

FIND A BROKEN WALL

*7 Ancient Principles
for 21st Century Leaders*

find a
**BROKEN
WALL**

7 ANCIENT PRINCIPLES for
21st century LEADERS

BRIAN C. STILLER



CASTLE QUAY BOOKS

Find a Broken Wall: 7 Ancient Principles for 21st Century Leaders

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CASTLE QUAY BOOKS

Dedication

To those who over my lifetime have enabled me by their
friendship and support in leading local and national ministries

The heart of leadership is the heart of the leader. Partly visionary, partly turn-around artist and master strategist, Brian Stiller offers a compelling insight into the heart of a leader—his own heart. *Find a Broken Wall* is both a gripping story and an insightful challenge from a man who has seen beyond the “lost cause” of faltering organizations to champion the cause of rebuilding, restoring, and reinvigorating.

Ron Nikkel, President and CEO
Prison Fellowship International

Through personal transparency and provocative insights, Brian Stiller tells a refreshing story of Nehemiah that all of us in leadership need to hear and heed. Since I know Brian as a friend, the best part of reading this book is understanding that the man who wrote these words also strives from his heart to live these words. If you want your vision stoked, take the time to savour this book forged on the anvil of Brian’s own effective and servant-hearted life of leadership.

Barry H. Corey, President
Biola University

Deeply personal and remarkably insightful, *Find a Broken Wall* will call the leader out of every reader. Brian’s fascinating and sometimes difficult journey in leadership will encourage, inspire and challenge both seasoned and emerging leaders. Read this and let it spur you on to find the broken walls that God is calling you to rebuild.

Dave Toycen, President and CEO
World Vision Canada

I kid Brian about how he gets in touch with his “inner locomotive.” This “locomotive,” fuelled by his passionate faith in Christ, shapes and motivates his leadership of difficult causes. His remarkable vision for rebuilding valuable Kingdom resources has led him on a costly but fruitful leadership track. This book gives us a window into his inner locomotive and encourages us with the wisdom of proven experience to engage in the difficult task of leadership.

Norm Allen, President
Touchstone Ministries

Brian Stiller has led a full and fascinating life. His wise, experienced and practical comments are interspersed with autobiographical stories, which not only give insights into Brian Stiller as a rebuildier of broken walls, but will also surprise you with how much you learn about yourself. In learning to trace the guidance of God, this book will provoke and stimulate your thinking.

Charles Price, Senior Pastor
The Peoples Church in Toronto

Having successfully led three different types of ministries, Brian Stiller is most qualified to write a book on leadership. As with everything he does, the lessons he offers are rooted in Scripture and written with passion. A blend of story-telling and instruction, it is an insightful and stimulating read.

Bruce J. Clemenger, President,
The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

Brian Stiller's insights are powerful because they flow from a lifetime of discerning leadership in multiple contexts. If your organization is facing challenges, this book should be on your desk.

Kevin J. Jenkins, President and CEO
World Vision International

Brian is a leader of leaders. With a lifetime of effective leadership, Brian provides us with great and inspirational insights. If you are going to read only one book on leadership this year read this one.

Dr. Geoff Tunncliffe, CEO/Secretary General
World Evangelical Alliance

When Brian Stiller speaks most everyone who knows of him listens. A proven leader for 50 years, he has pretty much "been there, done that" in national and international leadership. He is informed, experienced, insightful and inspiring. *Find a Broken Wall* encapsulates a lifetime of cutting-edge ministry.

Jim Cantelon, Author and Host of 100 Huntley Street
Crossroads Christian Communications Inc. CTS

Two people have given me courage and wisdom in leadership in defining moments of my leadership. One is Nehemiah, the other Brian Stiller, friend and mentor. They embody my definition of leadership: One who looks at their world and says, “It does not have to be this way” and does something about it.

Brian and Nehemiah have calluses and a track record to prove they are skilled leaders. Both did more than was expected, and in the face of impossible odds. They offer wisdom, down to earth common sense and experience. They both have wounds and scars of the conflict and opposition they endured. They also completed their task while staying in cadence with another’s best, not just building a wall or rescuing a college, but inspiring us rather than building empires, to seeking his Kingdom. For me, I not only have a shovel and trowel in hand but now a basin and towel also.

T. John McAuley, President and CEO
Muskoka Woods

One of Canada’s most inspiring faith leaders has inspired us again! Brian’s story of how God called him to a life of visionary leadership and equipped him to endure its rigorous challenges is incredibly helpful to any leader intent on making a meaningful difference for God’s Kingdom.

Donald E. Simmonds, CEO
Crossroads Christian Communications Inc. CTS

The most important thing in life has been Brian’s passion. In this, his best book yet, he gives us life lessons on how to reach the most important. It is sage advice for leading, influencing and caring for people and projects as they come into their highest potential.

Lorna Dueck, Executive Producer, Context TV
President, Media Voice Generation

Brian Stiller is like few leaders I know—an understanding of how to lead and the gift of communication to help us understand key biblical truths and key principles. *Find a Broken Wall* uses the best of his talents and insights, surpassing most of what I've read in this area. It has something for everyone, whether a leader or member of a church. This book is the history of Brian: biblical truths he applies to the challenges he has faced and stories of what God has done under his leadership over these past decades. I highly recommend it as reading to everyone!

Hon. Jake Epp, Chairman
Ontario Power Generation Inc.

Many years ago my friend Brian Stiller drove a strategic tentpeg into the secular ground of Canada and assembled a structure where those with the same view of Christ would also find a voice in the culture. That peg was in the shadow of Canada's crumbling wall of Christian faith. He went on to give the rest of his life to restoring that wall. His legacy is that he is not just a builder, he is a re-builder. If you want to know where Brian Stiller is on any given day, go visit that wall. It is by that wall he works and by that wall he will die.

John D. Hull, President and CEO
EQUIP Leadership, Inc.

A must-read for organizational leaders, pastors, teachers and visionaries! It prioritizes encouragement, challenge and dealing with reality as a Kingdom leader. We need to multiply in increasing numbers men and women who take the challenge of building broken walls.

Geri Rodman, President
Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of Canada

Foreword

Find a Broken Wall is a call to action for every reader. Once each of us identifies what it is we have to offer—our God-given gifts—the next step is to listen, pay attention, and have the faith, vision, and values to go where we are needed. What is God calling you to do? It may be leading a troubled university, ministering to the needy, devoting yourself to a social cause, or even helping to fix what has broken within your own organization. With a backdrop of the Biblical story of Nehemiah, Dr. Brian Stiller challenges readers to find a place where they can make a difference—whether it be within their home town or across the globe—and then offers up the tools of effective change. This book is a gift to all of us.

Ken Blanchard, coauthor of *The One Minute Manager*®
and *Lead Like Jesus*

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Introduction

This began with one of many conversations with friend and mentor Henry Wildeboer. He asked, “Why don’t you write about what you really understand?” Without waiting for me to ask what he meant, he said, “Leadership.”

So began this journey. It took a few starts. After many words in the hard drive I asked Don Loney, editor at John Wiley & Sons, to review my second draft. He had my manuscript with him when delayed at the Halifax airport, and so for those hours pored over it, and in our next time together said I was going in the wrong direction. Lifting one chapter, he focused on the Nehemiah story, giving me the title and outline. His interception was timely. For his interest and help I’m grateful.

Herb and Erna Buller were interested in this from the start, for over the years, the four of us have often sat into late evening hours, reflecting on life, telling stories and trying to decipher the ways and needs of leadership.

There are many who have contributed to my learning. In danger of missing some I want to point out those who were chairmen: Al Setter and Jim Hill, Youth for Christ in Montreal; Bruce Mathewson and Geoff Moore, Toronto YFC; Vince Walters and John Neufeld, Canadian YFC; Mel Sylvester, John Redekop, Donald Bastian, Don Jost and Ken Birch, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada; Archie McLean, Tyndale University College & Seminary. Of course there were many in these organizations and others with whom I’ve worked that have had much to teach me.

Audrey Dorsch has been an editorial colleague for a number of my books. Her expertise, wisdom and editorial smarts never cease to amaze me.

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One wonders what else you have to contribute to a topic that many others have written about. In reviewing the literature I saw many describe various forms and styles of leading, but none spoke about rebuilding troubled and broken organizations.

Right out of university, I learned firsthand what it takes to reconstruct a tired and out of step organization. This began a life experience of lifting and restoring ministries.

Nehemiah has been a friend of many years. Often I would read his story, looking for ideas and insights to fuel my heart, and help me see what was needed in creating new enterprises of value.

Brian C. Stiller

March, 2012

Prologue

Nehemiah wrapped his robes around him for some warmth in the cool early morning as he stepped onto the patio of his lavish apartment in Susa, capital of the Persian Empire. Last night he had been told of the impending arrival of Hanani, his brother, from Jerusalem. Bureaucratic insider gossip told him the news was troubling. But only his brother's version would he trust.

When Hanani arrived, they greeted as brothers. Their life history, friendship, and life in exile had maintained their bonds in spite of long separation. They understood each other's words, spoken and unspoken. Little chat was needed to get to the core of an issue. They also knew their roles.

While Hanani was a family man, Nehemiah had ended up in the king's court with the trusted role of senior minister to the king. The decision was not without cost: now a eunuch, Nehemiah could have neither marriage nor family. Without the prospect of descendants, his life was on a different track—his king was his life. Loyalty would not be complicated by wife or children. Sexual opportunity had no attraction. Little distracted his interest or attention—that is, until today.

Brothers embraced. As they sat on the eastern edge of the courtyard, servants brought early morning drinks and fruit. The sun pushing its way up over the horizon promised another hot day. Yet in the cool air, Nehemiah sensed another heat. There was something troubling today about his brother. Hanani's eyes hinted at a story that would soon affect Nehemiah's life.

Politics. It wasn't everything, but in Nehemiah's world everything was political. Nothing touched his world without some overlap of political intrigue.

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As senior minister, he knew the goings to and forth in the court. Stories of insider manipulations came to his desk. He had eyes and ears to know what was going on, any time, any place. He was expected to know. Only Nehemiah did the king ultimately trust. He was even the last to inspect the king's food to guard against a favorite enemy ploy of poisoning.

In 586 BC, almost a century and a half before Nehemiah's time, the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar had overrun the Jewish community nestled on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, destroyed the Temple and took captive craftsmen, artisans, and skilled leaders: fifty thousand to eighty thousand Jews were exiled to Babylon.

The raid occurred on a chessboard of shifting powers. Babylon (now Iraq), north and east of Israel, was in ongoing battle with Egypt to the south and west. Israel, stuck in between, was bounced back and forth, century after century, ruled by one power after another.

Cyrus, king of Persia (now Iran), took over Babylon in 539 BC without much resistance. Benevolent and tolerant, he allowed Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem. Many Jews, led by Zerubbabel, returned and rebuilt the Temple. Other Jews, prosperous and successful where they were, saw little value in returning to their homeland.

In 529 BC Cyrus was killed and internal fighting broke out over who would be king. Eventually (519 BC) Darius took over the vast Persian Empire, which stretched from India across into North Africa. A brilliant governor, Darius organized the empire with regional leaders and by taxation built up central wealth and power.

When he died, his son Xerxes took over but lacked his father's skills in organization and leadership, and soon the empire began its long slide. The only bright spot in Xerxes' career was when he gave in to the pleas of Queen Esther to save the Jewish exiles.

In 465 BC Artaxerxes came to the throne, desperate to keep the kingdom intact. With Egypt on the cusp of rebellion, the king had to play his cards right to keep the outer edges of his kingdom—in this case Judah—from slipping into the hands of the Egyptians. Artaxerxes sent Ezra to Jerusalem to modernize the language and document the events of the city.

Then to add to Artaxerxes' woes, the Athenians in 460 BC cast their lot with the Egyptians. Not only was the Persian king faced with Athens and

Prologue

Egypt ganging up on him, one of his generals, Megabyzus, turned on him (449 BC). The king was fighting battles without and within.

Jerusalem was strategic. Through it ran a primary trade route from the Tigris and Euphrates valley to Egypt. Whoever controlled Jerusalem had economic dominance.

Now Nehemiah heard devastating news from his brother: the walls of his beloved city were lying in disrepair.

Hanani's face, creased with years in the desert sun, was shadowed by sorrow. Waiting until the servants slipped away, Hanani slowly began, choosing his words carefully. Hanani, close in age to his older brother and possessing the same faith in the God of their patriarchs, knew Nehemiah had issues and concerns far beyond his own. He had no wish to encumber Nehemiah with an increased burden. But to whom could he turn? Wrestling with whether to tell him, Hanani concluded his brother would not forgive him if he was kept out of the most critical issue their people had faced in their years of exile in the Persian world.

“Brother, the news I have to tell you from our beloved city is not good. We live in ridicule and abuse. Jews who escaped when we were taken captive have finally come out of hiding. They live as scroungers and beggars. They scratch away at the soil, and are run off by our enemies, who try to keep our people from Shabbat worship.

“Then—and this will be hard to believe—while a few of our countrymen were quietly singing King David's songs, those half-breed Samaritans heckled them, attacking them with insults and clubs.

“I was humiliated. Not only did the Persians rob us blind and kill and carry off many of our best families, now the locals are making us look as if we are religious nothings. They've tried to take our faith; now they are showing signs of taking our city.

“Nehemiah, when we rebuilt the Temple, we could at least sacrifice and worship. Here is the critical issue and the one we must address: the walls of Jerusalem are in rubble. Even the doors have been burned to ashes. The stones that gave the city such protection are tumbled around. It's a disgrace. But more. It shows the Samaritans, our enemies, that we don't care. It's one thing for people to attack us, but if we do nothing, what message does that send?”

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Nehemiah's heart seemed to stop. Nothing held his affection as did the Temple. "It began the night our ancestors left Egypt," he thought. He recalled the story.

The final warning Moses gave to Pharaoh was this: "In any house that is not sprinkled with lamb's blood tonight, the death angel will kill the oldest son of the household."

From that moment—the night Moses began leading the Israelites from Egypt—the Temple began. A slain lamb became the cornerstone of their religious ritual. In the wilderness they built the Tabernacle, and finally under King David's son Solomon the great Temple was built. It housed God. No mobile wilderness tent, Solomon's Temple was not only an architectural wonder, it was the holy place where confessed sins were forgiven and where voices co-mingled in praise and homage to the God of life.

Nehemiah's rise to influence in the Persian world had been remarkable. An immigrant's son becoming a senior official in government, living in luxury in the most powerful of nations, was a rare achievement. No longer a despised Jew, Nehemiah had class, status, and influence.

Now his world was about to change, his comfortable life upended by the news of catastrophe in Jerusalem. The city was not simply his ancestral home; it was the seat of his spiritual life, religious memory, and identity. While much had been done to reconstruct the city and Temple, what use was that when everything that had been built up was exposed to danger because the city's walls were in disrepair? Weeping was not foreign to his world, and Nehemiah let his feelings show.

In the following days, he found comfort in seclusion, fasting and praying. Time alone gave him focus and opportunity to craft a plan. As a Jew, and senior government official, Nehemiah made it his business to discern the intricate web of political entanglements. Time in prayer was not simply asking God for a way out; he was giving his mind to seeing what kind of plan would work. In his early years as king, Artaxerxes had been hard on the Jews in Jerusalem, ordering that all building be stopped. Nehemiah wondered whether he could persuade the king to reverse that order. He knew the news from Jerusalem might upset the Jewish exiles in Persia, and he was confident the king would do his best to keep the Jews from unrest. It was the opportunity Nehemiah needed. He watched for the right moment to lay out his proposal.



It had been four months since Nehemiah heard news of his homeland. With the king's court now back in session, it was time for Nehemiah to swing into action; mourning over his stricken city would be left for another day. Visiting satraps sat with their entourages as the king opened the session. Times were tough. Rebellion was in the air. Taxation was a festering issue in many regions. The effect of conquered regions being forced to raise enough taxes for their own needs and also deliver the levies Artaxerxes expected was crippling. Nehemiah understood. Now Egypt was prowling, sending noises of its readiness to battle Persia. Sitting in between was Judah.

This was the best card Nehemiah had to play. It wasn't a story he had made up. His loyalty to the king was too deep for that. But it was a factor, and there was no need to spell out the consequences.

The king called for Nehemiah. Nehemiah answered, following protocol and meeting the dignity of the occasion. The king noticed something was amiss. When time allowed, he took his trusted bureaucrat aside.

"Nehemiah," he asked quietly, "what's wrong? My goodness, you look like you've haven't slept for days."

"With permission, Your Majesty, at the end of today's session, might I have a word with you?"

It was agreed.

And so began the remarkable journey of Nehemiah as he requested of the Persian king permission to leave his high position in Persia and return to Jerusalem to make his home city safe from those who sought its demise. This was no small request, for by such authority he affected the political dynamics of the ever-explosive Middle East. For the next twelve years, he led a ragtag group that was underfunded, underarmed, and under attack, nationalists who had a will to recreate in the city of David what any Jews worth their salt would give their eyeteeth for: protection of the very building in which Yahweh lived, the Temple.

