



THE LEADERSHIP LINEUP

UNCHANGING LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES TO KEEP YOU AND THE MINISTRY YOU LEAD IN PEAK POSITION

Reading the lineup is key to maximizing one's surfing opportunity. Having solid objects on land to line up and hold one's position is essential in light of the shifting nature of the ocean. Similarly, leaders within Christian Surfers need solid, unchanging principles to hold them in position so they can maximize their ministry opportunities. The Leadership Lineup features unchanging leadership principles to keep you, and the ministry you lead, in peak position.

LINEUP #10: The Surf Culture

Extract from Christian Surfers Foundations Training

Unit 1.8 "The Surf Culture"
from the Trainers Notes

There is a great opportunity to be serving at a local pro am surf event in your town. You have contacted the local organisers and your CS mission is going to be in charge of the marshalling and the BBQ. It will enable you to get face to face with every competitive surfer in your town. The only problem is that for the first time, this contest actually got waves! What problem you ask? Problem is that the CS leaders have all gone surfing and you have been left alone except for a 15 year old bodyboarder who is intimidated by the hardcore surfers. You wonder if this Christian Surfers thing even works! "Where are those other leaders?!?" you ask as you gaze over the 4-5' offshore line up and see leader no. 2 bang off three re-entries on the best wave you have seen in a month...and you are thinking of throwing in the towel (and the BBQ fork) to go join them.

CSI Core Values Reinforced

Our surfing needs to be submitted to God in order for God to use us within a surfing ministry. In order for us to be more efficient in evangelizing it is not enough to concentrate on our gospel 'seed,' if we are unaware of the 'soil' into which we are planting. This means we need to have a clear integration of ourselves within the surfing culture so that we can capitalise on aspects of the culture that are 'gospel friendly,' as well as know what aspects of the surf culture that need to be 'gospel confronted.'

Know Your Culture

Consider aspects of the surfing culture and how they provide gospel opportunities as well as what are their gospel obstacles? Some examples are listed below.

Surf Culture	Gospel Opportunity	Gospel Obstacle
Creation conscious	Lifestyle orientated	Individualistic
Basic believers in God via creation evidence and appreciation	Understands how ones life is to revolve around what is valuable, good, Christian, wholistic discipleship	Willing to stand against the tide of mainstream culture, can choose to face the challenge of following Jesus
Tend to worship the creation rather than the	Self centred surfing lifestyle is at odds with the	Difficulty of committing to the Christian community

Trends in Surfing

Brainstorm the trends in surfing. Prayerfully consider what does this mean strategically for your CS mission to be capitalising on these world trends?

- Penetrating the poorer strata in society
- Increasingly a global tribe and culture
- Ongoing mass appeal of surfing
- Growth in women's surfing
- Surf camps and coaching
- Indigenous surfing growth beyond the expatriate surfers
- Environmental sensitivity
- Social conscience
- Technology of internet forecasting, webcasting, etc.

Trends in Worldviews

Consider these 'big picture' changes in overall worldview as post-modernism impacts all nations:

- Post-modernism is affecting even the third world today
- Lack of absolute truth - what is true for you is true and what is true for me is true
- See with their eyes and think with their emotions - instead of rational logic
- Need to belong before they believe
- An increasingly linked Global Community and the corresponding reaction of a longing for a more intimate community - subcultures like surfing are very successful in this

Trends in Mission

- Partnerships with churches and agencies is the way of the future
- Integration with the local community and meeting felt needs is key
- Increased use of the web and technology
- Creation of community instead of events and programs
- Niche market strategies and resources
- Diversification of gospel expression to engage the 'whole' person
- Intimate loyalties to leadership rather than organisations

When you consider all of this, consider what might be an application of your CS mission? Ask the question, "What are we doing now that may need to change?" and, "What are we not doing now that we need to be doing?"

Surfing: Christian Surfers Best Friend/Worst Enemy

How come we're always struggling for committed leadership? How is it that there's plenty of people keen for Christian surfing, but not Christian service? People who seem much more disciples of the surf, than of Christ? Where surfing seems to use us, rather than we use our surfing? The point being made is that SURFING provides CS with our greatest potential for reaching the beach community and it also seems to be our greatest limitation.

Surfing is both a blessing and a curse in Christian Surfers.

Is there a solution? Let me say up front, I believe it's impossible to be a 'Christian Surfer.' A 'Christian' with a capital "C" is all about following Jesus. A true disciple (quite different to merely a 'believer') is one who values Jesus so much, he willingly forsakes all other priorities and commits all that he has and all that he is to follow Jesus.

Now a 'Surfer' with a capital "S" is really a disciple of surfing. A surf-centered person is a self-centered person. Surfers are so slack because they're so selfish, let's be perfectly honest. And selfishness is a contradiction to being a disciple of Jesus, a 'Christian.'

So you need to be asking yourself: are you more a Christian than a Surfer?

Try out this self-assessment about whether you are a SELFISH SURFER or a SUBMITTED SURFER.

Signs of Selfish Surfing

Where it may be an idol in your life. Basically, is your surfing characterised by the following (not meaning that you don't occasionally lapse into these):

- You spend more time, effort, money, and diligence on surfing than on godliness, eg, you'll get up at 6am for a surf but not a quiet time; you'll seek out surf tips from a hot surfer, but not godly tips from a mature Christian; you read Surfing Life Magazine each issue, but never Christian books.
- Surfing occupies more of your brain space than God?
- You'll discipline yourself to perform at your peak for a contest, but not discipline your life for peak ministry opportunities.
- Surfing is your chief delight, your greatest motivation; the weather patterns determine your life more than Christ and His purposes.
- You use surfing to promote yourself, rather than Jesus.
- You know more about surfing than Christianity.

- You drop people and ministry as soon as the waves are on.
- You don't know the names of your local surfers and they don't know yours.
- You undergo a character transformation as soon as you hit the water (the old 'praise-God-and-curse-men-with-the-same-tongue syndrome', see James 3:9).
- You surf for yourself - who you surf with, where you surf, when you surf in order to maximise your share of waves.
- See other surfers as semi-human objects to hassle waves off, and will snake, drop in, or take more than your share.

Signs of Submitted Surfing

Where it is surrendered and used for service:

- You take Jesus out there with you. You can still pray and are mindful of Jesus whilst in the water.
- See other surfers as real people with real needs.
- You regularly use your surfing to make personal contacts for the gospel eg: surf with friend you're trying to get close to; take the route to the beach that maximises the chances of meeting people; surf crowds just for 'exposure' (not just paddling off to that lone peak); talk to others, make friends on the beach.
- You give up prime surf time for the sake of prime ministry time. You are aware that your surfing is a tool, a means of reaching a higher end.
- You make it feel better for others in the water rather than worse.
- You don't 'have' to surf when there are other more important priorities of life you are responsible for eg: family, work, church etc.
- You are known as a great person to surf with.

Well, how did you go? I often wonder just what does Jesus think about all the surfing we do in CS? Here's a few thoughts about making our way through all of this:

1) God has made all things VERY GOOD, Genesis 1:31 "...and behold it was very good." God pronounces all this creation 'very good' and that includes the waves. It is ok to unwind and enjoy the beautiful sport of surfing. One of the great appeals of surfing in fact is the innate fulfilment of 'harnessing' God's creation and the sense of identification with God's creation (so rare in our Western world today). So, let's not get overly paranoid!

Surfing is 'very good,' surfers aren't

2) Surfers tend to worship the Creation rather than the Creator, Romans 1:23 "They became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds, animals and reptiles" (and even waves and surfboards). The problem with this is that God detests idols and will tolerate no rivals to Him in our lives. Idolatry must be repented of, not accommodated; there is no fooling God.

Idolatry of surfing must be repented of

3) Under Christ, all things can have purpose and meaning, Colossians 3:17 "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to the Father through him." In and of itself, surfing is nothing. It's not some sanctified sport that puts us on a 'higher plane.' Surfing becomes significant when it takes its proper place and serves a higher end. The issue isn't whether it's ok to surf or not, but WHO you surf for and WHY you surf. God has given all sorts of gifts. They are not all cerebral (intellectual) ones like speaking, music, art, etc. To be an effective tool, however, it must be yielded into the hands of the Master - put on the altar if you like.

It's not so much an issue about WHETHER to surf, but more WHY and for WHOM you surf

What I really believe God is challenging us to is this:

GIVE UP YOUR SURFING

Sooooo now what will become of 'Christian Surfers' if we give up our surfing? Well, if 'Christian Surfers' propagates selfish surfing and selfish surfers then it may well be an abomination to God, no matter what your program looks like.

There are two possible outcomes then:

- 1) God will give surfing back to you, but remember to Whom it belongs. It is now on call for His glory and purpose, not yours.
- 2) God will not give surfing back to you ie: no more surfing?! However, God most likely will only do this if:
 - a) There is another ministry he's calling you to that will take you away from surfing, or
 - b) Surfing is preventing your growth as a Christian.

Either option may be for a season, or forever. All solid CS missions have been established on this principle, surfers who have surrendered their surfing

Finally, here's a prayer. Take this very seriously.

"God, you are the King. You own this world, its waves and you own me. I do thank you for surfing. I'm sorry that I've been surfing for myself, have left you out of this area of my life and it's become an idol. I change all this now. I offer you myself, and my surfing. I put this on your altar. I'll never surf again if you don't want me to, and I'll only surf again for you. Jesus, you are the greatest one in my life. I trust you. Accept this sacrifice in Jesus' name."

In summary, challenge yourself and your CS group with the following questions.

- Has your surfing been surrendered to God for him to use its potential for good?
- Do you believe and apply the principle that it is not how well you surf that God uses, but how well you serve?

- Do you believe that it is more important that you are known as the best person to surf with, rather than the best surfer?
- What can you do personally to improve your surfing for Jesus?
- What can your CS ministry do to improve it's surfing for Jesus?
- What can you do about the inherent difficulty of managing a large group of CS surfers and how this impacts on the other surfers around you are trying to reach?

As an exercise, go surfing as an individual and as a group with a very intentional goal of influencing the climate in the water with good gospel values. Pray before you go out, do all you can to surf 'Christianly' and then return and debrief about how you went.

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