

*Teams That Thrive: Five Disciplines of Collaborative Church Leadership*

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*Researchers and practitioners Ryan Hartwig and Warren Bird have discovered churches of various sizes and traditions throughout the United States who have learned to thrive under healthy team leadership. Using actual church examples, they present their discoveries here, culminating in five disciplines that, if implemented, can enable your team to thrive.*

## Five Disciplines That Help Church Leadership Teams Thrive

**What makes *Teams That Thrive* a unique book for church leaders?**

**Warren Bird and Ryan T. Hartwig:** Though nearly every church says they're led by a team, many of these "teams" aren't teams at all, much less effective ones. Despite good intentions, many don't know what it takes to develop a thriving top team. *Teams That Thrive* shows leaders step by step how to thrive in their teams, especially at the senior leadership team level. As the subtitle—*Five Disciplines of Collaborative Church Leadership*—hints, this timely guide gives church leaders both what they want—practical, straightforward, compelling guidance with real-life examples of successful teams—and what they need—substantial, challenging insights and a fresh model grounded in the latest research on church leadership teams.

**Why did you decide to write a book like this together?**

**Warren and Ryan:** We wrote this book to help the teams at each reader's church genuinely thrive, especially the senior leadership team. From all our research, we're convinced that the best teams are distinguished in two ways. First, teams that thrive believe that collaborative leadership is practically and biblically the right way to lead. Despite the challenges that teams naturally face, these teams are committed to make collaboration work at the executive leadership level. Second, teams that thrive discipline themselves to practice the fundamentals that make a great team, day in and day out. Teamwork can be hard, for sure, but the great teams work hard to become great at it. Because they're convinced it's worthwhile to lead collaboratively, they do what it takes to become extraordinary.

**What do you hope readers take away from *Teams That Thrive*?**

**Warren and Ryan:** You can have a healthy, thriving leadership team. It's both biblical and doable. To develop a team that thrives, you will need to practice these five disciplines:

*Discipline #1: Focus on Purpose, the Invisible Leader of Your Team*

Great leadership teams realize that purpose drives every decision and every action of the team. Purpose is, in essence, the invisible leader of the team. As you clearly articulate your team's 5C purpose (clear, compelling, challenging, calling oriented, consistently held), remember that the best teams make critical, church-wide decisions both regularly and continually.

*Discipline #2: Leverage Differences in Team Membership*

Thriving teams know that differences make a difference. That is, they intentionally pursue diversity in personality, background, and perspective as they strategically identify who

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# Q & A

*“At Saddleback we’ve shared leadership from the beginning. While it’s not always been easy, it’s absolutely been worth it. This insightful book, with its strong research, real-life stories and practical how-tos, makes it easier for you to build a strong, thriving senior leadership team.”*

—Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church and author of *The Purpose Driven Life* and *The Purpose Driven Church*

should be on the team. Once together, those diverse members focus on what’s best for the church while making their work on the leadership team a priority.

### *Discipline #3: Rely on Inspiration More Than Control to Lead*

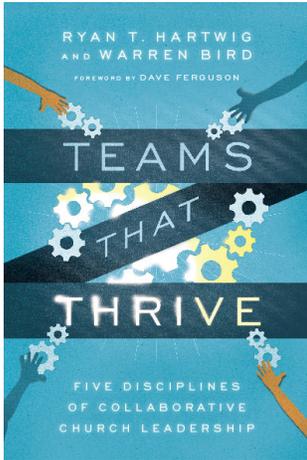
Leaders of outstanding teams rely more on relationship-based inspirational leadership than role-based directive leadership. They build trust, cultivate positive working relationships, and share leadership functions with others as they pursue the team’s meaningful purpose.

### *Discipline #4: Intentionally Structure Your Decision-making Process*

When it comes to making decisions, thriving leadership teams take advantage of divine inspiration and collaborative interaction. Specifically, they utilize a process that may even cultivate healthy conflict as they simultaneously seek God for his perspective and leading.

### *Discipline #5: Build a Culture of Continuous Collaboration*

Effective leaders make the most of their meetings. They meet with intentionality, collaboratively develop meeting agendas and find ways to work together continuously.



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*"Serious leaders are serious about their teams because something extraordinary happens when a team thrives, something much greater than the sum of its parts. Teams That Thrive is an unusual blend of spirit and practice. It is fresh, deep and eminently helpful!"*

— Nancy Ortberg, author of *Lessons in Non-Linear Leadership*

## Authors of *Teams That Thrive*: Ryan T. Hartwig and Warren Bird



**Ryan T. Hartwig** (PhD, University of Colorado) teaches small-group, organizational and leadership communication at Azusa Pacific University, where he serves as associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. In addition, he frequently speaks to groups of pastors and ministry leaders regarding senior leadership teams, teamwork in ministry, and small-group ministry design and leadership. His scholarship has been published in the *Journal of Applied Communication Research* and *Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications Journal*, and presented at the annual meetings of the National Communication Association (NCA), the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) and the Rocky Mountain Communication Association (RMCA). He and his wife Jill have three daughters and one son and live in the Los Angeles area.

[ryanhartwig.com](http://ryanhartwig.com)



**Warren Bird** (PhD, Fordham University) is the director of research and intellectual capital support for Leadership Network. He also spearheads ongoing research initiatives and Leadership Network's free biweekly newsletter, *Advance*. Warren has written many publications for Leadership Network and also collaboratively authored or coauthored over twenty books for ministry leaders, including *Next: Pastoral Succession that Works*, *Viral Churches*, *The Multi-Site Church Roadtrip* and *Better Together: Making Church Mergers Work*.

Warren is an ordained minister through the Christian and Missionary Alliance, having served as a church planter, associate pastor or lead pastor for fourteen years. Warren and his wife Michelle live just outside New York City and have two grown children.

[warrenbird.com](http://warrenbird.com)

Follow Warren Bird on Twitter: @warrenbird