

Call Statement Development

CCCC exists today because God called us into existence and continues to sustain us to fulfill his purpose. We do not believe we are simply fulfilling a need or satisfying a demand. God wants something done. So as we formulate strategic and action plans, and as we make daily choices, a statement of our call will help ensure that we stay true not only to our mission, but to the specific things that we believe caused God to bring us into existence.

Since God calls people not organizations, as a way of discerning God's call (purpose) for CCCC we asked people associated with CCCC if they felt the work of CCCC aligns with a particular call they already had on their own lives before their connection with CCCC began.

Our Founder

God gave our founder, Ian Stanley (Vice President of Stewardship at World Vision Canada), a heart for the welfare of Christians in vocational Christian work. His primary concern was that after years of service, people were retiring with nothing but their faith that "the Lord will provide" to sustain them. They had no savings and few assets, particularly missionaries who had served overseas. His goal was to provide Christian workers with a pension plan for their retirement. This was a long term vision as there was no organization in existence then to host such a plan. Later he also wanted to provide a group benefit plan while they were still serving.

Ian saw his opportunity to develop that organization when he was asked to give a workshop on stewardship at a conference in Ottawa. Not only was his workshop packed, but people who had attended other sessions came afterwards and took all his remaining handouts. He quickly realized there was a great need for stewardship education and that this need could be the basis for a financially-viable organization that would provide the retirement plan he first dreamed of. On October 12, 1972 he met in Scarborough, Ontario with six friends from Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario and founded CCCC to provide stewardship education. He was chair of the working board from 1972 to 1979.

Ian's story shows that our original call was to care for ministry employees and the means of funding an organization to do that was by providing stewardship training.

Our working board Chair

Ian was succeeded in 1979 by another World Vision vice president, Ken Dick, whom Ian had recruited to World Vision a few years earlier. Ken was board chair from 1979 to 1985. By the time he took leadership of CCCC, it had enough members to make it possible to offer a registered pension plan and group benefit plan. He completed Ian's vision and sense of call for CCCC by arranging the transfer of World Vision's pension and benefit plans to CCCC. Both became multi-employer plans that still serve the needs of ministry staff members today.

Ken discerned an expanded call for CCCC. He saw the need not only for stewardship education but also for administrative help. We began writing about matters related to charity regulation and the Income Tax Act and taking questions from our members. Ken hired our first staff member, Frank Luellau, to provide the capacity to do this new work.

During Ken's time, we perceived an expanded call to serve the administrative needs of Christian ministries.

Our first Executive Director

At the time he was asked to lead CCCC, Frank was working for The Gideons. He served as our executive director from 1983 to 2003. A fellow Gideon worker had asked him if he could imagine working in any other ministry, and he replied, 'No.' His workmate challenged him to think more deeply about what type of ministry he would be willing to serve in if he were not at The Gideons. After some reflection, Frank told him the other ministry would have to be even more ecumenical than The Gideons.. When Frank was later asked to consider the position at CCCC, he discovered that CCCC was an evangelical ministry that was more ecumenical than The Gideons because it served the whole church..

Frank felt that the willingness to serve all Christian ministries aligned with his personal call to service.

Our current CEO

In 2003 leadership passed to the current CEO, John Pellowe, who by the age of ten understood that he was called by God to serve "the church" some day. He did not understand how someone could serve the entire church, so he waited until God initiated something. When CCCC offered the job to John, he was in the process of becoming a pastor. Providentially, the same weekend that the offer was made, he was leaving for a one week spiritual retreat. The spiritual director suggested John spend a day in silence and solitude and talk with Jesus about whether to serve in a church or at CCCC. This conversation, recorded in writing as it happened, turned out to be the specific call that has guided John's leadership of CCCC ever since. While the Lord left the career choice with John, John felt impressed by these considerations:

- Christian ministries should be above reproach in all aspects of their management and operations.
- Anything less hurts not only that ministry, but also Christ's reputation. His Name is impugned and his life transforming power is ridiculed when Christian ministries get themselves in trouble. The church should not itself create stumbling blocks through less than exemplary behaviour that could keep people from faith in Christ. The only thing that anyone should be able to criticize the church for is its authentic following of Christ (1 Pet 3:16, Mat 5:11).

CCCC's service to the entire church is central to John's personal call, and the Lord's purpose for CCCC is very much about integrity and excellence in the management and operations of Christian ministries.

What is very interesting is that the call perceived by the later two leaders was not in addition to what the earlier two leaders felt, but in agreement with what they had already incorporated into the life of CCCC. From the earliest days, integrity and service to the whole church were part of CCCC's DNA. So all four senior leaders have had pretty much the same, perhaps even the very same, understanding of our call.

People associated with CCCC

Corporate members, past and present directors, and staff were asked if they had any stories to share about a sense of call to CCCC. There were many who spoke about a call in the sense of being personally obedient to Christ and how that obedience led them to CCCC and their stories are a great encouragement to be a faithful disciple of Christ. I was deeply moved as I read their stories.

Those who mentioned a call that related to the actual work of CCCC spoke of:

- helping churches be administratively, operationally and legally effective and efficient,
- encouraging integrity, accountability and best practices,
- helping Christian ministries be the example of integrity and excellence for all organizations, and
- helping Christian ministries carry out their mission and advancing the kingdom of God through our work.

These stories affirm what we've already learned about our call, but the last point highlights our ultimate purpose - to work together with all Christ's ministries to advance the kingdom of God.

Statement of Call

A statement of call is a statement of historical fact, of how people perceived their call, and so it is not something that is created or crafted to please or inspire an audience. It just is. However, a call can be a living thing in that the Lord is free to change a call or make it more specific, as he did with Paul when he called him out of Asia and into Europe. There is plenty of room to interpret how a call is to be fulfilled in the vision and mission statements.

Here we provide a statement of our call (with allusion to Ephesians 4:1 and Colossians 1:10) that reflects how the four senior leaders collectively have interpreted it and which appears to be supported by the survey respondents who addressed it:

We are called to support the work of the whole church by helping ministries care for the welfare of their workers and helping them operate above reproach in a manner worthy of the call they have received, pleasing the Lord Jesus Christ in every way.

Thoughts? Questions? Interaction? Please comment.