



## HELPING CHURCH LEADERS TRANSITION FROM THE PRESENT TO THE FUTURE

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### REAL TIME LEADERSHIP

The magazine, *Fast Company*, aims to be the "handbook of the business revolution." Not only has it brought a new perspective to chronicling the people and practices that are inventing the future and reinventing business, it is also changing the way people gather through its Real Time conferences. Two weeks ago, the fourth Real Time conference was held in San Diego around the theme of leadership and one of the first things participants noticed was that there were no theorists or leadership consultants as presenters. All the main sessions and workshops featured practitioner/ leaders...men and women who were leaders in the context of their respective professions and businesses...people who live out their leadership every day.

**Robert Swan** is a world class explorer and master storyteller. The only man to have walked to both the North and South Poles, he challenged Real Time participants to "think clearly about leading yourself...how are you leading you?" Woven into his story were lessons of leadership drawn from his experiences in leading teams of explorers. "I chose different people for my team...our diversity would be the strength of our survival." In an environment in which "if you make a mistake, you die," how do you hold a team together? One is that "you learn to have the courage to tell each other the truth and more importantly, you have to learn to really listen to each other." You also have to "manage the risk through discipline which is a hard word for me. And above all else on this journey we must have trust. Trust is not something that just exists...it starts with yourself...if you don't trust yourself, how can others trust you?" In assembling his team that went to the North Pole, "we spent 45 days at base camp taking the time to understand each other...it was the basis of our survival. On any team, if you don't understand what makes people tick, they won't tick. I knew as a leader that every member on my team believed we could reach the North Pole...it's not about me...no individual can do this...we have to believe that WE can do this." Not all his adventures have been successful and when he was faced with a decision 300 miles short of reaching his goal, he had to turn back. "Maybe the best thing I ever did in my life was not always to win...there is strength in failure."

**Terry Waite** is recognized internationally as a humanitarian and man of faith. Perhaps best known for his negotiation skills as a special envoy of the Archbishop of Canterbury, he was kidnapped in 1987 and held hostage for five years, four of them in solitary confinement in a Beirut prison. When asked about surviving that situation, he replied, "All of us need to learn how to live strongly from within. I could say to my captors 'You may have the power to break my mind and break my body but my soul is not yours to possess.'" Later, in an interview with the editor of *NetFax*, when asked to comment on his observations of matters of faith from a worldwide perspective, Waite replied, "I don't want to be judgmental but I think there is rather too much emphasis on feeling good...that faith will enable you to prosper...let's hope that happens...but there are many people for whom faith will not necessarily immediately change their situation and make them feel good. What faith can do is to enable them to have and maintain hope...the recognition that you are a unique individual and a child of God is a very remarkable understanding. The second thing is that while it is important for some people to be propagating the faith by word of mouth, I find increasingly in the world that religious language carries very little content for many...most as of the theological terms that I was brought up with don't necessarily carry much weight for this modern generation. What carries more meaning to people in the world is when they recognize within individuals something of the real spirit of Christianity...when they see that applied through work and through which life is led and the actions and directions that are taken. Now I am not for one moment suggesting that Christianity can be totally encompassed by merely doing good deeds, but true sincerity of belief inevitably will carry forth into action and affect your everyday life and decisions. There is a capacity in all of us to say, 'my faith belongs in this compartment and my business decisions belong to another.' There's got to be harmony between the two."

For a recap of the Real Time conference on leadership, visit *Fast Company's* website at [www.fastcompany.com/homepage/](http://www.fastcompany.com/homepage/)

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