

# Greetings and Blessings!

## It's a new year and a new day in the lives of Americans as we celebrate the inauguration of our country's 44<sup>th</sup> president, Barack Hussein Obama.

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**J**anuary 20<sup>th</sup> was a remarkable day that changed the way we and other countries look at politics and leadership. We are hopeful that the leadership of President Obama will pull this country out of its recession and into a brighter, productive future. When looking at the new direction of leadership America is now taking, it caused me to examine the leadership of International Institute of Deaf Services.

Last year was a turning point for me as it relates to IIDS. For 9 years, I had been the sole planner and coordinator of IMPARTATION and the other activities sponsored by IIDS. For years, I would solicit help and often, many would volunteer but when it was time to work, their promises would fall through the cracks. After years of disappointments, I stopped asking. When a few of my friends insisted that I reach out again, they volunteered to help. It wasn't until then that they learned IIDS was operated by a one-man show.

When developing our current leadership team, I was seeking individuals that had a heart for Christ, a love and a passion for His people, and individuals that could catch and run with my vision (the vision God had given me for this organization). Before making decisions and developing specific positions, I spent much time in prayer. I believe I have obeyed God and this is the right group.

In order for this team to move forward, it's important we are all walking the same path and moving in the same direction. Last year, we worked as a compartmental group, often with one hand not knowing what the other was doing. This year, I pray we will work as a comprehensive group, on one accord. For that to happen there must be clarity of the vision. In an effort to clarify any misconceptions or loop-holes, I wanted to share a leadership model that we are adopting for IIDS. It's the VISA model.

## **V** Vision [Proverbs 29:18](#)

Where there is no **vision**, the people **perish**: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.



## **I** Integrity [Numbers 30:2](#)

If a man make a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break **his word**, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

## **S** Structure [1 Kings 9:4](#)

And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in **integrity** of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments:

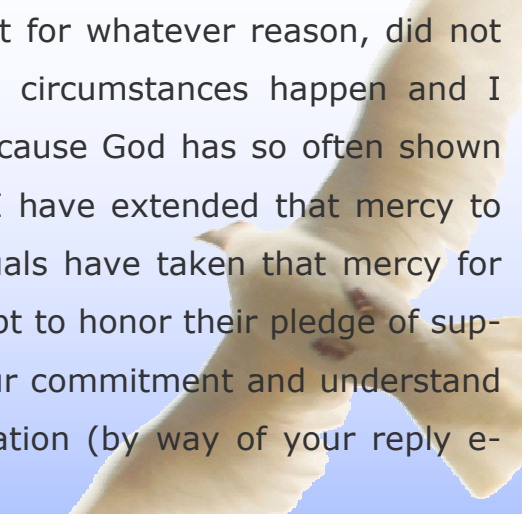
## **A** Accountability [Hebrews 13:17](#)

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must **give account**, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

**I**t is the MISSION of IIDS to train leaders and educators both deaf and hearing, interpreters and workers with the deaf to evangelize, obtain skill development in American Sign Language and Deaf Culture, technology and religious training. Leaders, educators, sign language interpreters, workers/teachers of deaf children and adults around the country will make a dynamic impact on society.

The VISION of IIDS is to bring individuals together, both hearing and deaf, to train for evangelism, educate in Deaf culture and produce interpreters and leaders that will effectively minister to the deaf using the latest of technology and biblical education in American Sign Language. The forums for such training are Impartation Conferences, Impact Conferences, and our National Deaf History Month.

Our goal is to allow Impartation to become self-supported by soliciting sponsorship, partnership and church support. In order for this vision to become a reality, it requires a 100% commitment from each of you.



**I**n the past, some have promised their support, but for whatever reason, did not honor their commitment. I understand that life's circumstances happen and I make a sincere effort not to take it personally. Because God has so often shown mercy on me when I don't honor my promise to him, I have extended that mercy to those who didn't honor their word. Sometimes, individuals have taken that mercy for granted (as we do God's grace,) never making an attempt to honor their pledge of support. It is my hope that each of you will re-evaluate your commitment and understand that the pledge you made to support IIDS and Impartation (by way of your reply e-mail) was really a pledge and an oath to the Lord.

I felt in order for us to develop a commitment that you could honor, we would need structure. The leadership structure that you signed and agreed to was developed so each person would have assigned responsibilities that were spread out over a year's time. Duties were selected that would not monopolize one's time and enable you to meet whatever challenges might arise with the assistance of the complete staff. I'm often told by members of the leadership team to "stay in my lane." Because I'm so use to doing everything myself, it was difficult to not begin a task or jump into a task that has been assigned to one of you. It's not my intention to undermine anyone's efforts, just a bad habit I'm working on breaking. I will, however, jump in when there appears to be no progress or no effort made in your specific areas. This is one of the reasons we have requested progress reports due two weeks before each conference call. Your report allows us to see the work (or lack thereof) being done in each area. This structure allows us to show accountability for the work we've committed to complete.

The accountability portion of the VISA concept has always been my area of struggle. I've had the tendency to make excuses for those who did not pull their share of the load. After much prayer and counsel, I now must hold you accountable because God holds me accountable as I am the head of this organization. I understand and have always respected the fact that each of you willingly volunteers your time and talents to this organization. I always felt guilty calling you on something you said you would do when I'm not paying you to do it. I had to realize that as a leader, I have to hold you accountable for the commitment you've made to Christ and guide you in the right direction to honor that commitment. Making excuses for you only enables that negative behavior and for that, I will have to give an account.

I pray that with the CHANGE America will experience in the next four (4) years, IIDS will experience a similar change and Step Up to be all God has called us to be. I pray each of you will review this VISA Leadership Concept and apply it to the work you do, not only for IIDS, but in every aspect of life.

For His service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul", with a stylized flourish at the end.

**PAUL WILLIAM ELLIS**

