefit its operations, and to reach out to make an impact on the broader community. I confirmed Stearns observation, that the church not only can, but should benefit from using good business practices and leadership skills.