



August 12, 2008

I am writing out of appreciation for the significant contributions that Eric Dombach has made to the organizational effectiveness of Life Center Ministries International, a local church, a mission training organization and a regional resource center, with offices in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. I am writing this from the perspective of over thirty years in full-time ministry. I have served as senior pastor of Life Center since 1988. This Fall will mark the twentieth anniversary of my tenure as the president and chairman of the board of this organization. At present, we have a staff of about 30. Twenty are full time. We have eight staff pastors and administrators. Our typical Sunday attendance falls between 1000 and 1200. Our annual budget is currently \$2.6 million.

We met Eric and his family in the fall of 2003 and were impressed with his sincerity, perception and focused passion for the things of the Lord.

At the time we met him, my wife Anne and I had successfully kept a growing body of believers pursuing God while maintaining a fresh and life giving culture based in the spiritual and practical outworking of overflowing grace. As our faith community grew in numbers and the blessings of increased staff, budget and a recently acquired corporate campus were added changes occurred. We reached and surpassed the level of our organizational competence. Despite all the outward appearances of success and a relational culture characterized by affection, respect and optimism, we were fraying at the edges. As the senior leader, I was deeply fatigued by the continually simmering financial and organizational chaos and the need to balance the abundance of opportunities perceived by our very creative staff. In short, we were an overgrown mom and pop organization without sophisticated communication, forecasting or budgeting systems in place. It was like having 4 or 5 children enrolled in Universities all at the same time. So much potential! So little money! We were plagued by recurring financial shortages and the inability to unfold our collective vision in a timely manner.

Thank God for His unceasing grace and the many manifestations of His goodness in our midst. With astonishing regularity, we saw scores of lives significantly changed with physical, emotional and spiritual healing reliably occurring. Despite all the spiritual blessings, my own strength teetered on empty and I would frequently fight deep discouragement. My wife and I concluded that for the sake of my own health, I would look for a successor. However, if I could not find one in 5 years, my plan was to simply resign as graciously as possible. This did not bode well for the organization, since I have been

and still am the chief visionary officer and a real source of identity for the larger community.

At this point, we confided in Eric that we saw no way to get beyond our current state of affairs. We muddled along with good intentions, but lacked some key skills. Our team constraints limited us to a certain level of organizational performance.

Eric invited my wife and I to attend a business coaching seminar he was hosting in a nearby city. We attended, more out of a desire to get to know him than for any “business benefit.” As the presentation went on, we both realized that many of the issues that confront a typical business also play out in the organizational life of a local church. We saw the hope for a way out of our quagmire! We were hooked. Soon, Eric presented these principles to our key leaders. The lights went on and the truth sunk in! Over a period of several years Eric worked with us as a highly effective consultant. He changed our paradigm of running the church. We maintained our unique and healthy culture, but began to address areas of organizational incompetence.

Through Eric’s tutelage, we changed the way we hire new staff, now utilizing sophisticated psychometric tools, which effectively predict the successful fit and performance of potential hires. We found out both the hard way and the right way that the tools didn’t lie, but sometimes our “gut” did!

We began to utilize more vigorous financial forecasting, budgeting and regular reporting. We recognized that in spite of being a not for profit corporation, there were certain departments that actually brought income into the general organization, significantly augmenting the charitable giving of the congregation. We learned to use effective metrics to follow the return on various projects.

Along with all this, there has been a healthy change in the culture of our paid and volunteer staff. Regular communication, encouragement and accountability are now the norm. The results from each team are measured and the cumulative effects are phenomenal! Morale is higher. “Teamwork” has progressed from a nice idea into a practical methodology for accomplishing clearly stated goals. Life Center has maintained its delightful, optimistic and spontaneous culture. What has changed is the formerly fraying, exhausted core leadership, discouraged by lack of progress and seemingly insurmountable problems.

The last 2 years have seen the finances go from teetering on disaster, unable to answer our ever growing opportunities, to a healthy surplus. Increased communication and accountability led us to a leaner and stronger financial reality.

It is not an exaggeration to say that Eric was instrumental in turning the course of Life Center Ministries from burnout to vibrancy. He opened our eyes to organizational excellence. We learned that deeply embedded dynamics can change. He handed us the tools for change and coached us through the difficult transitions.

That's quite a story. There is much more to tell. If you would like to hear more details, feel free to contact me.

I strongly recommend Eric to anyone contemplating doing business with him. He has successfully started and grown multiple businesses. He is one of those individuals who seems to thrive on challenges, who succeeds over and over again. His integrity is absolutely solid.

He is a significant leader in our church organization, serving as an elder and as a director. He is a great husband and father. Both he and his wife, Deborah, are vitally connected with people from all walks of life, from key industry and political leaders to soccer moms to recovering and not so recovering drug addicts. They are amazing, loving people and the parents of four greatly gifted but really normal children. Can you tell I think they are fantastic? I think you will too.

Sincerely,

Charles Stock
Senior Pastor, Life Center Ministries
Harrisburg, PA