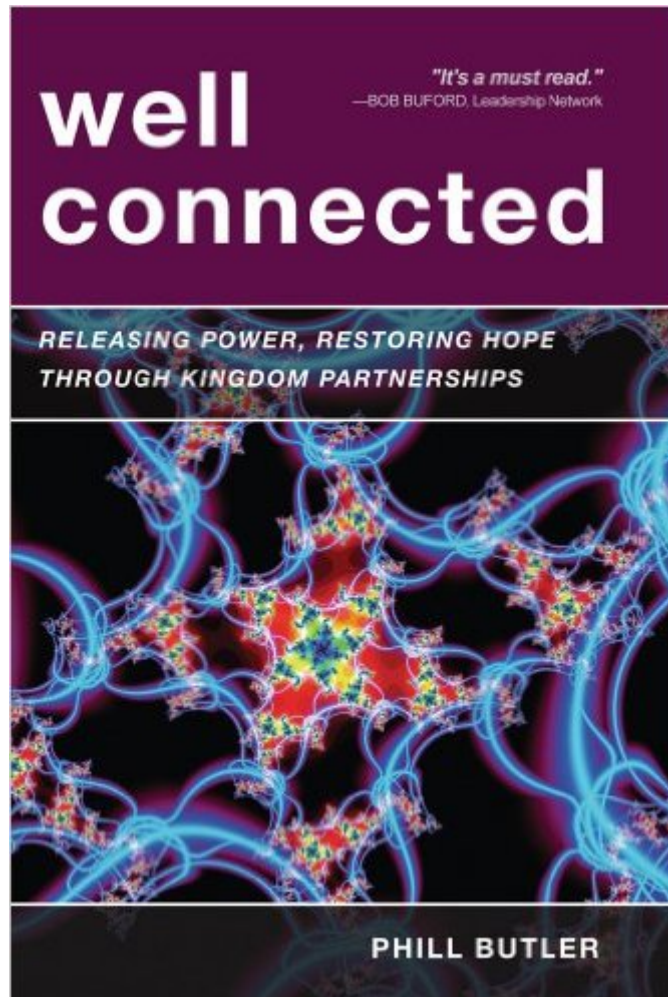


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Well Connected: Releasing Power, Restoring Hope Through Kingdom Partnerships



Synopsis

Jesus's words in John 17 represent one of the church's highest values: "May they all be one as you and I, Father, are one." Yet divisions occur from the highest levels of the church to street level projects, often neutralizing effectiveness and undercutting the credibility of Jesus's message. This book helps any believer turn the ideal of John 17 into reality. It provides solid grounding in the principles of partnership, abundant case histories, and empowering "how to" suggestions for lay person and ministry leader alike.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Phill Butler gives us one of those books that takes an action sport or skill that is usually performed on an intuitive or visceral level and reduces it to a formula. Don't get me wrong. This is not a criticism. Many of us need precisely such a formula that provides a handle, a method, or a path. Butler has given us that, and is to be thanked for doing so. Six more or less balanced sections move from top to bottom as they view the complex dance that leads to partnership among Christian churches, parachurch organizations, and related missional groups: One: The Big Picture Two: The God Design Three: Behind the Scenes Four: On the Way Five: Working It Out Six: Special Cases, Special Opportunities After telling his own story in an introduction, the author utilizes Part One ('The Big Picture') to build a case for partnership based on both pragmatic and biblical principle. In the first instance - and since 'all truth is God's truth' - Christians have much to learn from the business world and its own experience of strategic alliances. What's more, we ought to anticipate that many of the dynamics that lead to success or failure in that arena will also prove to be operative in our

own. With respect to biblical instruction on partnership, Butler believes that partnership is akin to unity and that unity is near to the Father's heart. It may work, and that's all to the good. But it's also *right*, Butler would seem to argue, and that's almost justification enough for the significant and sometimes grueling exertions that true partnership requires. Finally in Part One, the author defines the menu of alliances that are commonly available, subjugating structure and talk to matters of mission as he does so. Butler has a penchant for graphs, many of which repay careful analysis. He introduces his first one here in a visual that anticipates his perception that certain commonalities in form and process produce the possibility of discerning laws of partnership, though I am not aware that he uses such terminology. In Part Two ('The God Design'), Butler unveils the theological conviction that drives his work. Many Christians launch facile declarations about 'unity' that mistake intense preoccupation with the matter and location of one's calling with a fractious spirit. This is an unfortunate and undeliberated conclusion, and one that Butler comes perilously close to adopting as he explains why unity is God's idea before it is ours. Yet he skirts the danger by his confidence that unity is not only God's idea but God's project, thus only worthwhile as God births it, nurtures it, and teaches it to flourish. It is not essentially a feat of human engineering and is to be seen as a process that is watered by human laborers insofar as they offer prayer and relationship in service of its growth. In my judgment, Butler hits the mark with these observations and escapes the tendency of elevating partnership for partnership's sake to the top rung of an organization's strategic planning ladder. Part Three ('Behind the Scenes') fleshes out how vision, prayer, and relationship join together like three strands of a strong rope. It was not until reading Butler's Part Four ('On the Way') that I was persuaded I'd depart this book with something valuable in hand. Here WELL CONNECTED morphs into a practical manual for partnership-building to which I will refer frequently by taking it down from the book of well-thumbed manuals perched within reach on the shelf above my desk. In these pages, the author distinguishes himself as someone who has done the thing rather than as a dreamer of fine dreams that lose their pertinence by Thursday afternoon's leadership meeting. If you read only one portion of this book, start here. Parts Five ('Working It Out') and Six ('Special Cases, Special Opportunities') move the discussion in the direction of case studies and special circumstances. In doing so, they link closely to the fundamental declarations of Part Four. Phill Butler's WELL CONNECTED is not likely to be of service to you as a quick read. However, if you find yourself in leadership of a church or Christian organization, you probably already understand that today's world is not kind to those who go it alone. If you embrace that apparent fact, then this book can prove a valuable manual as you seek to build the right partnerships for the right purpose at the right moment. Its value will only be multiplied if the coterie

of leaders at the head of your organization covenant to read it together.

"Well Connected" has truly given me the kind of insight that brings community transformation into the realm of real possibility! I know worship and prayer are the key ingredients for transformation, but what are also the practical steps that really enables me to get a handle on getting started. "Well Connected" gave me the answers! And it really wasn't something new ... but how I needed to be reminded. Everything starts with relationships and then carefully and spiritually moves forward to collaborating and partnering about the work in our community that's on God's heart. And what we're discovering is, God already had in the community all the ingredients to accomplish His purposes for our city. We had just never connected the dots (real people and ministries). Now God is helping do just that ... and "Well Connected", by Phill Butler, is the catalyst God is using to help pastors and non-pastors learn and grow together in new Kingdom partnerships! This is going to help YOU a lot!~
Joe Walsh, [...]Sacramento, CA

Well Connected has proven to be a powerful tool for inspiration, evaluation, and growth for our organization--the International Council of Ethnodoxologists (a network of Christians involved in encouraging culturally-appropriate music and arts around the world). Our organizational DNA is permeated with the value of collaboration, so this book really speaks our heart language! In our board meetings this year, we are systematically examining the principles of effective networking and partnerships laid out in Well Connected; we rejoice to see that much of what we're doing is hitting the bull's-eye. We're also receiving insightful and practical suggestions for improvement. Especially helpful for us was Phill's clear definition of the relationship between networks and partnerships - we see now that our network has given birth to a number of effective partnerships; some project-oriented, some long-term. If our network is healthy, these partnerships will continue to form. The superb organization of the book includes several features that make it easier to unpack (and to share with others at the drop of a hat):* a concise three-sentence description of each chapter right in the table of contents;* a "quick-start chapter" at the beginning of the book summarizing the principles and benefits of kingdom collaboration;* a short "core idea" paragraph at the beginning of each chapter (an effective hook!)* an appendix with outstanding resources such as:1. a list of practical, downloadable resources available from related web sites.2. Assessment and evaluation tools for partnerships and networks3. Summary of the 15 critical principles of being well connected4. Bibliography for further reading on partnerships and networks In short, this ground-breaking volume is a "must read" for those who are ready to take seriously the scriptural

principle of the interdependence of the body of Christ and who desire to truly collaborate with others to see the Church at its most effective. Phill is right - "working together is God's idea." Well Connected puts "hands and feet" on this great idea, offering insight and realistic help for those with a vision for kingdom collaboration. Robin Harris Founder, International Council of Ethnodoxologists (ICE)

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