The Heartbeat of God at Lia

BY DR. FLORENCE MUINDI, PRESIDENT AND CEO, LIA INTERNATIONAL

If it only took an ability to drum up a vision, put together a strategic direction and with charisma mobilize people, put together systems and seek funding to have an organization, corporation or government, we could respond to leadership needs all over the world. But it does not depend on all that. Leadership can be desired and taught. Even people who step into leadership can endeavor to equip and develop themselves to succeed. But the need is still far from being met.

So what does it take? It takes a person, a man or a woman, who would partner with God in his purpose. One who is willing to release their ambition and purpose, search the mind of God, know his will and align himself with it. Many times we would rather bring our plans before God and seek his blessing. No, it's the other way round. He calls us to surrender our plans. Having done that, to then identify what he wants to do and sign up for that.

God is searching. The Bible says:

"The people of the land practice extortion and commit robbery; they oppress the poor and needy and mistreat the foreigner, denying them justice. "I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one. So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign Lord." (Ezekiel 22:29-31 NIV)"
God looked for one among them. One who was willing to partner with Him. It is in the same vein that Nelson Mandela writes:

“Africa is beyond bemoaning the past for its problems. The task of undoing that past is on the shoulders of African leaders themselves, with the support of those willing to join in a continental renewal. We have a new generation of leaders who know that Africa must take responsibility for its own destiny, that Africa will uplift itself only by its own efforts in partnership with those who wish her well.”

Our story of Life in Abundance is compelling and humbling. It is a God-story and he receives the credit. He invites us to his concern. City slum communities are destitute. Physical and spiritual poverty overwhelm many in marginalized areas. Children live on the streets of Ethiopia who know not their bearing in life. Sick people have no help within reach in the depths of South Sudan. Displaced people in refugee camps all over Africa have no place they can call home and diminishing hope to regain what they once knew and valued as a way of life. God wants to restore if only we stand before him on behalf of the land and act for him.

God has invited LIA to partner with him. The invitation was accepted and work began among the Maasai in Kenya in 1996 and then thereafter in Ethiopia in 1999. Today, we find ourselves partnering with God in his plan in several countries in Africa and even the Caribbean, to avert the destruction of his people.

Hundreds of communities have been impacted. Thousands of individuals have been trained to become trainers, passing on information and skills to others. Thousands of families have broken the cycle of dependency and poverty, launching out in income generating activities with newfound faith, healed emotions, and affirmed dignity. Thousands of orphaned and vulnerable children have been reached. Close to a million individuals have received help through community mobilizing activities exemplified by health education campaigns and medical camps. Community based clinics have been placed in the most needy areas. The changed lives of those impacted by others tell the story. God’s plan displayed.

In Ethiopia, over one thousand orphans and vulnerable children, some totally living on the streets, have been effectively reached and rehabilitated. The response to AIDS through health education, church based care and support groups, youth programs, prevention of transmission from mother to child, as well as testing and counseling, has had its impact. The hope that is generated is visible and keeps us serving.

A team of national leaders has been assembled. They are the hope of the world and the hope of the poor in the communities where we work. These national leaders are not our collective hope because of what they do singlehandedly. Rather, they choose to serve in such a way that they empower local pastors and lay leaders to restore their communities to God, and to one another. LIA is not expressly a leadership development organization, but the heart and practical output of our ministry is spreading the vision that God gave us many years ago: To transform communities by mobilizing, training, and empowering churches to implement holistic ministries focusing on the suffering. We focus on the poor.

We believe that in Christ, the local Church was designed to holistically meet the needs of their community. In the area where we work, our church partners are able to realize this vision after they have been equipped and empowered to do so. This is LIA at its best: a new generation of faithful African leaders inspiring local pastors and lay leaders ‘to be Jesus’ in their community.

As Mr. Mandela states: “This work cannot be undertaken without partners who wish Africa well.” We seek and facilitate partners to join us in fulfilling what God is doing. Our Goal is to declare the Glory of God in the nations, his marvelous deeds among all people. (Psalm 96:3). Restoring back what the thief has stolen, killed and destroyed. Only God can give that life back. That is actually why Jesus came, that they may have life, and life in abundance. (John 10:10).

Leadership begins when we identify what God wants and sign up for it whole heartedly, to wherever and for whatever it takes, joining those he invites until it is done his way and to his glory.

Further information on LIA is availed on our website: www.liaint.org

Dr. Florence Muindi
President and CEO, LIA International