



FEATURING
Mart Green

Adventure, Accountability, and Kingdom Governance

Episode 9 • TML Episode Guide

Generosity Partner, Kingdom Investor, and Founder of Mardel Christian & Education

“Governance starts at a very personal level. You have to live your life. Can you govern yourself?”

Overview

In this episode of *The Missional Leader*, Rob sits down with his longtime friend and ministry partner, Mart Green. Mart is part of the Green family, known for their leadership with Hobby Lobby and their deep commitment to advancing the gospel, strengthening ministries, and supporting the spread of God’s Word around the world. Rob and Mart reflect on a 27-year relationship shaped by trust and shared conviction. But at the heart of this conversation is a crucial leadership lesson: great vision is not enough. Leaders also need governance. They need people who can ask hard questions, tell them no, speak truth, and help them steward the mission with wisdom.

Core Insight:

Why Great Leaders Need Good Governance

One of the defining insights from this conversation is this:

Leadership may help an organization take flight, but governance helps it land the plane well.

Mart describes leadership as one wing of an airplane. It is essential. Visionary leaders dream, pioneer, build, and move things forward. But leadership alone is not enough.

The other wing is governance.

Without it, even gifted leaders can drift, overextend, isolate, or make decisions without the wisdom and accountability they need. Rob and Mart have seen this again and again in ministry settings, universities, boards, and Kingdom initiatives.

Many leadership failures do not begin with a lack of vision. They begin with a lack of governance.

Adventure Requires Accountability

Mart defines an adventure as “a dangerous and uncertain undertaking.” That kind of language sounds exciting until you realize what it actually requires.

Adventures involve risk, require sacrifice, create pressure, expose weakness, and often invite spiritual warfare.

That is why Mart decided years ago that he did not want to go on these adventures alone. He gathered what he calls “adventure partners,” trusted people who could encourage him, challenge him, prune him, pray for him, and tell him the truth.

This is personal governance.

Before governance becomes a board structure, it begins as a posture of humility.

Core Insight:

Trust Compounds Over Time

Rob and Mart's friendship began around a shared passion for the Bible, but it grew through years of serving one another, taking risks together, and walking through difficult assignments.

Their relationship shows that Kingdom partnership is not transactional. It is relational. It is built through trust, faithfulness, sacrifice, and time.

Over 27 years, one adventure prepared them for the next. Bible advocacy led to film. Film prepared them for future media initiatives. ORU became a school of governance. Governance became a framework they now use to help other leaders and institutions.

In the Kingdom, nothing is wasted.

The Framework:

How Missional Leaders Build Governance That Sustains the Mission

1

Start with Personal Governance

Mart makes this point clearly: governance begins with the leader.

Before a ministry, business, or organization can be governed well, a leader must ask, "Can I govern myself?"

Personal governance means inviting trusted people into your life who can ask hard questions and tell the truth. These may not be formal board members. They may be mentors, peers, friends, or what Mart calls adventure partners.

The key is that they must be able to see your life and speak into it. They are not impressed by your platform, not dependent on your approval, not there to affirm every idea, and they can tell you no.

For leaders carrying significant responsibility, this kind of accountability is not optional. It is essential.

The Framework:

How Missional Leaders Build Governance That Sustains the Mission

2

Build Relationships Before the Adventure Comes

Rob and Mart's relationship was forged through shared conviction and strengthened through shared risk.

They did not begin as a typical donor-ministry relationship. From the beginning, they stepped into work together — advocating for Scripture, discerning opportunities, making films, navigating institutional crises, and serving Kingdom initiatives that required more than financial giving. This is a different picture of generosity.

Generosity is not only money.

It is time.

It is trust.

It is wisdom.

It is relationship.

It is showing up when the adventure becomes costly.

Kingdom work moves at the speed of trust. And trust is formed before the crisis, not during it.

3

Learn to Recognize the Governance Problem

Rob notes that when they have been called into difficult situations, the root issue is often governance. There may be a great leader, strong vision, and deep passion, but without healthy governance, organizations become vulnerable.

Poor governance can create:

- Unclear accountability
- Decision-making bottlenecks
- Founder dependency
- Financial instability
- Mission drift
- Leadership isolation
- Crisis without correction

Mart summarizes good governance as:

Mission fulfillment with economic sustainability.

The order matters. Mission comes first. The calling must remain clear. But the mission must also be stewarded with institutional reality, honest evaluation, and financial wisdom.

The Framework:

How Missional Leaders Build Governance That Sustains the Mission

4

Understand That Governance Has Stages

Rob explains that governance is not one-size-fits-all. Organizations need different kinds of governance at different stages.

- **Founder's governance** helps catalytic leaders move quickly in the early stages.
- **Independent governance** creates accountability as more people and stakeholders become involved.
- **Shared governance** gives key stakeholders a voice when complexity increases.
- **Generative governance** helps mature organizations think strategically about the future.

The goal is not bureaucracy. The goal is wisdom.

Healthy governance serves the mission. It does not replace vision, but it helps steward vision with clarity, accountability, and sustainability.

5

Bring Young Voices to the Table

Mart encourages young leaders to get around healthy boards, even as observers, so they can learn what governance looks like in real life.

Rob also challenges seasoned leaders to bring younger voices into boardrooms, committees, and strategy working groups. In a digital age, innovation cycles are moving faster and faster. Older leaders often carry wisdom, while younger leaders carry knowledge of emerging tools, culture, and technology.

The Church needs both.

Young leaders need access to wisdom.

Seasoned leaders need access to emerging knowledge.

Boards need an intergenerational perspective.

Mission needs the whole body working together.

Formation:

Reflection and Next Steps

Reflection for Missional Leaders

Pause and reflect personally or with your team.

Identity

- Am I willing to be known deeply enough for others to tell me the truth?
- Do I have people in my life who can challenge me, correct me, and tell me no?
- Where am I tempted to confuse gifting or influence with maturity?

Calling

- What adventure has God placed in front of me that feels dangerous or uncertain?
- To what degree am I trying to carry that assignment alone?
- Who has God already placed in my life to help me discern, steward, and obey?

Governance

- Where does my organization need stronger accountability?
- Are we honest about institutional reality — what is working, what is not working, and what needs to change?
- How does our governance structure align or misalign with the stage of development we are in right now?

Generosity

- How am I practicing generosity beyond financial giving?
- To what degree am I willing to be generous with my time, wisdom, relationships, and trust?
- Where has God used friendship to shape my leadership?

Leadership Development

- Who are the younger voices that need access to the rooms I am in?
- As a young leader, where could I observe or serve in a governance environment?
- How can I help bridge wisdom and knowledge across generations?

Formation:

Reflection and Next Steps

A Simple Next Step

Missional leadership requires more than courage. It requires wisdom.

This month, take one intentional step toward healthier governance:

- Identify two or three trusted people who can speak honestly into your life.
- Ask one of them to help you evaluate an area where you need more accountability.
- Or, if you lead an organization, review whether your current governance structure fits your current stage of growth.

You do not have to start with a large board or a complex system. Start with humility. Start with honest relationships. Start with people who can help you obey God faithfully and land the plane well.

Adventures are dangerous and uncertain undertakings. But we were never meant to take them alone.

Resources mentioned in this episode

- [Hobby Lobby](#)
 - Referenced as the business founded by Mart Green's family
- [The Chosen](#)
 - TV series mentioned as a current adventure/project
- [Oral Roberts University \(ORU\)](#)
 - Referenced throughout the discussion on governance and leadership
- [Through Gates of Splendor by Elisabeth Elliot](#)
 - Book referenced in connection to the missionary story and film
- [End of the Spear \(film\)](#)
 - Movie produced as a result of an early adventure

Connect with Rob

Missional leadership is formed in community, not isolation.

Join the ongoing conversation and stay connected as we explore Kingdom leadership, generosity, and global mission together.

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