

Preparing For Harvest

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The Priority of the Church

Sincere - But Wrong

I committed my life to the Lord as a very young man and began playing the organ for church at twelve years old. I was raised and trained in the traditional church, active in Sunday School, a member of the youth group, youth leader, elder, etc. After two years of Bible College I served for three years as Lay Minister at my home church. From there I went to seminary and in 1977 came back to Vancouver and planted a church. After twelve years of ministry, that congregation merged with another and I accepted a job with a manufacturing firm as a technical writer. In the eleven years since the merger, I have served in two congregations (and trained a worship team for another for 3 years).

I believed that the task of the pastor was to preach Scripture and care for the people. I believed that the task of the church was missions, to preach the Gospel both at home and abroad. It was my desire to see every member fully mature and serving Christ. I embraced the doctrine of “The Priesthood of Believers” but had no practical way for it to work. I knew that my job as a five-fold minister was to equip saints for the work of ministry, but I did the ministry myself - and accepted “reasons” from the saints why they couldn’t “do the ministry”. Preaching and teaching, missions, and pastoral care are necessary. In doing them I sincerely believed I was fulfilling the ministry God had given me. **I was wrong.** I had allowed the “good and necessary things” to substitute for and exclude the “best and highest” thing, the very thing the Lord commanded.

Constantine's Influence

My wife and I attended a seminar (February, 2000) in the suburbs of San Francisco. The speaker, Dr. William Beckham¹, examined the historical perspective of the church and pointed out that the traditional church is based on the 4th century church (with Greek thinking²), not the 1st and 2nd century church (with Hebrew/Biblical thinking³). In the 4th century a major change happened in the Church. Constantine I⁴ committed Rome to Christianity and stopped the persecution of Christians. He marched his armies through water, called it baptism, and declared them Christian. For the first time, people claimed to be Christians who didn't have a clue what that meant. Since the Roman Empire was now “Christian”, Constantine wanted his subjects taught what it meant to be Christian. He built Cathedrals, after the pattern of the Roman Senate, where he ordered priests to “teach” the people. The state paid the costs of the buildings and the salaries of the clergy, creating a “professional clergyman”, who, after the Greek style, taught heathens how to be Christian.⁵
We've been doing it ever since.

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1. William A. Beckham; author of “The Second Reformation, Reshaping the Church for the 21st Century”; (Touch Publications, 1995) and world wide conference speaker on Cell Churches.
 2. Our culture and church is based on an intellectual approach to life. This influence is seen as coming from the Greek culture and style which was spread across the world by Alexander The Great. It was the dominant culture of the world even through the time of the Roman Empire and dominates in Western thought today.
 3. The Hebrew style is more relational and is typified by how Jesus related to and equipped His disciples.
 4. Emperor of Rome (306-337).
 5. See also, “House To House”; Larry Kreider; House To House Publications; Ephrata, PA; pg 21,

Early Church Standards

The church of the first 3 centuries was a church of relationship, commitment and accountability. The cost was high to be a disciple of Christ. Only those who saw their need of the Savior and were genuinely born again were willing to face the persecution and ridicule. These servants of God made a choice to obey Him regardless of the personal costs. They understood, with the authors of Scripture, what it meant to be the “slaves of Christ”.⁶

Modern Traditional Church Standards

Things are quite different today. We encourage people to “come to church”, and give an offering. We hope for some 'volunteer time' to accomplish the goals of the congregation. We request that, on special Sundays, members will invite their friends to come so the Pastor can preach to them, anticipating that some will make a “decision for Christ.” We point to those who make such decisions as proof that we are a “successful church”.

As these “converts” begin attending church, our primary objective is to keep them coming. We offer classes and social events that we hope will be so beneficial to them that they will stay with us. We select worship styles and songs based on what will attract and keep them. We are careful not to offend, and we rarely stretch them much beyond their comfort zone. We almost never challenge their basic values: the basis for their life decisions, how they spend their time, and why they do what they do.

Some “converts”, do seek to serve the Lord. They become active leaders in their respective congregations and organizations where each makes sacrifices to serve.⁷ Many eventually become leaders. While some members serve for the wrong reasons; for influence, power, preserving the denomination and personal recognition, most genuinely want to serve God. But, are they serving God in all their activities? Do they know where to lead the people? What is God’s goal? What is God’s calling on the people’s lives? Do they have a Biblical understanding of God’s plan for His people?

Those are some of the questions I had to examine this last year as I considered the purpose of ministry and the Church.

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6. Rom 1:1; 6:17-23; Phil 1:1; 2 Tim 2:24; Titus 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; James 1:1; Jude 1
 1401 δουλος {doo'-los} Uses Loquendi AV:- servant 118, bond 6, bondman 1; Total use in NT=125
 1) a slave, bondman, man of servile condition 1a) a slave 1b) metaph., one who gives himself up to another's will those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing His cause among men
 1c) devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests
 2) a servant, attendant
7. Estimated at 10% to 20% of the typical congregation, they do 80% to 90% of the work (programs, committees, building maintenance, record keeping, Sunday School Teachers, etc.). No wonder there is such burn-out in the church!
 It is estimated that 5% to 7% of the typical congregation provides 90% of the income.

God's Standard And Goal For His People

If I asked you “What is the Great Commission?” I'm sure all of you would get it right. I've been shocked at how many people get it wrong. I get two common answers:

- i). Evangelism! We are to go out to the world and preach the Gospel.
- ii). We are to teach everyone about Jesus and the Gospel.

Wrong!

The Great Commission is the most important reason the church exists but, in the traditional church, most people don't get it. And most of those who “get it” have a weakened, watered down view. Even then they can't point to consistent implementation. They can cite individual instances, but nearly everyone I speak to admits that the Church has forsaken any significant expression of Christ's final marching orders to the Church. With few exceptions, it isn't happening, at least not in the traditional church.

Christ commanded that we “make disciples”, not converts. To make disciples includes the need to proclaim the Gospel and to teach. All mature disciples witness and proclaim the Gospel. However, if we believe our primary goal is to “preach the Gospel,” we think we have accomplished that goal when we have preached or, perhaps, when people get saved.

A close friend of mine has been active in personal evangelism for 20+ years. In the late 1980's he was asked to design a follow-up process and team “to preserve the fruit” of the ministry of the congregation he was a member of. Don was excited. He had seen a lot of people get saved in his congregation. The pastor was anointed to draw people to the altar (as many as twenty a week!). Evangelism was important to the pastor and leadership team, but the majority of the “converts” went without guidance and wandered aimlessly, eventually to disappear.

After two years of struggle, pleading for resources, and begging for people dedicated to bring these new Christians to maturity, he realized it wasn't going to happen. How did he know? Because of what they did! Out of 100 people who volunteered he had five elderly women who were actually available. The leaders and the congregation said they wanted to conserve the fruit, but no resources, commitment, people or money, were available. Why? Because, while they knew that they should do it, they had higher values, higher priorities. In the end, the value of making disciples was so low it didn't happen at all. **“We do what we value, and we value what we do”**. Another way of saying that is “put your money (time and effort) where your mouth is”.

Teachers in the Cell Churches often reference John Wesley on the subject of discipleship. As you know, the Wesley brothers were greatly used of God. John Wesley's watch cry was “to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land.” What he found was that “evangelism” didn't bring holiness. He designed Classes (small groups) to effect genuine discipleship and personal holiness.

Larry Kreider⁸ refers to these Classes as key to the discipleship and success of the revival and, indeed, of the Methodist church.

“The classes were in effect house churches ... meeting in various neighborhoods where people lived. The class leaders (men and women) were disciplers.

The classes normally met one evening each week for an hour or so. Each person reported on his or her spiritual progress, or on particular needs or problems, and received the support and prayers of the others ... According to one author it was, in fact, in the class meeting “where the great majority of conversions occurred.”

The class meeting system tied together the widely scattered Methodist people and became the sustainer of the Methodist renewal over many decades. The movement was in fact a whole series of sporadic and often geographically localized revivals which were interconnected and spread by the society and class network, rather than one continuous wave of revival which swept the country [Classes joined together to form a society.]

Without the class meeting, the scattered fires of revival would have burned out long before the movement was able to make a deep impact on the nation ...

Now here is the remarkable thing. One hears today that it is hard to find enough leaders for small groups or for those to carry on the other responsibilities in the church. Wesley put one in ten, perhaps one in five, to work in significant ministry and leadership. And who were these people? Not the educated or the wealthy with time on their hands, but laboring men and women, husbands and wives and young folks with little or no training, but with spiritual gifts and eagerness to serve...

The system which emerged gave lie to the argument that you can't build a church on poor and uneducated folk. Not only did Wesley reach the masses; he made leaders of thousands of them.”⁹

Dr. Beckham comments that:

“These classes were, in Wesley's view, vital to the success of what God wanted to do among His people. Wesley succeeded where others had failed (in small group ministry). His success lies in his understanding of these “classes”. They functioned as the church. They did what the church was supposed to do. When opposition came Wesley was not distracted by the traditional church that considered itself to be the “real church”. The classes were real church to Wesley and were therefore his primary focus. They were functioning with the authority of the body of Christ. Because Wesley placed such a high spiritual purpose and doctrinal nature on his classes, they could withstand the resistance of the traditional church. ... Wesley summed up his attitude about the “classes” in a letter, “Those who will not meet in class cannot stay with us.”¹⁰

Joel Comisky writes:¹¹

“John wesley changed his structures and methods, almost against his will, in order to save souls. He didn't want to use women, but he did in exceptional circumstances. The ‘exceptional’ became normal. He didn't want to use lay pastors, but he did. They were able to reach the unbelievers. He didn't want to preach in the open air, but he did so that more might hear the Word of God.”

The passion of John Wesley on the need to bring converts to maturity can be understood in his statement: **“How dare you give birth for the murderer!”**

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8. Larry Kreider, International Director of Dove Christian Fellowship International and author of “House To House”.
 9. “The Radical Wesley”; Howard A. Synder, Intervarsity Press, pg 53-57, 64 as quoted in “House To House”; Larry Kreider; House To House Publications, Ephrata, PA; pg 24,25.
 10. “The Second Reformation, Reshaping the Church for the 21st Century”; William A. Beckham: Touch Publications, 1995, pg 120.
 11. “Home Cell Group Explosion”; Joel Comiskey; Touch Publications, 1998, pg 52.

That quote went like an arrow straight to my heart. The Spirit showed me that to give birth to an infant, and leave him prey for “the murderer,” is an atrocity to God. Still, as my friend Don found, the church as a whole, places little value on what we lightly call “follow-up”. We are not called to “follow up” converts but to make disciples in all nations. For the traditional church, the great commission is often considered complete (in an individual) when a new convert attends orientation and foundation classes and joins the membership roles.

Servants Or Consumers?

Discipleship is the standard against which the church will be judged. The last and great commandment of Christ was “Go! Make disciples out of all ethnic groups... teaching them to do all that I have commanded you (i.e. to make disciples).” So why do we spend our time and resources doing other things, things that time and history have proven don’t accomplish that goal?

For the most part, churches today have become a kind of spiritual supermarket which have made consumers of those who attend. We offer seminars and programs on self-help, political involvement and any number of other fine and good programs. The staff and committees rack their minds to come up with more opportunities for the members to be involved and keep them happy with the church. The member continues to be involved as long as the church serves up an offering of programs that “meet his needs”. If another congregation has a better offering, perhaps a more active youth group, a better choir, etc., the “consumer member” switches congregations.

This attitude is typified by the comment of more than one person who has said to me; “I didn't get anything out of the worship service today.” My response is; “That's OK, we didn't come to worship you!”¹²

The call of God on the life of the believer is to be a servant, not a consumer. We are to serve the Lord as members of His kingdom first of all. In doing that, we will find ourselves serving His people and our neighbors. This process will crucify the old nature, our selfish ambitions and pride so that, more and more, the new man will be manifest to the glory of God.

Make no mistake about it. The Christian life is a transformed life. The very word “Church” in the Greek is ἐκκλησία, (ekklesia) a compound word literally meaning “the called out ones”. We are a “called”¹³ people; “called out” of the world system, values, priorities and goals. But, we are not only “called out”, we are also “called in” to the fellowship of Jesus (1 Cor 1:9) and one another.

This understanding is imperative for any who would become a disciple of Christ. It is not possible to hold onto the old life and our old nature, and still be a disciple of Christ. Some seem to believe that when you receive Christ as Savior you are automatically a disciple. That certainly is the intent

12. I know that when we genuinely worship there is an anointing and an overflow of blessing God sends upon us individually and corporately. We do get blessed when we worship “in Spirit and in truth”. But the attitude, the heart of the worshipper is toward God, not what he can “get out of it.” Looking for personal reward in worship, or other activities in the church, is a consumer mentality.

13. Ro1:6,7; 1 Cor 1:2, 26; 7:17-24; Gal 1:6, 15; 5:13; Eph 4:1, 4; Col 3:15; 1 Thess 4:7; 2 Thess 2:14; 2 Tim 1:9; James 2:7; 1 Peter 1:15; 2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10; 2 Pet 1:3; Jude 1; Rev 7:14; 19:9

of the Lord, but is not true in the everyday practice of most Christians. Discipleship is an intentional process by which we are transformed into the image of Christ.

Cell Groups the Key

The last two decades have seen a rise in popularity of small groups in many churches. New believers are encouraged to be a part of one of these groups (if they have time) with the hope that relationships will be established and the group will meet some of their needs. Like Wesley, these churches have a sense that more is required to “mature the saints” and are asking God for answers. They know, from the Bible and the witness in their spirit, that believers need small group ministry and experience. In most cases these groups have been a real benefit to the life of the believer and the church.

But is it enough just to gather in small groups?

The traditional church (with or without small groups) continues to struggle to find effective ways to make disciples. Who can deny that, after years of failing to achieve the desired results, the programs and methods used just are not working? Perhaps it isn't the program that fails, but the premise for the use of the programs that is at fault. Here is a list of three foundational problems with the way the traditional church approaches this issue. You may know more, but let's begin with these:

1. There is a low standard and/or a distorted view of discipleship.
2. We think that classes and “imparting knowledge” (Greek style) will make disciples.
3. We believe that it is “the pastor's job” to bring the saints to maturity. That is why we hired him!

The modern church is missing the most important element of discipleship, personal involvement in the life of the disciple (Hebrew style). The only way we can be involved in the lives of every new Christian is a combination of one-on-one care and small group ministry.

What is the solution? Change! Why continue with things that don't work? Donald McGavran, the founder of the church-growth movement, teaches that church growth is simply catching the fish (evangelism) and not letting them go (discipleship in the church). McGavran's passion for the lost propelled him to promote an uncompromising pragmatism. He writes:

Nothing hurts missions overseas so much as continuing methods, institutions, and policies which ought to bring men to Christ - but don't; which ought to multiply churches - but don't; which ought to improve society - but don't. If it does not work to the glory of God and the extension of Christ's church, throw it away and get something which does. As to methods, we are fiercely pragmatic...¹⁴

14. “Home Cell Group Explosion”; Joel Comiskey; Touch Publications, 1998, pg 51.

The Reformation

The work of the Reformers, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and others, opened the door to the restoration of foundational truths.¹⁵ Sola Scriptura, Sola Fide, Sola Gratia together with the Priesthood of believers were key elements of the Reformation. The Priesthood of all believers was taught but never implemented because of the pressure put on these men by their supporters. They have been called “Magisterial Reformers” because of their relationship with the state and it has been said that if the princes of Germany had not supported Luther, he could never have successfully reformed the church. The princes were ready for a change and, when Luther’s voice was heard, they found in Him a vehicle for their ends, but their support came at a cost. They were willing to throw off the papal yoke and make some changes, but most of them could not - and would not allow the reformer- to make all the changes God had placed in his heart. One of those changes had to do with small groups and the Priesthood of the Believer. Dr. Beckham writes:

“Martin Luther, the leader of the first Reformation, intended to reform church structure along with church theology. Luther identified three kinds of worship in his Preface to *The German Mass and Order of Service*.

The first, he said, is the Latin mass, and the second is the German liturgy. Notice Luther’s comments on the third kind of worship, which sounds like the home groups of the New Testament:”

“These two orders of service must be used publicly, in the churches, for all the people, among whom are many who do not believe and are not yet Christians ... That is not yet a well-ordered and organized congregation, in which Christians could be ruled according to the gospel; ...

“The third kind of service should be a truly evangelical order and should not be held in a public place for all sorts of people. But those who want to be Christians in earnest and who profess the gospel with hand and mouth [word and deed] should sign their names and meet alone in a house somewhere to pray, to read, to baptize, to receive the sacrament, and to do other Christian works. ... Here one could set up a brief and neat order for baptism and the sacrament and center everything on the Word, prayer and love.

“In short, if one had the kind of people and persons who wanted to be Christians in earnest, the rule and regulations would soon be ready. But as yet I neither can nor desire to begin such a congregation or assembly or to make rules for it. For I have not yet the people or persons for it, nor do I see many who want it. But if I should be requested to do it and could not refuse with a good conscience, I should gladly do my part and help as best I can.”¹⁶

“Luther knew that if he reformed the doctrinal wine, he had to also reform the structural wineskin of the church. What hindered Luther from following through on this reform of church lifestyle as well as theology? D.M. Lloyd-Jones believes it was a spirit of caution, political considerations, a lack of faith in the people in his churches, and fear of losing the movement to the Anabaptists.

“What would the church look like today if Luther had been as successful in the area of structure and lifestyle as he was in the area of theology? One can only speculate, but I believe the church would be significantly different. Luther continued to use the Catholic Cathedral design as the wineskin for his new doctrines, *and it leaked.*”...

Even after Luther decided to continue using the cathedral structure, small groups continued showing up. Doyle L. Young, in his book “New Life For Your Church,” traces small groups within the Pietist movement. He has an excellent study of Philip Jakob Spener, the father of Pietism (1635-1705). Dr. Young points out “as early as 1669 Spener had come to see the church’s identity required Christians to meet together regularly in small groups to encourage and discipline one another. To Spener this was not “a pastoral strategy but a necessary correlate of ecclesiology.”¹⁷

15. There has always been a remnant, a “persecuted minority” which never lost these truths, but we speak here of the visible group seen by the dominate culture of that day as “the church”.

16. Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 53, Preface to The German Mass and Order of Service.

17. “The Second Reformation”; William A. Beckham: Touch Publications, 1995, pg 116-117.

Jesus and Small Groups

Here are but a few examples of Jesus ministering to people in small groups - and commanding that his disciples (both the twelve and the seventy) do so as well.

1. Mark 1:23-34 (Mt 8:14-ff):

In this text we see Jesus ministering in the Synagogue at Capernaum.

Next he goes to Peter's home and heals Peter's mother-in-law. That starts a significant ministry in Peter's home.

2. Luke 9:1-5; Matthew 10:1-15:

Jesus sent the twelve out to the people of Israel. The process of preaching the Gospel, healing the sick, raising the dead and casting out demons is done in the context of finding someone "worthy" in that area and entering his house with the salute of peace.

3. Luke 10:1-9:

Later, the lord sent the seventy with similar instructions. Notice the prominent place "the house" has in His ministry instructions.

4. Matthew 7:17:

After being involved in public, large group ministry, Jesus withdraws to a house with His disciples where they ask questions and He shapes their understanding of ministry.

c.f. Mk 9:28; Mk 10:10.

5. Luke 10:38-42:

Jesus in the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, engaged in ministry.

6. Luke 19:1-10:

Consider the account of Zacchaeus. Notice that Jesus says:

"Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house."

Why must Jesus abide at his house? Jesus entered into the life of people He ministered to. He knew that Zacchaeus was hated and rejected by others. Jesus touches his point of need by "abiding at" his home. The pattern is our example as well. A single leader is not able to spend any significant time in the homes of church members, but a Cell Group (the leader and the members of the Cell Group) can.

Why is it important? Because disciples are made at a personal level where there is a higher level of accountability, commitment and care.¹⁸

18. The modern "Home Schooling Movement" has taught us the value of mentoring in small groups. The committed relationship between parents and children, plus the quality time spent and the authority represented by the parents more than overcomes any absence of higher education and training of the teacher.

The various mentor programs set up by the National Guard, and others, to help troubled youth, have also proven the value of these committed relationships which hold one another accountable in a caring and consistent relationship.

The Early Church

There were two specific “last directives” Christ gave the Apostles:

“¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.** ¹⁹ **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,** ²⁰ **and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”** Matthew 28:18-20

“In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ² until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen*. ³ After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴ On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “**Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.** ⁵ **For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”**

⁶ So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

⁷ He said to them: “**It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.** ⁸ **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.” Acts 1:1-9

*Evidently a reference to Matthew 28:18-ff and, perhaps, other things not recorded by the Holy Spirit in the Scripture.

If I may summarize, Jesus commanded two things of the Church:

1. Go into all nations (ethnos=ethnic groups) and make disciples by:
 - Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son & Holy Spirit.
 - Teach them to observe everything I (Jesus) have commanded you.
(This certainly includes: go & make disciples, etc.)
2. Before you go to make disciples, wait for the Holy Spirit power from on High to make you witnesses.

Let's look at what the New Testament church did in response to this command of Christ.

Acts 2 - The Process

Jesus fulfilled His promise. We find that the Holy Spirit came in power upon the disciples as they obeyed the Lord.

- Notice that they were all gathered together in one place and in one accord (Acts 2:1). (Verse two tells us that they were in a house.)
- The Holy Spirit comes upon them as He brings power to witness.
- A large crowd gathers because of the unusual sound of wind they hear from the house.
- Peter gives spirit-anointed witness to this large gathering of people. Many are convicted in their hearts and accept the truth of Peter's message (Acts 2:37).
- Under conviction, they ask "What shall we do?" Peter answers:
 - Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins.
 - Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

But this is not where it stopped! The discipleship process had only just begun. What happens now?

- There were ADDED to them about two thousand souls. What does it mean to be added? It is more than just "numbered." To be "added" means to be counted with, to be a part of. These new converts were convicted in their hearts, repented and were baptized in the name of Jesus, they knew their sins were forgiven. Now they are ADDED.
- They Continued Steadfastly (Acts 2:42-ff):
 - The Apostles doctrine/teaching.
 - Fellowship
 - Breaking of Bread
 - Prayer
- Fear came upon every soul
- Wonders and signs done by the Apostles
- All that believed were together and had all things in common (meeting needs)
- Continued daily with one accord in the temple -and-
- Breaking bread from house to house.

A Change In Values

What we see in these new/young believers is a values change. Everything else took on a lesser importance as they became steadfast believers committed to the things of God. Notice that both the large group gathering (temple) and the small group (house to house) were vital parts of discipleship, following the pattern Jesus gave His disciples.

Home Meetings

- Acts 5:42:
The disciples were so successful that the Sanhedrin got upset. They ordered the Apostles to be

beaten and commanded them to stop preaching in the name of Jesus. What did they do? They continued to preach BOTH in the temple and in every house.

- Acts 16:4-6; 1 Cor 16:19:
Paul mentions Priscilla and Aquila in conjunction with a “church meeting in their home.”
- Col. 4:15:
Nymphas is mentioned “and the church which meets in his house”.
- Philemon 2:
“Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in thy house”.
- 2 John 10:
John commands not to allow false doctrine “into your home” or to welcome those who teach it. Why? Because the home of the believer is a gathering place for teaching and discipleship. Those who wanted to perpetuate false doctrine would naturally select a place like that, if they would be allowed to spread their ideology.

A Great Harvest

Larry Stockstill writes about preparing for a great harvest. He pastors a congregation in Louisiana and was surprised by the Lord's message to him on election night in 1992.

“Two things are coming in America: HARVEST and HOSTILITY. Your church is not prepared for either of them. I will show you something soon that will prepare you for what is coming upon the earth.”¹⁹

What do you think?

- Do you believe we are coming to a time of great harvest?
- What would we do with such a harvest?
- Will we be ready to implement the Lord's great commission to His church?

Harvest - Then What?

Harvest. It sounds so final, like the job is complete, but farmers don't harvest crops just to let them sit and rot. The harvest has a purpose. Some of it must “fall to the earth and die and produce thirty, sixty and a hundred-fold”. Some of it must be processed (ground up) so it is suitable for the edification (building up or feeding) of others.

Personal Preparation

After the harvest comes a lot of work! How do we prepare for that?

- Each Christian trained to share the Gospel and maintain a daily witness.
- We must intentionally find ways to gain open doors for people to hear the Gospel.
- We must pray that the Lord would send laborers into the harvest field - and be prepared ourselves to accept that task.
- We must know what to do with those who are the harvest.
- We must have a heart for the Great Commission - to make disciples who will make disciples.
 - A personal commitment to be a disciple.
 - Do a personal examination and be willing for our values to be changed to line up with the Lord's call and marching orders.
- A plan for intentional discipleship for ourselves.
- A plan to ADD those in the harvest to the Body of Christ.
- A plan that will prepare us to disciple those in the harvest.

Equipping New Christians

I said above that we must have a plan. In the last two decades the Lord has been working to develop congregations that genuinely disciple. As a result there are many churches around the world with experience to help us, including the availability of published materials to work with.

19. “The Cell Church”; Larry Stockstill: Regal Books; 1998

The EQUIPPING TRACK is a discipleship plan to assure that every new member is thoroughly equipped for service. It will be implemented in the cell groups and under the direction of the Cell Group Leaders. Leaders will be thoroughly trained to help all members, and give oversight so that all future members, complete this training material.

See the Equipping Track explanation on [page 25](#).



John Wesley

**“Give me 100 men
who hate nothing but sin
and love God with all their hearts
and I will shake the world for Christ!”**

The Cell group is vital to this process and is key to making disciples. The success of the cell groups, and the discipleship implemented there, will determine whether the Great Commission is fulfilled. Cell groups, in conjunction with the weekly celebration service, mean stability and strength as we “GO” to make disciples of all nations.

Jesus The Messiah:

**“...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”**

Matthew 28:18-20

These are the Biblical values. This is the call God places on every believer. Will you allow the Spirit of God to make whatever changes may be required in your value system so that you can be one of those willing to train to be ready to disciple God's people?

God told Joshua to narrow the army down to 300 men. Wesley wanted 100 men. In this day I believe God's goal is 100% of all believers training as disciples and committed to preparing to help others to be disciples of Christ.

Are you?

Understanding The Cell Church

The Lord is doing a significant thing in this day and age. He is returning the church to the effective patterns of the early Church. The New Testament Church can not be known by its structure or organization but it can be known for its values. During the last two decades the Lord has built churches which have stepped into the stream of 1st century Christianity. For the last twenty plus years those churches have paved the way so that we who follow have a much better understanding of the Lord's will and how to walk in the values of the early Church.

Church Government

Five-Fold Ministry

For three decades, perhaps longer, the Lord has been re-establishing His five-fold Ministers. Strong and anointed leaders who understand the call of God on their lives to serve his people and establish them as His disciples are vital to the success of the Cell Church. Whether you use the term "five-fold ministers" or not, without a full understanding of the Ephesians 4:11-ff equipping ministers, members cannot be fully equipped to take their place in the "priesthood of believers".

The best book (in my opinion) addressing the churches operating with this dimension is entitled "Church Quake"; Regal Books; by C. Peter Wagner. The subtitle is: "How the New Apostolic Reformation is Shaking Up The Church As We Know It."

The Five-Fold ministry has been established. While some may still wish to debate, it is time to move on with God's plan to equip His people.

The Journey To Cell Church

There have been many experiments with home groups, share groups, kinship groups, etc. When we talk about the "Cell Church" we are not talking about a church with these groups. We are not talking about adding another program to the existing programs in a church. Rev. Lawrence Khong says: "There is an East and West difference, a Heaven and Earth difference, between a Cell Church and a Church with cells."

Each of the home group movements were motivated by a philosophical conviction. That conviction is often revealed in what the group is called. Some of the most obvious group names are "Bible Study", "Prayer Group", "Share Group", "Care Group", "Ladies or Men's Ministry", and "Kinship Group". As you look at what they are called, the purpose of the group becomes immediately apparent.

One of the missing elements in the modern church has been committed relationship where believers genuinely care for one another. The study of the Bible has had a very high priority as had specialized ministry to men and women. These have all been very valuable to help the saints mature and walk in God's truth. In fact, they have contributed significantly in the journey to cell life.

The issue which drove the development of the cell church is the conviction that God has called all Christians to be ministers and that the primary task of the church is to make disciples with the result that they will fully walk in their ministry.

Four Basic Church Models

There are four basic church structures or models today:

1. Program Based Design (PBD) church: In this traditional model, 10% to 20% of the congregation attempts to meet the needs of the 80% to 90%. This congregation designs activities and groups to attract people. People quickly learn that churches are “competing” for their attendance and begin looking to see which provides thing they want. “Does the Youth group meet my expectations and schedule? Is the choir performing up to my expectations? What about Sunday School, the Preaching, etc., etc.?” The result is that people become a kind of “consumer.” If they become dissatisfied with what is offered in a given church, they go to another with a better offering. But, not to worry. The PBD Church knows how to attract more consumers!

People in these congregations loose two ways: Those who operate the programs rarely get into the ministry God has for them (they are to busy meeting the expectation of others), and the “consumers” are rarely challenged to do any more than come to church to get their needs met (and place some \$\$ in the offering).

2. Home Church. This model is usually a collection of 10 to 25 people who relate to one another by meeting in their homes. They rarely interact with the rest of the body of Christ. Often their understanding of Biblical leadership is flawed, usually rejecting the idea of a leader among them in favor of a kind of “equality of peers”. This group reject the need for a large group gathering and, if they have one at all, outreach does not include any sense of systematic evangelism for the purpose of growing. (Granted, there are exceptions.)

3. Transitional Church: This is the congregation that has already taken steps away from the traditional PBD design church. They have seen the Biblical truth that every Christian is to be fully equipped to be an effective disciple of Christ. This congregation usually has implemented some kind of home group, encourages spiritual gifts, and may have a training program in place to prepare those who want to go into ministry. The transitional church will usually have added a variety of small group ministry expression intended to equip the saints for ministry.

4. Cell Church: The Cell Church is sold out to one overriding truth: Christians are to be equipped to fully accomplish their ministry as individuals and as part of the body of Christ on the earth. As they become Disciples they are to begin to disciple others. The best context for this is participation in small groups where ministry and relationships are formed and each person is held accountable for their progress.

Unlike the Home Church, the Cell Church is committed to the reality that Christ’s church has “two wings” with which to fly.

- A. The first “wing” is the large group, often called celebration gatherings. Here the cells gather to worship corporately and to receive five-fold ministry.
- B. The second “wing” is the cells. These cells are not like the small groups of the PBD or Transitional Church. This church is committed to all ministries springing from the cells. It is in the cells that multiplication happens. Those who wish to join the church do so through a cell. All members are part of a cell. All activities of the Church are for the purpose of making the cells work. While the church holds leadership retreats and discipleship retreats and encounter retreats to help people face up to and be freed from the bondage of their old life, all these things are done to assist the cells in the discipleship of the Saints. If an activity or program does not directly strengthen the cell, or assist it to accomplish its ministries, the activity is not funded, staffed or authorized.

The key to a successful Cell Church is to understand the values¹ of the Bible for God’s people. In the Cell church those values are placed before all else and anything not supporting them is eliminated.

What Is A Successful Church?

Many people who have attempted to make changes in the structure of an established congregation have experienced heartbreak as they see people upset, angry and divisive of the changes. It is not easy for a pastor to see his congregation “grow” by decreasing in numbers and people he has grown to love reject his leadership and leave.

That we evaluate success based on numbers is a problem. If a congregation is increasing in numbers we consider it “successful”. If a congregation is small and declining in numbers we consider it a failure. If people get upset at the pastor, don’t like the direction leadership has chosen and decide to leave (and take others with them) we say that “the pastor split the church”.

What is a successful church? Is it proper to judge the small or declining congregation as a “failure”? In our honest moments we understand that some of the fastest growing churches in America are not successful in God’s eyes.

Accountable To God

Hebrews 13:17 says that the leaders of the congregation (to whom the members are to submit and obey) will “give an account to God”. What do you think God will have on that list? When the leader stands before God and is examining the individual names of the people added to that congregation, what kinds of issues do you believe will be on the list? I don’t believe God will ask about numerical growth. I don’t believe He will ask about the quality of the choir or orchestra. I don’t believe it will be an issue whether we had a quality pipe organ or soft pews and a wonderful building. What will it be?

1. It is important not to confuse a “value” with what we do. The value is “why” we do something. We can know what we value by looking at what we do. **“We do what we value and we value what we do.”** We must clarify and correct our values to line up with God’s plan.

We will be examined, held accountable, for the discipleship of each person added to our care. Discipleship not only includes pastoral care for every member, but the maturation of every member so that they begin walking as a minister (the priesthood of all believers) AND begin to disciple others (Matthew 28;18-ff).

Temporary Decline Common

Dr. William Beckham teaches the transition process using what he calls a “J Curve”. An established PBD congregation that becomes a Cell Church leaves behind the programs people have come to depend on. They are a “comfort zone” for the people and have been areas they have come to see as their areas of service (even if they are only attending a class). When those are displaced by commitments in a cell group people are in “water deep enough to swim in” and they feel out of control, out of their comfort zone and threatened. Some will work through the discomfort and make the transition. Others will leave and may even become angry at having “their church” changed.

A second “threat” commonly felt by members is the accountability of relationships in a Cell Church. Since the highest priority is given to discipleship, moving into personal ministry and accepting responsibility to begin to disciple others, many people are intimidated. They long for the more comfortable expression of church they had become accustomed to. Some will make the transition and become committed to this new level of accountability. Many will leave and may even become angry at having “their church” changed.

Dr. Beckham points out that a PBD church that transitions to a Cell Church can take three to five years. During that time the membership can decline dramatically (the tail of “J”). During this period is it proper to call that church a failure? Not if they are obeying God. Not if they are training those who remain. Not if those who remain come to understand God’s gifting in their lives and the ministry God has called them to. Not if people are released into that ministry and walk in the anointing and power that accompanies obedience to God’s Spirit. Regardless of the numbers, that is success!

Many transitioning churches, however, don’t make it through the disappointment of the tail of the “J”. The decline for several years while members are taking on the DNA, the core values of Cell Church is too much like failure and the pain of the separation of friendships is too great. They quit and people conclude that “Cell Churches don’t work in America.” See [“Why American Cell Churches Fail” on page 39.](#)

Perseverance Brings Success

For those who make the complete transition a wonderful experience awaits - the stem of the “J” - a significant increase in numbers. When members are trained and live out the NT values of a Cell Church, a new kind of activity begins - every member begins reaching as workers in the harvest and new people are both brought into the kingdom and themselves become disciples. Numerical growth exceeding their previous experience is realized. And that is what leaders will be held accountable for. That is what defines success in God’s eyes.

Recommended Reading

The following books, in my opinion, set forth the vision and possibilities of a cell based church. These men have years of experience to offer. I have set the books, with some comments, in the order I suggest they be read, especially if you wish to encourage others to consider the Cell Based Church. Most of these books are available at: www.touchusa.org

Bob Goldsby

First Books

For Concept and Inspiration

“The Cell Church”: Regal Books; Larry Stockstill; This book covers the experiences of a large and successful congregation making the transition to a Cell Church. Their pastor, Larry Stockstill, explains his reasons for making the change and his strategy for the change. He briefly talks about the two primary leadership-training programs used by Cell Churches: the 5x5 leadership style and the G12 leadership style.

“Home Cell Church Explosion”: Touch Publications; 1998; Joel Comiskey; Joel Comiskey is a Christian and Missionary Alliance minister and missionary. He has been doing research on the cell church movement and reports his findings in several books on the subject (see “GROUPS OF 12” below). This book reports on the ministry and operation of eight cell churches around the world. They are:

Bethany World Prayer Center, Baker, Louisiana;
The Christian Center of Guayaquil, Guayaquil, Ecuador;
Elim Church, San Salvador, El Salvador;
Faith Community Baptist Church, Singapore;
The International Charismatic Mission, Bogata, Colombia;
Love Alive Church, Tegucigalpa, Honduras;
Living Water Church, Lima Peru;
Yoido Full Gospel Church, Seoul, Korea.

The book is an excellent overview of cell churches, lessons learned, and leadership training. It provides clear definitions and descriptions, for example, on the distinction between a Cell Church, a Church with cells, and a Home Church.

“The Apostolic Cell Church”¹: by Rev. Lawrence Khong; A book fresh off the presses is excellent reading for those comfortable with five-fold ministry. Lawrence Khong functions as the Apostle of Faith Community Baptist Church (FCBC) in Singapore and church plants around the world. He deals mostly with five-fold and apostolic ministry as it relates to the cell church. Like Stockstill’s book, it deals with the actual transition of his congregation from a traditional Baptist/Charismatic church to a cell church. Ralph Neighbor, who has been in cell churches longer than anyone else in the US, spent several years on staff helping Rev. Khong establish FCBC as a cell church. I have a video tape presentation of a seminar he taught in August of 1999 at a church in Portland, OR.

“House To House”: by Larry Kreider; Another excellent book by a pastor who has done it. Larry Kreider has been pastoring this cell church for twenty plus years and shares the pitfalls as well as the things you must do to build a successful cell church. A great book by a pastor that has planted cell churches world wide. Very inspiring and insightful.
House To House Publications, 1924 West Main Street, Ephrata, PA 17522

“The Second Reformation”: Bill Beckham sets forth the theological principles as well as the practical “how to” of a cell church. As a missionary with a desire to see equipping happen in God’s church world wide, Bill sought God’s answer. That answer is the Cell Church. He believes the changes coming upon the Church of this millennium are as dramatic, necessary and earth shaking as the 1st Reformation under Luther and the other Reformers. Just as the church was transformed when the Gospel was restored under the Reformers, so in today’s reformation the principles of discipleship and ministry of the Saints will transform the church – and already is around the world!
Touch Publications; William A. Beckham.

1. “The Apostolic Cell Church”; Lawrence Khong. Distributed in the United States and Canada.
\$12.95 soft cover and \$19.95 hardcover, plus shipping and handling. You may place an order by phone at 1-888-404-3222, fax us at (940) 484-6097, or send an E-mail to publications@wci.org.

Getting Specific

Reading For Application

“Groups Of 12”; Touch Publications; Joel Comiskey. Groups of twelve is a Leadership Training method. It is an option to the 5x5 methods used by Cho in Korea and many other cell churches. One advantage of this method is that of maintaining relationships of the cell group. The 5x5 model calls for each group to “multiply” every six to ten months. This keeps the groups growing and creates new opportunities for leadership in the new groups.

The G12 model places EVERY CHRISTIAN in the church on a training track to become both a disciple and a discipler (Mt 28:18-ff). Each person is encouraged to work with other people to strengthen them in the faith (disciple them). That relationship becomes the core for a new cell. Even after they have started their own cell they meet with their original leader. In this way established relationships are not abandoned. The “Groups Of Twelve” was first initiated by ICM (International Charismatic Ministries) in Bogota Columbia and has been adopted, in various forms, around the world.

The author does not recommend that anyone adopt the ICM methods exactly, but believes that the G12 model offers significant value to the Cell Church. NOTE: He also believes it can only work in a Cell Church where the values of the Cell Church dominate.

“Where Do We Go From Here”; With Paul Yongi Cho, Ralph Neighbor is the most experienced cell church “guru”. His twenty plus years of experience are shared in this second edition book sub-titled: “A Guidebook For The Cell Group Church”. Each chapter is rich with experience and this book serves as an excellent reference book, reading individual chapters for their subject content.

Touch Publications; Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr.

Leadership Training

(Available at: www.touchusa.org)

Intern's Bundle

Buy 'Cell Leader and Intern Guidebook', 'The Shepherd's Guidebook' and 'Ordering Your Private World' together and save 15% off list price.

“Cell Leader Intern Trainer's Guide”: Every Intern needs modeling along with instruction and vision casting in order to make the training effective. This user-friendly Facilitator’s Guide, along with suggested reading from The Shepherd’s Guidebook, The Cell Leader Intern Guidebook and Ordering Your Private World will prepare your cell leader interns for fruitful ministry. This guide explains the schedule and the content for the “Intern Weekend” and provides the teaching outlines and transparency masters for the eight weeks of intern equipping. Your church will have tested, equipped and mentored cell leaders through the use of this proven system.

TOUCH Publications. ISBN 1-880828-93-6, First Published 1995, 149 pages. 73 pgs. and 76 overhead masters.

“The Shepherd's Guidebook”: Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr. & Jim Egli.

This thoroughly tested book will equip your cell leaders for success and train them to listen to God for their cell members, develop community and lead people into relationship evangelism. Not only will your cell leaders gain the tools for leading a cell meeting, they will also learn to pastor their flock and multiply the ministry of your church.

Book, ISBN 1-880828-55-3, First Published 1986, 256 pages.

“Ordering Your Private World”: Gordon McDonald;

This best-selling classic has been adapted to help your leaders evaluate their use of time, priorities, and ability to live a contented life. Leaders will learn to choose important issues over the urgent and develop balance within the pressures of ministry. Every cell leader will gain freedom in their public ministry as they develop their private world.

ISBN 1-880828-94-4, 228 pages.

“Life In His Body”: Dr. David Finnell [NOTE: A great book explaining life in cells!]

Communicate the vision of the cells to everyone in your church with this simple tool. The short chapters followed by discussion questions clearly define cell life for your leaders and members so that they can catch a lifestyle of prayer, community and evangelism. This book will give your church hope and vision as your members discover the possibilities of the New Testament community.

Book, ISBN 1-880828-87-1, First Published 1994, 160 pages. Price **\$9.95**

Product Code **CGC-9**, Quantity Discount available.

“Nine Keys To Effective Small Group Leadership”: Carl F. George

These nine biblical keys will unlock and open doors to new health, growth, vitality and life in your small group. Learn how to prepare for meetings, lead others into one-on-one ministry and recruit interns. Your group will thrive and you will multiply your ministry as you learn and apply these simple keys. Includes a free audio tape.

Book, Kingdom Publishing; First Published 1997 216 pages.

“The Key Is The Coach Seminar”: Jay Firebaugh

The Key is the Coach - A cassette series by Jay Firebaugh • Every cell leader needs a leader, an encourager, an equipper, a coach! Many cell church pastors argue that the role of the coach (overseer of 3-7 cells) is the most vital key for success with cells. This tape series will train you in the three roles of a coach, show you how to develop leaders under your care and clearly explain how coaching works in both the 5x5 and G12 systems. Learn from Jay Firebaugh, a pastor who has developed one of the most effective coaching systems! Includes 4 cassette tapes and a syllabus.

Audio Cassette Class**Cell Leader & Intern Seminar Tape Series:** Randall Neighbour;

Cell Leader and Intern Seminar Workbook and Tape Series - this live recording provides a broad overview of cell life and leadership. Your leaders will enjoy Randall's candid discussions on cell leadership and his humorous stories of cell life. This set includes 6 tapes, syllabus and instructions to download the powerpoint presentation from our web site. Product Code: CLISAK Author: Neighbour, Randall

Book, First Published 1999, 44 pages. Price **\$39.99** Product Code **CLISAK**

Other Training Materials

Available at: www.touchusa.org

“The Cry For Fathers & Mothers”: Larry Kreider

Every person in the church needs practical input from loving, seasoned spiritual mentors to reach their full potential in Christ. A seasoned cell church pastor reveals the biblical foundation for this ministry and provides you with practical guidelines for success. R14 * \$11.95 (no quantity discounts) Kreider, Larry

Book, 186 pages Price **\$11.95** Product Code **R14**

“Are You Fishing With A Net?”: Randall G. Neighbour;

Lead your group into team evangelism! These proven steps will prepare your members to reach out effectively as a group. This booklet contains five weeks of cell agendas for prayer and fasting for a cell harvest event, a game night and an evangelistic cell meeting guide. Also contains a master prayer list for “oikos” members. Author: Randall Neighbour.

Book, ISBN 1-880828-11-1, First Published 1998, 12 pages. Price **\$2.97** Product Code **CGC51**, Quantity Discount available.

“Body Building; Edification In The Cell”: Hosted by Les Brickman

Learn how to lead your group beyond cognitive Bible study and into the ministering presence of Christ. This video will train your cell leaders to listen to the voice of God and to lead in the Spirit, opening the door for effective ministry. Groups will experience the life of God moving in their midst with the help of this one hour video.

Video, NTSC, Running Time 60 minutes. Price **\$39.97** Product Code **VBB**

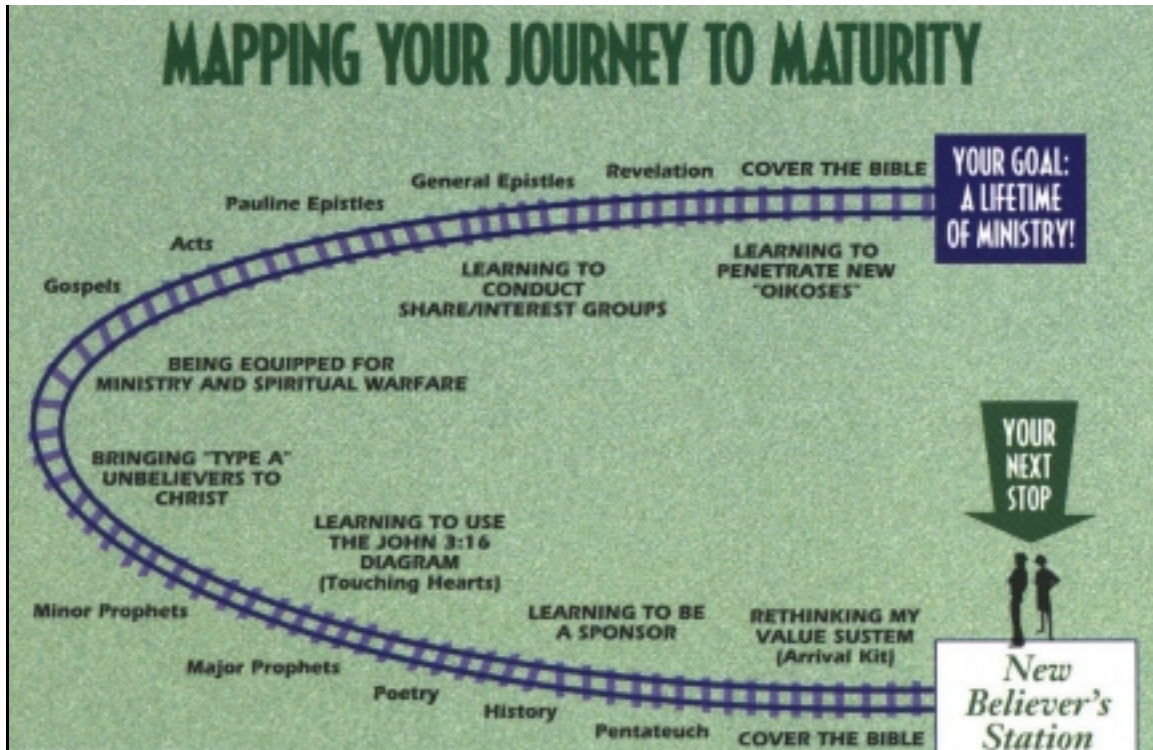
Many More Resources

The materials presented above represent my research over the last six months. There are many more resources available. Dove Ministries International (Larry Kreider, Pastor) offers seminars, speakers and training materials as does Bethany World Prayer Center in Baker, Louisiana (Larry Stockstill, Pastor), and Touch Ministries, USA (Founded by Ralph Neighbour). While some of the above resources are from these groups, they have many more not mentioned.

I will continue to update this paper as additional information and resources becomes available.

Equipping The Saints

Touch Ministries Equipping Track¹



The material described in the following pages is published by Touch Publications. It is designed to enable a discipler (they use the term “sponsor”), in conjunction with the cell leader and cell group, to equip a new believer for their work of ministry.

The equipping track includes the lessons discussed below PLUS a book entitled “Cover The Bible”, a Bible survey course as outlined in the graphic above. Each new believer goes through the “Cover The Bible” course as they progress through the discipleship material.

Welcome to your Changed Life

This is an 18 page, easy to read booklet explaining the basics of salvation, reinforcing the decision of a new convert, assuring them of the truth of God's plan of salvation for them and pointing them toward discipleship and cell life. The study includes six memory verses.

This booklet is intended to be shared with the new believer when he has prayed for salvation. For those who have not completed it, it is a part of the first lesson set in the “New Believer's Station”.

1. See Touch Ministries at <https://www.touchusa.org/>

Your Journey Guide Week 1

The journey Guide is designed to help cell leaders understand the spiritual, emotional and intellectual background of the cell members. With this information the cell leader can more effectively minister to them.

All incoming cell members are asked to go through this booklet and prayerfully complete each page. Cell Leaders then schedule a time to go through the booklet with each person, together with a discipler selected to guide the new person on the equipping track.

- Welcome to your Spiritual Journey
- About your past...
- Bible Knowledge Quiz, Part 1
- Bible Knowledge Quiz, Part 2
- How would you Characterize Your Life?
- How do you learn?
- Strongholds
- Cell Life is Important To You.
- I Can't Do It All Alone
- Stations Along your Journey
- Journey Guide Evaluation Form
- Dates (A page of five specific dates to begin and complete the various “modules”).
- Date “Cover The Bible” a four part overview course on the Bible, done simultaneously with the modules above.
- How To Prepare Your Personal Testimony

New Believer's Station Weeks 2 - 6

This is a five week course in which the discipler and young believer study the following:

- Welcome To your New Life
It may be that the believer went over this with a counselor or friend when they prayed to receive salvation.
- How To Listen To your Lord
- Receive Christ's Freedom
- Follow Jesus As Lord
- Grow In God's Word

The Arrival Kit Weeks 7-18

This is an eleven week course on the Kingdom Of God. “Welcome To The Kingdom”

- Week 1: Kingdom Lifestyles - your new Family
- Week 2: Kingdom Lifestyles - Let's Take A Tour
- Week 3: The Kingdoms of This World - What's Old?
- Week 4: The Kingdoms of This World - What's new?
- Week 5: The Servant Life: Equipped For Service
- Week 6: The Servant Life: Touching God
- Week 7: Personal, Please: Dealing with Strongholds
- Week 8: Personal, Please: Dealing with Attitudes
- Week 9: Facing The Powers: The Battle For Men's Souls
- Week 10: Facing the Powers: The Wrestling Match
- Week 11: The Journey Beyond
- Weekly Sponsor's Guide: Preparing to Sponsor Others

Evangelism Training

Harvesting “Type A” Unbelievers

Touching Hearts Guidebook - Weeks 19-25

This book is composed of three parts: one Seminar and two sections of five lessons each.

- Part One: Touching Hearts Seminar
- Part Two: Daily Growth Guides
 - Our Mandate
 - Our Message
 - Our Meditation
 - Our Motive
 - Our Ministry
- Part Three: Share The Vision Times
 - Sharing About Your Oikos Contacts
 - Sharing About Your Prayer Burden
 - Sharing About Your Investigative Bible Study
 - Sharing About Unbeliever's Strongholds
 - Sharing About Your Cultivation event
- Report form
- Scriptures To Memorize

Harvesting “Type B” Unbelievers

Part 1: Building Bridges - Opening Hearts Weeks 26-33

This book is the first in a series of three. It is a seven-week course in Share Group² Training, reaching the Type “B” unbeliever.

- Ministry Outreach Weekend - Retreat
 - Week 1: Approaching The Bridge
 - Week 2: Crossing The Bridge: How To Conduct yourself
 - Week 3: Over The Bridge: Things To Remember
 - Week 4: Bridging The Gap: Sponsoring “Get-Togethers”
 - Week 5: Bridging The Gap: Good Communication
 - Week 6: Bridging The Gap: Handling Distortions
 - Week 7: Forming Your Share Group
- How To Have A Half Night Of Prayer
- Share Group Team Covenant

Part 2: Building Groups - Opening Hearts Weeks 34-44

This book is the second in a series of three. It is a ten week course in Share Group Training, reaching the Type “B” unbeliever.

- Week 1: Launching your Share Group
- Week 2: Assisting Your Trio To Lead The Share Group
- Week 3: Power For Evangelism
- Week 4: Preparing for “Level 2” Bible study
- Week 5: Share Group Issues, Part 1
- Week 6: Share Group Issues, Part 2
- Week 7: Understanding Presuppositions
- Week 8: Practical suggestions
- Week 9: The Worldview of a Type “B” Unbeliever
- Week 10: Discerning The Harvest Potential
- Share Group Team Covenant

2. Share Group, as used by Touch Publications, is not a cell group, it is a special event designed to reach out and establish relationships as we meet the needs of Type B unbelievers. The goal is to gain permission to present the Gospel with them.

Part 3: Building Awareness - Opening hearts Weeks 45-55

This book is the third in a series of three. It is a ten week course in Share Group Training, reaching the Type “B” unbeliever.

- Week 1: Bringing Christ Into Oikos Networks
- Week 2: Finding The “Man Of Peace” Today
- Week 3: How To Make “In Visits”
- Week 4: How To Make “Out Visits”
- Week 5: Issues You Will Face
- Week 6: Target Groups, Part 1
- Week 7: Target Groups, Part 2
- Week 8: Target Groups, Part 3
- Week 9: Target Groups, Part 4
- Week 10: Where You Go From Here
- Special Help For Those Leading A Support Target Group
- “Year Of Equipping” Graduation Vows

“Knowing that Christ has brought me His peace, I will offer it to those who have none. I will help those who are in deep distress, patiently working with them until they are able to choose whether they wish to respond to Christ's unconditional love.

I will respond to all with God's acceptance; I will not be judgmental. I will always remember that God allows all things for His eternal purposes. I will prayerfully seek to know what, in each situation, God wants to address - and be His voice of compassion.

I will earnestly avoid giving simplistic “solutions” to difficult situations.

Knowing that a Share or Target Group session may be the turning point for a life, I covenant to place my commitment to this ministry at the very top of my priority list.

As God anoints me, I shall do his work to expose each type “B” unbeliever to Christ's love, God's grace, and the Holy Spirit's presence.”

Sponsor's Guide Book

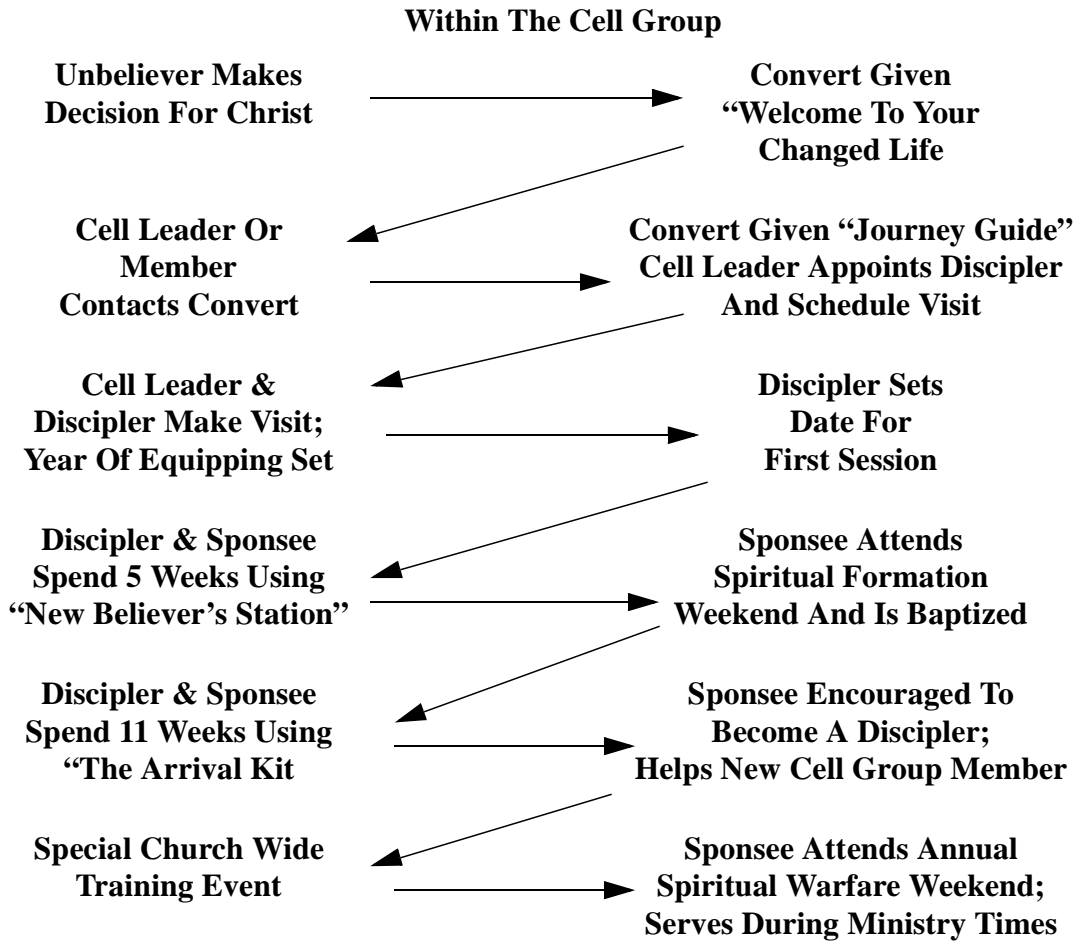
Practical Steps for Building Up Another Christian.

This book is written for the discipler to assist him to understand his task and work through the issues of being a discipler.

The “Year Of Equipping” Within The Cell Group

- Introduction
- The Sponsor's Lifestyle
 - 1) Jesus and His Cell Group
 - 2) Sponsoring and Accountability
 - 3) Six Things a Sponsor Does
 - 4) The Sponsor's Ministry
 - 5) The Sponsor's Mission
 - 6) Your Weekly Meetings
 - 7) Principles To Remember
 - 8) Dealing with Problem Areas
 - 9) Preparing Your Sponsee to Sponsor
- Useful Forms

The Year Of Equipping Illustrated



For Outreach Evangelism

**Cell Leader
Sends Team To
John 3:16
Weekend**

**Cell Leader
Sends Team To
Share Group
Training**

**Church-wide Training
For Harvesting
Type "A" Unbelievers
Given
"Touching Hearts
Guidebook"**

**Church-wide Training
For Harvesting
Type "B" Unbelievers
Given
"Opening Hearts
Trilogy"**

Cover The Bible

Five days a week,

Five minutes a day,

will allow a cell member

to complete a survey

of the entire bible in one year.

The four quarters may be taken at the cell member's option.

A Discipleship Series by DOVE Christian Fellowship

Biblical Foundations

This is a summary of the Discipleship series written by Larry Kreider, international Director of Dove Christian Fellowship International. DCFI is located in South Central Pennsylvania. This series is Copyrighted 1993, 1997 and 1999 by House to House Publications, 1924 West Main Street, Ephrata, PA 17522. Contact: Phone (717) 738-3751, FAX (717) 738-0656.

Each chapter is designed to be studied daily. The student reads the daily lesson and Scripture (perhaps one page of material) then completes the “Questions To Consider” for that day. It involves looking up one Scripture and answering several questions. One example will be used below but all the books, and daily studies, have the same design. [See “Ways This Series Can Be Used” on page 37.](#)

Knowing Jesus Christ as Lord : - Understanding His purpose for our lives through a personal relationship with Jesus

1. A Solid Foundation

KNOWING HIM Read John 17:3. What is eternal life? What is God’s desire for you? Is it possible to know all about God but not really know Him?

Explain: _____

2. Counting The Cost
3. Total Trust
4. Hot, Cold, or Lukewarm?

The New Way Of Living: True repentance and faith toward God.

1. Faith Vs. Rubbish
2. Get Rid of the Old Rags
3. The Potent Mixture: Faith and the Word
4. Forgiveness, Watermelons, and The Good News

What About Baptisms: Four baptisms including baptism in water and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

1. Water Baptism
2. More about Baptism
3. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit - Part 1
4. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit - Part 2

Building For Eternity: Laying on of hands, resurrection from the dead, and eternal judgment.

1. Called to Be a Blessing
2. The Laying On of Hands
3. The Resurrection Of the Dead
4. Eternal Judgment

Grace, Grace: How to apply God's grace to everyday living.

1. What is Grace?
2. Grace Comes Through Faith
3. More About Grace
4. Speaking Grace to the Mountain

Freedom From The Curse: How to walk in the freedom Jesus Christ brings.

1. What is a curse?
2. Jesus Became a Curse for us.
3. Receiving Freedom in Jesus' Name
4. I Can Be Completely Free

Learning To Fellowship With God: How to deepen your relationship with God

1. Building a Relationship with Jesus
2. Prayer and Worship, Fellowship With God
3. "How Can We Hear God's Voice?"
4. Hearing His Voice Clearly

The Local Church: How to relate to the Body of Christ.

1. What Is A Local Church?
2. Spiritual Families
3. Who Is Watching Out For Your Soul?
4. Commitment To The Church

What About Authority And Accountability? How to respond to leadership and other believers God places in our lives.

1. Understanding The Fear Of The Lord
2. The Police, My Boss, My Dad And My Pastor
3. The Blessing Of Authority
4. The Blessing Of Accountability

God's Perspective on Finances: How does God want His people to handle finances?

1. God's Risk
2. Robbing God
3. Tithes and Offerings
4. What About the Ninety Percent?

Called To Minister: Every Christian's call to serve

1. Who Are The Ministers Anyway?
2. Called To Serve
3. Ministering With Compassion
4. Partners With Jesus

The Great Commission: Our purpose for living on this planet.

1. What Is The Great Commission?
2. Tapping Into The Power Source
3. Reaching The Lost At Any Cost
4. Called To Make Disciples

Ways This Series Can Be Used

- **Read** from start to finish as a source of encouragement as you aspire to know the Lord in a more personal way.
- **A daily devotional.** Each day's reading has corresponding questions at the end of each chapter.
- **For a Paul - Timothy discipleship relationship.** Questions at the end of every chapter can be studied together and life applications discussed.
- **Small group teaching.** Each chapter has a teaching outline and questions for group discussion. Cassette tapes of the teachings are available.
- **A personal study** of the Bible builds basic spiritual foundations.
- **Basic Biblical foundation course** taught by a Christian leader for a local church using the entire series of twelve on the basic Biblical foundations.

Why American Cell Churches Fail

by Randall Parr¹

The Korean Model

While many American pastors have studied the organizational genius of David Yonggi Cho's mega-cell church in Seoul, Korea, none have come close to duplicating its success on home turf. Why not - and how can we make cell churches work in America?

Whether you call them cell groups, care groups or home fellowships, most Christians are familiar with the concept of small-group ministry. To some, these group systems have been a blessing (they are often credited as the building blocks of mega-churches). To many more, however, the very mention of "cell groups" brings on a mega-headache. Small group systems set up with much planning and great enthusiasm - yet organized the wrong way - have "nuked" many a fine little church before its time.

The famous cell ministry of David Yonggi Cho in Seoul, Korea, has been the model by which most contemporary small-group systems are measured. Thousands of ministers flock to Korea every year for Church Growth International's (CGI) conference on cell ministry development. They come from around the world with notepads in hand, seeking to obtain the success secrets of Cho's amazing system. And amazing it is.

When I first attended the CGI conference in 1984 (the 100th anniversary of Christianity in Korea), Cho's Yoido Full Gospel Church was approaching an active membership of 500,000 people. They were operating through 21,000 home cell groups that were systematically adding 10,000 new members each month. Pretty impressive for a ministry that started 34 years ago in a U.S. Army surplus tent with five of Cho's family members! Every pastor in attendance was awed by the immensity of the Yoido cell system, each earnestly desiring to take some piece of this "miracle" home with them. Typically, however, the miracle refused to come along.

In hundreds of personal interviews I've conducted with pastors around the country, over 90 percent agree that, though Cho's system may work great in Korea, cell groups are largely unsuccessful in America. Nobel American attempts have been made to imitate the Korean program, but few have scratched the surface of its impact. Ambiguous cultural mysteries tend to take the blame. Yet the same question continues to haunt those leaders who long for American revival: Can U.S. churches ever achieve the same evangelistic impact on their cities as yoido Full Gospel Church has in Seoul? Is this kind of church growth possible in our nation? Is the Korean phenomenon some kind of socio-religious fluke?

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Five Reasons American Cell Churches Fail

Like advice, speculation is free and plentiful. Why do American cell group systems struggle and fail? Here are five reasons - and what Christian leaders can do to beat them.

Reason 1: Wrong Methodology - Designed To Fail

American cell group systems fail because they are methodologically designed to do so.

Listening to Cho's lecture on home-cell ministry development, I was struck by one crucial statement. **"In America," Cho said, "cell groups are always built around the church. In Korea, the church is built around the cell groups."**

How revolutionary! Growing up, my concept of the church was one of a classic red-bricked, stained-glass building with the white steeple on top. Most Americans are comfortable with that image because it is tangible, representing the core around which programs and ministries revolve. Cho, however, emphasizes the biblical principle that people, not buildings, are the church.

Cho has put action behind his philosophy by developing the Yoido cell program into a medium through which the entire ministry agenda can be managed without geographical restraint. **The Yoido Full Gospel Church is actually a huge cell group system that consolidates each week-end for corporate worship and prayer services.**

Throughout the week, some groups meet in the morning; others gather at noon or at night. Some meet in homes; others meet in offices, factories and schools. Church life exists almost totally through cell-oriented special events, meetings and social gatherings where everybody is somebody. Through a superb combination of systematic design and intensive leadership training, the proverbial "back door" of the church is essentially shut, resulting in qualitative growth based upon personal relationships.

The main point is this: Successful cell ministry cannot survive as a mere ancillary "program," as happens so often in American churches. It must become the way we do business.

Reason 2: Pastoral Commitment & Leadership

American cell group systems fail **because they lack sufficient pastoral commitment.**

Cho believes that pastoral commitment to the control of the cell system is essential. "Every system has a point of control," Cho says, "and in cell ministry, that point of control is the pastor." American pastors can improve group ministry control by enhancing their awareness in at least three areas.

Personal Knowledge

Here are three good rules:

1. Don't play with electricity if you are not an electrician.
2. Don't fly an airliner if you are not a pilot. and
3. Don't mess with cell groups if you don't know what you're doing.

Besides, it is difficult to get motivated to implement an effective cell ministry if you do not fully understand its potential. Take the time to get well-acquainted with small-group dynamics. Study how small groups are employed in other countries such as England and China, where such systems are frequently the primary avenue of evangelism and Christian life.

Personal interest

An effective small-group system will demand the lion's share of your attention. In order to experience optimum congregational participation in the cell system, members must see that this “non-traditional” method of ministry holds top priority with the pastor. Whether it be through regular verbal affirmation from the pulpit, in promotional videos, in the church newsletter or at fellowship meetings, the people must be convinced that their spiritual leader believes in the cell ministry. How else can they be expected to believe in it themselves?

Personal leadership

All too often, cell systems have been prematurely “delegated” to faithful assistants who really have no idea what a cell group is, much less know how to manage an entire network of them. If vision, integrity and quality control are to be maintained, cell ministry leadership and management must remain, ultimately, in the hands of the pastor. Eventual system delegation is fine if stabilization has been achieved and the associate is as informed and excited as the pastor about the subject matter. Until that time, however, the pastor should stay enthusiastically in charge.

Reason 3: Not Tuned In To Community Needs

American cell group systems fail because they have not discerned the needs of their communities.

Marketing research analyst George Barna defines “user-friendly churches” as those “in touch with the needs of those they want to serve.” Gone are the days when traditional youth, singles, young adult ministries and the like can fit every bill. Alarming increases in broken homes, dysfunctional families, AIDS, alcohol and drug addiction, and sexual and physical abuse demand creative methods of outreach to hurting people - people who will never come to our churches on their own.

Then there is another group of wounded, non-church-attending folks who will not approach our doors: those of our own camps who've been incapacitated by “friendly fire” and discarded. A pro-

active network of homogeneous small groups offers an outstanding way to help bind up the brokenhearted and demonstrate the love of Jesus.

Homogeneous means “like in nature or kind,” referring in this case to small groups designed for individuals who have particular common interests. For example, a homogeneous cell consisting of former alcoholics can provide loving, understanding support for those now suffering or recovering from the effects of that illness; healed victims of abuse or disease, single parents and others can offer much to those who share in their unique circumstances.

Concerned pastors can begin by carefully identifying community needs. By matching them with the talents and desires of group leader candidates, homogeneous groups can be planted wherever people are hurting. Although homogeneous groups are only one type of cell that may be utilized (“geographical” being another), they are perhaps the most powerful medium of organized church response to the often silent pains of those around us.

Reason 4: Guided without Vision

American cell group systems fail because they are guided with little or no vision.

Most Christian congregations in America have less than 100 people in attendance on any single day of worship. But according to Cho, American churches stay small because they think small. When once addressing an audience of young pastors, Cho challenged, “Show me your vision, and I will show you your future!” It is certainly no revelation that leaders restrict themselves to the confines of past experience. In fact, one major (and swiftly shrinking) denomination I know of still boldly reminds its pastors that “we were called to be faithful, not successful.”

American cell systems suffer from the same limitations. When planning a small group program, start small - but think big. Cho believes “the No. 1 requirement for having real church growth - unlimited church growth - is to set goals.” Prayerfully plan a program marked with clear, measurable objectives so that progress can be accurately charted. Map out the number, types and locations of prospective cell groups over the next six, 12, 18 months and so on. Prepare the groups with care and manage system progress methodically (as in any business). Keep detailed records on everyone and everything involved. Take it slow, stick closely to the plan, and don't quit. God's people perish where there is no vision, and cell systems are not exempt.

Reason 5: Inadequate Leadership Training

American cell group systems fail because of inadequate leadership selection and training.

Poorly selected and trained group leader candidates are usually the primary causes of cell system disintegration in our country. Pastors can remedy this problem up front by approaching prospects they know personally that are loyal, caring individuals of sound character and exemplary Christian lifestyle. Candidates must have a heart for small-group ministry and be willing to “contract” 10 hours per week to the program for one year.

Gender should not factor into leadership selection. In fact, one of Cho's creative approaches to cell leadership selection has been his frequent choice of women. Of the 21,000 cell group leaders serving the Yoido Church during my initial visit in 1984, 19,000 were females. With over 50,000 groups today, that ratio remains the same.

Cell Leaders Are Extensions Of The Pastor

Pastors must recognize that their cell group leaders will be living functional extensions of themselves. As faithful care givers, cell group leaders will be pastors' lifelines to the congregation and, as such, must be carefully trained by them.

Leadership training should include such subjects as cell ministry dynamics, counseling, pastoral care and small-group evangelism. Specially designed training events should be provided periodically to keep group leaders fresh, motivated and thinking creatively. This practice will help ensure their personal growth, as well as a healthy relationship with their pastor.

Can American Cell Churches Succeed?

Can cell groups succeed in America today? The answer lies in the willingness of Christian leaders to adopt cell group ministry as the "church" of the future. Wise pastors will seek to discover the dynamics of this powerful ministry medium and harness it effectively - not only to minister to their flock, but to take their cities for God.

