

12-2005

Mobilizing Believers Through an Intentional, Sequential and Relational Approach to Discipleship Training at Calvary Baptist Church, Accra, Ghana

Joseph Agyei Mensah

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin>



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#)

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

MOBILIZING BELIEVERS THROUGH AN
INTENTIONAL, SEQUENTIAL AND RELATIONAL APPROACH
TO DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING AT
CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, ACCRA, GHANA.

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

JOSEPH AGYEI MENSAH

ACCRA, GHANA

DECEMBER 2005

PORTLAND CENTER LIBRARY
GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY
PORTLAND, OR. 97223

DISSERTATION ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE

JOSEPH AGYEI MENSAH

PRESENTED: NOVEMBER 12, 2005

TITLE:

**MOBILIZING BELIEVERS THROUGH AN INTENTIONAL, SEQUENTIAL AND RELATIONAL
APPROACH TO DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING AT
CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, ACCRA, GHANA**

***WE THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE READ THIS
PROJECT AND APPROVE IT AS ADEQUATE IN SCOPE AND
QUALITY TO COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY IN
LEADERSHIP IN SPIRITUAL FORMATION DEGREE***


SIGNATURE

11-15-05
DATE


SIGNATURE

11-15-05
DATE



GEORGE FOX
EVANGELICAL SEMINARY

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Sarah, my soul mate, friend and partner in ministry. To my daughters Gloria and Priscilla, and my sons Joshua, David and Joel for allowing me to leave them home while traveling to and from Portland, Oregon. I am grateful for their patience while I stayed late at the office to work on this project.

I also dedicate it to Jim and Linda May of “HIS HIDING PLACE” retreat center in the state of Oregon. With joy and gratitude to God who used them to provide funding for tuition and other expenses, without which I could not have completed this project. May God multiply this investment in His kingdom many fold back to them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
ABSTRACT	viii
CHAPTER	
1. IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM	1
2. DISCIPLESHIP IN THE BIBLICAL CONTEXT	9
Old Testament Examples	9
New Testament Examples	11
Sequential Principles of Discipleship	14
Intentional Principles of Discipleship	18
Relational Principles of Discipleship	21
Implications for Ministry	24
3. DISCIPLESHIP IN HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS	26
John Wesley's Approach	26
A Case for Corporate Spirituality (Small Group Discipleship)	43
Contemporary Approaches to Disciple Making	47
Summary	51
4. DISCIPLESHIP DEVELOPMENT IN CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH	53
Guiding Principles for Ministry at Calvary Baptist Church	54

Small Group Ministry (Sheepfolds)	58
Strategic Questions for Revitalizing Small Group Ministries at CBC.	67
5. IMPROVING UPON THE DISCIPLESHIP INITIATIVES OF CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH	70
APPENDICIES	
A. Small Group Sign-Up Form	85
B. Sheepfold Membership Up-Date Form	86
C. Sheepfold Quarterly Report Form	87
D. Plans for Leadership Training and Small Group Development	89
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
Works Cited	169
Additional Works Consulted	171

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge, with gratitude to God, the following individuals and groups:

Dr Jules Glanzer, Dean of George Fox Evangelical Seminary, for supervising me on this project.

Mr. Charles Church, Retired, for donating time to provide editorial services as well as being my second reader.

Dr. Rand and Phyllis Michael; Paul and Nina Hoopes; Ray and Martha Messa; and Pastor Joseph Yeung and his church for opening their homes and sharing their resources with me during the times I was in Portland, Oregon to take classes.

The Cohort C group for their friendship, encouragement, and support.

Finally to my Senior Pastor, mentor and friend, Rev. Dr. Fred Deegbe and the entire church family of Calvary Baptist Church, Accra, Ghana, for giving me time off from my work schedule to pursue this degree which, with God's help, will enhance my ministry to the church and beyond.

God's blessings on you all!

ABSTRACT

Calvary Baptist Church has historically been a disciple making church. In recent years, however, interest and attendance has waned and church growth has plateaued. In an attempt to encourage new growth, revitalize small group discipleship training, and direct new leadership into ministry opportunities, this dissertation asserts that spiritual growth developed through a relational approach to sequential and intentional discipleship training for spiritual formation will help Christian leaders mobilize believers for ministry

Chapter two examines the disciple making approaches of both the Old and New Testaments with Jesus' process being the primary example. Chapter three analyzes the discipleship methodology of John Wesley and contemporary practitioners who focus on the sequential, intentional, and relational aspects of discipleship. Chapter four illustrates how discipleship has been the driving force in influencing the establishment, ministry and growth of Calvary Baptist Church.

In conclusion, action plans and innovative procedures are outlined which, when implemented, will revitalize the discipleship program of Calvary Baptist Church through new administrative structures, a revised discipleship curricula, and dynamic leadership training.

CHAPTER ONE

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

Pastor Wujanji's secretary beeps him, "Pastor, deacon Manana is here to see you."

"Let him in." Pastor Wujanji beamed but he felt a bit apprehensive as he went to open the office door for the deacon. He knew there must be a problem for it is not the style of deacon Manana to make social calls.

Deacon Manana is the chairman of the body of deacons of the church that Wujanji pastors and has been for the past thirty-eight years. He was there when the church was started and knows all the history and transformations of the church. Pastor Wujanji has deep respect for deacon Manana due to his love and affection for the church. He wonders about what problem he has come to share with him today. He thinks it likely has to do with the deacons' subcommittee deliberating on church members' low attendance at cell group meetings.

The deacons subcommittee has been formed by the church to investigate the reasons behind the apathetic attitude of church members towards the small group system of church growth and spiritual formation. The plan of the church is to disciple believers through the small-group system.

Theoretically, the church is a disciple-making institution. It even has a discipleship department with some discipleship curriculum. There are about one hundred

fifty home cell groups currently formed with their corresponding cell leaders and associate cell leaders. Church members are, however, apathetic towards these home cell meetings.

“Hello, Chairman, come in.” Pastor Wujanji shook his hand warmly as he welcomed him to his office. Deacon Manana is generally a reserved person but very experienced and outspoken on church issues. Pastor Wujanji, on the other hand, is a people-centered person and has visited the deacon’s home with his family on several occasions. A cordial friendship exists between them.

“It’s good to see you. Tell me about the kids and Florence,” Wujanji said as they sat at a conference table across from Wujanji’s desk. After a few minutes of sharing family news, Wujanji directed the conversation. “So, what is on your mind, chairman? I know you didn’t come here just for a social visit. What is going on?”

“I got a report from the deacon’s subcommittee who interviewed church members on why they are reluctant to participate in the cell meetings. I came by to share the information with you before the discussion at the general body of deacons meeting,” said Manana.

Manana gives pastor Wujanji some background to the subcommittee’s work. “The church is primarily a middle class church. It is composed of 40 percent female who have higher education and hold white collar jobs as do 30 percent of the males. The remaining 30 percent of males and females have low education and low income jobs. Over all 60 percent of family units have children in school, college or university.

“Generally the people in both groups work from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday and do their laundry, shopping and other chores on Saturdays. Most

attend the traditional Sunday morning worship service. On Sunday evenings they are expected to attend cell meetings. However, they seem to prefer to stay home with their families and supervise their ward's homework. Others complain that they do not attend the cell meetings because it is obvious by the quality of the lessons that those leading the meetings do not prepare well; and, as a result do not give interesting presentations or handle the meetings well. Hence attendees do not benefit from the meetings. These are the reasons given by most people the committee interviewed," Pastor. "There has to be some structural changes in our cell meeting system."

"I'm sorry to hear this," said pastor Wujanji, "but I think there is a deeper reason that our church members not attending cell meetings. I agree we need to give attention to them, but something else is wrong. Why would we make time for everything except our personal spiritual growth? I believe that ought to be our priority. The scriptures tell us in Matt 6:33¹ that we should seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness and all other things will be added to us. Those who think they know better than the current cell meeting leaders should volunteer to lead these meetings. I have been requesting from the pulpit the past weeks for volunteers to sign up for training but no one has yet come forward."

"You are right pastor," said deacon Manana, "the problem is much deeper than what it appears to be on the surface. I think our people have not clearly understood our desire to intentionally and sequentially disciple them in relationship with others through our cell meetings system. They simply don't get it. I heard of a situation where a cell

¹ NIV Men's Devotional Bible, New International Version, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993). Unless otherwise noted all scripture references will be from this version.

leader changed locations without communicating where the new meeting place would be and ended up scattering the group.”

“Most of our members have lost their sense of belonging,” said pastor Wujanji. “They seem to be so focused on themselves that they have no interest in or concern for others. They have lost their connection. It is like they have divorced themselves from the rest of the body.”

“When we started this church thirty-eight years ago, pastor, we were only a handful of people and a very close family. We would stick together, we shared our joys and sorrows and we were accountable to each other. Now we have grown so much that we hardly relate to each other on anything but a superficial level,” said deacon Manana.

“This is what I call ‘growth pains’,” said pastor Wujanji, “Growth in numbers is good but we must work hard to solidify our gains. What I mean is we should rejuvenate our cell meetings system to focus on relationships. More like the support and accountability groups you had thirty eight years ago when the Lord used you and others to start this church. We can be a large church and still be a close community. When our people mature in their faith we will be able to mobilize them to do ministry, just as you grew to love the Lord and became mobilized to serve Him as a deacon.”

“We really have a big task ahead of us,” said deacon Manana.

“That is why we are here,” said pastor Wujanji. “It is good that we have identified this problem. We need to consider how to reform our current cell group system into a sequential and intentional discipleship program for spiritual formation. With the focus on relationship with each other and the Lord our people can be mobilized to do the work of the ministry.”

Though pastor Wujanji and deacon Manana are fictional characters, and their conversation is an imaginary one, they portray the reality currently existing in the Calvary Baptist Church of Accra, Ghana.

Not only in Ghana, but in many churches around the world pastors and church leaders wrestle with the attitudes of non-commitment and apathy among their members. Spiritual growth is not a priority for many Christians. In his book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren explains that there are five levels, or circles of commitment. They are: the community, the crowd, the congregation, the committed and the core.²

Warren explains that the community is the pool of unchurched people that lives in the church's environs. The community is where the task of evangelism takes place in the context of the church's mission contained in the great commission. (Matt: 28:19-20).³

The crowd includes everyone who shows up in church. They are the regular Sunday or worship service attendees. The crowd is made up of both believers and unbelievers. They are committed to attending worship service every week. The congregation is the group of official members of a local church. They have been baptized and accepted into membership. They have made a commitment to be part of a local church fellowship.⁴

The committed are those in a local church who are serious about their faith. They pray, give to support the church and are dedicated to growing in discipleship. They love the Lord but have not yet gotten involved in serving in a particular ministry. The core is the smallest group, it represents the deepest level of commitment. The core constitute the

² Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 131-134.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

dedicated minority of workers and leaders, those who are committed to ministering to others. They are the people that lead and serve in a local church.⁵

John Maxwell talks about the Pareto principle in his book, *Developing the Leader Within You*. The idea is that, twenty percent of an organization's personnel will be responsible for eighty percent of the organization's success.⁶ This means that in a church situation much more effort must be spent in, as Rick Warren would say, getting more people who are in the community into the crowd, from the crowd into the congregation, from the congregation into the committed and from the committed to the core. The leaders then spend dedicated time with the core that will be responsible for growing the ministry of the local church.

The claim of this dissertation is that, spiritual growth developed through a relational approach to sequential and intentional discipleship training for spiritual formation will help Christian leaders mobilize believers for ministry.

As a result of establishing and supporting this claim, a proposal will be offered to: (1) restructure the current discipleship programs of Calvary Baptist Church of Accra, Ghana, making them sequential, intentional and relationally based, (2) adapt new discipleship materials for cell meetings, (3) provide materials for leadership training, and (4) develop a mechanism for selecting and mobilizing church members for ministry in the church.

To substantiate the assertion of this dissertation, chapter two will examine the discipleship methodology of Jesus. Efforts will be made to show that it was sequential, intentional and relationally based. This relational spirituality contributed to the

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1993), 22.

mobilization of the disciples to do ministry. Greek and Hebrew renderings of the word ‘disciple’ will be examined.

Chapter three will take a critical look at spiritual formation groups developed by John Wesley and others. Wesley’s society, class, band, select society, and penitent band will be examined to demonstrate that the discipleship groups that Wesley created were sequential, intentional and relational, and contributed to the mobilization of numerous assistants that supported him in his ministry. Other approaches from the historical to the contemporary will also be examined to develop the theme of sequential, intentional and relational discipleship.

Chapter four will focus on how discipleship development in Calvary Baptist Church has influenced its establishment, its operations, its vision and its missional core values. The chapter will examine both strengths and weaknesses in the church’s discipleship training programs, consider the issues involved and raise some strategic questions that will help in developing a discipleship model for Calvary Baptist Church.

In an effort to provide a solution to the identified problem in ministry, chapter five will present a proposal to overhaul the current discipleship infrastructure at Calvary Baptist Church. Emphasis will be made on sequential, intentional and relational spiritual formation in the small group setting. In addition, small group study materials and leadership training proposals will be developed. A mechanism to identify, select and mobilize potential leaders will be explored.

Having witnessed the remarkable growth of Calvary Baptist Church in its early years, we long for the renewal of the Holy Spirit in bringing our members to maturity in their Christian life. There seems to be a widening gap between the knowledge that one

gets in the church service and the practical application one applies to their daily life. We believe that this concern can be addressed by revitalizing our sheepfold ministries in the context of small groups. It is the place where a sense of belonging occurs, where being loved makes us stronger in faith, where dialogue opens our eyes to the truth, where openness and honesty removes hypocrisy. The small group reminds us that we are not alone, that community means caring for one another and that ministry expressed through our gifts fulfills our deep longings for a discipleship relationship with our Lord.

CHAPTER TWO

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE BIBLICAL CONTEXT

In this chapter we will examine the discipleship concept in the Old and New Testaments and explore Jesus' model of sequential, intentional and relational disciple-making

What is discipleship? Discipleship is a way of thinking and speaking about the nature of the Christian life. The topic of discipleship recurs repeatedly in scholarly, biblical and extra-biblical writings. The meaning of Christian discipleship means different things to different people. What is needed is a clear grasp and biblical model of discipleship.

Old Testament Examples

In the study of the Old Testament we are struck by the relative absence of discipleship terminology. The terms that specified the master-learner relationship in Judaism, *talmidh* and *limmudh*, are virtually absent in the Old Testament. They are found only four times (Isa 54:13; 50: 4; 1Chr 25:8; Lev 26:12). *Talmidh* is the Hebrew equivalent of the common Greek term for disciple *mathete*, just as *mathetes* "leaner" or "disciple" is derived from the verb learn *lamadh*, meaning "taught one." *Talimidh* is the

equivalent of *mathetes* in later rabbinical Hebrew, although it normally designates a “scholar” in rabbinical use.¹

Surprisingly, *talmidh* is used only once in the Old Testament. Within a classification of musicians, the noun indicates a pupil in contrast to a teacher, or a novice in contrast to a master. The adjective *limmudh*, “taught,” also derived from the verb *lamadh* occurs six times always in the prophets.(Isa 8:16; 50:4; 54:13; Jer 2:24; 13:23). *Limmudh* was rendered as a verb substantive “taught one” but did not become a common term for a disciple in later Judaism as did the related noun *talmidh*.

In the book of Jeremiah, the adjective has the meaning of “accustomed to something” while in the book of Isaiah, it means “taught or instructed.”²

The occurrences of *limmudh* in the book of Isaiah have the most significance for our purpose, especially since lexicographers have given the adjective the force of “taught” as disciples or disciple follower. Isaiah 8:16 reads, “bind up the testimony and seal the law among my disciples.” This indicates that a group of disciples were gathered around the prophet Isaiah listening to the words of God through him.³

While scarcity of Hebrew and Aramaic words of “disciple” leads some to minimize the concept of discipleship in the Old Testament, these terms and expressions point to the fact that, discipleship and master-teacher relationships existed in the Old Testament.

¹ Gerhard Hassel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, 3^d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 146.

² Ibid., 170.

³ Ibid., 150.

During the Hellenistic period, the time when the New Testament was written, the trend toward a variety of relationships associated with the term *mathetes* continued. While learners and pupils in an academic setting could still be designated as “mathetai,” disciples or adherents to various kinds of masters became the common usage.⁴

The relationship between a great thinker or leader and his followers involved a commitment that affected the follower’s entire life. The follower was truly a disciple of a leader and was known primarily for the character of the relationship shared with the master. For example Euripides was honored because he was the disciple of Anaxagoras in Greek folklore.⁵

New Testament Examples

By the time of the New Testament religious adherents, especially those within the mystery religions, were commonly called disciples. Learning was minimized in these contexts. Instead religious commitment and imitation of the religious leader’s life and character characterized the relationship.⁶

The historical development of the term “mathetes” is important for comprehending the way in which people would have understood its meaning at the time of the writing of the New Testament. A “mathetes” was a committed follower of a great master, although the type of masters ranged from philosophers to religious figures. The commitment assumed the development of a sustained relationship between the follower

⁴Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 76.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 78-79.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

and the master, and the relationship extended to imitation of the conduct of the master. This was the notion of the word understood by a Greek at the time the New Testament was written.

Combining our understanding of Greco-Roman “mathetes” with the socio-religious world of Judaism, into which Jesus was born, helps us to more clearly understand his unique form of discipleship.

What kinds of disciples other than Jesus’ might have existed in the world of Judaism? What would have been their characteristics? The gospels speak about the disciples of John the Baptist and the Pharisees. How were they alike? How were they different?

The various subgroups that existed within Judaism each had their own followers. Several of them could be described by the master-learner relationship.

The Pharisees are one such group. In Mark 2:18, Mark tells us that the disciples of the Pharisees along with the disciples of John the Baptist were concerned about fasting. This passage points to key ingredients of Pharisaism. The Pharisees were committed to an intense study of the scriptures and were also committed to living out the law and the traditions. Therefore their disciples were students of the law and the traditions and were practitioners of both.

John the Baptist’s disciples mentioned in Mathew 11:2-3: were sent by John, while he was in prison, to ask Jesus about his messianic identity. Their activities centered on piety and righteousness. Their master, John the Baptist, preached in the desert region of Judea a message of repentance and righteousness. He withdrew from society, ate wild honey and wore camel hair. Hence his disciples followed suit (Mark 1:4-8). The

disciples of John were unique within Judaism in the sense that they withdrew from society and lived in the desert as did John himself.

The Qumran sect was a community of Jews who left civilization behind in order to purify themselves through study, ascetic practices, prayer and communal life in anticipation of the arrival of the messiah.⁷ They saw themselves as the righteous remnant of Israel. This was a community gathered out of the rest of Judaism for a communal life of strict dedication to the study of the Torah and obedience to God under a teacher of righteousness. They had social structures that could be described as a master-learner relationship. The rationale behind looking at the discipleship models in Judaism is to help us understand the prevailing practices at the time Jesus came to the scene and called his own disciples.

Now with this brief review of the practice of discipleship and the understanding of who a disciple is, both in the Greco-Roman world and the world of Judaism, we will turn our attention to the sequential, intentional and relational disciple-making methodology of Jesus.

In Mark 3:14-15 we read that Jesus appointed twelve men designating them as apostles to be with him and to send them out to preach. This appointment was based on a series of encounters that Jesus used to select them. He attracted them by his miracles, they followed him at his personal call, he taught them and molded them by his character and works, and finally sent them out to preach...These sequential aspects will be explained as the chapter develops.

⁷ David Lowes Watson, *Covenant Discipleship: Christian Formation Through Accountability* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1991), 101.

Jesus was also intentional in his disciple making approach in that he specifically chose twelve out of the many that thronged him. Some were tax collectors (Matthew), some quick tempered (Peter), even one was to betray him (Judas), and yet he selected them and intentionally trained and groomed them to do ministry

Sequential Principles of Discipleship

A careful analysis of the gospel materials shows that Jesus committed a great deal of his time directly, or indirectly, to preparing his disciples to assume his ministry after his departure from this world. He taught them directly when he was with them alone, indirectly when he modeled ministry for them during his numerous public activities.

In order to do a sequential, intentional and relational study of the discipleship methodology of Jesus, I will utilize the harmony of the gospels by Frank Charles Thompson in the Thompson Chain- Reference Bible as my primary material source.⁸ This work analyzes the phases through which Jesus took his disciples while training them. The phases as coined by T-NET DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES INC. are “come and see,” “follow me,” “come be with me” and “remain in me”⁹ Even though all four of these phases could legitimately be considered “sequential,” the first two lend themselves most directly to the concept being considered. Therefore, the “come be with me” and “remain in me” aspects will be addressed later in the chapter.

⁸ Frank Charles Thompson, *Thompson's Chain Reference Bible, NIV* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983).

⁹ T-NET, “Module C3: Developing the Foundation of a Disciple Making Church, Manuscript,” p. 30, Intentional Discipleship Resources, Inc., n.d.

Come and See

“Come and see.” Sequentially, at this phase John the Baptist played an important role. In Mathew 3:1-3 we read of the ministry of John which was focused on heralding the coming of Jesus. “ In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, ‘repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near’” (Matt 3:1-2). This served as an invitation drawing people’s attention to come and see Jesus.

Bill Hull observed that, “The magnificent obsession of the Jews was to witness the ushering in of the kingdom of God with all its promised benefits. John the Baptist spoke of the importance of preparing one’s heart for the arrival of the promised deliverer. The people came to be baptized as a sign of dedication as they waited for the coming king.”¹⁰ An air of expectancy pervaded the land.

In John 1: 35-49 we read the account of Jesus’ calling the first five disciples namely, Andrew, Simon, Philip, Nathaniel and another disciple whose name is not given in this passage. In John 2:1-11 we read of Jesus’ miracle of turning water into wine. The miracle gave substance and credibility to the disciples’ belief. In John 4:46-54 we read of the healing of a certain Royal official’s son. In John 4 Jesus talk with a Samaritan woman was amazing to his disciples for Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. This resulted in the woman running to her village proclaiming that she has found the Messiah, again calling people to “come and see.”

At the “come and see” level Jesus attended social events with his disciples, (John 2:2, 12). The disciples were willing to serve and run errands (John 4:8). The disciples began to understand that true worship derived from the heart without pretense (John 4:23-

¹⁰ Bill Hull, *New Century DiscipleMaking: Applying Jesus’ Ideas for the Future* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1997), 17.

24). The disciples were challenge to a life of harvest ministry and to bearing fruit for eternity (John 4:34-36). The disciples observed Jesus, their master, doing the work of the ministry (Matt 4:7; Mark 1:14; John 4:46-54; Luke 4:16-31). The disciples were given time to consider the challenge of ministry (Matt 4:18; Mark 1:16-20).

Jesus launched his ministry with a simple invitation to “come and see.” “Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked ‘what do you want?’ They said, ‘Rabbi (which means teacher) where are you staying?’ ‘come,’ he replied, ‘and you will see’” (John 1:38-39). During this period, he allowed people to observe who he was and to learn what he planned to do. In regards to sequence, these miracles, activities and declarations served an essential function.

Follow Me

“Follow me.” We read in Matthew 4:18-19 that, “As Jesus walked beside the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake looking for fish. ‘Come and follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men.’” The passage says that they at once left their nets and followed him. He also called James, son of Zebedee, and his brother, John, at the same period and without delay they left their father and followed him (Mark 1:16-20).

The question that needs to be asked is why did the men drop their nets and immediately follow Jesus? Bill Hull observed that the men followed Jesus because they had already had some connections with him.¹¹ A chronological review of the disciples

¹¹ Ibid., 67.

exposure to Jesus reveals that during the initial “come and see” period the disciples experienced an exposure to Jesus and the nature of his ministry.

During the “come and see” period the men experienced life changing discussions with Jesus. They saw him perform miracles and witnessed him speaking with an immoral woman. The men may have gone home to think about his claims and to allow time for digesting what had taken place. There was time for their observations to grow into solid convictions. So when the day of decision came, they left everything and followed Jesus.

Some people think that Jesus hypnotized his followers and that they were not free moral beings. Quite to the contrary, Jesus disciples followed him because they had already been with him. Jesus gave them time to make solid decisions.

Another reason, according to Bill Hull, why the men followed Jesus was that they were given an invitation, not a responsibility. “Follow me” is a simple invitation. Jesus assumed full responsibility, “Follow me and I will make you...” He would bear the weight of their training.¹²

The implication here is that the responsibility of the convert, in becoming a disciple, is simply to respond to the invitation of Jesus. The Holy Spirit through the human instrument of a Christian leader will train him or her. The discipler’s task is to increase the convert’s appetite for the work of ministry through selective exposure to that ministry.

Jesus’ method of changing the men from fishers of fish to fishers of men was to expose them again and again to ministry opportunities that he initiated and modeled for

¹² Ibid., 69.

them. The men who followed Jesus observed him modeling ministry in their presence through the “follow me” phase.

It is clear that the sequential, intentional and relational aspects of Jesus’ disciple-making techniques were all occurring simultaneously. But, it is helpful to tease out the specific attributes of his methodology for a closer examination. Thus the “sequential” elements set us up to appreciate even more the intentional and relational principles he modeled.

Intentional Principles of Discipleship

Indeed, Jesus was intentional in his disciple making approach. He sequentially and intentionally selected and trained his disciples by allowing them to witness him perform miracles, follow him and observe him doing ministry. They learned from Jesus to be intentional in the ministry they chose (Mark 1:37-38). They learned to be submissive to God and were beginning to recognize his work (Luke 5: 5-8). They continued to observe their master doing the work of ministry (Matt 12:15). They began to learn the importance of developing inner compliance over external observance of God’s law (Matt 12:1-8).

Come Be With Me

At the beginning of this intentional phase (Mark 3:13-14) Jesus chose a few of his disciples as his inner circle and even within the inner circle he had a core comprised of Peter, James and John. Jesus intentionally separated the twelve out for special authority and responsibility. In the Mathew 5-7 account of his public teaching Jesus indirectly

gives to the twelve the essential content and meaning of his mission. He deals with major themes of character, service, righteousness, love, spiritual discipline, obedience, interpersonal relationships and trust in God. These are important virtues for all those desiring to be his disciples.

This teaching was followed in Mathew 8-9 by events that focused on his public ministry of healing, casting out demons, dealing with impulsive and reluctant followers (Matt 8:18-22), the stilling of the storm (Matt 8:23-27) and questions about fasting that concerned both his disciples and John's disciples.(Matt 9:14-17). These chapters demonstrate the interwoven public and private ministry of Jesus which expose us to his direct and indirect sequential and intentional strategies of training his disciples. He has given them this instruction and example because he intends for them to take over the ministry when he leaves the scene.

The disciples of Jesus were with him during his public ministry. Ministry was intentionally modeled for them and they individually saw demonstrated for them in public the theory that he had taught them in the privacy of their small relational group.

In Mathew 4-9 we are given the opportunity to watch the Master-Teacher at work. Christopher Adsit comments, "To be a disciple maker requires that you discern the unique needs of your disciples and construct a program to meet those needs. It requires that you be able to flex with the variables of your disciple's life. It requires that you be there to answer the questions that are not in the books, and to bind the wounds he suffers, to challenge him to go where he would not normally go."¹³

¹³ Christopher B. Adsit, *Personal Disciple Making: A Step-by-Step Guide for Leading a Christian from New Birth to Maturity* (San Bernadino, CA: Here is Life Publishing, 1988), 99.

Jesus answered the questions on the minds of the disciples and met their needs. They now know what he does for others. They begin to know each other and to know Jesus at a deeper level because a relationship has been established. By Mathew 9:36 the disciples have discovered Jesus' compassionate heart for the spiritually leaderless multitudes. The disciples begin to see people as Jesus sees them and to discover his heart for those in need. His vision becomes theirs because they are relating to him in an intimate manner.

Jesus is now able to clarify the problem that they face. In Mathew 9:37 he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few." Instead of telling his disciples of the great needs, he intentionally allows them to live with him so that they may see in that sequence firsthand just how many people are in need. And Jesus wants his disciples to see more than the magnitude of the needs. He wants them to understand the solutions to these needs.

The problem is not the plentiful harvest but the absence of laborers for the harvest. The solution lies with the laborers. Far too few of them are available.

Jesus had a twofold solution to this problem and he wanted his disciples in training to know the answer. First, he exhorts them to pray to the lord of the harvest. Prayer is the reminder to the disciples that they need to depend on God for his solution as well as his grace to carry out the solution. Allan Coppedge reminds us that without concerted prayer ministry cannot be adequately carried forward.¹⁴ Though the disciples are laborers in training, Jesus impresses upon them that it is their responsibility to pray to the lord of the harvest that he will increase the laborers in the fields.

¹⁴ Allan Coppedge, *The Biblical Principles of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Asbury Press, 1988), 80.

The “come be with me” phase was primarily a “doing” phase. Jesus let the disciples do ministry. He deployed them to act out what they had observed him doing in their presence. They modeled Jesus’ ministry (Matt 10:5-7). They boldly declared God’s truth to people in their surroundings. They handled rejection maturely (Matt 10:14) and they had compassion for the lost (Matt 9:36-38).

The picture of Jesus deploying his disciples to their first mission in Mathew 10 provides a key to understanding his method of disciple making as intentional in nature. Jesus builds himself into their lives. The opening verses of the chapter emphasize his order of priority. He calls them to be with him, to cultivate their relationship with him and then they were sent out by him to do ministry (Matt 10:1-5). Thus Jesus has sequentially and intentionally disciplined them by relating to them at a deep level before deploying them in ministry.

Relational Principles of Discipleship

Despite other facets of the discipleship process, learning to be with Jesus was the top priority. The resultant relationship would transform individuals and make them ready for service.¹⁵ In preparing the twelve for ministry Jesus delegates to them certain authority in the areas of preaching and healing (Mark 3:14; Matt 10:1). The principle of disciples living under the authority of Jesus was then extended as he gave his disciples certain responsibilities.

Disciples sent to minister for Jesus do so not on their own authority. The sent out one carries the authority of the sender. Their commission and motive for ministry was not

¹⁵ Robert Coleman, *Discipleship: Training Leaders to Make Disciples* (Wheaton, IL: Billy Graham, 1992), 50.

their own. It was given to them because of to whom they belonged. In giving account to Jesus upon return from their mission they indicated that they had been involved in teaching, healing and preaching.

They knew how to carry out their ministry responsibility because they were with Jesus when he was teaching in their synagogues. Jesus had been transferring his vision and purpose to them.

Remain in Me

At the “remain in me” phase of Jesus’ sequential, intentional, and relational disciple-making he taught his disciples that spiritual growth was life long and that it required constant relationship with him as well as group interactions with others in order to optimize and stabilize growth (John 15).

The “remain in me” concept required constant abiding in Jesus in order to bear fruit (John 15:4). In Mathew 10:16-23 Jesus reminds his disciples that they will face opposition. He describes them as sheep in the midst of wolves. He counsels them to be wise as serpents but innocent as doves - wisdom and humility in the midst of a hostile environment. They would be able to endure only as they would abide in him and stay connected with each other for support (John 15:5, 12.). They were to be wary of people and expect hostility while they were doing ministry. Jesus exhorts them not to fear opposition and not to allow opposition to bring them to a place where they will deny him (Matt 10:28).

Finally, Jesus begins to specify the cost of being his disciple. Part of the cost was his insistence that they place him first in their lives. He indicates to them that sometimes

a man will be in conflict with his father or a daughter will be against her mother. What this means is that their foes may be those of their own household and family (Matt 10:35-36). Jesus was looking for disciples who had made him the priority of their lives.

He tells them if they love their mothers, fathers and other relations more than him, they are not worthy of him (Matt 10:39). He wants his disciples to reach a point where he is more important to them than anyone else in the world. This is part of the cost of being all that Jesus desires his disciples to be.

Robert Coleman comments that, "Jesus was not just content with the disciples' willingness to make him more important than their families. He wants to be more important to them than their very lives."¹⁶

At the "remain in me" stage, the disciples were being encouraged to sustain their spiritual growth by being in constant relationship with Jesus and in a loving, accountable relationship with one another. These relationships would provide a context for modeling for one another, learning from others' experiences and building one another up in the faith. The "remain in me" stage encourages the disciples to incorporate attitudes and behaviors of Jesus into their own lives. Evidence for this is found in Matthew's account of Jesus' arrest in the garden.. One of his companions drew his sword and cut the ear off of one of the servants of the High Priest. Jesus rebuked the disciple and said, "put back your sword for all who draw the sword will die by the sword" (Matt 26:51-52). Here Jesus taught his companion the inappropriateness of his behavior. The lesson for the disciple was to remain tolerant even in the face of unfair treatment, thereby demonstrating a godly character. To remain in Jesus and in loving accountable

¹⁶ Ibid., 116.

relationship with people of like faith also provides a context in which group members will discover and utilize their spiritual gifts. Getting closely involved in the lives of other people provides many opportunities for using one's spiritual gifts and facilitates group members dealing with spiritual issues that hinder or aid their spiritual formation.¹⁷

We could summarize Jesus' sequential, intentional and relational activities in making disciples as follows: (1) "come and see" by telling them what and telling them why, (2) "follow me" by showing them how and doing it with them, (3) "be with me" by letting them do it and deploying them., and (4) "remain in me" by relating to Christ and to small accountability groups for spiritual growth and formation.

Implications for Ministry

What are the implications of Jesus' method of discipleship for us? The application of these principles of disciple making means several things. The first is that, Christian leaders need to be sequential and intentional in their disciple making as summarized in the four stages above.

Secondly, disciple-makers need not set aside public ministry in order to make disciples. The two are best done simultaneously so that those in training will learn on the platform of a public ministry setting. Those who have effective public ministry to sizable groups of people must learn the value of multiplying that ability for the body of Christ through the making of disciples.

Thirdly, disciple-makers must learn to teach and model solid biblical and spiritual truth in their daily walk with the Lord. This example will be the basis of their spiritual

¹⁷ Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1982), 81.

formation and theological convictions. Opportunity for personal holiness, truthfulness, love, faithfulness, integrity, authenticity, spiritual discernment, peace, goodness, self control and all the other Christian virtues will contribute to the formation of a disciple-in-training.

The fourth implication is that disciple-makers should maintain close relationship with their learners and encourage group relationships which will ensure accountability. They should also deploy their learners for ministry after they have modeled ministry for them.

The training methodology used by Jesus to train the twelve, as described above, is timeless. The fact that explicit instructions are given regarding their training indicates the importance of these basic principles of disciple-making. While these gospel lessons had specific application for the twelve disciples under Jesus' tutorship, the principles involved are applicable in every age and culture. These ought to be taken seriously if disciples are going to be made the way Jesus made them.

In this chapter we have examined the biblical texts relating to discipleship, have presented evidence for, and have demonstrated that: (1) Jesus was sequential and intentional in his disciple-making methodology, (2) the disciples of Jesus learned ministry by being with him, relating to him in an intimate manner and observing his modeling of ministry for them, (3) Jesus, in the course of training his disciples, deployed them in ministry and (4) Jesus took time to intentionally instruct his disciples in various spiritual virtues contributing to their spiritual maturity which resulted in their deployment into ministry having deep theological convictions.

CHAPTER THREE

DISCIPLESHIP IN HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS

In this chapter we will explore the concept of spiritual formation through a small group discipling process that focuses on sequential, intentional and relational elements. This will include an in-depth examination of John Wesley's approach to small groups, an examination of the "community" aspect of corporate spirituality and a look at some contemporary examples from Korea, Singapore and Latin America. It will be observed that these methodologies show great success, each embodying strong sequential principles, intentional elements and a relational focus.

John Wesley's Approach

The structures of John Wesley's ladder of Christian discipleship were small interactive groups, the class, the band, the select society, the penitent band and the society which was not a small interactive group per say but rather the umbrella group for the entire Methodist movement. Each group within the system was designed to accomplish a specific spiritual growth and development purpose. Each group had its own carefully and intentionally defined roles and procedures to ensure that the central objectives were accomplished. Any believer could climb up the ladder of spiritual development by faithfully participating and moving from one level to the next.

Wesley wove the experiences of his own spiritual pilgrimage, his deep spiritual growth convictions and the proven methods of other contemporary Christian leaders into a format that would address the needs of the urban working class.¹ The elements of Wesley's system of pastoral care were not unique, however they did provide a dynamic tool for making Christian disciples which was effective in his day and useful in many other contexts today.

John Wesley's disciple making methodology brings to bear several key principles of New Testament Christianity: (1) personal growth within the context of intimate relationships, (2) accountability for spiritual stewardship – “all the believers were together and had everything in common,” (Acts 2:43), (3) bearing one another's burdens (Col 3:13), and (4) speaking the truth in love. Wesley's groups were focused on achieving these goals. His discipleship structures provided useful insights about these processes by which Christian disciples learned to do ministry.²

We will now look at the levels of group disciple making that Wesley prescribed to show that they were sequential, intentional and relationally based. People grew spiritually through the process and ended up being recruited as ministry leaders by Wesley.

The Society.

The Methodist society was the large group which included all the Methodists in a given locality. The term “society” is synonymous with the term “congregation” in the Methodist system. It included all those who were official members of the movement.

¹ D. Michael Henderson, *John Wesley Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples* (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 1997), 75.

² Ibid., 94.

Methodist society was the focal point of group identification. The society was the umbrella group of the movement and all other related groups came under its jurisdiction.

In the rules of the united societies, Wesley gives his own definition of a society: "... such society is no other than a company of people having the form and seeking the power of godliness. United in order to pray together to receive the word of exhortation and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their own salvation."³ This definition shows the intentionality of Wesley's disciple making. The group had an intention and that was to work out their own salvation or progress on their spiritual journey.

The primary function of the society was the educational channel by which the tenets of Methodism were presented to the masses. Members were those who had been drawn to the movement by field preaching or by invitation. They were, however, required to join a class meeting, which is a small interactive group, before they were admitted in the society meeting. The method used for this model of disciple making included preaching, public reading, lectures, hymn singing and exhortation. The physical arrangement was an audience of fifty or more arranged in rows, usually listening to a speaker with a prepared speech. Little or no provision was made in this particular mode for personal response or feedback.⁴

This level of Wesley's discipleship structure is what Rick Warren refers to as the congregation in his analyses of the church's discipleship levels. The congregation represents those who are committed both to Christ and the membership of a local church.

³ John Wesley. *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 8 (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, n.d.), 269.

⁴ David Lowe Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meetings: Its Origins and Significance*, (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1985), 125.

Intentional structures must be put in place to move them to deepen their commitment to Christ. Wesley designed the class meetings as the next step in the sequence to accomplish that goal.

The Class Meeting.

The heart of Methodism during the life of Wesley was the Methodist class meeting. This was a small covenant discipleship support group where members were accountable to each other. They confessed their faults one to another; prayed for each other, and stirred one another to love and good works. Here the teachings of the bible were examined in the light of actual personal experience. Here leaders were nurtured and equipped. The class meeting was the most influential discipleship instructional unit in Methodism and Wesley's greatest contribution to learning in a group setting. Although simple, it attracted positive comments from educators and religious leaders as a profoundly effective educational tool. Henry Ward Beecher reportedly said, "The greatest thing John Wesley ever gave to the world is the Methodist class meeting."⁵ Dwight L. Moody, nineteenth century revivalist, offered this commendation, "The Methodist class meetings are the best institution for training converts the world ever saw."⁶

The class meeting was not a voluntary unit inside the society. Every congregant became a member of a class and attended it regularly or he or she was no longer a member in "good standing" of the society.

⁵ Charles L. Goodell, *The Drillmaster of Methodism* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1902), 15.

⁶ Ibid

The class meeting was an intimate group of ten to twelve persons who met weekly for personal supervision of their spiritual growth. Whereas the society was without any interpersonal dynamics, the class meeting was a tool for alteration of behavior. The rules of the class meeting specified the basic subject matter which was “to see that their soul prospered.” There was no room here for lecturing or preaching. The emphasis was on present and personal spiritual growth presided over, not by a professional trainer, but by a fellow disciple.⁷

The particular behaviors that the class meetings aimed to produce were listed in the rules for the class meetings. There were three categories of behavior specified: (1) prohibitions, or things not to do, (2) exhortations on positive behavior, and (3) helpful practices to maintain. These were known as the means of grace.⁸

These were not conditions, per se, but behavioral targets. Watson explains, “There was only one condition previously required in those who attended these meetings: a desire to flee the wrath to come, to be saved from sin, but whenever this is fixed in their soul it will be shown in their fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein to evidence their desire of salvation first by doing no harm, and by avoiding evil of every kind.”⁹

The format of the class meeting began with a short hymn followed by one person stating the condition of his or her spiritual life. They then shared a short testimonial

⁷ Watson, *Covenant Discipleship*, 81.

⁸ Ibid., 85.

⁹ Watson, *Early Methodist Class Meetings*, 109.

concerning the previous week's experience, thanking God for progress and openly sharing any failures, sins, temptation, grief or inner battles.¹⁰

In this context the leader modeled the role for others to follow. By following this pattern, the tenor of the meeting was controlled and directed. The subject matter of the class meeting was personal experience on the path of spiritual growth not doctrinal ideology or biblical information. The focus was internalizing, applying, and incorporating biblical ideals into a member's life.

As the members took up these goals for themselves, they would be nurtured in an encouraging context by an affirming group, all of whom were at various stages in the same quest. The collective goal of the class meeting was the attainment of personal holiness, or what Wesley called, "perfect love or the character of Christ." John Wesley provided the best evaluation of the class meetings when he wrote:

The particular design of the classes is to know who continue as members of the society: to inspect their outward walking, to inquire of their inward state, to learn what are their trials and how they fall by them or conquer them, to instruct the ignorant in the principles of religion, if need be to repeat to explain or enforce what has been said in public preaching, to stir whether they now believe, now enjoy the life of God. Whether they therein grow or decay, if decay what is the cause, and what the cure. Whether they aim at being wholly devoted to God or would keep something back. Whether or not they take their cross daily. Whether they humble themselves in everything, are willing to be blamed and despised for well doing. Count it the greatest honor that Christ appoint them to walk with him. How they conquer self-will in all its forms and see through its

¹⁰ Ibid., 111.

disguises, consciousness of their own vileness and nothingness. What zeal they have for doing good, in all they do, or suffer or to receive from God. Whether they live above it making Christ their all and offering up to God nothing for acceptance but his life and death. Whether they clear full abiding conviction that, without inward complete holiness no man shall see the Lord. That Christ was crucified for us that we might be a whole burnt sacrifice to God and that having received the Lord Jesus Christ, will profit nothing unless we walk with him.¹¹

Wesley earnestly exhorted all leaders of class meetings to embrace these principles and put them into practice. This evaluation by Wesley reveals how intentional and relationship-based he was in his disciple making methodology - like Jesus' time alone with his disciples in their small group of twelve. The class meetings were designed to help people in the Methodist societies apply what they had heard in Wesley's public meetings. The class meetings could be compared to the "committed" in Rick Warren's church discipleship levels.¹² The committed in a local congregation being those members who are serious about growing into spiritual maturity and are willing to join mutual accountability groups.

The Band.

The next in the sequence of Wesley's disciple making structure was the band meetings. The band, unlike the class meeting, was a homogeneous grouping by age, sex and marital status. The bands were voluntary cells of people who professed a clear

¹¹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol. 8, 272-273.

¹² Warren, 131-134.

Christian commitment and a desire to grow in love, holiness and purity of intention.¹³

The environment for this particular group was one of frankness and honesty in which its members sought to improve their attitudes, feelings and affections.

Wesley established bands on a voluntary basis in most Methodist societies. There was no requirement that every member belong to a band, but it was advocated in the society meetings and people were urged to join them for their own personal holiness.

At the first Methodist Conference in 1774, a set of rules was drawn up for the bands stating their format, the questions asked of the applicants and the instructions for weekly inquiry. Stating what Wesley considered their biblical foundation, the Conference wrote the following guidelines:

The objective of the meetings is to obey that command of God, “confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another that you may be healed. To this end, the bands met once a week to come punctually at the hour appointed. To begin exactly at the hour with singing or prayer, to speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the fault we have committed in thought, word or deed and temptations we felt since our last meeting. To end every meeting with prayer suited to each person present. To desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest in order as many as are searching questions as may be concerning their state and temptation.”¹⁴

Band members spoke in turn at each meeting. There were differences, of course, in the level of maturity of the participants, their depth of openness and the readiness with

¹³ Henderson, 79.

¹⁴ Wesley, *Works*, Vol. 8, 272-273

which they shared their personal matters. It is to be noted that in the class meetings the responsibility was focused on the leader who was appointed to a pastoral role and who asked questions of each member in turn; however, in the band meeting the members took the initiative individually to speak about their progress towards inward holiness. One person served merely to start the process.

In order to help members of the band meetings speak about their issues, Wesley proposed a series of questions for getting feelings and attitudes out in the open so they could deal with them. The questions were: “What known sins have you committed since our last meeting? What temptations have you met? How were you delivered? What have you thought, said or done of which you doubt whether it be sin or not? Have you nothing you desire to keep secret?”¹⁵

Clearly this was more than in today’s context we would describe as “sharing.” It was a process of mutual confession. For those who took their discipleship seriously, it might have been a significant means of spiritual growth. However, according to David Watson, the bands had limitations which began to emerge quite clearly once Methodist preaching took to the fields.¹⁶ Wesley himself noted that even with the weekly confessions many of the new members were slipping back into their old way of life and even leaving the societies. By 1742 this was causing him considerable concern. With hindsight of modern research into small group dynamics we can make an informed judgment as to why this happened. It was a case of cultural and spiritual disjunction.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Watson, *Covenant Discipleship*, 30.

¹⁷ Henderson, 106.

The bands, patterned after Moravian community life, were too disclosing for ordinary working people. To talk about one's innermost spiritual life requires a vocabulary that many ordinary new converts probably did not possess. To reveal deep feelings, especially religious feelings, without the means to express them adequately must have led to considerable tension. This, in turn, would have caused much apprehension both in and about the meetings providing quite enough reason for people to stay away. Walking comes before running. Young Christians must be helped to walk before they are led to run.

In terms of numbers and popularity the bands had only limited success. The environment necessary for intimate conversation was so restrictive that only applicants who had been recommended by members were allowed to join. Wesley, however, was fond of this mode. This stemmed from his own appreciation for the help he had received from "close conversation." Henderson comments, "Wesley had great regard for those who cared enough to ask him searching questions concerning his inner life. Even in his latter years he happily recalled those deep conversations with Peter Bohler, Christian David at Hernhut, William Law and especially his mother Susan Wesley. He summed up his confidence in the band meetings with this comment: 'I have found by experience that one of these people has learned more from one hour's close discourse than ten years of public preaching'" ¹⁸

The Penitent Band.

This group was specially designed by Wesley for those who lacked the will power, or personal discipline, to live up to the behavioral demands. The primary goal of

¹⁸ Goodell, 239.

the penitent band was to restore its members to the mainstream of the “society” and its channels of spiritual growth. The penitents met with a minister who selected whatever measures were necessary to deal with their problems.

Wesley described the format of the penitent band as follows, “At this hour all hymns, exhortations and prayers are adapted to their circumstances, being wholly suited to those who did see God, but have now lost sight of his countenance, and who mourn after him and refuse to be comforted till they know he has healed their backsliding. By both the threats and the promises of God, and by crying to God in their behalf, we endeavored to bring them back to ‘the great shepherd of their soul.’”¹⁹ Again the intentionality and relational base of Wesley’s disciple making structure is seen here. He did not leave any one out. Those who were struggling with petty sins had their small group where they related to those who had the same struggles so they could draw strength from each other.

The Select Society.

The next in sequence was the select society. This was the uppermost group of Wesley’s discipleship structure. As its name suggests, it was a “select” company of men and women whom Wesley had hand picked from among the most faithful Methodists. The purpose was to model or exemplify what Methodism was all about, especially the perfecting of the human spirit. It was to provide a training experience in the doctrines and methods of the Methodist movement.²⁰

¹⁹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol. 8, 259-260.

²⁰ Leslie F. Church, *The Early Methodist People* (London: Epworth, 1948), 151-152.

The members of the select society had distinguished themselves by participating as leaders in other levels of the discipleship structure. In an early list of those who were members of the first select society all names in the group were listed elsewhere as leaders of classes and as local preachers. This top group was intended to receive the finest training experience so that they could provide a pool of available and ready leadership for top positions in the system.²¹

As Wesley made clear in his statement of purpose for this group, “The inner dynamics of this leadership association are to be a model of how all the modes of Methodism should function, open and honest commitment to each other, caring and concerned for each other’s welfare.”²² Not only were they to be models to all the brethren as patterns of good works and holiness, but the quality of their group experiences were to provide a standard of excellence for all the other groups in the discipleship system.

The select society was different from the other groups in several ways. It had no rules, no leaders and no prescribed format. Wesley encouraged open discussions, especially on matters of significance to the policies of Methodism. Although the members of the select society were, in one sense, in training, they were also learning to lead by making decisions, establishing policies and shaping doctrines.

Although there were no rules for the select society, there were two directives which were to guarantee unity in the group: (1) everything said was in absolute

²¹ Henderson, 123.

²² Ibid., 152.

confidence, and (2) in all differing opinions the members would agree to submit and abide by the arbitration of a senior minister.

Wesley described the open atmosphere of a select society as follows:

Everyone here has an equal liberty of speaking, there being none greater or lesser than another. I could say freely to these, when they were together, “ye may all prophecy one by another that, all may learn and all may be comforted. And I found the advantage of such a free conversation, and that in the multitude of counselors there is safety. Any who is inclined so to do likewise. Encouraged to pour out his soul to God, and here especially we have found that, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”²³

The select society, according to David Watson, was a home base for Wesley himself. It provided a safety net and refuge for him.²⁴ A question has been asked, “Who pastors the pastor?” Wesley needed an intimate fellowship of likeminded companions to share his failures and defeats, progress and victories, frustrations and hopes. He needed a forum of friends in which to work out his own personal quest for holiness, a strategic group who could sharpen the focus of his own thinking. Wesley found the select society the ultimate peer mechanism of a group who were committed to each other to speak the truth in love.

The implication for Christian leaders today is that it is a healthy thing to join an accountability group of like-minded people to protect one’s self from drifting from faith and moral standards. The select society can be compared with the “core” in Rick Warren’s levels of discipleship in a local church.²⁵ The “core” are those members in a local church who actively serve in ministry as leaders.

²³ Wesley, *Works*, Vol. 8, 261-262.

²⁴ Henderson, 124.

²⁵ Warren, 134.

Wesley was intentional, sequential and relational in his disciple making. He rejected the idea that all human actions are predetermined. He placed the responsibility for human behavior on the individual, whom he believed to be capable of making moral choices. The theological term for this system of thought is Arminianism. Wesley held that true religion manifest itself in relationships, in contrast to those who emphasized inner contemplation as a way to spiritual growth. Wesley promoted social interaction as a key to spiritual growth, placing the full thrust of personal spiritual growth on group participation.²⁶

To Wesley holiness consisted of both an outward uprightness and an inward purity. His belief in the perfectibility of human nature had both behavioral and affective applications. The design of Wesley's discipleship structures had the goal of personal holiness. The societies proclaimed and explained the doctrine; the class meetings were designed to implement the behavioral quest for a holy life style; the bands facilitated the cultivation of inner purity; and the select society recruited and groomed leaders for the Methodist movement. It was an interlocking system focused on a common goal. Achieving that goal depended on each component part making its unique contribution²⁷.

On one occasion Wesley was asked why he could not content himself with the preaching and let God look after the converts instead of going through the trouble of forming his converts into societies, classes and bands. Wesley replied, "We have made

²⁶ Henderson, 87-88.

²⁷ Watson , *The Early Methodist Class Meeting*, 103.

that trail in various places but in all of them the seed has fallen by the highway. There is scarcely any fruit remaining.”²⁸

In light of his experience it appears that disciple making is not an option for the church; it is a specific command of the Lord in the great commission passage (Matt 28:18-20).

The only way this command can be fully obeyed is to make disciples and raise leaders who form ministry teams. The role of these teams is to plant more churches, who would also multiply and plant more churches, etc. In that way we will spread the gospel and perpetuate the cause of Christ on earth as we are commanded to do.

The ministry core group was mobilized through his disciple making methodology: The selection of leaders tended to evolve naturally as an acknowledgement by Wesley of their spiritual development and their ministry potential. Thus the progression from class leader to preacher was not uncommon.²⁹

Wesley acted very much like Moses in the supervision of his discipleship program. Moses, on the advice of his father-in-law, chose leaders to select under-shepherds for the Israelites on his behalf (Exod 18:21-23). Wesley kept on stepping back but kept control through the hierarchy of leadership. Snyder writes: “For a time Wesley himself visited each of the societies to supervise them and enforce discipline. As they increased, this became impossible and he assembled his preachers in annual conferences. As societies and preachers grew in numbers, he established circuits with traveling

²⁸ Watson, *Covenant Discipleship*, 30.

²⁹ Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting*, 100.

preachers and soon an assistant or superintendent was placed in charge of each circuit. In this way he kept an autocratic control of the whole system.”³⁰

We are told that eventually hundreds of thousands of people participated in Wesley’s small group discipleship system. Snyder reports that “By the time Methodism had reached 10,000 members at the end of the century, the movement must have had over 10,000 class and band leaders with perhaps an equal or larger total number of other leaders. This system of bands and classes continued for over a century demonstrating a remarkable growth. Consider: (1) in 1738 the Methodist movement began., (2) in 1768 forty circuits existed with 27,341 members, (3) in 1778 sixty circuits existed with 40,089 members, (4) in 1788 ninety-nine circuits existed with 66, 375 members, and (5) in 1798 one hundred and forty-nine circuits existed with 101,712 members.”³¹

These facts and figures attest to the fact that, John Wesley’s sequential, intentional and relational discipleship program emphasizing small groups enabled him to mobilized people for ministry. This evidence validates the claim of this dissertation. Specifically, that sequential and intentional discipleship for spiritual formation, facilitated in the relational context of small accountability groups, will help Christian leaders mobilize people for ministry.

John Wesley’s discipleship methods were structured towards attracting people to Christ and building them up for spiritual growth. There is much to learn from Wesley today. Howard Snyder has said, “... reasons for studying Wesley today go beyond mere

³⁰ Howard Snyder, *The Radical Wesley and Patterns for Church Renewal*, (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1980), 127.

³¹ George Hunter III, *To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1987), 119.

historical curiosity, Wesley's role in bringing spiritual renewal to a rapidly industrializing society and his understanding of the practice of Christian discipleship attests to his continued relevance. If anything, Wesley is more significant today than for any period since the eighteenth century. He is important and often cited as an example of warm-hearted evangelism tied to active social reform."³²

Recapping the factors that contributed to the Wesley's success we find that: (1) in his indigenous approach to ministry he reached people within the context of their own culture, (2) he had an innovative approach to organizing his converts into small groups that were interlocked, (3) he had a unique method of delegating ministerial responsibility to people other than clergy, (4) he exhibited a pragmatic approach to ministry, and (5) he was willing to learn from others.

Some timeless lessons can be learned from this great disciple maker: (1) God's call and grace does not make thorough and careful planning irrelevant, (2) spiritual growth thrives more in a relational atmosphere of mutual accountability, love and concern and is better practiced in small groups, (3) spiritual growth is a gradual process and must be recognized as such, hence a sequential and intentional training curriculum must be flexible enough to allow for differences within the same group

Efforts have been made thus far to examine the discipleship methodology of John Wesley. We have looked at the leadership or ministry teams that his discipleship strategy produced and the effectiveness of his disciple making methods. The factors that accounted for his success and their implications for Christian leaders and disciple makers today. Evidence has been provided in a bid to substantiate the claim of this dissertation

³² Snyder, 3-4.

that sequential, intentional, and relational discipleship facilitated in the context of small groups of increased accountability, will help Christian leaders mobilize believers for ministry in a local church.

A Case for Corporate Spirituality (small group discipleship)

The theological basis for corporate or relational spirituality is examined in Kenneth Boa's book, *Conformed to His Image: A Biblical Approach to Spiritual Formation*. Boa states that "we come to faith as individuals, but we grow in community."³³ Life in Jesus should not be solitary and individualistic, but a shared experience. Of course when we stand before God we will be judged individually according to our works (2 Cor 5:10; Rom 14:12), but the nurture of the community of faith is designed to prepare Christians for everlasting life with the Lord and with one another (Rev 22: 3-4).

Kenneth Boa points out that God is a community being: the lover (Father), the beloved (Son) and the love that flows among them (Holy Spirit.).³⁴ This Trinitarian idea of the one and many, the unity in diversity, the three in one, is found in scriptures. The plural pronouns "let us make man in our own image according to our likeness" (Gen 1: 26); "come let us go down and confuse their language" (Gen 11:7); as well as other passages that distinguish the persons of God as Yahweh and Adonai (Ps 110:1); the ancient of days and the son of man (Dan 7: 9-14); all point to God as one essence who subsists as three eternal and co-equal persons.

³³ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: A Biblical Approach to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 416.

³⁴ Ibid., 417.

Kenneth Boa explains that, “Since God made us in his image and likeness, we have been created for community with him and with one another. The bible portrays God as a covenant maker and keeper. As we enter into the benefits of the new covenant through the blood of Christ (Luke 22:20), we become members of a new community that is called to reflect the glory of the unity of the Godhead (John 17:22-26). The two greatest commandments are to love God and our neighbors (Mark 4:7, 11, 20-21).”³⁵

Kenneth Boa further comments that, “the devastating consequences of the fall (Gen 3) was the fourfold alienation from God, ourselves, others and nature. For those in Christ a significant healing has begun on each of these levels, but it will not be complete until the redemption of our body and the redemption of the created order (Rom 8:19-23). We who have been renewed in Christ have already become new creatures (2 Cor 5:17). God’s redemptive plan is to restore relationship at all levels, with God, self, others and creation.”³⁶ This analysis by Kenneth Boa encourages Christians to strive to maintain faithful relationships.

There is a link between a solitary, contemplative spirituality and a corporate spirituality. As Christians, who constitute the body of Christ grow individually in their intimacy with Christ, their capacity for life in community increases as well (1 John 4: 7-8). True community in Christ is a dynamic interaction of people who know they are accepted and loved by Christ. Generally, God does not call us to be Christians at a distance, but as interactive groups of persons of which Christ is the head. In Hebrews 10:25, we are admonished not to neglect the fellowship of one another.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

The corporate life of the body of Christ is not optional. Christian growth best occurs in a community of faith. Because we are created in the image of God, we are potentially relational beings. Community was created among men when God declared “It is not good for man to be alone, I will make him a helper comparable to him” (Gen 2:18). Even though this passage best describes the institution of marriage, it still shows that God expects human beings to relate to each other.

God in his wisdom, created us for relationships. As Christians our spiritual growth is solidified by our involvement in a community of likeminded people -a community of faith.

The life of the early church documented for us by Luke in Acts 2:42-47 gives us a good idea of the activities and characteristics of the early Christians. These Christians were devoted to a communal life that contributed to a vital Christian community. They devoted themselves to fellowship and they gave to anyone as he or she had need.

Christians share a common life because they share a common savior and have been reconciled through him through a common faith.. Throughout the New Testament instructions such as: “be devoted to one another”(Rom 12:10); “ live in harmony with one another” (Rom 12:16); ”have equal concern for each other” (1 Cor 12:25); ” pray for each other” (Jas 5:16); “each one should use the gift he has receive to serve one another” (1 Pet 4:10) and, “love one another” (1 John 3:23) are all best demonstrated in group situations. One can not live in isolation and be able to affect his or her fellows with these virtues.

The corporate life of the body of Christ should not be optional. Admittedly, participating in community does have its negative sides-notably frictions, backbiting,

gossiping and other vices that have a tendency to surface in groups settings. The benefits of corporate spirituality or growth groups, however, exceed the drawbacks. Kenneth Boa has listed some benefits for which community provides a context for spiritual growth which are quite remarkable. They are: (1) relational enrichment and commitment, (2) trust, love and acceptance., (3) mutual submission out of reverence for Christ, (4) encouragement and accountability, (5) nourishment in scripture, meditation and prayer, (6) participation in corporate calling and purpose, (7) love for neighbor as essential expression of the spiritual life, (8) ministry and service opportunity, (9) expression of the unity in diversity, (10) guidance and sustenance in diversity, (11) support for those in physical, emotional and financial need, (!2) an environment of growth and transformation, and (13) celebration of one another's gifts and existence.³⁷

Dallas Willard summarizes the case for corporate spirituality in relation to our individual relationship with Christ this way "Our personal life together with Christ should both support and be fed by our corporate life together in Christ. Each of us needs a rhythm of solitude and community, of withdrawal and engagement, of ministry and activity, of being served by and serving others, and of personal and corporate growth."³⁸

Emphasis on corporate spirituality, or small group spirituality, underscores the need and clarion call for churches to modify or develop programs of spiritual formation that capitalize on the community aspects of spiritual growth and discipleship.

³⁷ Ibid., 420.

³⁸ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1988), 83.

Contemporary Approaches to Disciple Making

In this section we will look at some examples of sequential, intentional and relational disciple making methodology in the context of small groups from Korea, Singapore and Latin America.

Korea

When one thinks of aggressive sequential, intentional and relational disciple making that produces leaders for ministry in a local church, pastor Yongi Cho's church in Seoul Korea comes to mind. Even as impressive as Cho's church may be, there are nine other churches in Korea which have more than 30,000 members. All of them, without exception, have experienced rapid growth by structuring their church around sequential, intentional small group discipleship ministry.³⁹

The Korean model of the sequential, intentional and relational small group discipleship approach seems to be most widely watched and copied worldwide. Paul Cho's Yoido Full Gospel Church is credited with being the foundational model for modern small group discipleship based churches.⁴⁰ Cho's system has been replicated by many pastors and churches. It is very hard to dispute the incredible church growth that has taken place at Cho's church with more than 625,000 members and 22,000 sequential small groups. Pastor Cho's church grows at a rate of 140 new members a day.⁴¹

³⁹ Carl F. George, *Prepare Your Church For The Future* (Grand Rapids MI: Revell, 1991), 50.

⁴⁰ C. Kirk Hadaway, Stuary A. Wright, and Francis DuBose, *Home Cell Groups and House Churches* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 19-21.

⁴¹ Ralph Neighbour, *Where Do We Go From Here: A Guide Book for the Cell Group Church* (Houston TX: Touch Publications, 1990), 24.

Cho attributes his churches' growth to the small group ministry. Hadaway, Wright and DuBose make this comment:

The word spread that Paul Cho's church and several other huge churches in Seoul, Korea reached their massive size through sequential small group discipleship ministry and that the technique will work anywhere. A movement began, and pastors have flocked to Korea to learn. Churches all over the world are beginning to adopt the sequential small group discipleship approach as an organizational tool. In a real sense the growth of the Yoido Full Gospel Church and the Young Nak Presbyterian church has galvanized attention around a new idea, created a focus, and birthed a movement which is just beginning to impact mainline denominations around the world.⁴²

The structure of Yong-gi Cho's sequential small group discipleship ministry is as follows. There are homogeneous closed groups which are not open to every member unless he or she qualifies by social or gender status. Such as married couples, men and women. There are also new convert groups who graduate to general small open groups for discipleship purposes. These groups meet for fellowship and discuss topics related to their needs.⁴³ Each week members of Yong-gi Cho's church gather in their neighbourhoods, fifteen to a group, where they have an opportunity to worship the Lord, to pray together, to learn from the word of God, to experience the working of the Holy Spirit and to enjoy loving relationships.⁴⁴ The small groups in Yong-gi Cho's church are sequentially and intentionally put together in the context of relational small groups to meet specific felt needs, be it homogeneity in the case of married couples who share common needs or new converts who share a common goal of growing spiritually. Pastor Cho remarks, "The Sunday services in our church are very structured, very traditional,

⁴² Hadaway, Wright and Dubose, 17.

⁴³ William A. Beckham., *The Second Reformation: Reshaping the Church for the Twenty-first Century* (Houston TX: TOUCH Publications), 1995), 32.

⁴⁴ Yong-gi Cho, *Successful Home Cell Groups* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1981), 50-51.

the services are usually crowded, and that limits the participation of each individual to the singing of hymns and to regulated time of congregational praise. They are there to receive instruction from the message, to receive healing or assurance from the Lord, to enjoy the celebration, and to give their offering to the Lord.”⁴⁵

However, in the cell groups each one has an opportunity to be used by God to minister to the others in the group. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit distributes His gifts as He chooses (1 Cor 12:11). In Yong-gi Cho’s small group discipleship system, although leaders teach from the word of God based on the church approved outline, the members of the group have the opportunity to bring a word of encouragement or share a testimony. Each member can pray for the needs of others and believe God will hear his or her prayer and meet the need. It’s a wonderful communal life. Each one is caring for the other. When a member belongs to a home cell group, he or she knows they are cared for, and that is the kind of security many people never find in churches that do not have small groups.

Through this group participatory process potential leaders are identified, trained and deployed to lead newly established groups. This demonstrates the claim of this dissertation that an intentional, sequential and relational small group discipleship approach will help Christian leaders identify and deploy leaders for the work of the ministry. Paul Cho’s church has 22,000 home cell groups which suggests that, 22, 000 leaders have been identified and trained for the work of the ministry.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid, 51.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 65.

Singapore

In the early 1970's only two percent of Singapore's population were considered Christian. Today that number is around fourteen percent⁴⁷ Some of the most radical and exciting growth has come from churches using the sequential, intentional and relational small group discipleship programs. One such example is the Faith Community Baptist Church which was started in 1986 with 600 people. On May 1, 1988, with the help of Ralph Neighbour, they totally restructured their church to become fully dedicated to the small group discipleship model.⁴⁸ Today 7000 to 8000 people attend this church and are personally pastored by 500 active small group leaders. The groups are homogeneously structured, but in some cases special closed support groups such as divorcees, widows and widowers are intentionally created to meet specific felt needs. General open groups are also available to take care of spiritual growth needs of new entrants as they are won and added to the church.⁴⁹

Founding pastor Lawrence Khong, says this about their small groups discipleship strategy: "There is a vast difference between a church with small groups and any ordinary church. All the things the church must do: training, equipping, discipling, evangelizing, praying, and worshiping are all done through our small groups. Sunday service is just the corporate celebration."⁵⁰ This presupposes that leaders have been raised to do ministry

⁴⁷ Patrick J. St. G. Johnstone. *Operation World*, 5th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 1993), 487.

⁴⁸ David Tan, "The Transition To a Program Based Design Church To a Cell Church" (DMin. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1984), 8.

⁴⁹ Johnstone, 489.

⁵⁰ Elizabeth Farrell, "Aggressive Evangelism in an Asian Metropolis," *Charisma*, (January 1996): 55.

through a sequential, intentional and relational discipleship methodology by the Faith Community Baptist Church based in Singapore.

Latin America

Patrick Johnstone describes Latin America as one of the great evangelical successes of the 20th century. Evangelicals have grown from between 200-300,000 in 1900 to 46 million by 1990. Which means that now more than eleven percent of Latin America is evangelical.⁵¹

Many Latin American churches are using sequential, intentional and relational small group discipleship programs. One church that is well known for its small group approach is the Elim Church in El Salvador. This church has grown so rapidly that it now has a membership of 120,000 with 2,600 small groups for adults and 1,300 groups for youth as well as special groups created to meet specific felt needs of members. Examples are groups for professionals designed to reach out with the gospel to their fellow professionals in the market place. Each group meets weekly and has 10 to 15 members.⁵² The number of small groups created in this Latin American church, with its attendant leaders, attests to the effectiveness of this methodology and will help Christian leaders to identify, groom and deploy leaders for the work of the ministry.

Summary

In this chapter we have examined the methodology of sequential, intentional and relational discipleship through several historical and contemporary models. We have

⁵¹ Johnstone, 65.

⁵² David Miller, "Latin America's Sweeping Revival," *Charisma* (June 1996): 32-44.

learned that the history of the small group movement must be seen within the cultural realities of each particular time period. For example, John Wesley's insights into the spiritual conditions of the people in his movement may not be copied verbatim since it may not reflect well today's culture. One must grant liberty to adapt to the social, cultural and religious climate of our times. However, it has been demonstrated through Wesley, Yongi Cho and other cutting edge ministries in Singapore and Latin America that Jesus' principles of sequential, intentional and relational disciple-making are being effectively used in different cultural settings.

Intentionally developing the laity to minister through small groups has been seen, throughout the discussion in chapter three, to provide a way for church leaders to identify, train and deploy effective leaders for the work of the ministry. The importance of the sequential and relational aspects of this process cannot be underestimated and is confirmed in both the historical and contemporary examples presented.

In this chapter we have provided evidence to substantiate the claim of this dissertation that intentional, sequential and relational small group discipleship programs will help Christians grow in maturity and productivity.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCPLESHIP DEVELOPMENT IN CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

Chapter four will focus on how discipleship development in Calvary Baptist Church has influenced its establishment, its operations, its vision and its missional core values. The chapter will examine both strengths and weaknesses in the church's discipleship training programs, consider the issues involved and raise some strategic questions that will help in developing a discipleship model for Calvary Baptist Church.

Calvary Baptist Church (CBC) was established in 1968 in Tesano, a suburb of Accra, Ghana. It was first called the English Baptist Church to differentiate it from The First Baptist Church which, at that time, was made up primarily of Nigerians. The English Baptist Church was renamed Calvary Baptist Church under the leadership of Rev. Gerald Carlin, a missionary from the Southern Baptist Denomination of the United States of America.⁷⁶ In 1971 the Church moved to the Orion Cinema facilities, a commercial cinema hall in Accra, for Sunday morning services. But Sunday evening and Wednesday evening prayer meetings were held at Accra Baptist Center at Tesano.⁷⁷ The Church moved to the current location in Adabraka, also a suburb of Accra, in 1974. In the thirty-eight years of CBC's existence, it has undergone a number of transformations in respect to church growth and discipleship development.

⁷⁶ Flora Sackey, Adotey Ankrah Hoffmann and Francis Agbodeka. Eds. *A History of Calvary Baptist Church. 1968-2003* (Accra, GH: Graphic Packaging Limited, 2003), 12.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 24.

CBC is currently located in an area settled by a cross-section of the Ghanaian population. Ghanaians who have migrated from other regions of the country as well as foreign nationals from the West African sub-region now inhabit the area. It was once the home of the indigenes Ga peoples (commonly known as the GAS). Because of its centrality in the Accra metropolitan area it is easily accessible from all parts of the city.

Membership of the church has been growing steadily from an initial number of about 100 in 1968, to 3000 in 1989, and 8000 in 2003.⁷⁸ This growth has been accomplished by reaching out to the unchurched through evangelism and church planting and nurturing members to full commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. The nurturing process has been focused on bible study and small group programs which are grounded in the mission, vision and core values of the church.

Guiding Principles for Ministry at Calvary Baptist Church

Vision

The vision of Calvary Baptist Church is to exalt God in worship, grow towards Christian maturity and reach out to the world with the Gospel of Jesus.

Mission

The mission of Calvary Baptist Church encourages the church to share the good news of Christ's death and resurrection with unchurched friends and neighbors so that they might be brought into the family of God. The bible commands the church collectively and believers individually to be actively involved in evangelism out of

⁷⁸Ibid., 39.

gratitude for their salvation and love for him, to obediently share the good news about who he is and what he has done and to bear witness before the world of who they are in Christ (Mark 16:15-16; John 17:13-21; 2 Cor 5:14). This witness of proclamation is to be a way of life (Phil 1:12-18).

The mission commits the church to assist members in glorifying God (Eph 3:20-21; Rom 15:8-9) through effective evangelism, purposeful growth to maturity (Col 1:28-29), dynamic fellowship and productive ministry.

The mission challenges the church to develop vibrant small groups. Small groups provide a natural environment to involve people in ministry and prepare them to serve the larger body of Christ. It is a place where biblical community is modeled: a safe place where we accept one another and are accepted in return, where we love and are loved, where we shepherd and are shepherded, where we encourage and are encouraged, where we forgive and are forgiven, where we serve and are served. The small groups are conducive to the study, discussion and application of scripture. Members are encouraged to discuss how biblical principles apply to the challenges for every day living. Members pray for one another during the meetings and throughout the week. Prayer both glorifies God and unifies the group. It provides a context for modeling and learning from the experience of others. This enables people to incorporate positive attitudes and behaviors of others into their own lives. Members can discover and use their spiritual gifts and talents. Meaningful praise and worship is a natural outcome of this community experience where members deal with spiritual issues on a regular basis.

The mission proposes to help church members discover their divine design so that they are equipped to serve Christ effectively in some ministry either within or outside the

church. This process of discovery is a significant element in growing churches. The emphasis, according to a survey conducted by Christian Schwarz, in his book *Natural Church Development* is on people not programs. When opportunity for ministry emerged the most common response was for leaders to encourage individuals to get involved in the life of the person who required support.⁷⁹ Often churches identify a need and institute a program. Once implemented, programs tend to perpetuate themselves. Leaders often fail to assess how well the program is addressing the need that prompted the response originally and how the target audience responds to the program. Ministry happens when a person's needs are met. Sometimes a program will facilitate this sometimes it may not. Growing churches consistently demonstrate the ability to identify individuals within the church who are able to minister to people with special needs. The church leaders in Schwarz's report encouraged people to use their gifts and talents to do ministry to which they were called regardless of whether programs existed to foster such an outreach.⁸⁰ Growing churches that were studied did not look at people's expressed needs first and foremost as opportunities for creating programs, they perceived those needs as an opportunity for one person to minister to another. Calvary Baptist Church strives to encourage its members to use their gifts and talents to minister to one another.

Core Values

The following ten core values guide our relationships and ministry as we seek to serve God together.

⁷⁹ Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996), 93.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 95.

1. Life Transforming Word. We believe that life-related Bible teaching is a foundational catalyst for life change. This means teaching specifically for life change and encouraging obedience to the scriptures (2 Tim 3:16-17; Jas 1: 23-25; Rom 12:7).

2. Discipleship. We believe that the church is called to make disciples for Christ because lost people matter to God. This includes the concepts of relational evangelism, evangelism as a process, world missions and targeting ministry to those outside the church (Luke 5:30-32; Luke 15; Matt 18:14).

3. Ministry. We believe that all Christians are ministers and should serve in a manner consistent with their gifts (1 Cor 12:1-4; Rom 12; Eph 1-2; Ps 133:1).

4. Small Groups. We believe that life change happens best in small groups, therefore we encourage and ask all our members to fully participate in biblically functioning small groups where they may reach the lost, exercise their spiritual gifts, be shepherded and thus grow in Christ likeness. These groups emphasize discipleship, mentorship, vulnerability and accountability (Luke 6:12-13; Acts 2: 44-47).

5. Growth. We believe in the good news that Christ accepts us as we are; but the great news is that He does not leave us that way. This requires instruction in sanctification, stewardship, character, perseverance and holiness (Eph 4:25-26; Heb 12:1; Phil 1:6).

6. Contextualization. We believe that the church should be culturally relevant while remaining doctrinally pure. This shapes our worldview and makes us sensitive to relating to the culture through our worship facilities, the arts and drama (1Cor 9:19-23).

7. Holistic Development. We believe that the church offers great hope for the family. We are committed to building strong marriages, training for godly parenting and offering excellent ministry to children and youth.

8. Love. We believe that love is the distinguishing mark and call for all Christians. We seek to model love in all we do following the example of Jesus Christ (John 15:5; John 12:34-35; Luke 10:1; Neh 3).

9. Prayer and Fasting. We believe that God desires his people to pray and fast and that he hears and answers prayer. Therefore, the ministries and activities of our church will be characterized by a reliance on prayer in their conception, planning and execution (Luke 18:1; 1 Thess 5:17).

10. Excellence. Since God gave his best for us, we aspire to honor him by maintaining a high standard of excellence in all our ministries and activities (Col 3:17; Mal 1:14-16; Prov 27:17).

Small Group Ministry (Sheepfolds)

CBC is a church based on small groups. It expects its members to fully participate in home cell discipleship fellowships which we refer to as sheepfolds. Because the sheepfolds were scattered throughout the Accra metropolitan area, CBC was able to initiate a church planting drive in the 1990's with broad area support and a strategic plan to establish 20 new churches by the year 2000.

As a result of the church planting initiative, CBC now has ten satellite churches around the Accra area. This was done by drawing leadership teams from the sheepfolds and bringing several of the discipleship groups together to form the satellite churches.

The satellites are not autonomous or independent, but are an integral part of the administrative structure of CBC. Five of the churches have a pastor, administrative and accounting assistant and a finance committee that deal with daily operations. The remaining five churches have a pastor but no support staff. Hence they receive direct administrative support from CBC. Local initiatives from the churches are encouraged in a manner that is consistent with the vision, mission and core values of CBC. The satellite churches are all in the suburban area of Accra: Adenta, Crossroads, Aburi, Awoshi, Nsawam, Avornyokope, Ablekuma, Teshie, Nungua, and Dunkuna.

Pursuant to the call of the mission statement to develop church members who would function effectively in worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship and ministry, CBC started the sheepfold ministry 17 years ago. This program was designed to provide more opportunity for church members to discover, develop and apply their gifts both at the small group level and in the larger body of the Calvary family. Successful implementation of this ministry led to the phasing out of the traditional Sunday school program.

Sheepfolds were established in neighborhoods of current church members. In 1999 there were 236 groups with an average attendance of ten persons in each cell. However, as of December 2003, there were only 139 sheepfolds with an average attendance of four persons each.⁸¹ This indicates that the majority of church members were not participating in the sharing, caring and discipleship development aspects that the sheepfolds were designed to encourage. It would appear that they are not maturing in

⁸¹William Amoah. "Strategic Framework Document on Calvary Baptist Church," (CBC unpublished document, 2003), 7.

their faith and are therefore not involved in productive ministry in the church. This situation is of great concern to the CBC leadership.

It is interesting that the membership of the church has grown from 3000 to 8000 in a fourteen year period while attendance in the sheepfolds has declined by about forty two percent.⁸² Some have speculated that the sheepfolds have exceeded their growth limits. Others would argue that the stagnation is due to poor group leadership resulting in member's needs not being met in the sheepfolds. It is evident that small groups, which are the basis of building the Calvary Baptist Church family into a functional and vibrant church, are experiencing some challenges that need to be addressed.

An assessment was needed to evaluate the current program. Discussions were held with the following leadership groups: Staff Team I (top-level management), Staff Team II (mid-level management), Deacons, Pastors and the Church Council of Calvary Baptist Church. Leaders from these administrative teams interviewed 100 individuals from identifiable ministry groups such as, Choir, Men's Fellowship, Women's Fellowship, Youth, etc. Issues identified to be enhancing as well as inhibiting the effective operation of the sheepfold ministry were discovered and are discussed below.

Strengths of the Small Group Ministry at CBC

1. The small group ministry has helped the church in the past to established ten satellites churches. This is a strength that should be a motivation to refocus on small group ministry. In the past, small groups in specific areas of the city were mobilized to establish churches in their localities. A cluster of groups would be brought together to

⁸² Ibid., 12.

form the core congregation. With proper leadership, management and resourcing of the sheepfold ministry the church we will be able to raise ministry teams from those groups to plant even more churches. As members learn to use their gifts in a more effective way the church will be able to field teams and group leaders to establish beachheads in new communities. By helping individuals find their ministry gifts they can be moved from obscurity in the larger church family into leadership positions which will provide the manpower to enlarge the influence of the gospel and the effectiveness of the church. Thus, by bearing fruit and serving faithful, a new excitement for growing in the spirit will be observed and others will want to become involved.

2. A number of small groups still exist in most residential areas of the membership. By revamping, reorganizing and revitalizing leadership and commitment it is expected that new members will join, old members will be refreshed and new spiritual growth and nourishment will be realized. This will enable Calvary Baptist Church to be a place where people minister and are ministered to, shepherd and are shepherded, so the discipleship cycle will be complete. Community based discipleship groups will help facilitate this growth and maturity process so that new converts will be brought in, disciplined, trained in their area of giftedness and empowered to serve the Lord in the church.

3. A discipleship department already exists in the administrative structure of the church. There is a need to restructure and resource the department so that it will be able to accomplish its intended goals of overseeing the sheepfold ministries, developing discipleship curricula, and training leaders. The discipleship department should receive enough of the church's annual budget to adequately undertake operations. With prudent

management of the financial and human resources of this department members will be disciplined, trained and deployed for the work of the ministry both in the local church and beyond.

4. The assimilation unit channels newcomers to the sheepfold ministries. This unit is the first contact with new members and converts. It has a strong nurturing and hospitality function. It's responsibility is to make sure new converts are channeled to appropriate groups for their discipleship growth needs. This unit needs to be trained and empowered to sensitively assess where each new member or attendee can best grow in their spiritual life. When the assimilation ministry team observes the revitalization of the sheepfold ministry they will be able to enthusiastically encourage and counsel new members to participate in the group that best meets their needs. A strong coordination between the Discipleship department and the Assimilation unit needs to be ongoing.

Weaknesses of the Small Group Ministry at CBC

1. The discipleship department has been diverted from their primary responsibility of training small group leaders to oversee other areas of church development, respond to urgent demands, and solve a diversity of problems in a growing church. As a result the shepherding commission has not been available to help the sheepfold leaders meet the spiritual needs of their groups or develop skills for facilitating the small group meetings. Even though sheepfold leaders are committed to serving the body of Christ, they have not had adequate instruction in how to do it. Consequently when members were interviewed about their attendance, they indicated that because their spiritual and social needs were not being met they lost interest.

2. New church initiatives and activities drew congregational focus away from the sheepfold ministry. Each of these new activities required the leadership to take on more responsibility and consequently programs which seemed to be doing fine on their own were neglected. As church growth occurred and emphasis was placed on expansion of church buildings and office facilities emphasis from the pulpit turned to motivating attendees to give to these projects that required immediate attention. Members who were interviewed indicated that they were expecting pastors and other leaders to attend small group meetings to encourage them in their spiritual growth but since that was not the case they stayed home.

3. Transportation difficulties are a problem. Some members interviewed said that they stayed away from the meetings because it required two to three rides to get to the location of the small group meeting place. In Ghana most people do not own cars and have to depend on public transport to move around. Since small group meetings are organized on Sunday evenings and public transportation is not as readily or reliably available on Sunday evenings, some members did not make the extra effort required to attend. This calls for an innovative approach by leadership to structure the small group meetings in such a way that a variety of options will be available in regards to time and place for meetings.

4. Groups have become exclusive in their membership. It was discovered during the interviews that some small groups have become cliques and as a result have closed their doors to new members. This attitude has discouraged some new converts and their natural reaction has been to stay away from the small group meetings. Since the Sunday morning services are largely celebrations it is important that new members be channeled

into groups where they can grow to their spiritual potential. This discovery calls for rethinking and restructuring some small groups in the discipleship system. There may well be a place for “closed” groups, who are closely monitored, that focus on specific needs of the congregation but which do not become cliques. Open groups in which any person will be welcome is the norm.

5. Poor supervision and training impacts group stability. The interviews brought to light that supervision, not only training, of the small group ministry was lacking. Some groups disbanded because of poor attendance or the host families moving away without the knowledge of the church leadership. This would not have happened if proper monitoring and reporting procedures were in place which would keep the leadership abreast of activities and operations of the small groups. It is important that accountability in knowledge of both the groups and their members be a guiding principle in maintaining a healthy small group ministry.

6. Many gathering places are not conducive to spiritual interaction. Inadequate meeting space was also named as a reason for declining attendance at small groups. In Ghana most people live in what are called “compound houses.” These compound houses are not like private apartments. Families have private bedroom facilities but share all other areas in common with the other tenants. So when a group meets where bathroom, kitchen and living areas are occupied in common with others not attending the meeting conflict often arises. In many cases other tenants are of the Islamic faith or not interested in Christianity. Sensitivity and careful evaluation is required to determine how best to approach these situations. It may be important for groups to meet in that atmosphere as a means of evangelizing the unchurched people in the houses and neighborhoods. And one

must recognize that there are not many choices of other meeting places in these communities. Leadership needs to take the initiative in encouraging and educating group members to the potential of evangelization as their neighbors see the love of Christ demonstrated to them.

7. Small group leaders were inadequately trained to shepherd the members of their group. The people interviewed from our satellite churches indicated that they stayed away from the small group meetings because the leaders were not skillful enough to guide them in their spiritual growth. Two problems became evident. First, the satellite churches did not make their training needs known to the mother church. Secondly, the trainers would not have been available because of the additional responsibilities they had been given on tending to needs on other growing edges of the church. This was not an intentional neglect. The demands of the urgent often rob us of taking care of the important. The way forward is for the leadership team to refocus on equipping small group leaders for effective ministry both at CBC Adabraka and all the satellite churches. Since small groups are the basis on which the Calvary Baptist Church has grown and prospered, it is imperative to train the human resources of small group leaders to rebuilding the effective ministry that has led to such remarkable growth.

8. Confidence and participation are in decline. Since many of the small groups are poorly attended, the morale of the existing attendees is down. With the prospect of uninspired and untrained leaders, recruitment for new group membership and new group leadership is difficult. No one wants to attend, or accept responsibility for leading a group, that is in serious decline. The way forward is to prayerfully restructure the small

group ministry so it will be attractive enough to entice people to participate and to attract people to be trained to facilitate and lead them.

9. Potential leaders are uncertain about their abilities and the training opportunities available to them. There is difficulty in recruiting facilitators to lead small groups. It was discovered in the interviews that some of our people refused to accept leadership responsibility because they are not sure about their giftedness in leading. They lamented that there was no curriculum or interest inventory available to help them identify their gifts. If they were aware of their gifting they could receive specific training that would enable them to serve with confidence, joy and spiritual maturity. This is an important concern of potential leaders. The way forward, in response to this problem, would be the adoption of a spiritual gifts inventory to help members discover their gifts and talents so they would be confident to step forward and accept leadership roles in the ministries of the church. This would equip them for effective service.

10. There is no plan in place to restore declining groups. It was agreed at the consultations that there was no integrated plan to revive groups that were faltering, or had disbanded, due to the problems identified above. No attempts had been made to re-organized or revive them and as result members of the effected groups were no longer participating in any small group discipleship ministry. One way to address this problem is to establish a reporting system that would identify struggling groups early in their decline so that overseers could take appropriate remedial action before members are scattered or lost to the discipleship program that is designed for their spiritual growth.

11. There are no groups that minister to members with unique needs. It was also discovered that there was a lack of clear vision for groups that minister to specific felt

needs of the congregation. Some people interviewed were widows, single parents and single professional adults who indicated that they would be attracted to a small group that would address or would discuss specific issues that confront them on a daily basis. As a result some of our members falling into these categories stay away completely from our small group ministries because the groups are not meeting their felt needs. The way forward is to be sensitive to the specific felt needs of our people and to encourage members who fall into these categories to meet together with a trained leader for mutual support and spiritual growth.. Church leadership will provide resources in terms of discipleship materials and specialized training to help group leaders facilitate and shepherd their group to spiritual maturity and productivity.

Strategic Questions for Revitalizing Small Group Ministries at CBC

After a thorough analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the small group discipleship program of Calvary Baptist Church the following strategic questions need to be answered. These questions ask for solutions that can be implemented in a way that will restore the numeric and spiritual momentum that the church experienced in its earlier growth years. It is believed that the small group ministries have a key role to play in the revitalization effort.

- How can we revive small groups through leadership training?
- How can we develop groups to meet the felt needs of the body?
- How can we disciple sheepfold members for effective Christian living?
- How can we identify effective tools to help members discover their spiritual gifts for use in ministry?
- How can we improve the structure and supervision of the small group system?

Answers to these questions must come from a cooperative effort to coordinate administrative and supervisory structures, discipleship department goals, and members' felt needs with the scriptural mandate to bring God's people to spiritual maturity and productivity.

In this chapter we have discussed how discipleship has influenced the establishment and growth of Calvary Baptist Church. We have realized that the methodology once used in the rapid growth of the church no longer is producing the same results. The leadership team has examined the mission and core values of the church and affirm that they are essential in building the church for the Kingdom of God. The team has identified both strengths and weaknesses in the current system and have asked several strategic questions in regards to the revitalization of the sheepfold ministry.

Chapter five is devoted to providing solutions to three of the concerns expressed by the leadership team. I will propose a revitalized discipleship model that is intentional, sequential and relational in the context of small groups (sheepfolds). I will propose the adaptation of specific discipleship and leadership training materials to the needs of the sheepfold ministry of CBC. And, I will propose a revamping of the discipleship administrative structure for Calvary Baptist Church.

CHAPTER FIVE

IMPROVING UPON THE DISCIPLESHIP INITIATIVES OF CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

The task of this chapter is to propose an improvement to the existing small group discipleship models of Calvary Baptist Church based on the weaknesses, strengths and strategic questions identified in chapter four.

The issues raised and questions asked warrant the effort to revive the small group ministry. Vibrant discipleship structures for building and growing members of Calvary Baptist Church will enable church members to serve and be served.

Christian Schwarz focuses on this concept in his book, *Natural Church Development*.

...small groups are the natural place for Christians to learn to serve others both in and outside the church with their spiritual gifts. Planned multiplication of small groups is made possible through the continual development of leaders as a by-product of the normal group life of small groups. The meaning of the term “discipleship” becomes practical in the context of small groups. The transfer of life, not learning of abstract concepts takes place here. Much of the essence of true church life is worked out in small groups. The larger the church becomes, the more decisive small groups will be with respect to her further growth.¹

In a congregation the size of Calvary Baptist Church it is difficult to maintain a pastoral role in the personal discipleship of all those who come to faith in the Lord. We must therefore be prudent and invest time, energy and resources in our small group ministry where the personal touch can be maintained. Spiritual growth as well as the

¹ Schwarz, 32.

capacity to give of one's self is essential for every Christian and this is best achieved in small groups. This argument was advanced in chapter two.

According to survey findings by Schwarz, leaders of growing churches concentrate on empowering members for ministry.

They do not use lay workers as “helpers” in attaining their goals and fulfilling their own vision; rather they invent the pyramid of authority, so that the leader assists the lay person to attain the spiritual potential God has given them. These pastors equip, support and mentor individuals, enabling them to become all that, God wants them to become. Rather than handling the bulk of church responsibilities on their own, these leaders invest the bulk of their time in disciple making, delegation, and multiplication. Thus the energy they spend can be multiplied indefinitely. This is how spiritual self-organization occurs. God's energy not human effort and pressure is released to set the church in motion.²

Pastors need not be superstars. When Christians are developed to serve in their areas of giftedness it reflects the scriptural fact that God sovereignly determines which Christian should best assume which ministry (1Cor 12:27-30).

We see that Calvary Baptist Church has been blessed with human resources that should be prudently developed, encouraged and equipped to enlarge her ministry. The presence of about ninety seven deacons, thirty pastors, one hundred fifty small group leaders and their associates, are ministry resources that should motivate us to develop our small group discipleship program.

The most obvious result of the findings of chapter 3 is a declining involvement on the part of church members in the small group ministries of discipleship. In that review it was discovered that about forty-two percent of our membership do not attend the existing small groups. In order to turn this around and maximize the spiritual growth potential of our members, I propose an advisory committee for the Discipleship Department comprised of fifteen qualified and dedicated women and men. Selection will be based on

² Ibid., 22.

the person's perceived passion for discipleship, Christian commitment and availability to serve.

The team, once selected, will be divided into three taskforce units of five members each. Team one will be responsible for the care and nurture of our members. They will be charged with the responsibility of developing strategies to help our small group leaders keep members fed with the word of God so that they will grow in mind and heart into the image of Christ. They will be required to develop a proposal that will help the church to be sensitive and attentive to the needs of our members, to watch over, look after, guard and be supportive of their spiritual development and welfare.

Team two will be tasked to develop proposals that will help our members build up one another and be knit together in love. The goal is for church members to become one another's keepers. The focus will be to make group meetings a place where people love and are loved, where we help one another develop into Christ's image, and a place where abilities, interest, needs and talents are blended into a vibrant and caring family of God. The church will not be merely a friendly people gathering to worship, but a close knit family serving God and each other.

Team three will be given the responsibility to work with the small group leaders to assist them in the functional organization of their group meetings. They will also help organize inter-group activities for fellowship and fun. In addition, team three will develop a plan to facilitate the training of deacons and other small group leaders.

In an effort to retrieve inactive and marginally active members, I propose to use educational and promotional tools which will encourage and educate church members to the advantages of membership in a small group. This will be done through pulpit announcements, distribution of flyers and brochures, and special activities and events.

I propose distribution of a small group membership form designed to create awareness and solicit attendance at small group meetings. The effectiveness of soliciting tools have been affirmed by George Barna, a church growth statistician. He believes that if you want something to stay in the minds of people you have to speak passionately about it as well as publish information about it so people can read and make a decision.³ Calvary Baptist Church has a high percentage of members who can easily read and fill out forms. The introductory paragraph to form one reads as follows:

At Calvary Baptist church we believe our relationship with God and each other is best developed in small accountability groups. If you are not in a small group, we encourage you to join one. In small groups you will have an opportunity to ask questions about the Christian faith and explore your spiritual journey alongside your friends. You will also get to know and develop meaningful relationships with wonderful people. Whether you are single, married, divorced, widowed, with or without children, there is a small group for you. Please print and complete the entire form, couples attending together should complete only one form. You can also sign up to host a small group meeting or be trained as a small group leader.⁴

On the form there will be multiple options available to give church members opportunity to choose from a number of small groups that will meet their peculiar and specific needs.

Form two will be designed for updating small group meeting membership records.⁵

Calvary Baptist Church has members scattered across the city of Accra and its suburbs. I propose dividing the city into four zones with a supervisory pastor responsible for each zone. His role will be to provide leadership and mentoring to the deacons and small group leaders in his assigned zone. A deacon or deaconess will be appointed,

³George Barna, *Discipleship in the Local Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995), 18.

⁴Appendix A.

⁵ See Appendix B.

under the zonal pastor, to supervise the other deacons and small group leaders located in their zone. This supervision will be done through visitations and monthly meetings. Each of the other deacons or deaconess residing in the zones, or sub-zonal leaders, will be responsible for a cluster of four to five small groups. She/he will supervise the small group leaders in that particular cluster and will be accountable to the deacon who is the zonal leader. The sub-zonal leaders will organize for visitation and care of their members. These sub-zonal leaders will submit quarterly reports on the activities of their small groups to their respective zonal deacons.⁶

The zonal leaders will receive the reports from the sub-zonal deacons and leaders. Evaluations and recommendations will be submitted for discussion and/or action at the Advisory Committee of the Discipleship Department. The data once gathered will be put into a data bank, as a source of facts and figures, to direct and inform future decision making that will enhance the small group ministry.

The objective is to give focused attention to the small group ministry in an effort to revitalize the commitment to sharing in each other's lives by edifying, admonishing, rebuking and building up each other to spiritual maturity.

Another issue raised at the consultations revealed inadequate training for small group leaders and inadequate identification of spiritual gifts as sources of dissatisfaction in the small group ministry. To deal with these problems I propose that the currently identified small group leaders mentor their assistants through instruction and modeling as they release them to do ministry within the small group. This apprenticing is a biblical model for raising leaders. We see Joshua being tutored by Moses, Elisha being brought to leadership by Elijah, the disciples recruited and trained by Jesus. Timothy was mentored

⁶ See Appendix C.

by Paul who in turn was discipled by Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37; 9:26-28; 11:19-30; 13:1-13; 15:1-4).

One of the clearest models of apprenticeship through group process appears in Paul's instructions to Timothy: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Tim 2:2). This verse alone covers three generations of multiplication of leadership skills: (1) Paul to Timothy, (2) Timothy to faithful men, and (3) faithful men to still others. The idea of mentored leadership seems to be central to most of the role models throughout scripture. Carl F. George and Warren Bird in the book they co-authored, *Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership*, have made an important point about the need to multiply leadership skills in the local church. "The central leadership task of the church, after hearing from God, is to develop leaders for care-centered evangelistic cells: leaders who produce various large group events; leaders who produce church wide worship celebrations; leaders who organize and carry out all the ministries given by God to a congregation"⁷ Small group leaders of Calvary Baptist Church will be encouraged to established leadership development goals for their groups. They will also encourage members of their groups to accept leadership responsibilities.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the poor presentation and facilitation skills of small group leaders. In this regard adaptation of four lessons for small group leaders' training will be used. These were compiled by Dr. David Durey of New Hope

⁷Carl F. George and Warren Bird, *Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership*, (Mansfield, PA: Kingdom Publishing, 1997), 46.

Community Church of Portland Oregon and used with permission.⁸ This four lesson series is designed to help small group facilitators lead and impact their groups effectively.

In addition, we will adapt and use a series of 52 small group lessons from New Hope Community Church. This material contains: (1) a nine lesson study of values, (2) a nine lesson study of the book of Ephesians, (3) eight lessons on powerful praying, (4) four lessons on marriage, (5) two lessons on stewardship, (6) lessons on Easter, (7) lessons on Christmas, and (8) a group of lessons on miscellaneous topics. These materials were selected because they contain one lesson for each week of the year. They are intentionally written and carefully formatted to facilitate easy discussions in the group context. These lessons are simple discussion guides which seek to direct the group study time and help the group members discover biblical principles for their daily lives. The lessons begin with a general question that helps start the discussion and lead the group towards the topic of the study. In the body of each lesson there are some questions that can only be answered by looking at the bible, while other questions help the group think more deeply about the biblical truth being discussed. The lessons conclude with an application question which seeks to have each person ask themselves what they will do during the week to apply what they have learned from God's word.

Sequential, intentional, and relational discipleship is the model we want to develop for Calvary Baptist Church. When a person walks forward to accept Jesus as Lord and savior, he/she will be intentionally put in a new converts group for eight weeks where he/she will learn how to find their feet in their new found faith. After eight weeks they will be given the option, as well as guided, to join any small group of their choice that meets their felt needs. Groups such as married men, married women, senior citizens,

⁸ See Appendix D.

widows, widowers, singles and parents waiting for child birth will be available.

Professionals, small business entrepreneurs and youth will have opportunity to join a group where their interests can be explored and their felt needs for fellowship and spiritual growth can be met. This will facilitate the intentional and relational aspects of our discipleship program.

At the small group level members will be encouraged and coached to take a spiritual inventory test to determine their gifts and divine makes and shapes. They will be encouraged to join service groups like, choir, evangelistic teams, prison and hospital visitation teams, ushers, counselors, drama groups, discipleship class teaching ministries and many more service opportunities that the church may have that utilize their talents and gifts. Leaders will emerge, based on their gifts and talents, and be trained and deployed into the work of the ministry.

I also propose small closed accountability groups patterned after Wesley's select society for core ministry leaders. These groups would consist primarily of small group leaders. These core groups could be formed around the cluster of small groups that will be created in the zones. Leaders would meet once every month for fellowship, prayer and sharpening each other by discussing the challenges which confront them in ministry. The core groups would also be a place for these leaders to work out their own spiritual struggles while receiving strength and encouragement from each other.

By embarking on a revitalization effort of small groups as outlined above, it is our prayer that members will catch the vision of their own spiritual formation through the dynamic discipleship ministry available in small groups. By engaging them in a relational approach to sequential and intentional discipleship we believe they can be deployed to do ministry in line with the gifts and talents with which God has endowed them.

In conclusion, the claim of this dissertation is that spiritual growth developed through a relational approach to sequential and intentional discipleship training for spiritual formation will help Christian leaders mobilize believers for ministry.

I learned from the study of the discipleship methodology of both Jesus and John Wesley that, when Jesus began to call his disciples he did so in the context of Judaism that had institutionalized ministry structures firmly in place. One might have thought that Jesus would follow the existing structures in the selection of his ministry team. Instead he picked the average person on the street, poured himself into them, and then deployed them for the work of the ministry. Similarly Wesley, during the time he lived in England, was confronted with high church structures which had well defined roles for the clergy. Wesley, however, took the average believer, trained them in discipleship through small accountability groups, and deployed them for ministry. Both Jesus and John Wesley had significant results as a result of their discipleship approach. This strongly suggests that the work of the ministry in a local church can best be done by motivating and encouraging the ordinary Christian.

Biblical evidence was presented in chapter two where the disciple making methodology of Jesus was examined. It was demonstrated that: (1) Jesus was sequential and intentional in his disciple making approach. This was demonstrated by his invitations to (a) “come and see,” (b) “follow me,” (c) “be with me,” and (d) “remain in me.” (2) It was also established that the disciples of Jesus learned to minister by being with him and observing ministry modeled for them. This shows the close accountability and relational base of Jesus’ discipleship model. (3) Jesus took time to intentionally instruct his disciples on the major spiritual virtues which gave them deep convictions

about him and his mission as well as what he expected of them, and (4) That Jesus, in the course of training his disciples, deployed them to do ministry.

Chapter three presented evidence from Christian history and thought by examining the discipleship structures of John Wesley and other more contemporary examples. It was established that (1) Wesley's approach was (a) sequential in the use of the society, class, band, penitent band, and select society, (b) intentional in content so that each group was tailored to meet their peculiar spiritual needs, and (c) relational by using accountability groups that promoted spiritual growth. (2) Yongi Cho's discipleship approach was also found to be sequential, intentional and relational which enabled him to identify and deploy leaders for the work of the ministry. Samples of sequential, intentional, and relational discipleship approaches from Singapore and Latin America were tendered and it was established that they, too, produced the same results, thereby enabling the Christian leaders to identify and deploy leaders for the work of the ministry. A case was made for the need of small accountability groups based on Kenneth Boa's discipleship facets and their benefits and impact on personal spiritual formation.

Chapter four examined the influence of the discipleship programs of Calvary Baptist Church in its establishment. Analysis of the Discipleship Department and its structures identified both strengths and weaknesses in the program. The cause of perceived apathy of church members to small group ministries was probed.

Chapter five suggests a remedy to the declining interest in the sheepfold ministries. Proposals were made to improve upon the current administrative structures of the small group ministry. Training materials were suggested for the training of the small group leaders as well as spiritual gift inventory tools for identifying spiritual gifts and talents of group members for effective training and deployment for ministry. Small group

discipleship materials were intentionally suggested based on their content for the use in the small groups meetings. Promotional, educational, and evaluation forms were suggested to assist in administrative concerns.

The implications of this study for CBC can be summarized as follows. First, Christian leaders need to be sequential and intentional in their disciple-making methodologies. The plan proposed for Calvary Baptist Church is intentional in purpose. It focuses on small groups which are intentionally created to meet the felt needs of special groups such as widows, single parents, married couples, etc. It will be sequential in that new converts will begin their discipleship journey in a new converts small group for eight weeks before they transition to other fellowship and ministry groups. It is in the relational aspect of the small groups where they will touch other people, learn from each other, and incorporate spiritual values into their lives.

Second, disciple-makers need not set aside public ministry in order to make disciples. The two processes are best done simultaneously, so that those in training will learn on the platform of a public ministry. In the discipleship program plan of Calvary Baptist Church we encourage small group leaders to model ministry for their assistants at the small group level so they could learn on the job. Later they could lead other groups as they were needed.

Third, disciple makers must learn to teach and model solid biblical and spiritual truth in their daily walk with the Lord. This example will be the basis of their spiritual formation and theological convictions. In the discipleship plan for Calvary Baptist Church we encourage group leaders to form small accountable groups with other leaders. They will become mature in their own faith, and will reflect the character of Christ to the people they lead.

The fourth implication for disciple-makers is that they should maintain close relationship with their trainees and encourage group relationships which will ensure accountability. They should also deploy their trainees for ministry after they have demonstrated how it is to be done. The discipleship plan for Calvary Baptist Church promotes this intentional training process of apprenticing where mentors hold their assistants accountable for their daily activities of spiritual discipline.

The work of the ministry in a local church can best be done by motivating and encouraging the ordinary Christian. With a sequential, intentional, and relational approach to discipleship training Christian leaders can increase the influence of the gospel by mobilizing believers for the work of the ministry.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH
SMALL GROUP SIGN-UP FORM.

At Calvary Baptist church, we believe our relationship with God and with each other are best developed in small groups. If you are not in a small group, we encourage you to join one. In a small group you will have an opportunity to ask questions about the Christian faith and explore your own spiritual journey. You will also get to know and develop meaningful relationships with wonderful people. Whether you are single, married, divorced, male, female, with or without children, there is a small group for you.

Please complete one form and drop it in the offering basket. Couples need to complete only one form. You can also sign up at the church's website: [www. Calvarybaptistchurch.org/ghana.com](http://www.Calvarybaptistchurch.org/ghana.com). Select "sheepfolds" and then click to find a group that is right for you. Thank you.

Name. _____

Mailing address _____

Location of your residence. _____

E-mail address. _____

Phone numbers. (work) _____ (home) _____

Please tick all appropriate responses:

☐ I want to join a sheepfold.

☐ I am already in a sheepfold.

☐ I would like to host a sheepfold

☐ I am already a small group host.

The best day for me to meet is: _____ ☐ Any day is fine

The best time for me to meet is: ☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening.

The type of group I would like is:

☐ Couples group.

☐ Singles group.

☐ Couples and Singles.

☐ Women's group.

☐ Men's group.

☐ Any group.

The age group I prefer is:

☐ 20's.

☐ 20's & 30's.

☐ 30's & 40's.

☐ 40's & 50's. ☐ 50+.

☐ Any age

☐ Mixed ages

APPENDIX B

CALVAVRY BAPTIST CHURCH

SHEEPFOLD MEMBERSHIP UPDATE FORM.

The church is updating its records on sheepfold membership. Kindly fill out all the information below and drop it in the offering basket. Thank you.

Name _____

House Number/ Name of meeting place _____

Directions to meeting place _____

Name of shepherd _____ Zonal leader _____

I attend sheepfold: () Regularly () Sometimes. () Not at all.

Marital status: () Married. () Single () Divorced. () Widowed.

Date of Birth: ____/____/____ Anniversary Date: ____/____/____

E-mail address: _____

Phone number: (work) _____ (home) _____

Mailing address: _____

APPENDIX C

**CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH
SHEEPFOLD QUARTERLY REPORT FORM**

Name of Sheepfold _____

Name of shepherd _____

Meeting place/Area/location. _____

Name of zonal supervisor/Deacon. _____

Please supply numbers for the following categories:

- _____ Number of members in sheepfold
- _____ Average monthly attendance at sheepfold meetings
- _____ Number of regular Absentees/follow-up.
- _____ Number of members undergoing pre-marital counseling.
- _____ Number of marriages/blessing of marriage.
- _____ Number of births ___ naming ceremonies ___ dedication of children.
- _____ Number who were sick but now well ___ currently remain sick.
- _____ Number of sick members who were admitted to the hospital.
- _____ Number of visitation made to the sick
- _____ Number of unemployed members.
- _____ Number of members needing welfare assistance from the church
- _____ Number of deaths ___ bereavements.

What problems did you encounter during the quarter? _____

What solutions did you adopt or do you recommend? _____

Please tick any of the following activities which your sheepfold organized during the quarter:

☐ Prayer meeting/retreat.

☐ Evangelistic outreach.

☐ Couples fellowship.

☐ Social activity

(love feast, picnic, games, etc.)

Any special event not covered above. _____

Any comments or suggestions. _____

Any prayer requests _____

Do you have any special coming-up programs/events being organized by your sheepfold which you would like other sheepfolds in your zone to attend? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, please give us some more information.

Description of the program/event _____

Date _____ / _____ / _____ Venue _____

Time _____ Speaker _____

Prepared by _____ Signature. _____ Date _____

Supervisor's comment. _____

Name. _____ Signature. _____ Date _____

APPENDIX D

PLANS FOR LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND SMALL GROUP DEVELOPMENT

This appendix contains a handbook of lessons designed for successfully operating a small group program. The first four lessons provide training for the leaders. The remaining lessons give guidance to session content for each week of the year. The contents are timely and relevant to small group study.

52 Lessons for Small Groups

with

Training Sessions for Small Group Leaders

Book 1

Compiled by

David D. Durey

52 Lessons for Small Groups: With Training Sessions for Small Group Leaders, Book 1

Copyright 1997, David D. Durey
All rights reserved.

ISBN # 0-9656237-5-0

Copyright Permission: Permission is granted to the purchaser of this book to make copies of these lessons for use within one local church or ministry setting. You do not have copyright permission to reprint and sell this material.

Other Ministry Tools and Training Materials include:

Small Groups

52 Lessons for Small Groups: With Training Sessions for Small Group Leaders, Book 2

Mentoring and Equipping Resources for Small Group Leaders

Steps Toward Spiritual Growth: One-to-one Mentoring for Effective Spiritual Development

Steps Toward Ministry: One-to-one Mentoring for Effective Ministry

Steps Toward Balancing Life's Demands: One-to-one Mentoring for Effective Living

Telecare Ministry Contact Records

For orders, seminars or additional information:

Intentional Discipleship

New Hope Community Church
11731 SE Stevens Road
Portland, OR 97266
503-659-5683
www.IntentionalDiscipleship.com

CONTENTS

Introduction

Four Training Sessions for Small Group Leaders:
"Get Ready, Get Set, Get Going and Keep Going"

A Nine Lesson Study of Values

A Nine Lesson Study of Ephesians

Eight Lessons on Powerful Praying

A Four Lesson Study of Marriage

Two Lessons on Stewardship

Small Group Lessons for the Easter Season

Small Group Lessons for the Christmas Season

Small Group Lessons on Various Topics

INTRODUCTION

Small groups have been a fundamental part of the ministry of New Hope Community Church since the church was founded by Pastor Dale Galloway and his wife Margi in October of 1972. Year after year, hundreds of small group leaders have been ministering to thousands of people in the Portland area. Under the leadership of Senior Pastor Ray Cotton, New Hope Community Church continues this commitment to small group ministry.

THE BENEFITS OF SMALL GROUPS

There are many benefits provided by small groups that cannot be obtained by attending the larger Sunday worship services and adult educational classes. The first benefit involves the ability to mobilize so many people for effective ministry as small group leaders. Secondly, those who participate in small groups experience C.A.R.E.:

Close Personal Friendships: Everyone can be known, loved and accepted.

Affirmation: Everyone is needed, each person can find a place of service.

Rewarding Studies: Everyone can apply the Bible to their daily lives.

Effective outreach: A non-threatening place to invite unchurched friends.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book contains two types of tools: First, there are four training sessions to help small group leaders get started successfully. Secondly, it contains 52 small group lessons, one for each week of the year. These lessons have been compiled from those we have provided to our small group leaders during recent years.

The lessons are simple discussion guides which seek to direct the study time and help the group members discover biblical principles for themselves and apply those principles to their daily lives. The lessons begin with a general question that helps start the discussion and lead the group toward the topic of the study. In the body of each lesson there are some questions that can only be answered by looking at the Bible while other questions help the group think more deeply about the biblical truths being discussed. The lessons conclude with an application question which seeks to have each person ask themselves what they will do this week to apply what they have learned from God's Word.

This tool will save you hours of lesson preparation and provide your ministry with an economical way to supply your leaders with lesson materials. You have permission to make as many photocopies from these lesson masters as you need for use in your local church or ministry.

It is our joy to share with you the basic tools that have been helpful to us for so many years in our small group ministry. We are praying for your success. For further help in small group ministry and leadership development for small groups we recommend the following resources:

Books On How To Create A Small Group Ministry

Growing Small Groups, Floyd Schwanz. Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1995.

The Small Group Book, Dale Galloway. Revell, 1995.

Resources For Managing A Small Group Ministry

52 Lessons for Small Groups: With Training Sessions for Small Group Leaders, Book 1

52 Lessons for Small Groups: With Training Sessions for Small Group Leaders, Book 2

Resources For Mentoring And Equipping Small Group Leaders

Steps Toward Spiritual Growth: One-to-one Mentoring for Effective Spiritual Development

Steps Toward Ministry: One-to-one Mentoring for Effective Ministry

Steps Toward Balancing Life's Demands: One-to-one Mentoring for Effective Living

Telecare Ministry Contact Records

For orders, seminars or additional information:**Intentional Discipleship**

New Hope Community Church

11731 SE Stevens Road

Portland, OR 97266

503-659-5683

www.IntentionalDiscipleship.com

TRAINING SESSIONS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS

TRAINING SESSIONS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS

- *Get Ready* -

-

PLAN FOR A NEW SMALL GROUP

1. **Determine where the group will meet.** A home, restaurant, church, or elsewhere.
2. **Decide on the day, time, and length of the small group.**
 - a. Will the group meeting last one hour or will it be longer?
 - b. Will the group meet for a few weeks, months or be on-going?
3. **Select study materials for the group.**
 - a. What topic(s) or Bible passage(s) will be used?
 - b. Will a published study guide be used?

PARTNER WITH OTHERS FOR LEADERSHIP

1. **List the leadership responsibilities.** To illustrate the need to share the leadership load of a small group, make a list of all the responsibilities that must be taken care of for a group to succeed.
 - a. Lesson selection and preparation.
 - b. Facilitate Bible lesson discussion.
 - c. Lead group in conversational prayer.
 - d. Lead group in sharing about their week.
 - e. Meeting place set-up and preparation.
 - f. Greeting guests as they arrive.
 - g. Refreshments coordinated.
 - h. Child care.
 - i. Handling phone calls and interruptions.
 - j. Phone calls to group between meetings.
 - k. Invitations to new people.
 - l. Visits to meet the needs of group members.
 - m. Other leadership responsibilities. . .
2. **Share the leadership responsibilities.** Here is a simple formula for successful small group leadership:
 - a. One leader doing it all = burnout and end of the small group.
 - b. Two people sharing leadership = maintaining the small group.
 - c. Three people sharing leadership = multiplication of small groups.

Get Ready, page 2

PROSPECT FOR SMALL GROUP MEMBERS

1. Choose the type of people to target.

- a. Will the group be for men, women or both?
- b. What ages will be represented in the group?
- c. Will the group be for singles, married couples or both?
- d. Will it be a neighborhood or workplace group?

2. Create a prospect list of those you wish to attend the group.

- a. Build your prospect list.
 - 1) Generally speaking, there is a 3:1 ratio between the total number you are inviting and the average attendance of your group. If you want a group attendance of 10 people, you need to have 30 people on your prospect list.
 - 2) Use your personal circle of relationships: family, neighbors, friends at work, church, school, clubs or other organizations in which you participate.
 - 3) Have your leadership team add prospects to the list.
- b. Pray your prospect list.
 - 1) Ask God to lead you in who you should invite to the group.
 - 2) Pray that God will work in the lives of each person on your list even if they can't or don't come to the group.
 - 3) Take spiritual responsibility to pray for these people regularly.
- c. Work your prospect list.
 - 1) Contact each person on your prospect list and invite them to participate in the small group.
 - 2) Realize that you may need to make several additional contacts with those on your prospect list in order to gain their participation.
 - 3) Keep in regular contact with those on your prospect list between group meetings, especially when a person has been unable to attend that week.

SMALL GROUP LEADER PLANNING SHEET

Leader: _____ **phone #:** _____

Assistant: _____ phone #: _____

Host: _____ phone #: _____

Location of the meeting:

Address: _____

Day of meeting: _____ Time: _____

Starting Date: _____ Ending Date: _____

Description of lesson materials:

Type of small group:

☐ Men's ☐ Couple's ☐ Mature Adult's
☐ Women's ☐ Young Adult's ☐ Single's
☐ Mixed Adult's ☐ Support/Recovery ☐ Youth
 Other:

Prospect Invitation list:

(Friends, family, neighbors, church members)

TRAINING SESSIONS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS

- Get Set -

THE SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP TEAM

There are three vital small group leadership positions: the leader, the assistant leader, and the host. When each person functions in their role, it encourages the others, lightens the load and makes the group successful.

1. **The Leader:** This person or couple is ultimately responsible for the small group. They ensure what is necessary to fulfill its purpose.
2. **The Assistant Leader:** This person may be co-leading with years of experience in small group leadership or they may be just beginning as an apprentice leader. Either way, they are free to assist in any aspect of small group responsibility as they work with the leadership team.
3. **The Host:** This person or couple is responsible for providing the location, set-up, refreshments and positive atmosphere for the small group meeting. They also assist in greeting attendees.

FOUR GOALS OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

1. **Discipleship.** The leadership team's concern should be that everyone in the group is growing in spiritual maturity through fellowship and application of God's Word.
2. **Pastoral Care.** The leadership team must answer these questions:
 - a. Are we aware of the needs of the group members?
 - b. Are the group members involved in meeting each other's needs?
 - c. Are the needs of the group being met adequately?
3. **Service.** The leadership team continually looks for opportunities to express the love of Jesus by meeting the tangible needs of group members and those in the community.

4. **Outreach.** The leadership team must continue to motivate group members to bring unchurched friends and family into the group.

Get Set, page 2

BUILDING A LEADERSHIP TEAM

1. **Build a leadership prospect list.** Look for the following qualities:
 - a. People with a heart and vision for ministry.
 - b. People who demonstrate loyalty and teamwork.
 - c. People who have a positive influence on others in group settings.
 - d. People who are F.A.T.:
 - 1) Faithful to God and others.
 - 2) Available for ministry assignments.
 - 3) Teachable. Willing to learn.
2. **Prayerfully evaluate your prospects.** Look for these characteristics:
 - a. Enthusiasm. A positive outlook and a love for God and people.
 - b. Clear testimony. A clear Christian testimony of what God has done and is doing in their life.
 - c. Dedication. A clear commitment to the success of the group.
 - d. Spirit-directed life. A life submitted to the control and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.
 - e. Time and means. The prospect must have adequate time available to give to leading and developing the small group.
3. **Invite your leadership prospects into service.**
 - a. Ask your prospect to help lead different parts of the group meeting.
 - b. Give your prospect additional opportunities to serve as they prove responsive and faithful.
 - c. Employ "Planned Absence." When you know that you cannot attend the small group meeting, ask your leadership prospect to take your place in facilitating the meeting.
 - d. Affirm your prospect when they succeed in a ministry task.
 - e. Invite your prospect to become part of the leadership team of the small group.
 - f. Continue offering counsel and feedback on their performance.

SHARING THE LEADERSHIP OF A SMALL GROUP

1. Take inventory of your small group leadership team.

Leader: _____

Assistant: _____

Host: _____
2. List the responsibilities that need to be covered for your group.
3. Divide the responsibilities among your leadership team and group.

TRAINING SESSIONS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS

- Get Going -

SEEK TO GAIN EVERYONE'S PARTICIPATION

1. **The leader is a facilitator not the authority or teacher.**
 - a. "Play Dumb." The leader should not respond to every question. You must allow the group members to give their input.
 - b. Don't be afraid of silence. Sometimes the leader must be quiet and wait for the members to formulate their response to a question.
 - c. Cave Exploring. The Bible lesson is the "cave." Don't stand at the entrance of the cave telling the group what you've seen inside, take them in and let them explore for themselves.
2. **How you arrange the seating makes a difference.**
 - a. Sit in a Circle. This allows everyone to feel included.
 - b. Same Eye Level. It is best if the members of the group can sit at the same eye level.
 - c. Only One Extra Chair. Avoid having several empty chairs. A feeling of closeness is lost if the groups members are seated too far apart. Add chairs as they are needed.
3. **Everyone is encouraged to participate but no one is required to pray, read or speak.**
 - a. Don't Hog--Don't Hide. Encourage everyone to share but no one is allowed to dominate.
 - b. Don't Go Around the Circle. Don't make people feel obligated to participate by reading, praying or sharing around the circle.

PRESENT A BALANCED SMALL GROUP MEETING

Make it a priority to balance the three necessary elements for an effective meeting:

1. **Shared Life.** The first 15 minutes of the meeting is usually reserved for the sharing of life. This allows friendships to develop and deepen as members get better acquainted and find

common points of interest or need. This sharing time may include several of the following components:

- a. Welcome.
- b. Opening prayer.
- c. Introduction of guests.

Get Going, page 2

- d. Fun ice breaker activities or questions.
 - e. Testimonies or reports of answered prayer.
 - f. Expressions of appreciation for one another.
 - g. Worship through singing.
 - h. Announcements.
- 2. Conversational Prayer.** The next 5-10 minutes are devoted to conversational prayer. Conversational prayer is a very effective way to pray in a small group. It is a prayer which unites people in conversation with God and with each other.
- a. This simply means talking to God in an easy, natural conversation.
 - b. Each person should feel free to pray several times using short sentence prayers.
 - c. No one person should dominate the prayer time.
 - d. Several people should pray short sentences on each topic before changing to a new prayer focus.
 - e. No one should ever feel forced to pray out loud.
 - f. It is best not to go around the circle and take prayer requests, instead have people state their requests as the group is praying.
 - g. Conversational prayer is topical prayer. Prayer starters can include thanking God for what He has done; asking God to do something for a person within the group; praising God for who He is, etc.
- 3. Bible Application (30 minutes).** One goal of the small group is to apply the Bible to everyday life, learning to live in obedience to God.
- a. Start with an opener question. The discussion guide should begin with an opener question which will point the conversation in the direction of the topic. Example: "How do you explain why bad things happen to nice people?"
 - b. Read the Bible passage and discuss the lesson. The discussion guide should have six to eight questions that help the group explore the Bible passage or topic.
 - 1) Some questions should have answers that only the Bible can provide. Example: What made Paul confident that God would take care of His people? (Romans 8:31, 32)
 - 2) Some questions should be thought questions which allow anyone to offer an opinion or perspective. Example: What gives Christians confidence to face difficult times?
 - c. Apply the Bible lesson to everyday life. The discussion guide should have a closing application question which helps group members think about how they can use the Bible lesson in their lives this week. Example: What can you do this week to demonstrate that you are trusting God to work out your circumstances for good?
- 4. Close with Conversational Prayer (5-10 minutes).** The primary focus of this closing prayer is the application of the Bible truths in the lives of group members. "Lord, help me this week to apply in my life what you have shown me in your Word today."

TRAINING SESSIONS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS

- Keep Going -

-

PRESERVING GOOD SMALL GROUP DYNAMICS

1. **Be consistent in starting and ending on time.** Establish the total time the meeting will last, generally one hour weekly.
2. **As the leader, maintain a relaxed spirit in the group.**
 - a. Be honest and open yourself, allowing the Holy Spirit to be the teacher. You need not have all the answers.
 - b. Affirm others when they share their points of view.
 - c. Be shock-proof and non-judgmental, practicing acceptance while not necessarily agreeing.
3. **Participation is the key to success:** Encourage participation without making anyone feel uncomfortable for not participating. Don't require anyone to speak, read or pray.
4. **Practice mutual edification (Romans 14:19).**
 - a. Seek to build each other up. Affirm one another. We want to build healthy self-esteem in each member.
 - b. Pastoral care is a natural by-product of small groups. The leader, assistant and host need to set the example in how they express love and care for each other.
5. **Encourage everyone in the group.**
 - a. Make each person feel important. Let them know that their ideas and comments are valued.
 - b. Avoid focusing advice on just one member of the group. This is not a counseling session.
6. **Respond lovingly to a need expressed. . .immediately.**
 - a. Pray immediately when a need is expressed. Don't make a list of prayer requests before you start praying. Pray when the first need is expressed.
 - b. Teach by example. When you as the leader have a need, share it and ask the group to pray for you.
 - c. "The Love Seat." A chair can be placed in the middle of the circle while people gather around and gently lay their hands on the person in the "love seat" and pray for their need.

Keep Going, page 2

HANDLE PROBLEM PEOPLE IN A POSITIVE WAY

- 1. Handle problem people away from the group on a one-to-one basis.**
 - a. No dumping permitted. A disturbed person cannot become the center of attention. Make it clear that everyone is loved but that "no dumping is permitted."
 - b. Refer troubled people to a support group. A disturbed person may need to be asked to join a support group which can better address their needs.
- 2. Don't allow people to confess anyone else's faults but their own.**
 - a. No Gossip. Don't talk about people outside the group.
 - b. Focus on helping those in the group by asking, "How can we pray for you?"
- 3. Don't allow doctrinal discussion that is divisive or argumentative.** State, "I'll be happy to discuss this with you after the meeting." Or, "I'll go with you to ask our Pastor about that doctrinal issue if it is important to you."
- 4. Don't allow anyone to do all the talking.**
 - a. Don't give frequent eye contact with the talker.
 - b. Have the talker sit next you, not across from you.
 - c. Have your assistant help you keep on track without your having to directly confront the talker. Have them say, "Thank you for your comments, now let's hear from someone else." Or, "Let's continue our lesson with the next question."
 - d. If the situation persists, confront the "talker" one-on-one away from the group. Tell them that they must stop dominating the discussions and explain that everyone needs an opportunity to contribute.

A NINE LESSON STUDY OF VALUES

Values Series

Honesty

Joshua 6

Small Group Lesson 1

1. Tell about someone you know who has illustrated honesty and integrity. Was this a family member, neighbor, co-worker, business owner, etc.?
2. How important is honesty in personal friendships? What happens to a relationship when dishonesty is discovered?
3. What does God's Law state about honesty? How were the children of Israel to deal with one another? (Leviticus 19:11; Exodus 20:16)
4. How did the Apostle Paul address this issue regarding the way Christians were to deal with each other? (Ephesians 4:25, 28)
5. In Joshua 6 we find the account of the fall of Jericho at the hands of the Israelites. God had commanded Joshua and the people to destroy the city and everything in it except Rahab, the woman who had assisted the Israelite spies (Joshua 6:17-18). What instructions had been given regarding articles of silver, gold, bronze and iron? (6:19)
6. How did the Israelites act regarding the Lord's command at Jericho? (7:1)
7. What bad thing happened because of Achan's dishonesty? (7:2-5)
8. Did Joshua know why trouble had come upon the Israelites? How did he find out what the problem was? (7:6-15)
9. What dishonesty was finally uncovered that had brought the Lord's anger against the children of Israel? (7:16-23)

10. After the sin had been revealed and corrected, the Lord restored His blessing to the Israelite army (Joshua 8:1). Take inventory of your own life, is there any hidden sin or dishonesty that you need to confess to the Lord? Read Psalm 51:1-12 as an example of getting honest with God. Also read 1 John 1:9 to be reminded of God's readiness to hear from you.
11. Is there someone that you need to speak to this week to correct some dishonesty between you?

Values Series

Self-Control

Galatians 5:22-23

Small Group Lesson 2

1. How would you define "self-control?"
2. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and identify the positive qualities that church leaders should have as well as the negative traits that should be absent. Is self-control included in this list?
3. What was the common character quality that Paul wanted Titus to teach the various groups under his care? (Titus 2:1-8; 11-12)
4. What motivation did Paul offer for living a life of self-control? (1 Thessalonians 5:2-8; Titus 2:13-14)
5. What did the Apostle Peter have to say about self-control? (1 Peter 1:13, 4:7; 5:8; 2 Peter 1:6)
6. Lack of self-control is well illustrated by the acts of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19-21). Describe what someone's life is like when they lack self-control.
7. What happens when Christians yield control of their lives to the Holy Spirit? (Galatians 5:16, 22-25)
8. Ephesians 4:22-28 and Colossians 3:5-14 illustrate the "Put-off, Put-on Principle." Identify what Paul says Christians are to "Put-off" and what they are to "Put-on." Discuss how "putting on" the new self through the power of the Holy Spirit can displace the acts of the sinful nature.
9. In what area of life do you want greater self-control? What can you "put-on" that will help you establish self-control in this area?

Values Series

Courage

Joshua 1:9

Small Group Lesson 3

1. Who comes to mind when you think of a courageous individual? Why are they so courageous, where does their courage come from?
2. After Moses had died, the Lord God spoke to Joshua. What commands or instructions did God give to Joshua and what encouragement did He offer? (Joshua 1:1-9)
3. What was Joshua's greatest reason for having great courage? (Joshua 1:9)
4. In the New Testament we read about Peter one of Jesus' closest friends and followers. Describe how courageous Peter was when things got difficult for Jesus. (Luke 22:33-34; 54-62)
5. See Acts 4:1-20. Here Peter is put in jail then brought before the rulers in Jerusalem. How would you describe Peter's courage while facing such strong opposition? (Acts 4:13, 18-20)
6. What was the source of Peter's great courage? (Acts 4:8)
7. What can Christians do to gain greater courage in order to live boldly and obediently for Jesus in a hostile world? (Acts 4:23-31)
8. Where do you go for strength and courage, to your own resources or to God? Pray together that the Holy Spirit will fill you with Himself and strengthen you to live courageously for Jesus Christ.

Values Series

Obedience

1 Samuel 15:22

Small Group Lesson 4

1. How would you define obedience? Can you think of an illustration of obedience in daily life?

2. Read Psalm 119:97-104. What benefits do you see that are a result of obedience to God's commands, laws and instructions?

3. What spiritual principles did Moses present to the children of Israel to instruct and motivate them regarding obedience to God?
(Deuteronomy 28:1-2,15)

4. The example of King Saul:
 - a. What was God's command to King Saul? (1 Samuel 15:3)

 - b. What was Saul's level of obedience? (1 Samuel 15:8-9)
 - ___ total rebellion
 - ___ complete obedience
 - ___ partial obedience

 - c. How did God react to Saul's level of obedience?
(1 Samuel 15:11)

 - d. When confronted by Samuel, how did Saul respond?
(1 Samuel 15:13-15, 21)

 - e. What principle did God teach through the prophet Samuel?
(1 Samuel 15:22-23)

5. As Christians, what should be our motivation for active obedience to God?
(John 14:15, 23-24; 15:10)

6. Based on your current desire and effort to identify God's commands and obey them, rate your level of "loving obedience."
 - ___ I'm living in loving obedience to God's revealed will.
 - ___ I need to diligently seek to know God's commands for I desire to obey.
 - ___ I know that I could do better in obeying what God has already shown me.

Values Series

Loyalty

1 Chronicles 29:18

Small Group Lesson 5

1. Tell about someone who has been loyal to you. This might be a Christian friend, a family member, someone in the work place or a childhood friend.
2. What are characteristics that describe loyalty?
3. Read 1 Samuel 19:1-7; 20:16-17,41-42. Describe the loyalty between Jonathan and David.
4. Why should there have been rivalry instead of loyalty between these two men?
5. Consider the story of Naomi and her daughter-in-law, Ruth (Ruth 1). How did Ruth demonstrate tremendous loving loyalty to Naomi?
6. As Christians, what is one reason that Paul gives for remaining loyal and interdependent on one another? (Romans 12:4-5)
7. Read Romans 12:9-13. How should Christians demonstrate loving loyalty to one another?
8. King David offered a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing as the people presented gifts for the building of the temple. He prayed that the Lord would keep the hearts of the people loyal to God forever (1 Chronicles 29:18). How can we demonstrate our loving loyalty to God?
9. List those to whom you want to affirm your loving loyalty this week:
10. How will you express or demonstrate your loving loyalty to those you have listed above?

Values Series

Loving (Part I)

John 13:34-35

Small Group Lesson 6

1. When you were a child, from whom did you receive a lot of love? How did that person demonstrate love to you?
2. What qualities do you associate with love?
3. Is love a feeling that overwhelms you, then prompts you to positive action or do you first choose to love, then demonstrate that commitment through positive action?
4. What qualities does love have according to the Apostle Paul?
(1 Corinthians 13:4-8)
5. Which of these qualities do you need to trust God to develop and demonstrate in your life?
6. How could a person exercise spiritual gifts, personal sacrifice, service, even martyrdom and yet have these things be counted as worthless?
(1 Corinthians 13:1-3)
7. Read John 13:34-35. What actions might indicate the kind of love that Jesus is referring to here when He commands His followers to love one another?
8. When have you suspected that someone was a Christian because of observing their "love in action?"
9. "Love really counts the most when it is difficult or costs the most." How do you respond to this statement?
10. In what context of life are you trusting God to love through you?

Values Series

Loving (Part II)

Romans 5:8

Small Group Lesson 7

1. When have you been shown unconditional love even though you were not acting in a very lovable manner?
2. What is so unique about the kind of love that God has demonstrated for mankind? (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8)
3. Read the story told by Jesus in Luke 15:11-32. Based on the two son's actions, which son might you expect the father to love and which might you expect him to resent?
4. How did the father respond to the return of the younger son? (Luke 15:20-24)
5. How have you personally experienced the forgiving love of God the Father?
6. How did the older brother act when the younger son returned? Based on his response, how would you describe his love for the younger brother? (Luke 15:29-32)
7. What does this story of forgiving love from a father reveal about God's love toward mankind? Toward you?
8. When considering your life during the last few weeks, whom do you most identify with in this story, the younger son, the older son or the father?
9. Think of how you can demonstrate God's unconditional love. To what "undeserving" person can you extend love and forgiveness this week?

Values Series

Kindness

Matthew 25:34-40

Small Group Lesson 8

1. What is kindness? Share examples of acts of kindness shown to you or kindness you have shown to others. What impact did these acts have?
2. Read Ephesians 4:32. If we are to treat each other with kindness, why is it important that we forgive one another?
3. One of the best illustrations of human kindness is found in Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan. What makes this such a great example of kindness? (Luke 10:25-37)
4. Do only great acts of kindness find favor with God? (Matthew 10:42)
5. What does Jesus ask of us if we are to be His followers? (Matthew 25:34-40)
6. What about our enemies or those who do evil? How should they be treated? (Romans 12:17-21)
7. There is a popular phrase which states: "Practice random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Would you change it in any way? How?
8. How do the hypocrites do their "acts of righteousness?" How does Christ say we should act? (Matthew 6:1-4)
9. What is one act of kindness that you will perform this week? Write down a description of the act of kindness and the person to whom you will show it.

Values Series

Humility

Philippians 2:1-11

Small Group Lesson 9

1. How would you describe a humble person? Can you give an example of a humble person from your own experience?
2. How did Christ's life teach us to live with humility? How did He display humility in His relationships?
3. What does an authentic Christian life, lived in humility, look like? Read Philippians 2:1-11 and identify at least four ways we can live in humility.
4. Discuss why these behaviors do or do not demonstrate humility:
 - ☐ being a doormat for others
 - ☐ respecting other's opinions
 - ☐ being bold and assertive
 - ☐ showing kindness to those from all walks of life
 - ☐ putting yourself down
 - ☐ telling others of your righteous deeds
 - ☐ accepting leadership positions
5. Read Proverbs 11:2; 13:10; 16:5. How can pride be a barrier to our spiritual growth and living by God's word?
6. Identify great leaders in the Bible. How did their lives show humility? Is there a relationship in their lives between obedience and humility?
7. Read James 3:13-18. Contrast "deeds done in humility that comes from wisdom" and those done with "envy and selfish ambition." Identify well-known people who have lived by each of these values and describe their impact on others.
8. How are you doing with your humility? Rating yourself in this area is very difficult, but give it a try:
 - ☐ I'm humble and proud of it!
 - ☐ I feel okay about this area . . . I think.
 - ☐ I really need more humility.

A NINE LESSON STUDY OF EPHESIANS

A Study of Ephesians

Spiritual Blessings From God

Ephesians 1:1-14

Small Group Lesson 1

1. What has happened to you recently that you count as a blessing?
2. How have Christians been blessed? (Ephesians 1:3)
3. In verse 4, what did God decide for believers and when did He choose it?
4. What did God predestine (mark out beforehand), and what is the destiny or relationship that believers have with Him? (1:5-6)
5. What are the blessings that Christ has provided for the believer? (1:7)
6. What did Jesus Christ have to do in order to provide these blessings? (1:7)
7. Read verses 8-10 and summarize in your own words how God has and will pour out spiritual blessings.
8. God predestined the Jews to be the first to believe in Christ (1:12). What were the results of the Gentiles hearing the good news of salvation? (1:13)
9. Consider the role of the Holy Spirit in the spiritual blessing of God for believers:
 - a. God has placed the Holy Spirit as a "seal" on believers. A "seal" in Bible times showed ownership. (1:13)
 - b. God has placed the Holy Spirit as a "deposit" (down payment) to guarantee the believer's full redemption and inheritance as God's child. (1:14)
10. How does it make you feel to realize all that God has done for you? How can you express your gratitude to God this week for all His spiritual blessings?

A Study of Ephesians

Made Alive In Christ

Ephesians 1:15-2:10

Small Group Lesson 2

1. For what are you most thankful?
2. Paul gave thanks to God for the faith that the believers had in Ephesus (Ephesians 1:15-16). He also prayed that they would get to know God better (1:17). What 3 things did Paul also pray that the Ephesians would come to know as their hearts continued to be enlightened? (1:18-19)
3. What was the end result of God's great display of power which He demonstrated in Christ? (1:20-23)
4. How did Paul describe their former spiritual condition? (2:1)
5. What characteristics are true of those who are spiritually dead in sin? (2:2-3)
6. Why did God make those who were spiritually dead, alive with Christ? (2:4-5)
7. How has God honored those who have been made alive in Christ? (2:6)
8. Why is it that no one can say he has earned his own salvation? (2:8-9)
9. Have you ever had pride in your good deeds?
10. We are God's workmanship. (2:10) How can you see God's creative workmanship operating in your life?
11. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, what good work for the Kingdom of God do you hope to accomplish this week?

A Study of Ephesians

One In Christ

Ephesians 2:11-22

Small Group Lesson 3

1. Tell about a time when you felt excluded as an outsider because of social, religious or racial differences? How did you feel and react in that situation?
2. What do you know about the racial and ethnic differences that have historically existed between Jews and Gentiles? How did Paul state these differences? (Ephesians 2:11-12)
3. How did Christ's work on the cross transform the condition of the Gentiles in relationship to God? (2:13)
4. How did Christ's work on the cross serve to reconcile and unify Jews and Gentiles? (2:14-18)
5. How are some of the ethnic groups in our city, nation and world needing reconciliation? With what social, economic or ethnic groups have you had to overcome division, hostility and or prejudice?
6. In Christ, what is the new spiritual status of the Gentiles? (2:19-22)
7. How does the Gospel of Jesus break down social, religious and ethnic barriers?
8. If Paul were speaking to your church about reconciliation, would his words be filled with praise or disappointment?
9. How can you demonstrate the unity that should exist in Christ's church? What can you do this week to show love and acceptance to a Christian who is socially, culturally or racially different from you?

A Study of Ephesians

A Captive of Christ's Love

Ephesians 3:1-21

Small Group Lesson 4

1. If you were in prison, what would you miss most about life on the outside? In what ways would you spend your time trying to "escape" (mentally, emotionally, etc.)?
2. Paul likely wrote Ephesians while under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:16, 30-31). What is the clue that Paul gives regarding his location and condition? (Ephesians 3:1)
3. How did Paul describe his current circumstances? Whose "prisoner" did he say he was? (Ephesians 3:1) What does this say about his ability to deal with negative circumstances?
4. Do you think Paul was looking for sympathy as he wrote this letter (probably from a guarded room)? (3:2-13)
5. On what basis do you have any right to come to God? (3:10-12)
6. With what attitude are you allowed to approach God? (3:12) How does this compare to your normal attitude, actions and feelings about approaching God?
7. Paul soon shifted the focus from what God had done for him to what God could do for his readers. What overwhelming concept or truth was he wanting them to grasp? (3:14-19)
8. Have you fully comprehended what God has done for you and how great Christ's love is? Describe your perspective on His love for you.
9. As a closing for this lesson, read the benediction in Ephesians 3:20-21.

A Study of Ephesians

Unity in the Body of Christ

Ephesians 4:1-16

Small Group Lesson 5

1. What unites sports teams? How do sports teams illustrate the need for different gifts, working in unity?
2. What virtues foster unity among Christians? (Ephesians 4:1-3)
3. What are the 7 elements listed by Paul that should motivate us to pursue Christian unity? (4:4-6)
4. How do you get along with other Christians?
5. God has spiritually gifted some Christians to lead as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastor/ teachers. (4:11) What is the purpose of these spiritual gifts? (4:12-13)
6. How have you benefited from the leaders in your church?
7. What does God expect to see as a result of spiritual leaders equipping and mobilizing Christians for ministry in the body of Christ? (4:14-16)
8. What service can you offer within the body of Christ?
9. How would you characterize the unity of your church? What part can you play in your church's unity?

A Study of Ephesians

Living as Children of Light

Ephesians 4:17-5:21

Small Group Lesson 6

1. What are the type of things that happen in our city after dark?
2. How did Paul say Gentiles were living in the dark? (Ephesians 4:17-19)
3. *The Put Off - Put On Principle*: Paul lists many vices that Christians are to put off; however, he also lists the virtues that are to be put on in their place. To enjoy long-term change you must focus on the virtue that you are adding. Below, list the vices to put off and the virtues to put on in their place. (4:20-32)

PUT OFF	PUT ON
old self falsehood	new self speak truthfully

4. What virtues have you put on since becoming a Christian?
5. In what way are Christians to imitate God? (5:1-2)
6. What actions does Paul say should not be associated with God's people? (5:3-4)
7. Whom should Christians avoid partnership with? (5:5-7)

8. How does Paul suggest we live? (5:8-21)
9. Instead of yielding control of yourself to alcohol, what power should you yield to? (5:18)
10. What changes would you like to see take place in your behavior? Yield to the power and control of the Holy Spirit. Allow him to help you put on new virtues that will crowd out the old vices. Pray for one another right now.

A Study of Ephesians

Husbands and Wives

Ephesians 5:21-33

Small Group Lesson 7

1. Name a couple who have a good marriage relationship and describe what it is that you truly admire about them.
2. How does mutual submission between a husband and wife create a satisfying relationship? (5:21)
3. How does Paul help define the wife's responsibility in this mutual submission? (5:22-24)
4. Paul illustrates that submission in marriage is not one-sided, in fact, the husband is required to take an active role. How does Paul describe the mutual submission of a husband? (5:25-27)
5. How does Paul's teaching here illustrate that God should be at the center of a marriage relationship?
6. What priority should a husband give to loving and caring for his wife? (5:28-30)
7. How should the covenant bond between a husband and wife be more permanent than the relationship of a parent and child? (5:31)
8. How does Paul summarize the responsibilities of the husband and wife as they demonstrate mutual submission? (5:33)
9. If you are married, what can you do this week to demonstrate mutual submission to your spouse? If you are single, how can you use this principle of mutual submission to strengthen or help the relationship of a Christian couple?

A Study of Ephesians

Honor Those In Authority Over You.

Ephesians 6:1-9

Small Group Lesson 8

1. If you could relive your childhood, how would you change the way your parents treated you?
2. How is obedience to parents a part of a child's obligation to Christ?
(Ephesians 6:1)
3. Read Exodus 20:12. The word "honor" is used in the Old Testament to indicate something that is highly prized, cared for, to show respect for, and to obey. What does it mean to "honor your father and mother" as seen in the above verse and Ephesians 6:2.
4. What did God promise the Israelite children for obeying their parents? (6:2-3)
5. How does God's commandment and promise to children hold true today?
6. How did honoring your parents bring blessing to you?
7. What instruction does God have for Fathers? (6:4)
8. How is the Lord to be the center of parent-child relationships? (6:4)
9. How can a parents avoid exasperating their children?
10. What did Paul have to say regarding slaves and their masters? (6:5-9)
11. How are Paul's instructions to slaves and masters an application of Ephesians 5:21?
12. How can you submit to one another out of reverence for Christ and show honor to those in authority over you this week?

A Study of Ephesians

The Armor of God

Ephesians 6:10-24

Small Group Lesson 9

1. What precautions do police officers take to guard against danger?
2. What precautions did Paul tell the believers to take? (Ephesians 6:11)
3. How did Paul describe the danger that Christians face? (6:11-12)
4. Based on Paul's words, what can you expect to face sooner or later? (6:13)
5. What spiritual battles have you been faced with already in your life as a Christian?
6. Why is it helpful that Paul used a Roman soldier's armor to illustrate the protection available for spiritual warfare?
7. List and describe the pieces of spiritual armor that God instructs Christians to put on. (6:14-18)
8. How would you describe the armor of God in your own words?
9. What mandate does God give all Christians? (6:14)
10. What last piece of armor did Paul tell all Christians to take up? (6:17-18) What is the significance of this piece of armor, how is it different from the other items listed and why is it important?
11. What pieces of armor are you missing or are in poor condition? How can you correct that?

EIGHT LESSONS ON POWERFUL PRAYING

Powerful Praying!

The Dynamics of Prayer

Philippians 4:6

Small Group Lesson 1

1. How would you define prayer?
2. Prayer is based on a personal relationship with Christ. What kind of person prays effectively? (James 5:16)
3. How can we have the confidence to draw near to God? (Hebrews 4:14-16)
4. What authority do we have to approach God in prayer? (John 14:14; 16:24)
5. What reason might there be for not receiving an answer to our prayers? (James 4:3)
6. How does unconfessed sin affect our prayers? (Psalm 66:17-19)
7. What will keep us from receiving anything from the Lord? (James 1:6-8)
8. What condition does 1 John 5:14-15 suggest for answered prayer?
9. What does Paul suggest should accompany our prayers? (Philippians 4:4-7)
10. Your prayers should be balanced. Using the "A.C.T.S." of prayer as a guide, evaluate if your prayer life includes a good balance between **A**doration, **C**onfession, **T**hanksgiving and **S**upplication.

Powerful Praying!

The Most Powerful Prayer Ever Prayed

Matthew 6:5-15

Small Group Lesson 2

1. What role did prayer play in your family's life when you were growing up?
2. How did Jesus describe those who prayed to be seen by men? (6:5)
3. How did Jesus instruct His followers to pray? (6:6)
4. How will God reward sincere and humble prayers? (6:6)
5. What did Jesus have to say about trying to impress God and others by repeating meaningless phrases (lit. "utter empty words") during prayer? (6:7)
6. To whom did Jesus teach us to pray? (6:9)
7. What should be our attitude toward God and His kingdom? (6:9,10)
8. Who should we look to regarding the necessities of life? (6:11)
9. Why is it so important for us to forgive those who wrong us? (6:12,14-15)
10. What should we pray regarding temptation? (6:13)
11. How can you use this prayer as a guide to improve your personal prayer time this week?

Powerful Praying!

Teach Me To Pray

Luke 11:1-10

Small Group Lesson 3

1. How do you react to a child's relentless request for something?
2. What was Jesus doing when one of His disciples approached Him?
(Luke 11:1)
3. What was the disciple's request? (11:1)
4. What other religious leader had taught his disciples to pray? (11:1)
5. What topics did Jesus' prayer cover in this prayer? (11:2-4)
6. In the parable told by Jesus, why did the person in need go to the friend at midnight? (11:5-8)
7. In this story, whom does the friend in the house represent? (11:5-8)
8. Why did he eventually grant the man's request for bread? (11:8)
9. How did Jesus summarize the principle of this parable? (11:9-10)
10. What do you need to ask your Heavenly Father for?
11. How can you demonstrate patient, expectant persistence in prayer this week?

Powerful Praying!

Forgiveness

Matthew 18:21-35

Small Group Lesson 4

1. Why is forgiveness difficult?
2. What question did Peter ask and what was Jesus' surprising response? (Matthew 18:21-22)
3. In our culture are people likely to forgive someone more than once?
4. In the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, what happened to the servant who owed more than he could ever repay? (18:23-27)
5. In what ways has God shown mercy in forgiving your sins and the sins of others?
6. After being shown mercy, how did the first servant deal with a fellow servant who owed him a small amount of money? (18:28-30)
7. If God is so willing to forgive us, why do we find it hard to forgive others?
8. How did the onlookers in this Parable respond to the actions of the first servant? (18:31)
9. How did the king react when he heard about the actions of the first servant? (18:32-34)
10. How does Jesus' application for this parable compare to His teaching offered in the Sermon on the Mount? (18:35 and 6:14-15)
11. Who do you need to ask forgiveness from for a wrong you have done? This week, be reconciled to others by seeking or extending forgiveness.

Powerful Praying!

Touch Your Friends Through Prayer

Ephesians 3:14-21

Small Group Lesson 5

1. How often do you pray for those you love? Who do you pray for?
2. What did Paul request in prayer for those in Ephesus? (Ephesians 3:16)
3. Through whom would the Ephesians be strengthened and for what purpose? (3:16-17)
4. How and when have you allowed God to become too small in your life?
5. Why did Paul want the Ephesians to be "rooted" and "established in love"?
6. What does Paul go on to say about the love of Christ? (3:19)
7. What did Paul say as he closed his prayer? (3:20-21)
8. How does Paul's doxology encourage you? (3:20-21)
9. Talk about how you can improve in your intercessory prayer (prayers for the needs and well-being of others).

Powerful Praying!

Seek First His Kingdom

Matthew 6:25-34

Small Group Lesson 6

1. What do people worry about the most?
2. What three things did Jesus tell His followers not to worry about? (Matthew 6:25)
3. What did Jesus use to illustrate that God is a reliable provider? Why? (6:26)
4. Explain why worrying is not a positive solution to problems. (6:27)
5. How did Jesus argue against worry regarding the necessity of obtaining proper clothing? (6:28-30)
6. What group of people should be expected to worry about life's necessities? (6:31-32)
7. If we keep God's priorities, what can we expect? (6:33)
8. Why is worrying over the future so disruptive for today's peace? (6:34)
9. What is the difference between planning for the future and worrying about the future?
10. What steps can you take this week to keep your focus on His kingdom and His righteousness?

Powerful Praying!

A-S-K: Ask, Seek, Knock

Matthew 7:7-12

Small Group Lesson 7

1. If you were able to ask for anything in the whole world with the assurance that your request would be granted, what would you ask for?
2. According to James, what is one reason that we will not obtain what we need or desire? (James 4:2-3)
3. When we do ask something of God in prayer, what guidance is offered in 1 John 5:14,15.
4. Jesus taught His followers to A-S-K with expectation. What did He say would result from each of the following actions? (Matthew 7:7, 8)
 - a. Ask . . .
 - b. Seek . . .
 - c. Knock . . .
5. What point was Jesus trying to make by illustrating how godless parents provide the basic staples of life for their children (here represented by bread and fish)? (Matthew 7:9-11)
6. What is the likelihood of God answering the appropriate requests of His praying children? (Matthew 7:11)
7. In light of this truth--that God can and will supply His children with "good gifts" if they ask--what command does Jesus set forth? (Matthew 7:12)
8. This command (Matthew 7:12) is commonly known as the "Golden Rule." There is a similar ethical teaching found in major religions such as Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism which states "do not do to others what you do not want done to you." How does it differ from Christ's command?
9. This week, how can you demonstrate trust in God to supply your basic needs and how can you use these resources to bless others?

Powerful Praying!

Jesus Prays For All Believers

John 17:20-26

Small Group Lesson 8

1. When have you seen disunity in a family, church or community?
2. As Jesus prayed for other disciples, who else did he include in His prayer? (John 17:20)
3. Why did Jesus want all believers to be one? (17:21)
4. What did Jesus want to communicate to the world through the unity seen among His followers? (17:23)
5. How have Christians allowed division and destroyed unity in our world today?
6. How is the Father's relationship with the Son an example for us to follow in our relationships with other Christians?
7. What desire did Jesus express to the Father in John 17:24?
8. Who did Jesus say that the world did not know? (17:25)
9. Why was Jesus going to continue to make the Father known? (17:26)
10. What can you do to promote the unity among Christians that Jesus prayed for in John 17:20-26?

A FOUR LESSON STUDY OF MARRIAGE

Building Your Marriage Constructing a Good Relationship

Genesis 2:24

Small Group Lesson 1

1. What does it take to build a good marriage?
2. Read Genesis 2:24. Once a couple has received each other as God's gift (Genesis 2:18-23), they must leave their parents. How does a couple establish and maintain proper independence from their parents?
3. What are some ways couples do not leave their parents?
4. What can happen in a marriage when parents try to hold on and the son or daughter remain dependent on their parents rather than their mate?
5. According to Genesis 2:24, what should happen after the man leaves his father and mother?
6. What insights does Matthew 19:6 add to your understanding to becoming "one flesh"?
7. Is becoming "one flesh" something that happens at a point in time or an on-going process? Or is it both?
8. Physical intimacy obviously contributes to achieving oneness in a marriage. Sexual relations by themselves are no guarantee that oneness will result. What makes the difference?
9. Why is acceptance of and commitment to your mate important in achieving openness and oneness in your relationship?
10. What is one area of your marriage where you could do some remodeling in order to improve your oneness?

Building Your Marriage

Servant Leadership

Ephesians 5:23-29

Small Group Lesson 2

1. What various roles must you fulfill to be a success in society today?
2. What kinds of preparation, schooling, training courses, books, etc. did you have to have for filling these roles?
3. In order to write a biblical job description for being a husband who serves as Christ intends, read Ephesians 5:23-29. How is a husband's position illustrated?
4. What might Paul be describing when he says that the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church? (5:23)
5. What are the responsibilities involved in being "the head" of a group of people or an organization?
6. What additional insights do you gain about leadership from Mark 10:42-45? Which of these concepts is the most challenging to you as you think of your leadership in your home?
7. What is servant leadership?
8. How would becoming a "servant" leader change a man who tends to be passive and who does not accept his responsibilities? How would it change a man who is dictatorial and refuses to listen to his wife?
9. How would becoming a "servant" leader affect the ability of a wife to support her husband's leadership?
10. List 1-3 practical ways in which "servant" leadership can be demonstrated in your relationship in the coming weeks.

Building Your Marriage

Loving and Caring

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Small Group Lesson 3

1. What factors in society and in marriage make it difficult to be a good husband or wife?
2. What are your greatest struggles in being a good mate?
3. According to Ephesians 5:25-27, why is loving unselfishly so important?
4. How does this kind of love, this denial of self, communicate love to the wife?
5. How is following the description of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 meaningful to you?
6. Which of these descriptions of love do you need most to help build your marriage? (1 Corinthians 13: 4-7)
7. How would you make self-denial a willing act of love and not a grudging duty?
8. What does Ephesians 5:28-33 add to your view of your responsibility to your mate?
9. Why is caring so important?
10. What "elements of nourishment" does your mate need from you to help them grow?
11. How can you show your spouse that you esteem and value him/her?
12. Choose one act of unselfish loving or caring toward your mate that you agree to be accountable for this week.

Building Your Marriage

Building a Legacy

Psalm 78:3-8

Small Group Lesson 4

1. What comes to mind when you think of a "heritage" or "legacy"?
2. Read 2 Tim 1:5. Describe the heritage your parents left to you and the values it represents.
3. What legacy did Joshua desire for his descendants? (Joshua 24:14-15)
4. According to 3 John 4 and Psalm 78:3-8, you can leave spiritual as well as physical descendants. Read Matthew 28:19-20 and 2 Timothy 2:2 and talk about how you can leave a spiritual legacy.
5. According to Deuteronomy 6:1-9, how do you leave a godly legacy with your children by your influence?
6. Your marriage should leave a legacy of love that will influence future generations. Describe what you want that legacy to be?
7. Describe the gifts (spiritual and/or physical) you desire to leave to your children and grandchildren.
8. Describe the legacy you desire to leave to your spiritual descendants; those you lead to Christ and disciple.

TWO LESSONS ON STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship

Managing Your Time and Temple (Body)

Small Group Lesson 1

1. How would you rate your present job performance as a manager of your time and temple?

Stewardship involves managing someone else's property or possessions. A Christian steward is one who manages his life and resources to the glory of God, since he and all he has belongs to God. The Christian steward offers the whole of his life as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1) realizing that all men will give an account to God for the way they have lived. (Romans 14:11-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10)

2. Your **Time** is a gift from God. If you are a wise steward and obey the commands of our Lord, how will you use your time? (Ephesians 5:15-17)
3. In Matthew 6:33-34, what two things are believers told to seek?
4. How did Paul instruct the Thessalonian Christians to manage their time? (2 Thessalonians 3:6-12)
5. How might you improve the way you use your time?
6. Your **Temple** (body) is a gift from God to be managed for His glory. What does it mean to you to be the temple of the Holy Spirit? (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
7. What does Paul urge you to do with your body? (Romans 12:1)
8. What does Paul say we should avoid in managing our bodies for God's glory? (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8)
9. What are some changes you might make in order to take better care of your "temple"? Consider areas such as eating, exercise, rest and habits that hinder your spiritual walk or witness.
10. Accept the position as God's steward of your time and temple.
 - a. Acknowledge God's ownership
 - b. Thank Him for all He has given
 - c. Determine to manage all your resources to the glory of God

Stewardship

Managing Your Talents and Treasures

Small Group Lesson 2

1. What is one of your most treasured possessions?
2. What talents and abilities has God given you?
3. Your **Talents** are a gift from God. How should you use the gifts and talents God has given you? (1 Peter 4:7-11)
4. How would you apply Colossians 3:17 to the stewardship of your talents?
5. Your **Treasures** are a gift from God to be managed for His glory. What do you learn from Jesus' parable in Luke 12:13-21?
6. Why is it important to have the proper attitude toward money? (1 Timothy 6:6-11)
7. What is one positive use of money? (1 Timothy 5:3-8)
8. What did God remind His people to do in Malachi 3:8-10?
9. How does Jesus instruct us to give? (Luke 6:38)
10. What did Israel's King David declare regarding God's ownership as stated in 1 Chronicles 29:10-16?
11. This week, accept your position as God's steward of your talents and treasures.
 - a. Acknowledge God's ownership
 - b. Thank Him for all He has given
 - c. Determine to manage all your resources to the glory of God

SMALL GROUP LESSONS FOR THE EASTER SEASON

The Easter Story

Lord's Betrayal

Matthew 26:1-16

Small Group Lesson 1

1. What comes to mind when you think of being betrayed?
2. What did Jesus predict would happen at the Feast of the Passover?
(Matthew 26:2)
3. Why do you think these religious leaders gather? (26:3-4)
4. Why do you think these religious leaders would plot to murder Jesus?
5. Read Matthew 26:6-13. How did the disciples react to this sacrifice of love? (26:8)
6. How did Jesus respond to the disciples? (26:10)
7. What valuable act of service can you offer to Christ this week?
8. Who initiated the meeting between Judas and the priests? (26:14)
9. How did the chief priests demonstrate that they were interested in what Judas had to offer?
(26:15)
10. Why did Jesus choose a disciple who would eventually betray Him?
11. What would motivate someone to betray a man like Jesus? (26:16)
12. What are some ways that people betray Jesus today and how can you avoid betraying Christ this week?

The Easter Story

The Lord's Supper

Matthew 26:17-30

Small Group Lesson 2

1. When are some times during the year when your family tradition brings you together for a meal?
2. What question did the disciples ask Jesus? (26:17)
3. What instructions did Jesus give His followers? (26:18)
4. What did Jesus say during the meal that shocked His disciples? (26:21-22)
5. What sobering statement did Jesus make about His betrayer? (26:24)
6. What did Jesus say about the Passover bread that brought new meaning to it? (26:26)
7. What did Jesus say the cup symbolized?
(26:27-28)
8. When did Jesus say He would celebrate again with His disciples? (26:29)
9. How do you feel when you remember that Jesus shed His blood on the cross for you?
10. In light of what Jesus has done for you, how can you express your gratitude and love to Jesus this week?

The Easter Story

The Last Hours

Matthew 27: 32-56

Small Group Lesson 3

1. Why does it hurt so much when people reject you and make fun of you?
2. After He was arrested, where was Jesus taken? (Matthew 26:57)
3. When first questioned by the High Priest, how did Jesus respond? When He did respond regarding His identity, how did the High Priest react to Jesus' words? (26:62-66)
4. Read Matthew 27:1-2. Describe what is taking place and when it is happening.
5. When the Chief Priests had brought Jesus before Pilot, how did the religious leaders influence the crowd and how did Pilot attempt to evade any responsibility? (27:20-25)
6. Once Jesus was handed over to the guards, what took place? (27:26-31)
7. What did those who watched shout at Jesus? (27:39-40)
8. What was the behavior of the religious leaders as they watched Jesus die? (27:41-43)
9. What did Jesus cry out at the ninth hour? And what do you think His words meant? (27:46)
10. After Jesus died, what events took place that support the Centurions' declaration, "Surely He was the Son of God." (27:50-54)
11. What can you do this week that would declare that Jesus is the Son of God?

The Easter Story

The Lord's Resurrection

Matthew 28:1-10

Small Group Lesson 4

1. If you could go back in time and witness any historical event, which one would you choose and why?
2. After Jesus died, what happened to His body? (Matthew 27:57-61)
3. Why did the Chief Priests and the Pharisees go to Pilot the day after Jesus was crucified? (27:62-64)
4. What did Pilot allow them to do? (27:65-66)
5. Imagine yourself at the tomb of Christ on that first "Easter Morning". Describe what you see and explain how you feel. (28:1-6)
6. What three commands did the angel give to the women at the tomb? (28:5-7)
7. What happened as the women were going back to tell the disciples about Jesus? (28:8-10)
8. Why is the Resurrection so important to our Christian faith?
9. How would you answer someone who doesn't believe that Jesus really rose from the dead?
10. After Jesus had spent several weeks with His followers, He met the 11 disciples one last time on a mountain in Galilee. What did Jesus tell His followers to do? (28:16-20)
11. What steps can you take this week to obey Christ's command to make disciples?

The Easter Story

Jesus Ascends Into Heaven

Acts 1:1-11

Small Group Lesson 5

1. Talk about a time when you were given an assignment that you knew you couldn't carry out in your own power, or by your own abilities.
2. After His resurrection, how did Jesus spend time with His followers?
(Acts 1:3-5)
3. What specific commands did Jesus give the apostles and what promise accompanied them? (1:4-5)
4. What important point did the apostles still misunderstand? (1:6)
5. How did Jesus respond to their question? (1:7-8)
6. What did Jesus say the apostles were going to do? (1:8)
7. How did Jesus indicate that the apostles would be enabled to accomplish this overwhelming task? (1:8)
8. What is the importance of this final promise and command of Jesus to you?
9. After He finished speaking to the apostles, what did Jesus do? (1:9-11)
10. How did the apostles react? (1:10)
11. Who were the figures in white, and how did they encourage the apostles? (1: 10-11)
12. What steps can you take this week to tell someone about Jesus Christ?

SMALL GROUP LESSONS FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

Emmanuel - God With Us!

The Birth of Jesus Christ

Matthew 1:18-25

Small Group Lesson 1

1. How does the media illustrate how our society is so drawn to gossip and scandal?
2. What happened in Mary's life before she and Joseph were officially married? (Matthew 1:18)
3. What do you suspect Joseph thought when he first heard about Mary's condition? (1:18-19)
4. How does Matthew describe Joseph's character? (1:19)
5. How did Joseph intend to handle this difficult situation? (1:19)
6. What caused Joseph to reconsider his marriage plans? (1:20)
7. If Joseph wasn't the actual father of Christ, who was? (1:18, 20)
8. What name did the angel command Joseph to give the child and why? (1:21)
9. What is one reason that Matthew gives regarding the importance of Mary being a virgin? (1:22-23)
10. What does Emmanuel mean? (1:23)
11. What do you imagine were the thoughts and feelings Mary had through all these events?
12. What challenges do you face now that you must simply trust God and obey?

Emmanuel - God With Us!

The Visit of the Magi

Matthew 2:1-12

Small Group Lesson 2

1. Why do we give gifts a Christmas?
2. Though Mary and Joseph were from Nazareth, where was Jesus born? (Matthew 2:1)
3. Who were the Magi and what prompted the Magi to search for Jesus? (2:2)
4. What title did the Magi give to Jesus? (2:2)
5. How did King Herod and the people of Jerusalem react to the questions of the Magi? (2:3-4)
6. Why was it important that Christ be born in the city of Bethlehem? (2:5-6)
7. What amazing sign helped direct the Magi to the place where the Christ child was? (2:9-10)
8. How did the Magi's respond when they realized they had finally found the Christ child? (2:10)
9. How would you define worship and what sort of activities does worship involve?
10. Where was Jesus staying when the Magi found Him? (2:11)
11. What gifts did the Magi bring to Jesus? (2:11)
12. Why didn't the Magi report back to Herod as he had requested? (2:12)
13. What gift can you bring to Jesus this week to demonstrate your love for Him?

Emmanuel - God With Us!

The Escape to Egypt

Matthew 2:13-18

Small Group Lesson 3

1. Why is it especially difficult when there is a death of a child ?
2. What unthinkable act did King Herod have in mind? (Matthew 2:13)
3. How did God warn Joseph and what did He instruct him to do? (2:13)
4. How did Joseph respond to this warning? (2: 14-15)
5. How do you think the gifts of the magi may have helped provide for Jesus' family during their exile in Egypt?
6. How did King Herod react when he realized the Magi had tricked him? (2:16)
7. What orders did King Herod give in an attempt to kill Jesus, the Christ child? (2:16)
8. How was this horrible incident a fulfillment of prophecy? (2:17-18)
9. How should Christians respond to victims of senseless violence today?
10. How is the quick obedience of Joseph an example to you? Is there any area in your life today where there has been a delay in your obedience?

Emmanuel - God With Us!

The Return to Nazareth

Matthew 2:19-23

Small Group Lesson 4

1. Have you found it difficult to move from one place to another?
2. Where were Joseph, Mary and Jesus at the time the angel appeared to Joseph? (Matthew 2:19)
3. What were the angel's instructions? (2:20)
4. What comforting news did the angel bring? (2:20)
5. Who was reigning in Herod's place when Joseph, Mary and Jesus returned from Egypt? (2:22)
6. Why was it significant to Joseph that Archelaus was ruling in Judah? What was Joseph's emotional response to this knowledge? (2:22)
7. Where did Joseph locate his family and what helped him make that decision? Why? (2:22-23)
8. Why was it significant that Jesus' family settled in Nazareth? (2:23)
9. Where is your hometown and what influence has that had on your life?
10. Look back over your life and remember how God has guided and directed you. How can you demonstrate gratitude to God for His loving care for you?

Emmanuel - God With Us!

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

Matthew 3:1-12

Small Group Lesson 5

1. What preacher has had the most influence on your life?
2. What famous preacher is described in Matthew 3:1?
3. What was John's message? (3:2)
4. What does it mean to repent?
5. What was the significance and purpose of John's ministry? (3:3)
6. Describe John's physical appearance? (3:4)
7. What was unusual about his diet? (3:4)
8. How did people receive John's message? (3:5)
9. What action did John require of those who responded to his message of repentance? (3:6)
10. Describe the confrontation John had with the religious leaders? (3:7-10)
11. What was the purpose of John's water baptism? (3:11)
12. How did John describe the type of baptism and ministry Jesus would bring? (3:11-12)
13. In what way could you demonstrate repentance and obedience this week?

SMALL GROUP LESSONS ON VARIOUS TOPICS

Becoming Great In God's Kingdom

Matthew 20:20-27

Small Group Lesson

1. When you were a child what did you want to be when you grew up?
2. How did Mrs. Zebedee feel about her two sons? (Matthew 20:20-27)
3. What request did she make to Jesus? (20:21)
4. How did the other ten disciples react to her request? (20:24)
5. What did Jesus say to her? (20:22-23)
6. According to Jesus' teaching and example, what difference is there between the world's system of how one becomes great and God's system of evaluation? (Matthew 20:25-28)
7. List the opportunities in your life that you have for serving others.
8. Give examples of serving in the home.
9. Give examples of serving in God's Kingdom.
10. Give examples of serving in the community and work place.
11. How and where is God leading you to serve at this time in your life?

Mountain Moving Faith

Matthew 17:14-20

Small Group Lesson

1. If you could move any mountain in your life, which one would it be? Where would you move it?
2. Read Matthew 17:20. How big is a mustard seed?
3. What is Jesus trying to communicate to His disciples?
4. Which is more important, the size of my faith or the object of my faith?
5. What is the context or story that preceded Jesus' comments on "mountain moving" faith? (17:14-20) What was the problem?
6. How did Jesus respond to the Father? to His disciples? to the demons?
7. What can we learn from the father whose son could not be healed by the disciples? What would have happened if he had given up? What did he do?
8. Is there a mountain in your life that hasn't moved even though you've tried your best?
9. What could you do next to demonstrate that you are not giving up?
10. Allow others to pray with you about that mountain today.

Why Worry When You Can Pray?

Small Group Lesson

1. Tell about a time when you worried about something that could have gone wrong but didn't?
2. Describe the feeling you have when you've just received word that unexpected company will soon arrive?
3. Read Luke 10:38-41. Whom are you more like; Mary or Martha?
4. What point is Jesus trying to make to Martha?
5. Read Luke 12:22-31. What does Jesus teach us concerning worry?
6. What causes you the greatest amount of worry?
7. How do the commands and principles in Luke 12:31-34 help us to overcome worry?
8. God does not want us to be burdened down by worry and anxiety. What does God say you should do when faced with these temptations? (Philippians 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:7)
9. Pray "thanksgiving prayers" together by "presenting your requests to God" and "casting your anxiety on Him".

Obedience To Christ

Romans 6:13

Small Group Lesson

1. Jesus is Lord over all things and worthy of our submission and obedience. (Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-13) What does it mean to obey Jesus Christ?
2. What will happen to those who call Jesus their Lord but do not do what He has commanded? (Luke 6:46-49)
3. Before becoming a follower of Christ, sin had control in your life. What should be your present relationship to sin? (Romans 6:11-12)
4. What does Romans 6:13 state you **must not** do?
5. What does Romans 6:13 state you **should** do?
6. In Romans 12:1, 2 how does Paul challenge Christians to live?
7. How did the Apostle John challenge Christians to live? (1 John 2:1-6)
8. What challenge does Peter present? (1 Peter 1:14-16)
9. Write down one thing you know God has revealed to you that He wants you to do in obedience to Him.
10. Is this in line with the truths of God's Holy Word, the Bible?
11. Seek to accomplish this one item of obedience. Make it your number one goal at this time in your Christian life. What will you do this week in order to obey God?

Dealing With Temptation

1 Corinthians 10:13

Small Group Lesson

1. What is temptation?
2. What is true about every temptation you face? (1 Corinthians 10:13)
3. Who can give you victory when you are tempted? (10:13)
4. Does God remove temptation? (10:13)
5. What does God promise to do for you?
6. Is being tempted the same as sinning? Is it wrong to be tempted? (Hebrews 4:15)
7. According to James 1:13-14, where does temptation often come from? (also Galatians 5:16-25)
8. What is the Devil seeking to do when he tempts you? (1 Peter 5:8)
9. What does God do for you regarding temptation? (2 Thessalonians 3:3)
10. Identify a specific area of temptation in your life. What way(s) of "escape" can you use to avoid falling into sin?

Christian Fellowship

1 Corinthians 12:27

Small Group Lesson

1. Why is Christian fellowship important?
2. Why is human fellowship important? (Proverbs 27:17; Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)
3. What is the purpose of meeting together as believers? (Hebrews 10:24, 25)
4. Why is Christian fellowship important to you?
5. Each believer is given a different but important place in the spiritual body of Christ, the Church (1 Corinthians 12:14-27). Who gives the members their various functions? (1 Corinthians 12:18)
6. What is His desire? (1 Corinthians 12:25)
7. What attitudes lead to disharmony in the body?
(1 Corinthians 12:15-16, 21)
8. Are any of the members of the body unnecessary?
(1 Corinthians 12:20-25)
9. If you cut a finger how does it affect your body? How does this illustration relate to the body of Christ when one of its parts is hurting?
(1 Corinthians 12:26)
10. What will you do this week to connect with other Christians?

Controlling Anger

Ephesians 4:26-27

Small Group Lesson

1. What persons or circumstances most cause you to become angry and lose control?
2. What are some of the results when that happens?
3. Read Ephesians 4:26-27. Does Paul say that anger is a sin?
4. What will happen if anger is not resolved quickly and constructively? (Ephesians 4:27)
5. Read James 1:19. How would being "slow to speak" help when you are angry?
6. James 3:7-12 illustrates how the tongue has been a problem for Christians since the early church. How can we gain control of our speech?
7. Even though you may not be able to prevent feelings of anger, what are some constructive ways to maintain control over your tongue and prevent injury to others? (Proverbs 21:23)
8. How are you presently struggling with controlling your anger and speech?
9. Pray for each other in this difficult area of controlling the tongue and managing our responses to anger.

Turning Brokenness Into Blessing

1 Peter 5:5-10

Small Group Lesson

1. When have you experienced brokenness?
2. What benefits can come from being broken?
3. Read 1 Peter 5:5-10. Who does God oppose and to whom does He give His grace and help?
4. If you humble yourself during hard times and submit to God's leadership in your life, what will He do? (5:6-7)
5. Who is the real enemy that is seeking to destroy us? (5: 8-9)
6. What benefits can we look forward to after coming through a hard time? (5:10)
7. Can you tell about someone who has gone through brokenness and turned that experience into a blessing for others?
8. Read Genesis 50:15-21. Consider the life of Joseph. What brokenness did he experience and how did he allow God to turn it into a blessing?
9. Talk about the difficulties you are going through and pray for each other.

Unexpected Guests

Mark 6:30-44

Small Group Lesson

1. Who are some of the "unexpected guests" that God has allowed to enter your life and how have you responded to them?
2. Is it easy or difficult for you to adjust your schedule to meet the needs of others (children, spouse, neighbors, friends or the needy)?
3. Read Mark 6:30-32. What were Jesus and the disciples needing and what had Jesus suggested in order to meet that need?
4. How did Jesus respond to His "unexpected guests"? (6:33-44)
5. Read Matthew 5:13-16. When have you been "salty" enough to make another person "thirsty" for Jesus?
6. Do people indicate that they might want what you have found as a Christian?
7. Describe the difference between conversations that are "seasoned with the love of Jesus" and those that are "soured with complaints and criticisms"?
8. Sometimes God's "unexpected guests" for us are already part of our lives. What could you do this week that would help your "light shine" at home, work, school or in your neighborhood?

Good & Godly Advice

Colossians 2:6-23

Small Group Lesson

1. What are some examples of bad advice you have received?
2. What good advice have you never forgotten?
3. How did Paul tell these Christians to live their lives? (Colossians 2:6-7)
4. What does God give to Christians? (2:9-10)
5. From what did Christ deliver us and how did He do it? (2:13-17)
6. What are some "additional regulations" or "religious rules" that you have personally encountered?
7. How are we instructed to identify false teachers? (2:18-19)
8. How are we to respond to false religious regulations? (2:20-23)
9. What are the fundamentals of your faith that help you stay on track in your Christian life?
10. What good and Godly advice will you share with a new or growing Christian this week that will help them keep strong in his/her faith?

RESOURCES

RESOURCES FOR SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

52 Lessons for Small Groups: With Training Sessions for Small Group Leaders, Book 1

52 Lessons for Small Groups: With Training Sessions for Small Group Leaders, Book 2

RESOURCES FOR MENTORING AND EQUIPPING

Steps Toward Spiritual Growth: One-to-one Mentoring for Effective Spiritual Development

Steps Toward Ministry: One-to-one Mentoring for Effective Ministry

Steps Toward Balancing Life's Demands: One-to-one Mentoring for Effective Living

Telecare Ministry Contact Records

For orders, seminars or additional information:

Intentional Discipleship

New Hope Community Church
11731 SE Stevens Road
Portland, OR 97266
503-659-5683
<www.IntentionalDiscipleship.com>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works Cited

- Adsit, Christopher B. *Personal Disciple Making: A Step by Step Guide for Leading a Christian from New Birth to Maturity*. San Bernadino,CA: Here's Life Publishing, 1988.
- Amoah, Hagan William. Calvary Baptist Church, Accra. "Strategic Framework Document, 2003-2005." Accra, Ghana: Calvary Baptist Church, 2003.
- Barna, George. *Discipleship in the Local Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995.
- Beckham, William A. *The Second Reformation: Reshaping the Church for the Twenty-first Century*. Houston, TX: TOUCH Publications, 1995.
- Boa, Kenneth. *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan,2001.
- Cho, Yong-gi. *Successful Home Cell Groups*. Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1981.
- Church, Leslie F. *The Early Methodist People*. London: Epworth, 1948.
- Coleman, Robert E. ed. *Discipleship: Training Leaders to make Disciples*. Wheaton IL: Billy Graham Center, 1994.
- Coppedge, Allan. *The Biblical Principles of Discipleship*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988.
- Eims, Leroy. *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978.
- Farrell, Elizabeth. "Aggressive Evangelism in an Asian Metropolis." *Charisma*, (January 1996): 55.
- George, Carl F. and Warren Bird. *Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership*. Mansfield, PA: Kingdom Publishing, 1997.
- George, Carl F. *Prepare Your Church for The Future*. Grand Rapids MI: Revell, 1991.

- Goodell, Charles L. *The Drillmaster of Methodist* New York: Eaton & Mains, 1902.
- Hadaway, C. Kirk, Stuary A. Wright, and Francis DuBose. *Home Cell Groups and House Churches*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987.
- Hassel, Gerhard. *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*. 3^d ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982.
- Henderson, D. Michael. *John Wesley Class Meetings: A Model for Making Disciples*. Nappanee, IN: Evangel, 1997.
- Hull, Bill. *New Century Disciple Making*. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 1984.
- Hunter, George III.. *To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1987.
- Johnstone, Patrick J. St. G. *Operation World*. 5th ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 1993.
- Maxwell, John. *Developing the Leader Within You*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1993.
- Miller, David. "Latin America's Sweeping Revival." *Charisma* (June 1996): 32-44.
- Neighbour, Ralph. *Where Do We Go From Here: A Guide Book for the Cell Group Church*. Houston TX: Touch Publications, 1990.
- NIV Men's Devotional Bible*. New International Version. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993.
- Sackey, Flora, Nii Adotey Ankrah Hoffman and Francis Agbodeka. *A History of Calvary Baptist Church: 1968-2003*. 2d ed. Accra, Ghana: Graphic Packaging Limited, 2003.
- Schwarz, Christian. *The Natural Church Development*. Carol Stream ,IL: Church Smart Resources, 1996.
- Snyder, Howard. *The Radical Wesley and Pattern for Renewal*. Grand Rapids MI: Asbury, 1980.
- T-Net International. *Training for Disciple Making Pastors. Module 3*. Place Unknown: T-Net International, 2000.

- Tan, David. "The Transition To a Program Based Design Church To a Cell Church." DMin. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1984.
- Thompson, Frank Charles. *Thompson Chain-Reference Bible. New International Version.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983.
- Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Church.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.
- Watson, David Lowes. *Covenant Discipleship: Christian Formation Through Mutual Accountability.* Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1991.
- _____. *The Early Methodist Class Meetings: Its Origin and Significance.* Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1985.
- Wesley, John. *The Works of John Wesley.* Vol. 8. London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, n.d.
- Wilkins, J. Michael.. *Following the Master: Discipleship in the Steps of Jesus.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.
- Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines.* San Francisco CA: Harper Collins, 1988.

Additional Works Consulted

- Anderson, Williams K. *Methodism.* Nashville TN: The Methodist Publishing House 1947.
- Arn, Win and Charles Arn. *The Master Plan of Making Disciples.* Pasadena, CA: Church Growth Press, 1982.
- Baker, Frank. *John Wesley and the Church of England.* New York, NY: Abingdon, 1970.
- Brown, William. "Growing the Church Through Small Groups in the Australian Context." D.Min. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1992.
- Bruce, A.B. *The Training of the Twelve.* Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1971.
- Carter, Henry. *The Methodist Heritage.* Nashville TN: Abingdon Press. 1951.
- Collins, Williams. *John Wesley's Theology Today.* New York, NY: Abingdon, 1960.
- Downer, Phil and Chip MacGregor. *Eternal Impact: Strengthening your Faith by Standing Together.* Eugene OR: Harvest House. 1997.

- George, Carl F. and Warren Bird. *The Coming Church Revolution: Empowering for the Future*. Grand Rapids MI: Fleming H. Revell. 1997.
- Hadaway, C. Kirk Stuart A Wright and Francis DuBose, eds. *Home Cell Groups and House Churches*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987.
- Hanks, Billie J. and William A. Shell, eds. *Discipleship: Great Insights from the Most Experienced Disciple Makers*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993.
- Hawkins, Don. *Master Discipleship: Jesus' Prayer and Plan for Every Believer*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Resources, 1996.
- Hidderbrandt, Franz. *Christianity According to the Wesley's*. London, UK: The Epworth Press. 1956.
- Houts, Richard. *Houts' Inventory of Spiritual Gifts*. Mansfield, PA: Kingdom, Inc., n.d..
- Hull, Bill. *The Disciple Making Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1990.
- _____. *The Disciple Making Pastor*. Old Tappen, NJ: Revell, 1988.
- Kennedy, Gerald. *The Methodist Way of Life*. Prentice Hall, NJ: Canton Press, 1958.
- Luccock, Hutchinson. *The Story of Methodism*. Nashville TN: Abingdon Press 1949.
- Shalini, Pallil G.. "A Theology for Church Renewal with Special Emphasis on the Wesleyan Pattern." DMin. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1991.
- Smith, David L. "Ecclesiology." In *A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology*, Charles W. Carter, ed. Vol.2, 575-627. Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1989.
- Telford, John. *John Wesley. Veterans. Vol. 5*. Shoals, IN: Old Paths Tract Society, 1970.
- Tuttle, R..G.. Jr. "Wesley, John." In *An Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books, 1984.
- Willard, Dallas *Renovation of the Heart*. Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 2002.