Leadership Formation through an Engagement of Scriptures in the Toronto Chinese Community Church

Harding Ng

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LEADERSHIP FORMATION THROUGH AN ENGAGEMENT OF SCRIPTURES IN THE TORONTO CHINESE COMMUNITY CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a lonely business. Anyone in leadership long enough would testify to the validity of this statement. However, this notion that a leader will have to take up his or her cross, bear one’s grit, and be isolated perpetually without any friends is a self-pitying myth that causes self-inflicted mortal wounds. This view of one’s leadership reflects an inability to be transparent and vulnerable; such a person is hiding under the façade that a leader is one who can always pull things together.

Jesus’ life and ministry repudiates this kind of false spirituality. Even though he had to truly endure the loneliest suffering on the cross for the sins of whole humankind, and he did endure the Father’s forsaking during that darkest hour, yet for the most part of his earthly journey, he could claim: “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30 cf. other similar sayings of his intimate relationship with the Father in John 5:17, 19-23; 6:57; 7:16; 8:26, 38; 14:9; and chapter 17).¹

Jesus spent three full years of discipleship journey, bonding closely with twelve other men: living, eating, laughing, learning, arguing, challenging, and facing struggles and crises together with them. On the eve of his departure, he told them: “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15).

Jesus demonstrates that a true leader ought to live life to its full humanity and wholeness, even sharing one’s vulnerability and transparency. Although he was fully

¹ All biblical references will be taken from the New International Version, unless otherwise noted.
divine, being the Son of God, he was not afraid to share his pain and struggles with his companions, as evidenced in the Garden of Gethsemane.

In Western culture at large and also in the church in which I grew up, this kind of leadership spirituality of being human and open was sorely lacking. The unspoken expectation from the parishioners (and from the leaders themselves) was that pastors and deacons alike were all saints wearing haloes with perfect families and perfect children.

In my first few years of pastorate, I was also caught up in putting on a mask and hiding my personal struggles and shortcomings, until God taught me a lesson in a difficult way. This lesson came in the form of facing my son’s protracted teenage rebellion and waywardness from the Lord. God, the Good Shepherd, gently nursed my wounds from conflicts in the home with my son, but also eventually gave me the courage and humility to share these personal struggles with my congregation. At a church-wide revival meeting, I broke down in tears and publicly asked for prayer. Not only was I surprised by the congregation’s acceptance, but I was also tremendously comforted by their tears of concerted intercession for the prodigal’s return.

My son was overseas at the time. Within a year, God miraculously bestowed upon him a spiritual awakening, and guided me on a trip of totally unexpected but dramatic father-and-son reconciliation. Today, I can gratefully report that he is a baptized believer, set straight in his path, actively serving in an overseas church. This life-transforming experience for me and my family has had a dramatic impact on how I view leadership formation.
Michael Wilkins, author of *In His Image: Reflecting Christ in Everyday Life*, describes leadership formation succinctly: “Discipleship is walking with Jesus in the real world.” Wilkins gives a fuller definition that “discipleship means living a full human life in this world in union with Jesus Christ and His people, growing in conformity to His image, and helping others to know and become like Jesus.” Leadership formation does not outgrow one’s needs to remain humble and continue in the lifelong journey of being a faithful disciple and student of Jesus, conforming to his image.

Leadership formation is a long arduous process. A Chinese proverb says: “It takes ten years to grow a tree, but it takes a hundred years to form a mature leader.” Looking back at my own development as a Christian and later being given the chance to lead a church, I am amazed at the patience and mercy that God has bestowed on me in removing my impurities and refining my character into a vessel fit for his use.

Yet, God has the sovereign control and final say in his work of leadership development: “But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him” (Jeremiah 18:4). Despite one’s own sense of inadequacy and sometimes compounded by the neglect of being equipped by others, God still manages to remold and recast his people through their weaknesses and failures to accomplish his purposes.

Leadership is everything that counts for the health and success of any organization, be it in business, sports, institution, government, or church of which

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3 Ibid., 55.
spiritual leadership is the subject of this discussion. So much is at stake if believers do not invest in the selection, recruitment, nurture, and training of potential leaders. As Greg Ogden states, “Every church is only one generation away from extinction if discipleship is neglected and no leader is reproduced!”⁴

Unfortunately, most people overlook the need for training and formation of a leader, but there is no shortcut for discipleship. Many in leadership positions have not been truly discipled in the ways of Jesus. This only adds to the risk of “the blind leading the blind.” Some carry the myth that “I can’t lead if I am not at the top.”⁵

What really attracts people to follow a leader is character. This can only be cultivated from the inside out. Thus the formation process has to deal with being before doing. Hence, the need for spiritual formation is paramount. Ben Campbell Johnson, in his book, Beyond the Ordinary: Spirituality for Church Leaders, asserts that “many lay leaders and clergy are alike that they have had significant religious experiences but have not received intentional spiritual formation.”⁶ I, for one, can testify that during my own tenure serving as a deacon and later as an elder, there had never been any intentional spiritual formation being designed for me.

Not only has spiritual formation been lacking in the Church, the whole idea of leadership being a healthy, balanced development of other essential components of

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⁵ John C. Maxwell, The 360° Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), 22. See Appendix 1 for Maxwell’s discussion of the seven myths of leading from the middle of an organization.

⁶ Ben Campbell Johnson and Andrew Dreitcer, Beyond the Ordinary: Spirituality for Church Leaders (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 87.
growth is also deficient. Michael Bischof, in his dissertation, *SouLeadership, Holistic Formation for Spiritual Leaders*, advocates four dimensions of formation: spiritual, emotional, relational, and missional; these four dimensions must be balanced and integrated for healthy ministry. In this ministry focus paper, Bischof’s concepts of the holistic development of a leader will be asserted, as they have become my own convictions due to my own personal painful struggles.

The goal of all discipleship and leadership formation must be Christlikeness. However it is often not a program but rather modeling and mentoring that can really result in transformation. The Apostle Paul appeals to believers: “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Again, in my being called into the pastorate, changing from my medical career into a life of ministry, there was little mentoring that was available to me, especially in the area of spiritual formation. This formational process should not be just a personal pursuit, but rather it should be something that happens in a community setting where encouragement and affirmation can be given, thereby also enhancing its emotional and relational components.

Therefore, this ministry focus paper will utilize two forms of community, namely the discipleship triad and the small group, as training grounds where leaders can emerge and develop with supervision and empowerment. The harmony, mutual love, and affirmation of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit within the Trinity are the best foundation and model for community where leadership development is nurtured and affirmed.

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The agent of leadership formation truly is the Holy Spirit using the Word of God to bring about changed lives. When Moses passed on the mantle of leadership to his successor, Joshua, he was able to instill the fear of the Lord by cultivating the reverent study and obedience of Scriptures as the prerequisite of success (Deuteronomy 31:7-8). The Lord himself promised: “Do not let this book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:8-9).

Yet this guarantee of success does not come simply by absorbing Bible information, but it is also one’s biblical formation and transformation that contribute toward both the process and the ultimate goal. Hence, Eugene Peterson, in his book, *Eat This Book*, affirms the value of Scriptures: “But Holy Scriptures is the source document, the authoritative font, the work of the Spirit that is definitive in all true spirituality.”

Using the metaphor of eating, Peterson further elaborates the Holy Spirit’s guidance in one’s “participatory reading, receiving the words in such a way that they become interior to our lives, the rhythms and images becoming practices of prayers, acts of obedience, ways of love.”

In relation to spiritual formation, engagement with Scriptures is therefore foundational to leadership formation. Peterson describes it well: “Reading is an immense

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9 Ibid., 10.
gift, but only if the words are assimilated, taken into the soul – eaten, chewed, gnawed, received in unhurried delight.”¹⁰ Similarly, this importance is attested to by another author, Robert Mulholland Jr., who states that the intent of his book, *Shaped by the Word*, is to “help people transition from a modernist approach to scripture (informational) to a postmodernist approach (formational).”¹¹

This ministry focus paper will therefore present a case that the engagement and use of Scriptures in a creative, holistic fashion will have the lifelong effect of shaping leaders who can in turn multiply other leaders at Toronto Chinese Community Church (TCCC).

Part One will focus on the context of TCCC. Chapter 1 will give the background of the church in relation to its history, theology, and values. The reasons why leaders are lacking both in quality and quantity are explored. Chapter 2 continues this discussion by highlighting the cultural elements affecting leadership development: first, insensitivity to changes brought on by postmodern society in general, and second, the “ghetto mentality” (that is, staying in one’s own comfort zone and hence, inadvertently isolating oneself from mainstream society) which is inherent in ethnic Chinese immigrant churches in particular.

Part Two will lay the theological foundations for the proposal of leadership formation. Chapter 3 shows the importance of the balanced approach of holistic formation comprising of all four components: spiritual, emotional, relational, and

¹⁰ Ibid., 11.

missional. The Scriptures are central as a shaping influence, and this principle is demonstrated in the lives of Moses, Paul, and Jesus. Chapter 4 expands the influence of modeling and mentoring relationships using biblical pairing examples to show how abiding in God’s Word has a discipleship and leadership formation impact. Chapter 5 explains the importance of discipleship, mentoring and spiritual friendship using five pairs of biblical characters as illustrations of such relational empowerment principles. Chapter 6 suggests that the ideal arena for continual nurture and growth of potential leaders is the training of small group leaders in a community setting.

Part Three will present the ministry strategy for the actual execution of nurturing and reproducing of leaders at TCCC. Chapter 7 will describe the steps of cultivation of personal formation of the four components (spiritual, emotional, relational, and missional). Chapter 8 will focus more on the corporate formation where the settings and steps for training for both small group leaders and discipleship triad leaders are explained. Chapter 9 will conclude by giving a more detailed implementation strategy with sequence and desired outcomes. A section with assessment tools and evaluation for suitability as future ministry leaders is included.
CHAPTER 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO TORONTO CHINESE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Historical Review of Church Expansion and Multiple Church Plantings

Toronto Chinese Community Church (TCCC) was founded in 1975 by Rev. Dr. John Kao. Despite his humble beginnings as the eldest son of a large refugee family who fled China, hence deprived of a chance for education, Dr. Kao would diligently strive for every opportunity for further studies after his dedication to serve the Lord, ultimately receiving seminary training in the United States and Canada, culminating in two doctorates. Rev. Kao was commissioned by Dr. Andrew Song of China Native Evangelistic Crusade (CNEC) of Hong Kong (later the name was changed to Christian National Evangelism Commission, and later changed again to become the worldwide missions agency, Partners International) to plant a church in order to reach out to the Chinese immigrants in Toronto, Canada.

Six other families responded to Dr. Kao’s rallying call to become the founding core of TCCC. Due to his visionary leadership and tireless energy, the church has grown manifold in its thirty-three years. Also, due to Dr. Kao’s vigorous emphasis on church planting strategy, TCCC has spawned another nine congregations throughout the greater Toronto area. All churches planted continue to fellowship within an umbrella organization called the Association of Chinese Evangelical Ministries, Canada (ACEM) with Dr. Kao serving as founder and advisor.

I joined the church in its first year of existence, when it was comprised of fewer than fifty congregants, with a majority being visa students. With Dr. Kao’s background of
Western education and openness to innovative ideas, his leadership style appealed to a lot of the young students, including me. We were given ample opportunities in learning how to lead worship and Bible studies in small groups. He often let us experiment with new ideas and grow in service through learning by doing. Many rose to leadership positions in due course and became the pastors or deacons in various local community churches. In that sense, God has indeed granted a measure of success of leadership development.

However, in retrospect, this success was short-lived because there was a tendency for the selection of leaders to be based on gifts and talents rather than the depth of one’s spiritual life. Instead of cultivation of “being” before “doing,” there was often a hurrying to put these individuals in leadership positions before being tested for their teachableness, humility, and faithfulness. This resulted in numerous cases of shortened life-spans of serving as well as less than ideal performance. The gravity of this situation was especially prominent in the Worship and Sacred Music Department as the lure of the spotlight and the temptation of pride were most obvious. This would eventually deflate those who were genuinely called to serve, and short-circuit the cycles of disciple-making which would be so foundational to leadership development.

Dr. Kao is an aggressive evangelist who is burdened with a burning zeal for the rescue of lost souls. He is also blessed with a visionary strategic mind in planning church planting. He has a business acumen and intuitive ability to make an accurate forecast of population growth and demographic trends. This was a tremendous asset in meeting the challenges brought on by the immigration waves of the Chinese in the Diaspora,
especially from Hong Kong and Southeast Asia in the 1980s and 1990s. Hence there were multiple church plantings during his tenure.

However, due to the relative lack of equal emphasis on discipleship, this surge of repeated church plantings had historically drained the leadership of the mother church. The qualified deacons and leaders could not be so easily replenished. The church plantings, instead of becoming an incentive for younger leaders to emerge, had become a liability and a threat to continual growth because the infrastructure of ongoing discipleship and leadership training had not been consolidated. This situation had been likened by some disgruntled deacons to that of a mother who had just given birth, not fully recuperated, being befallen yet again with another “blessed” pregnancy.

My spiritual journey of growing with this church has brought me mixed bittersweet feelings of gratitude and sadness. Here is where a young man, soon after his conversion, found nurture, spiritual kinship, and opportunities of service. Dr. Kao has become my spiritual father and mentor, and was instrumental in my call to full-time Christian service, laying down my secular career of medical doctor to become a pastor. Due to his kidney dialysis condition, he was desperately in need of finding a successor, and thus I was recommended to the board to become the next senior pastor. I was thus ordained as a pastor in 1996 and then installed as the senior pastor in 1998. I will forever feel grateful for the trust and encouragement he has given me.

On the other hand, much of the advice and leadership formation that I had received from my predecessor were related to matters of skills. There had been little instruction or coaching in terms of spiritual formation. The subsequent challenges I faced
in the first few years of pastorate in terms of personnel issues and church politics had
more than once caused me to second-guess whether my decision of a career change was
right. This was especially acute when the church decided to move ahead with a relocation
plan to build a bigger sanctuary for expansion. The conflicts that arose from the building
campaign got me unwarily entangled in a quagmire with old friends parting ways and
some leaving the church. This was especially painful and disillusioning for me, since my
desire was to simply preach the gospel and bring people to salvation.

The engagement to study with the Doctor of Ministry program at Fuller Seminary
has breathed new life into my perseverance with God’s calling in the pastorate. This has
come in three dimensions. First, I was introduced to the importance of balance between
spirituality and ministry. Without a solid grounding of the practice of spiritual disciplines,
I would sooner or later be another casualty of burned-out pastors that is already so
prevalent among Christian professionals. Second, without minimizing evangelism, I have
gained a renewed conviction of growing a disciple-making congregation, as this is the
foundation of leadership development and supply of fresh manpower for church plantings,
thus ensuring the longevity of the Church. Third, the only sure guarantee of successful
leadership formation has to be dependent on the shaping influence of the Word of God
under the renewing and transforming impact of the Holy Spirit. These three motifs will
form intertwining principles that run through this ministry focus paper.
Recent Relocation and Steady Growth

By God’s grace, TCCC started out as one church with seven families in 1975 and has grown to over seven thousand adults worshipping in ten different community church locations under the auspices of ACEM. TCCC itself, which I currently pastor, has moved out from its old site in 2001 and relocated to 100 Acadia Avenue in the City of Markham. This is a strategic location at the junction of four regional communities with the heaviest ethnic Chinese population in Toronto, namely North York, Scarborough, Markham, and Richmond Hill.

The congregation size of TCCC at the time of relocation was 750 adults and 200 children. Now six years later, it has grown to 1,400 adults and 340 children in two Cantonese services and one English service (1,000 in Cantonese and 400 in English). There is plan to add a Mandarin service this year as the influx of new Chinese immigrants to Canada each year (between 30,000 and 40,000 people) are now mostly Mandarin-speaking from Mainland China.

There are many factors contributing to this steady growth since the relocation, but three seem to stand out as significant. First, with the new spacious facilities and friendly environment including a high-school-sized gymnasium, there are many new opportunities for special interest and hobby groups catered to outreach activities into the community neighborhood.

Second, the retiring Worship Pastor at the time of relocation and transition had already initiated steps of reform to turn the worship style from a traditional to a more contemporary one. Since then, we feel providentially blessed that her successor, a newly
hired worship pastor whom the church sponsored to study under Dr. Robert Webber of the Institute of Worship Studies in Florida, continued this reform by introducing blended worship. The choir is preserved, but the worship teams are more utilized with a rich mix of both treasured hymns as well as aptly chosen contemporary songs. Instead of simply using the piano and organ, more musicians with a variety of musical instruments are deployed. Each service is more meaningful in its design and purpose to bring out the fourfold importance of gathering, Word, Sacrament, and commissioning.¹ The English service has been given more autonomy in its own design and execution. The overall outcome is more participation and attraction of young people to the services, both English and Cantonese.

Third, the church conducted a Purpose Driven Life campaign called “The 40 Days of Purpose” in the spring of 2005 as part of the celebration of the church’s thirtieth anniversary. This was a movement engineered and popularized by Rick Warren of the Saddleback Church in Orange County, California. In TCCC’s setting, 80 small group leaders were being trained with over 600 people enrolled into small groups during this period. This has tremendously increased the sense of belonging and level of involvement of the parishioners. At the concurrent Ministry Fair, 125 people signed up to be volunteers in various service capacities.

The above description may paint a rosy picture of steady growth and blossoming of ministries. However, if the underlying lack of systematic discipleship and leadership

¹ Robert E. Webber, *Blended Worship: Achieving Substance and Relevance in Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2000), 43. Robert Webber defines the four essential movements of a blended worship as: 1) We enter into God’s presence – Gathering; 2) We hear God speak – Word; 3) We celebrate at God’s Table/We respond with Thanksgiving – Sacrament; and 4) We are dismissed – Commissioning.
development is not addressed, as this paper intends to do, then the bottleneck effect will once again resurface when the church ponders again its calling to plant a new church.

**Theology, Values, and Assumptions**

There are five distinctives laid down for all local churches by the founding pastor and advisor of ACEM, Dr. John Kao. They are: 1) a community of love and unity; 2) a community of discipleship training; 3) a community of church planting; 4) a community of world missions; and 5) a community of social concern.²

These are catchy phrases and nice slogans to adhere to, and they are certainly biblical foundation for developing healthy churches. However, whether they really transpire into systematic practical outworkings in the daily ministry of each congregation depends very much on the level of vigilance of existing leaders and their diligence in training the future leaders.

Some of these distinctives can be more easily substantiated than others. The ministry of missions is an example of one that can be fairly easily substantiated. In the first year of the church’s existence, one thousand dollars was given to missions out of a total annual budget of seven thousand dollars. This set a good tone for future annual missions conferences, when all sister community churches still gather together each year for the same cause of promoting world missions under a spirit of unity and love. This year, the joint missions budget pledges exceed $1.5 million. However, one still asks the question: With so much emphasis on giving to missions, how come there are so few

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² John Kao, *Crucial Factors in Doing Healthy Churches* (Hong Kong: Chinese Co-ordination Center of World Evangelism, 2003), 6-16.
home-grown missionaries as opposed to most of the disbursements are toward other missionaries and Christian organizations? It is my speculation that missions has become just a program instead of the church being truly missional, which would arise out of an ongoing education and steering of church ministry towards a change in paradigm.

Another distinctive in the area of social concern can be evidenced in the establishment of the first children’s daycare center in the church’s neighborhood twenty-three years ago. At the time, it was hailed by the community as a pioneering feat. In more recent years, there have been many more fundraising efforts to help local food banks, response to global disasters, and so on. However, in the last two years when some brothers and sisters in TCCC were burdened to do prison ministry and were successful in converting a few drug addicts and ex-inmates, this welcome news was surprisingly met with stiff opposition from some church members, instigated by none other than two deacons and board members. These ironic twists reveal that by simply having the right slogans, desirable Christian behavior is not necessarily called out automatically. The key lies in whether the leaders are adequately trained in the essence of the theological assumptions. Sometimes there may be other hidden values and deeply held traditions at work that not only block the work of God, but may even be lurking to sap the health and energy of the church, causing its growth potential to be severely compromised.

Specific Areas Needing Renewal

TCCC’s recent history offers specific examples of this struggle to truly reflect the stated values. Often, there have been historically potent values that may be good and
biblical in and of themselves, but over the years they have subtly become fossilized as they degenerate into unexamined traditions badly in need of renewal. Three specific situations illustrate this tension.

First, there is a lot of emphasis on evangelism as saving souls which is also the main thrust for repeated aggressive church plantings. Yet the methodology leans heavily on training in the confrontational style of evangelism including visitation of newcomers and Evangelism Explosion techniques, with regular events of evangelistic crusades for harvesting. However the yield is getting poorer and poorer.

The reasons for such low performance may be twofold. First, there is a lack of understanding on the part of the congregation that the majority of conversions take place as a process rather than just one encounter. Richard Peace explains this phenomenon in his book, *Conversion in the New Testament: Paul and the Twelve*: “To confront people with the need to decide in a moment for Jesus is derived from a punctiliar understanding of conversion. But if there is a second paradigm for conversion in the New Testament, this raises the possibility that there are other ways to do evangelism.” With this in mind, there is a need for training in friendship and relational evangelism. Secondly, there has been inadequate ongoing training of discipleship as a process based on natural settings. Usually the only discipleship effort discernible is the initial follow-up after conversion.

Also contributing to the lack of evangelistic success is the reality that most of the pastors and deacons are too busy with so many ministries that they are unavailable to set

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the tone and modeling of discipleship for the congregation in order to see this as a cornerstone philosophy for church ministry. Some of them will be embarrassed to admit that they have never been personally discipled before being put in leadership positions. Presently the situation is slowly being remedied by having systematic discipleship triad training in place, starting with the senior pastor, and including all other pastoral staff. Each pastor is required to participate and model this philosophy from the top down.

Second, another value is the importance of belonging to an age-graded fellowship group system. This system is very common and popular in most Chinese churches for body life function of caring and nurture, and has certainly served its purpose when the church size is small. However, as a congregation grows, there is definitely a need for a small group ministry. In such groups, small group leaders are trained to be undershepherds for home groups, where members’ spiritual needs and desires for community living can be met in more intimate settings.

Yet there is always a resistance to restructuring these mid-size fellowships into small groups. Part of the reason is probably to re-live the nostalgia of the good old days, when the church was small enough for all to be close-knit. But more worrisomely, the resistance may be due to an avoidance to practice vulnerability and accountability in community living. Persistent efforts are now being made to transition TCCC from a church with small groups to a church of small groups.

The third value that has also become an entrenched tradition is the liturgical style of worship. Unfortunately, this has alienated a lot of young people and has become a hindrance to reaching seekers. When the seeker-friendly and blended worship style was
first introduced after relocation into the new sanctuary, there were complaints from some old-timers, albeit a small minority, about all kinds of trivialities like the use of drums, the blocking of the center cross when the screen was lowered for video-projection, the choice of unfamiliar contemporary songs, and so on. The grumbling was endless. Some feared the danger of the church turning “charismatic” which would be a very sensitive issue within the Chinese evangelical church circle.

The worship pastor was initially quite discouraged. However, with my firm backing coupled with patient and gentle education, these staunch opponents were gradually won over. The uproar seems to have died down and the issue resolved, with more joyous participation in exuberant worship and singing, surprisingly even from the senior folks. The attendance of young people is also on the rise as they have also been given opportunities to serve with their musical talents.

The Deficiency in Leadership Development

For a number of years, there has been a growing phenomenon of difficulty finding people to serve in various capacities. Whether in Sunday school teaching, Fellowship Group committees, and deacons’ nomination, there are always the loud Macedonian calls unheeded and positions unfilled. Yet, the more we try to drag people by all kinds of luring gimmicks and making pleas in bulletin announcements, the tactics of recruiting volunteers just do not work. People seem to be scared of the high demands made, and many feel they are not sure of their spiritual gifts and are not adequately trained for the
job. Others have been hurt and disillusioned by interpersonal conflicts when they have been placed in mismatched roles.

In his book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren has popularized the metaphor of a baseball diamond as a spiritual growth pathway and church health model in which each congregant rounds the bases in the order of membership, maturity, ministry, and missions. Even though TCCC has already adopted this model of spiritual growth, yet in reality there is never a staff positioned in the third base position in order to monitor and mobilize the membership towards exercising their spiritual gifts for service in ministry. It is also important for existing leaders to determine whether potential leaders are truly “being” before “doing”; it is paramount to discern their spirituality through spiritual formation and their leadership potential, first in the discipleship triad and also in the small group leadership training. There is currently a push at TCCC to set up a core team for this “third base” in order to help congregants discover their spiritual gifts and be deployed in ministry. This initiative uses another model provided by Warren called “SHAPE.” SHAPE is the acronym for the five ingredients with which God shapes people for ministry: Spiritual gifts; Heart as passion; Abilities; Personality and Experiences.

As senior pastor, I myself will have to set my priorities straight first on the selection and development of leaders by giving more quality time to mentor and coach my pastoral team. They in turn are encouraged to take on a more equipping role to train others instead of just doing everything hands-on by themselves. The empowerment curve,

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5 Ibid., 370.
simplified in the following four stages -- I do, you watch; I do, you assist; you do, I assist; you do, I watch and bless you -- is given high publicity at TCCC as a paradigm for educating and developing leadership.\(^6\)

**The Low Quality and Immaturity of Leadership Character**

As mentioned above, there have been eroding standards of leadership at TCCC, not only in the declining willingness of nomination for deacons, but also in the ministry decisions of some who do not seem to conform to Christlike attitude and biblical values. Several situations have exemplified this in recent years.

The first situation took place during the church relocation project. Many decisions made by the Building Committee and the Board created much conflict and animosity, both internally as well as externally with ACEM (the church’s parent organization). These issues were mostly related to control and power. Thus the depth of spirituality and maturity of involved persons was revealed, as egos clashed and tempers flared with much wounded pride exposed. I for one would not claim myself to be immune from such crossfire, as I must have inflicted wounds on others as much as I also had become a casualty of personal attack and character assassination. Those were hideous days, but by God’s grace and in his timing, he has brought forgiveness and healing. Fortunately, there is balm in Gilead.

The second situation was related to the resignation of some pastoral staff due to incompetence and interpersonal conflict with some deacons. Unfortunately this pastor

had unwisely chosen to handle the procedures improperly under the disguise of medical illness. His resentment of the church management was expressed when he publicly circulated emails of false accusations of mistreatment, which caused much consternation and bickering among the leadership.

The third situation happened two years ago when some ex-inmates and drug addicts were successfully converted to Christ through prison ministry, and were rehabilitated and discipled to be baptized. However, a couple of leaders in the Board opposed their joining church membership for fear of these people posing a security risk to the congregation. They instigated others (those who wanted to keep the status quo) to sign petitions, in an attempt to stall the process. God miraculously turned the tide by having the Board take a strong stance of endorsement of the prison ministry. With repetitive urgings and patient education, those who originally opposed now have graciously accepted that reaching out to the outcasts was also part of Jesus’ mission and have concluded that believers today ought to follow his example.

The fourth situation was the non-compliance and refusal initially to adopt the “Alpha Course” when it was introduced as a viable tool for evangelism. Again, the fear was the danger of becoming “charismatic” with the course’s emphasis on the Holy Spirit. This perception only reflects the ignorance of the work of the Holy Spirit. It also reflects slowness in seeing the value of small group as the medium for experiencing truth in an increasingly postmodern milieu where people need to encounter caring and healing in a very tangible way. After much persuasion, the responsible pastoral staff yielded and was willing to give it a try.
The fifth situation corresponds to the planning of the impending Mandarin ministry. As there are more and more cries for help from Mandarin-speaking immigrants, with people literally showing up at the church’s doorstep, there is still a reluctance of a couple of pastors to catch this vision. Their rationale is that this will be a manpower- and resource-draining endeavor with many social needs to attend to in this people group. Their tithing ability is low and their turnover will be great as they are still unstable socially and financially. This view is too utilitarian, totally oblivious to Paul’s admonition to the Lord’s teaching: “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20: 35). Thankfully, the bulk of the pastoral team and the consensus of the Board are to adopt this move and plan for it to happen during the summer of 2007.

These symptoms from the above five scenarios are reflective of a less than desirable quality of leadership, and need to be tackled at their root causes. This process involves implementing changes in the leadership training by providing spiritual formation early on in the discipleship and small group settings. Otherwise, the side effects percolating down to the congregational level will be a decrease in morale; a suffocation of people’s desire to serve; and the compartmentalization of ministry instead of teamwork and synergism.

Erosion of the Concept of Commitment in the Emerging Generation

Traditionally, the “old faithfuls” show their loyalty to church by tithing regularly; volunteering to serve for a definite term, often renewable; some keeping their membership even after moving; and honoring their promises of fulfilling their duties in
general. Such congregants comprised the Church of the modern era, those belonging to the Baby Boomer generation.

Today’s Church, however, is filled with Gen Xers and Millennials of the postmodern era. The sense of commitment among these individuals is totally different from that of their predecessors. This is especially true in the English congregation. It is not that they are not committed, but their commitment is first and foremost to the Lord of the universal Church. With their very busy lifestyles, often mobile and changing jobs, they are the “e-generation” that is constantly connected through all kinds of electronic gadgets and the Internet. They prefer to help out in certain one-time projects rather than long-term commitments that might tie them down.

On the surface, it seems that they are not as zealous in living out their faith or serving the Lord. However, this is only a superficial judgment if “old-timers” are expecting them to follow their mold. On the contrary, these younger church members aim at being more incarnational if they can find the right cultural expression to embody their faith. Hence, Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger conclude the following in their book, *Emerging Churches*: “The emerging church is a quest for a more integrated and whole life of faith. There is a bit of theological questioning going on, focusing more on kingdom theology, the inner life, friendship/community, justice, earth keeping, inclusivity, and inspirational leadership. In addition, the arts are in a renaissance, as are the classical spiritual disciplines. Overall, it is a quest for a holistic spirituality” (italics mine).7

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7 Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 42, 45. Gibbs and Bolger outline the three
A case in point would be my own daughter, who has recently moved closer to the community where she volunteers in a community center and shelter for homeless people. This community center is also a worship place. She is a recent university graduate in photography, and is fond of using her artistic talent to hold art class for the drop-ins (including homeless individuals, street kids, and those struggling with mental illness). Initially, it was not easy for me to accept that the daughter of the senior pastor decided not to stay in her home church to serve. The question may be raised as to whether this is a sign of her losing commitment. But the truth of the matter is that she has found a niche for herself worthy of her commitment where meaningful holistic spirituality is being lived in a day-to-day, down-to-earth work-service-worship combination.

**Summary**

To conclude this chapter, it is fair to say that with the vision and stamina that God has empowered Dr. Kao as founder of TCCC and ACEM, he has established a strong base of church ministry and church planting to the ethnic Chinese in Toronto. However, such aggressive evangelism efforts need to be complemented with systematic pervasive discipleship training so that the fruits can last.

In addition, after over thirty-three years of history, there needs to be conscious efforts of renewal so that the church will not fall into the trap of traditionalism. This must start with the leadership in terms of more grounding in the practice of spiritual disciplines

primary trends of emerging churches as: 1) identify with the life of Jesus, 2) transform the secular realm, and 3) live highly communal lives. Because of these three activities, the next six trends are also present in emerging churches: 4) welcome the stranger, 5) serve with generosity, 6) participate as producers, 7) create as created beings, 8) lead as a body, and 9) take part in spiritual activities.
towards holistic expression of faith. Instead of the old-fashioned pressure tactic of coercing people to commit and serve, which will only backfire with diminishing return, there should be more cultivation of a grace-filled living in which faith and works, personal prayers and corporate praise, love and obedience are as natural as breathing. Young people should be given even wider latitude for their expressions of faith as they face the challenges of the postmodern culture.
CHAPTER 2

THE INADEQUATE LEADERSHIP FORMATION IN ETHNIC CHINESE IMMIGRANT CHURCHES

Natural Church Development Survey: the Need for Empowering Leadership

In May 20-21, 1999, TCCC sent a group of pastors and leaders to attend the Natural Church Development seminar by its founder Christian Schwarz.¹ This seminar provides a tool kit of evaluation to encourage churches to become islands of health. Its thrust is to avoid forcing a “manufactured growth,” but rather to release the biotic potential which God has already put inherently in each local church. The basis is taken from Mark 4:28 in the Parable of the Growing Seed where Jesus says: “All by itself (translated from automate) the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head.”²

The task of church leaders, therefore, is to minimize the obstacles to growth both inside and outside the church. Schwarz states that since churches have very little control over outside factors, they should concentrate on the removal of obstacles to growth and multiplication within churches. Then church growth can happen “all by itself.” The essential eight quality characteristics, or “biotic potentials” are: empowering leadership, gift-oriented ministry, passionate spirituality, functional structures, inspiring worship service, holistic small groups, need-oriented evangelism, and loving relationships.³

¹ Christian A. Schwarz and Christoph Schalk, Implementation Guide to Natural Church Development (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1998).

² Christian A. Schwarz, Paradigm Shift in the Church: How Natural Church Development Can Transform Theological Thinking (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1999), 235.

³ Schwarz and Schalk, Implementation Guide to Natural Church Development, 15-17.
In November 2000, TCCC enrolled in a Natural Church Development research survey which considered each of these eight quality characteristics, as well as the following: care for children, life-transforming preaching, a visitor-friendly atmosphere, and a God-centered, celebrative worship. This survey process involved the whole leadership team (including pastors and deacons) as well as asking congregants (those who attended a church particular prayer meeting), hence was considered comprehensive and representative. The resulting profile reflects a measurement based on a Canadian norm, which means that TCCC has been measured against the norm of other Canadian churches. The scores of this profile are not percentage scores, but are based on a mean of 50, with a standard deviation of 15 on either side. This means that the average score of all quality characteristics for an average church is 50, but it is common to see average quality indices between 35 and 65. The report may also be viewed as a bell curve, with 70% of all average indices falling within that range. Scores beyond 65 may be considered as extraordinary compared with the other average churches. The results of the “Eight Quality Characteristics” survey performed on TCCC are displayed in Figure 1.
Figure 1. “Eight Quality Characteristics” Survey at TCCC

![Bar Chart]

From the results, the two lowest score items are “Empowering Leadership” and “Inspiring Worship Service.” The next pair that also needs attention and improvement is “Passionate Spirituality” and “Holistic Small Groups.” In regard to the score of 40 for “Empowering Leadership,” some of the weaknesses noted included a lack of understanding of the meaning of true leadership; a lack of progressive and continuous leadership training for preparing and qualifying people for the different levels of authority; and a lack of strategic planning of logistics and mobilization.

These factors are intimately linked, affecting leadership formation. A foundational spiritual formation producing “Passionate Spirituality” and an “Inspiring Worship Service” will enhance training and practicum of apprentice disciples in “Holistic

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*Prepared by The Leadership Centre/Willow Creek Canada.*
Small Groups” resulting in “Empowering Leadership” formation. This is the goal of this ministry focus paper, but first the factors that cause leadership formation to be compromised will be explored.

The situation at TCCC may be quite typical of many overseas ethnic Chinese churches, especially in Canada and the United States. Many have their leadership made up of university graduates from the 1960s and 1970s who were converts through various campus student fellowship ministries, specifically the Chinese Christian Fellowship (CCF). Regardless of their denominational affiliations or labels, the church structure and polity are mostly the autonomous independent free-church style. There is often not enough consciousness of the continuity with the traditions and the rich heritage of the whole historic Christian Church. Hence the following are factors that might have contributed to the weak development of leadership formation.

**General Malaise of Biblical Illiteracy and Spiritual Indiscipline**

A survey conducted in TCCC on December 11, 2005 by the Christian Education Department during two Cantonese Sunday Services generated some worrisome statistics. This pertains only to the Chinese-speaking congregation, with an average Sunday attendance of 900. The number of filled forms returned was 444; hence the ratio of those who filled in the survey was 49.3%.

Out of the 444 forms completed and returned, 54.3% indicated that they had attended Sunday school within the last two years. Among these, 41.1% indicated they had daily devotion of reading the Bible and prayer, whereas the number rises to 51.0% if
those with devotion every other day are also included. However, among those who did not attend Sunday school in the last two years, those who maintain devotional time (whether daily or every other day) drops to 33.3%.

Other embarrassing numbers from the statistics show: 58.5% think Sunday school is boring; 14.6% think the Sunday school teaching is too rudimentary; 41.8% think the Sunday school teachers do not carry reasonable credentials or qualifications, and 19.1% think they do not need Sunday school because they are attending some other Bible-learning opportunities, like BSF (Bible Study Fellowship) or TEE (Theological Education by Extension) outside of TCCC. There are about 4% (35-40 out of 900) who had gone through a Paul/Timothy style one-on-one discipleship program.

Generally speaking, these statistics reflect a low interest in the spiritual disciplines and training as an athlete to have one’s faith well grounded in the Bible. Christians tend to see themselves as “believers” rather than as “disciples.” They think of discipleship as an elite experience for the few, not something that is necessary for their ongoing growth and sanctification. This is tied to the underlying phenomenon that most Christians had never been discipled. Even for those who have been discipled, they were merely cajoled or coerced through a program rather than mentored in a process, and thus leaders themselves have been unwilling to call people to discipleship.

Since this survey, the TCCC’s Christian Education Department has made efforts to remedy this situation by holding two separate campaigns. First, the Old Testament Reading Campaign (reading three chapters per day) took place in 2006. At the start of the program, 233 individuals enrolled and 78 completed the program. Secondly, the New
Testament Reading Campaign (reading two chapters per day) took place between January and July 2007. The program enrolled 210 individuals and 82 completed the program. The discipleship triad movement was also initiated on June 4, 2006. Currently, 123 people have been enrolled in 41 teams, and they are at various stages of the twelve- to eighteen-month process. There are some encouraging signs of momentum building as more people get interested in joining this discipleship triad movement.

**Ignorance and Negligence of Spiritual Formation Practices**

At the time of my conversion in the mid-1970s, the term “spiritual formation” was almost unheard of in Chinese church circles. There were “follow-up” practices, but the teachings and emphases were mostly on the need for a personal quiet time of daily Bible study and prayer. There was also encouragement to attend church services and Sunday school. Even more so, there was a lot of attention placed upon recruiting new converts for other forms of serving like joining the choir, helping with the children program, and the like. Yet there was relatively little mention on instruction or coaching regarding a discipleship life. Certainly it was rare to have a mentor or coach assigned to monitor the growth of any new Christian.

The Chinese Church, by and large, is the product of the Protestant missionary movements, thus it has inherited the view that many of the spiritual formation practices like solitude, meditation, contemplation, and fasting are the vestiges of the medieval Roman Catholic practices. These practices are viewed with suspicion, either as misleading to a doctrine of “salvation by works,” or worse still, regarded as bordering on
superstition. Any reading of books by Christian mystics or even contemporary contemplative theologians like Henri Nouwen is questioned and discouraged. This reflects a great deal of ignorance of the rich heritage of church history and entrenched prejudice towards Catholicism, as if everything Protestants believe as correct doctrine originated anew only after the Reformation period.

This is also compounded by the off-balance emphasis on serving and evangelizing to save souls as if this is the only worthwhile Christian duty. Even devotional books and training materials are heavily skewed towards a “doing” mentality; hence they guide readers toward a very utilitarian pragmatic approach to faith. There is a lot of weight put on the efficacy of Scriptures as the inerrant Word of God and the study of it. However so much is invested in the cognitive realm in terms of understanding the “what” and the “why” of the Bible that little attention is given to the “who” and the “how” of it. Therefore there is little affective reading of the Bible, in which one savors the intimate relationship with God as the author of the book; neither is there cultivation of how to hear his voice through the pages.

Most of the Chinese evangelical churches in Toronto are Calvinistic theologically, hence subscribing to the doctrine, “Once saved, always saved.” This has tremendous impact on how ministry is being run. In addition, there is a prevalent view that efforts to change this world are like the doomed failure of attempting to rescue the Titanic (the futile efforts of rearranging the deck chairs on this sinking boat). Thus, the view is that all endeavors of Christian ministry should be directed towards the rescue of as many souls as possible from the abyss of hell. Naturally, the efforts directed at discipleship and spiritual
discipline practices become minimized, and consequently there is also little talk about social concern and community rebuilding.

Dallas Willard, in his book *The Divine Conspiracy*, insightfully warns of this danger of such an extreme position of Calvinism as “a gospel of sin management” and “barcode Christianity.” Willard states:

The theology of Christian trinkets says there is something about the Christian that works like the bar code. Some ritual, some belief, or some association with a group affects God the way the bar code affects the scanner. Perhaps there has occurred a moment of mental assent to creed, or an association entered into with a church. God “scans” it, and forgiveness floods forth. An appropriate amount of righteousness is shifted from Christ’s account to our account in the bank of heaven, and all our debts are paid. We are accordingly, “saved.” Our guilt is erased. How could we not be Christians?5

Another reason stems from the fear of the “asceticism” and “salvation by works” doctrines allegedly promulgated by Roman Catholicism. The spiritual discipline practices are often regarded erroneously as in association with these wrong doctrines. Hence, Willard, in his book, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, explains “Here is where the Protestant reaction against asceticism comes in: it was a reaction against any essential role of spiritual disciplines in the process of redemption.”6 Willard further points out the danger of such position: “Protestantism continued that obsession. It precluded ‘works’ and Catholicism’s ecclesiastical sacraments as essential for salvation, but it continued to lack

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any adequate account of what human beings do to become, by the grace of God, the kind of people Jesus obviously calls them to be.\footnote{Ibid.}

It could be that Chinese Christians, in their overt effort to dissociate from their own cultural background of Buddhism, which emphasizes an “out-of-this world” monastic lifestyle, want to distance their faith from anything that might resemble a self-achievable sainthood through rigors and self-mortification. Unfortunately, this strict avoidance of a self-sufficient doctrine causes the Chinese Church to swing the pendulum too far to the other extreme. Salvation language has been reduced to “justification by faith” only. And the focus upon the rescue of souls to the kingdom of heaven neglects to emphasize sanctification as well as a life process of discipleship, which involve all the spiritual formation practices towards maturity and perfection.

**The Approach to Discipleship—A Program Instead of a Process**

The second distinctive of the ACEM organization is supposedly to develop churches with discipleship training. Throughout the history of TCCC, there have been several discipleship programs that have been adopted. However none of them lasted long enough to make an impact. This was mainly due to an over-reliance on the program rather than a process approach (in which mentors would be mandatory). If discipleship is a process, mentors are likened to guides along a journey. This is in contrast to discipleship being a program, in which “disciples” are like factory workers engaging in mass production on an assembly line.
Those leaders who were products of the Campus Chinese Christian Fellowships (CCFs) gained a slight advantage by having been exposed to varying degrees of programs promoted by organizations like Campus Crusade for Christ, Navigators, and the like. These programs involved matching young believers to more seasoned believers and nurturing these new believers for a period of time in a Bible study group. I myself was fortunate enough to be invited by my senior pastor to join him in many visitation ventures where I observed how he did personal evangelism. Certain ministry skills were picked up along the way through modeling and “learning by doing.” However, these modeling sessions mostly focused on the outward “doing” rather than the inward “being.” Thus, the many basics of the discipleship process of cultivating an intimate relationship with God through prayer, fasting, contemplation, spiritual reading, and so on, had, for the most part, not been discussed nor demonstrated.

This view is echoed by Rev. Dr. John Kao, founder and advisor of ACEM, my former senior pastor and mentor, who concurs that:

The topic of “spiritual formation” is rarely discussed in the Chinese church circle in the previous generations. Theological training under the influence of spiritual giants like Wang Ming-dao, John Sung and even Watchman Nee leaned more towards “doing” and serving with a zeal. The spiritual exercises of silence and solitude; meditation and contemplation were relatively neglected. In the development of TCCC and ACEM churches, the fast pace of church planting had zapped a lot of energy to the detriment of spiritual replenishment. If we had to do it again, the importance of spiritual formation should definitely be highlighted as a corrective.8

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8 John Kao, interview by author, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 18 July 2007. As President of ACCTE (Association of Canadian Chinese Theological Education) and CCSTTS (Canadian Chinese School of Theology at Tyndale Seminary, Canada), Dr. Kao is now championing this cause and personally teaches a course: “Spiritual Formation and Ministry.”
This shows a lot of grace and humility in a senior church statesman who demonstrates this kind of ongoing learning attitude and openness to correction.

The first time I was awakened to what had been missing in my own spiritual journey was when I took my first seminary course, “Discipling-evangelism as a Lifestyle,” taught by Dr. Robert Coleman, author of *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. Even though it was a two-week course, he took time to demonstrate the importance and sequence of Jesus’ method of modeling the discipleship process which consists of eight principles: selection, association, conservation, impartation, demonstration, delegation, supervision, and reproduction. It was then that I started forming habits of certain spiritual formation practices such as journaling, spiritual reading, solitude and silence, and the like.

Ogden, in his book, *Transforming Discipleship*, states that “Disciples are made in ‘iron sharpens iron’ intentional relationships.” Ogden also cautions: “programs can make it look like we are growing disciples, but that is more illusion than reality, and we know it.” He gives four characteristics of programs, that in and of themselves are not conducive to discipleship. First, programs tend to be information-and knowledge-based. Second, programs are the one preparing for the many. Third, programs are characterized

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11 Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 43.

12 Ibid., 43.
by regimentation or synchronization. Fourth, programs generally have low personal accountability.\(^\text{13}\)

Similarly, Willard, in his book, *Renovation of the Heart*, highlights the need to be process-oriented and thorough in bringing change. He advocates that the “heart” (or the “will” or the “spirit”) as the core of each person is where all the spiritual battles are fought over conflicting academic, scientific, artistic, religious, legal, and political viewpoints. He contends, “The human heart, will, or spirit is the executive center of a human life. The heart is where decisions and choices are made for the whole person. That is its function.”\(^\text{14}\) Wrapped in such multi-layered complexity, it is paramount to understand the heart’s function and the process whereby the whole person is being redeemed, from the inside out. There is no shortcut to this lifelong process nor can it be masked by conformity to some outward behavior pattern. Willard further delineates the six basic aspects of this human nature that need to be reshaped:

1. Thoughts (images, concepts, judgments, inferences)
2. Feeling (sensation, emotion)
3. Choice (will, decision, character)
4. Body (action, interaction with the physical world)
5. Social context (personal and structural relations to others)
6. Soul (the factor that integrates all of the above to form one life)\(^\text{15}\)

The purpose and process of spiritual formation are further depicted by Willard in his diagram which shows the whole picture (see Appendix 2).

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 43-46.


\(^{15}\) Ibid.
Hence, Willard concludes that “Spiritual formation in Christ is the process leading to that ideal end, and its result is love of God with all of the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and of the neighbor as oneself. The human self is then fully integrated under God” (italics mine). Again the importance of it being a process is being reiterated when Willard stresses: “The spirit must first come alive to and through God, of course. . . . But once the spirit comes alive in God, the lengthy processes of subduing all aspects of the self under God can begin. This is the process of spiritual formation viewed in its entirety” (italics mine).

If this emphasis on a comprehensive process approach is correct and mandatory, it is not evidenced in the current program-heavy style of discipleship in TCCC, and most Chinese churches for that matter. Much effort is expended on herding new believers to attend Sunday school. Once there, the curriculum is generally cognitively oriented and teaching occurs as a classroom-lecture method; little exercise is required for practicum, and certainly there are dismal results in terms of reproduction of disciples.

**Danger of Unbalanced Spirituality**

The Chinese culture prides itself on its balanced, holistic view of life. This can be reflected in many beliefs and proverbial sayings like, “Heaven and man become one,” the yin-yang philosophy, and the like. However, the Chinese Church does not seem to carry this kind of balance into its theology and ministry. On the contrary, there seems to be a

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16 Ibid., 31.

17 Ibid., 41.
lopsided leaning towards a highly verbalized version of faith, that is, a proclamational
type of Christianity, without the modifying effects of the contemplative internalization as
well as the permeating presence of loving deeds supportive of the message. This
proneness to the extremes can be classified as a lack of understanding in three categories:
theology, church history and, human personality.

Theology

First, an unbalanced spirituality is manifested in the area of theology. Although
there may be several doctrines that reflect a shallow understanding, the one that is most
crucial seems to be the one surrounding Trinity. This is attested by Simon Chan, a
Chinese theologian, well respected by his Western counterparts. In Chan’s book,

*Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life*, he asserts:

For a spirituality to be holistic it must be Trinitarian, at least implicitly.
Trinitarian spirituality is characterized by, first, form and stability and a
sacramental understanding of created things. Second, it seeks a personal
relationship with God through the person of Jesus Christ. Third, it is open to the
powerful workings of God the Spirit in signs and wonders as well as in “holy
familiarity.”

Traditionally, Chinese evangelical churches tend to elevate Jesus, the Son, in
order to highlight Christ’s deity as the only Savior, with relatively less attention given to
the Father and the Spirit (at least cognitively). This has caused a tremendous shift
towards a focus on evangelism, conversion, altar calls, and the preaching of the Word as
the means of salvation. Yet simultaneously, there might not be equal attention given to

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the humanity of Jesus to provide a balanced portrait of the effects and ramifications of his incarnation. Thus, his compassion, tolerance, mercy, and identification with the downtrodden are easily overlooked especially as they relate to social justice needs. Salvation is a more personal matter, rather than one that impacts social reform.

Again, with salvation being more personal than communal, the fatherhood of God is applied as the restoration of one’s individual relationship with him, likened to the prodigal coming home. The universal fatherhood dimension is not emphasized enough to encompass issues like human rights, social justice, and environmental concern, which stem from a greater appreciation of the concept of “This is My Father’s World.”

Of the three members of the godhead, the Holy Spirit is the one most neglected among Chinese evangelical churches. This is essentially an over-reaction to the charismatic movement. The sad result is an impoverishment of affection and fervor in worship as well as a lack of boldness in witnessing and experience in supernatural healing.

Church History

Second, an unbalanced spirituality is manifested in the inadequate understanding of church history. Richard Foster, in his book, *Streams of Living Water*, shows ably how the rich variety of traditions of spirituality throughout church history and representative
personalities can enrich one’s understanding of the ultimate objective of spiritual
formation, which is to imitate Christ.19

Foster first advocates the Imitation: the Divine Paradigm as the objective as well as the ultimate goal, that is, the imitation of Christ. Foster further outlines six great traditions. They are: The Contemplative Tradition: Discovering the Prayer-Filled Life; The Holiness Tradition: Discovering the Virtuous Life; The Charismatic Tradition: Discovering the Spirit-Empowered Life; The Social Justice Tradition: Discovering the Compassionate Life; The Evangelical Tradition: Discovering the Word-Centered Life; and The Incarnational Traditional: Discovering the Sacramental Life.

In a self-administered test in a Doctor of Ministry course that I had gone through, my own scores reflected a heavily skewed pattern of the Evangelical tradition background.20 Further, I discovered that I had been very ignorant of the Charismatic tradition due to repeated warnings by more senior church statesmen to avoid such heresy.

The test also brought to my attention my attraction to the Contemplative Tradition and the Incarnational Tradition, due to the never-ending amount of work in ministry that has led me dangerously close to burnout. Without the rhythmic cycle of solitude and ministry, there is such danger of busyness and activism that the Christian life becomes one of simply going through the motions, with no certainty that such work is really what God intended. It is so important that one’s ministry does not degenerate into workaholism,


20 Greg Ogden and Gareth Icenogle, “Historic Strands of Disciple-making,” Lecture from the course, CF765 “Growing a Disciple-making Congregation,” Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, August 1-12, 2005. The test was compiled from data taken from Richard Foster’s Streams of Living Water and expanded by Greg Ogden and Gareth Icenogle.
worse still legalism, with no example of Sabbath observance set for other leaders and the congregation.

Hence, there is a lot to learn for any church, regardless of its traditions, to widen its horizon and to deepen its understanding of what the Spirit has done and continues to do throughout church history. This is even more acute for the overseas Chinese Church, as it is spread all over the world in Diaspora, and is therefore immersed in a variety of contexts and cultures.

Personality

Third, an unbalanced spirituality is manifested in the area of personality study. M. Robert Mulholland, Jr., in his book, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*, introduces the value of Jungian psychology and the Myers-Briggs Personality Types as the basis for understanding various individual growth pathways as well as the importance of holistic balance. Mulholland explains the four pairs of personality preferences in terms of how they relate to others and the way they process data received from the surrounding world. They are: extraversion (E) and introversion (I); sensing (S) and intuition (N); thinking (T) and feeling (F); and judgment (J) and perception (P). These form a matrix of sixteen combinations, each with strengths and weaknesses.

People are prone to choosing activities and circumstances that are comfortable for their own personality preferences, hence developing a one-sided spirituality. Mulholland warns:

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The results of such one-sided spirituality can be devastating to our spiritual pilgrimage. The undernourished shadow side will, sooner or later, demand equal time. Not having any holistic spiritual patterns for its expression, it will usually manifest itself in “unspiritual” behaviors which are both antithetical to holistic spirituality and destructive to the spiritual activities of our preferred patterns.22

To ignore the nurture of one’s “shadow side” will ultimately bring disintegration resulting in a “shipwreck of faith” or a stagnation of growth. This is subtle and destructive as one maintains what appears to be a vital, lively, and growing spiritual pilgrimage, but is really a façade of having a “form of godliness without the power” (2 Timothy 3:5).23

Mulholland further likens such hypocrisy to the Thyatira church (Revelation 2:19) in that they seek to maintain an unholy mixture of faithful Christian discipleship and participation in the destructive brokenness of the world. Their lives develop two radically different compartments. In one compartment is their spiritual pilgrimage, in the other their indulgent and disobedient participation in the brokenness of the world.24

Not only do Mulholland’s appeals have benefit to personal holistic development, they also enhance harmony and unity in corporate spirituality development. This has both a mutually modulating and reciprocating effect:

We should ensure that our corporate spirituality nurtures persons holistically. The same holds true for small groups, which often stagnate in a pattern of spirituality that is comfortable for the members but restrictive to potential new members whose presence might be a much-needed gift of God’s grace to the group (italics mine).25

22 Ibid., 58, 62.
23 Ibid., 63.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., 72.
Insensitivity to the Changes and Challenges brought on by the Postmodern World

In the study of development of Christianity in the Western world, Darell L. Guder describes the formation of the “modern self” through the previous centuries of the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment until the “Modernity” era up to the last several decades.  

However, this seemingly rational, objective, and managed world of modernity has undergone deep, significant shifts in recent decades. It has shaken the foundations of society in the knowing and understanding of “what is real.” Guder refers to this as the “postmodern condition.”

Western civilization, due to technological advances and the effects of globalization, has moved into a postmodernist mindset and the traditional Christian Church, once dominant in society, is now marginalized. Three areas of the Enlightenment, including notions of truth, self, and society, have undergone significant changes.

The first major shift caused by postmodernism is that truth has become relative. Although the Christian Church needs to battle against such relativism and uphold the revelation of God through biblical faith and Jesus Christ as the ultimate absolute truth, there are ways in which postmodern thinking should challenge the Church’s expression to be more holistic and experiential. The second major shift caused by postmodernism is a decentered self. When God “died” in the equation of modernity, it was only a matter of

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27 Ibid., 37.
time before the modern self would also expire. The third major shift caused by postmodernism is a pluralist society. Globalization is now leading to multiple ethnic cultures and racial traditions living together in the same neighborhoods. New forms of community, shaped largely by media and consumer choices, are displacing many of the former structures of community. But they carry with them a major drawback: they often do not bring persons into face-to-face relationships. Many people today desperately search for a face-to-face community.

Although the crises are real and the challenges are great, Guder offers four distinct opportunities for the church:

1. Reemergence of spirituality—People are very secular, but they are often spiritual secularists.
2. Rediscovering the church’s identity as a social community in the midst of a broader national community of communities.
3. Reconciling power of the gospel in multicultural communities where violence associated with immigration policies and ethnic relations continue to grow.
4. Real future with rootedness in history—Postmodern persons tend to live in the present, a present that thrives on surfaces, images, and experiences. In this context, the church bears a gospel that is rooted in actual history, a gospel that takes seriously both consequence and contingency, and a gospel that offers a genuine hope for a real future.28

Subconscious Continuation of “Ghetto-mentality” of an Ethnic Church29

The Chinese Church follows the trend of the history of immigration in which the self-imposed segregation of the Chinese community infects the thinking of the community at large. Chinese people who live abroad (including Christians) tend to stick

28 Ibid., 44-45.

29 “Ghetto-mentality” refers to staying in one’s own comfort zone and hence, inadvertently isolating oneself from mainstream society.
together in the “China-town” syndrome where they are comfortable with their own language and culture. This is evidenced in the huge Asian/Oriental shopping malls where young adults both shop and “hang out.” Their social activities often center around their own circles as they often have difficulty integrating with the mainstream society. For example, those who own detached homes seldom socialize with their neighbors.

This group is often the parents or the first generation of a family that has migrated to North America, called “OBC” (Overseas-Born Chinese). They may have immigrated from mainland China, Hong Kong, or other parts of Southeast Asia to seek a better future for their children. Due to their background of being raised in a British colonial system, there is very little sense of patriotism or social involvement that would cause them to show interest in the political process. Their primary concern is for survival and to raise their young. Their sense of ownership of the community is also quite low. They still pay much attention to the news back home and often do not consider Canada (or the U.S.) as their adopted country. It is likened to the difference between driving a leased car and a purchased car: the leased car is their home in the West, while to others it is a car they have purchased.

These OBC individuals often think that their efforts are for their children, to give them a better future, and yet in this they put all the expectation on them that they will excel one day with good careers and social status. At the same time, parents are also over-protective of them, fearful of their adopting the liberal Western culture and lifestyle that are contrary to their cultural values. This phenomenon has created a lot of tension among the young due to identity confusion as well as the difficulty of sorting through this
maze of values and determining what to adopt and what to discard. Many have spoken of feeling like a “banana,” white on the inside and yellow on the outside.

In a ghetto mentality, the Church seems to be oblivious to the larger issues confronting the society like health-care, crime and safety in the neighborhood, education, unemployment and poverty, and the like. The result is that the younger generation, called “CBC” (Canadian-Born Chinese), feels that the Church is out of touch with society. Therefore it is understandable for them to feel alienated from the faith of their parents which they regard as being irrelevant to their daily living.

The OBC, who still carry their Confucian cultural background, also tend to be more hierarchical in terms of showing and demanding respect for structure and authority. On the other hand, their children, influenced by Western education, prefer more of a consensus-building process in decision making. This poses a lot of tension, not only in the home but in the church as well. This inevitably has a stifling effect on the development of future leaders. Indeed, many ethnic churches struggle with the depletion of young people and the next generation once they reach college/university years.

**Slowness in Empowering the Second-generation, English-speaking Leadership**

Tensions in Chinese Immigrant Family Dynamics: Parental Expectations of High Achievement and the Apparent Failures of Children

Recently, there was the world-shattering news of the Virginia Tech massacre on April 16, 2007 where an American student gunman of Korean descent killed thirty-two people on campus before killing himself. This tragedy exposed the struggle of many
immigrant families, in which parents often hold down multiple jobs to make ends meet, yet neglect the struggle of their children in adjusting to a different culture and language in a foreign land.

These parents might have given up a lot when they left their homeland, coming to this new country to try to give their children a future. Often the parents themselves did not have the chance of higher education, so they put high values on education, hoping that their children will get into prestigious colleges and universities. In addition, their wish is to lean towards the scientific and professional fields, thinking that these will supply high-paying jobs.

Many parents invest a lot of time and money in sending their children to all kinds of extra-curricular classes to learn music, math, computers, sports, ballet, scouts, and the like, just to give them more exposure. However this belongs only to the elite few upper/middle classes who can afford these activities. These parents are keen in discovering their children’s giftedness, but they seem to have already pre-conditioned their giftedness by pushing them into a certain mode conforming to their own values. By so doing, they put a lot of pressure on their children to perform.

However, their distorted value of success is focused upon making more money and climbing up the social scale. They also follow a narrow worldview and neglect a kingdom mindset, even if they are of Christian background. In this way, they discourage their children in choosing any arts-related field. This creates a lot of tension as some children are not scientifically inclined or they prefer to work with their hands; these children do not fit into their parents’ mold. Many aspire to venture into the fine arts,
performing arts, humanities, the social sciences, or political sciences, in order to serve God in those arenas. These are noble and legitimate goals, but are often met with discouraging remarks by their parents, making them feel rejected.

Parents who themselves are very hard-working, feel that they have done their part and expect their children to succeed. But they do not realize or sympathize with the high competition that is prevalent in most post-secondary education nowadays, where many students graduating with a bachelor’s degree often do not qualify for many jobs. They are forced to continue studying for masters or PhD degrees, not necessarily knowing why they do it. These “professional students” ended up putting more strain on family resources without producing, hence adding to the tensions.

The Chinese parents’ concept of education is to study hard and gain more information, not necessarily a broader approach of integration of the intellect and the affect and aesthetics. This means that if their children want to join a school band, the drama club, or the photography club, they would consider this as a waste of time and discourage them. There is also no room for going to technical schools or colleges; not getting into a university is in itself a shame and failure. All the pressure is for the children to achieve in white-collar jobs. There is no allowance for being tradespeople, as such a line of work is considered too menial.

This anomaly even spills over into some seminary and Bible school students who do not really have a clear call to ministry. They simply enroll in order to appear spiritual or to postpone their graduation. As such, they dilute the quality of the pool of students supposedly dedicating their lives to serve God full-time.
Empowering the Young Leaders

The result of this phenomenon is that the English-speaking second generation in the church often feels that they are second-class citizens. They feel they are rarely consulted and given little autonomy in ministry decisions. Some churches still continue to carry on interpretation from Chinese to English in their services. They feel their parents continue to run the church and do not regard them as partners even though they have already grown up, held down steady jobs, and are married as responsible adults. “Kids will always be kids,” their parents continue to say.

This kind of condescending attitude stifles their growth. If the tithing of the English congregation is not as much as the Chinese congregation, and if older generation blames this on the fact that “they have not grown up yet,” then they will forever stay in that infantile state. One of the English-speaking pastors at TCCC has recalled in conversation that his father took a very different approach, which he felt empowering.30 When he was only ten or eleven years old, his father, being a deacon of a Chinese church, already started encouraging him to take charge of his responsibility as he began to serve in his fellowship by admonishing him to one day grow up into a bona-fide church leader. He was deeply motivated by this to persevere in aspiring to serve God.

TCCC’s Pursuit of Empowering its Youth

Fortunately, TCCC has started integrating the English-speaking leadership into the Board and has given them fair representation. The church has sought to cultivate a

30 This pastor is Rev. Kinson Leung and he was interviewed by the author in Toronto, Ontario, Canada in August 2007.
partnership model in ministry as the Chinese-speaking leaders give a lot of autonomy to the English-speaking leaders for their decision-making. The Chinese-speaking leaders encourage the English-speaking worship to be customized in style and music for its target audience and outreach group. The worship consists of a lot of creativity in music, drama, dance, and the like. The Chinese-speaking leaders also encourage their way of social concern, including offering sandwiches to the homeless, involvement with food banks, free-tax clinics for low-income groups, and so on. In terms of missions, the English-speaking congregation has taken part in several short-term missions projects to the aboriginal reserves as well as to the urban poor. Both congregations jointly sent out home-grown missionaries to South Africa and China, in which one of the teams included a Caucasian couple nurtured in the church.

Due to outreach and also mixed marriages, TCCC is starting to see other ethnicities among the English-speaking congregation, including Filipino, Japanese, Sri Lankan, East Indian, black, white, Indonesian, Singaporean/Malaysians, and so on. In this way, the church is inching slowly towards becoming a multi-cultural church (at least superficially). Church leaders are open to the Spirit’s leading as they contemplate hiring non-Chinese pastoral staff so that they can broaden this model of ministering to different ethnic groups to mirror the ideals of God’s universal kingdom. In reciprocation, seeing the great influx of Mandarin-speaking immigrants from Mainland China, the English-speaking leadership is also supportive of the Board’s decision to start a new ministry to reach this target group.
CHAPTER 3

THE IMPORTANCE OF HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The word “holistic” has become increasingly popular over the last decade. It is an adjective relating to the word, “holism,” emphasizing the importance of the whole and the interdependence of its parts. The holistic approaches in fields such as medicine, education, architecture, community development, and the like have become quite commonplace, but the same commitment is yet to be seen in areas of spirituality and leadership. The quality of leadership is directly related to the degree of spiritual formation received. The various components of formation are essential and need to be balanced, but there should also be intentional integration so that the ultimate result is really growth in health and wholeness.

Borrowing the concepts presented by Michael Bischof in his book, *SouLeadership*, there are four essential components of formation that require attention. Bischof uses a mnemonic description created by author Philip Yancey to classify these four components. The first is Spiritual Formation—the directional mnemonic of “looking upward” to represent the leader’s vertical relationship with God. The second component is Emotional Formation—the directional mnemonic of “looking inward” to represent the leader’s inward reflection of gaining insights about how emotions function and relate to others. This is not meant to be self-centered or selfish, but a necessary step of self-understanding. The third component is Relational Formation—the directional mnemonic of “looking around” to represent the leader’s horizontal relationship with others in the process of
community building of transparency and authenticity. And the fourth component is Missional Formation—the directional mnemonic of “looking outward” to represent the leader’s focus of living out a life-transforming understanding of the gospel message.¹

Consequently, Bischof writes:

This missional formation flows out of a healthy and balanced understanding of one’s connection with God, the healing that takes place in one’s inner being as a result of the gospel, and the relationships that flow out of a life filled with God’s grace. It is imperative that leaders model an understanding of missional formation for all to see and understand.²

Word Studies of Holistic Concepts

The concept of wholeness is implicit in both the Old and New Testaments. The classical word is “shalom,” translated into the English word, “peace.” Often, peace is understood as the absence of conflict. People talk about “peace in the home,” “peace in the world,” or “giving peace a chance.” But the Hebraic understanding of “shalom” is far more than just the absence of conflict or strife.

“Shalom” is the presence of the goodness of God, and of goodness, completeness, and a restored relationship. When the Apostle Paul expands on this concept in the theme of reconciliation with God through Christ in 2 Corinthians 5, he is referring to attaining peace with God, peace with self, and then peace with others. Hence, it is a restored condition that affects every realm of existence. “Salvation is holistic in nature. For Jesus, being saved or reconciled to God involves far more than just the saving of your physical

¹ Bischof, SouLeadership, 25-31.
² Ibid., 31.
body or your soul – it involves all of you. God’s desire is for us to live in harmony with him – body, soul, spirit, mind, emotions – every inch of our being” (italics mine).³

Another word in the Bible that approximates the concept of wholeness is the word “holiness.” It means “to be set apart” or “to sanctify.”⁴ The Greek word most frequently translated as “holiness” is the one that carries ethical connotations: *hagios*. The related words are also significant: *hagiazo*—“make holy, consecrate, sanctify”; and *hagiasmas*—“holiness, consecration, sanctification.”⁵ Sanctification is the result of the manifestations of life produced by the Holy Spirit. In the high priestly prayer of Jesus before his departure, recorded in John 17, he uses the word five times to pray for the ultimate result of forming his disciples so that their holiness will bring glory to God. Paul expresses holiness as an inner separation that manifests itself in God-like character (Colossians 3:5-14), and Peter reiterates God’s call to holiness (1 Peter 1:15-16; 2:9-12).

Another word that relates to holism and holiness is the word “perfection.” A controversial term, some have argued that Jesus is putting unachievable demands on believers when he says: “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Misinterpretation of this verse has caused self-righteous pride on some and tremendous guilt on others. The word translated as “perfect” in the above passage is the Greek word “*telios,*” which signifies an undivided wholeness of people in their behavior. It is not the qualitative end-point of human effort, but the anticipation in time of

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⁵ Ibid.
wholeness in present-day living.\(^6\) Therefore, the “perfection” that Jesus teaches is a maturity, a completeness, or a wholeness that indicates a person is integrated in all of his or her parts. Kenneth S. Wuest’s translation renders Matthew 5:48: “Therefore, as for you, you shall be those who are complete in your character, even as your Father in heaven is complete in His being.”\(^7\)

**Biblical Patterns of Holistic Development**

1 Samuel 2:26 describes the growth of the prophet Samuel: “And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men.” This emphasizes holistic growth, specifically physical and emotional growth (stature), spiritual growth (favor with the Lord), and relational growth (favor with men). Remarkably similar to that pattern, the two verses that describe Jesus’ childhood development in Luke 2:40 and 52 also provide a holistic emphasis: “And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. . . . And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

Bischof sees some parallelism to his four components of formation:

His growth in favor with God represents spiritual formation. His growth in stature, or what some translations convey as “maturity,” can take into account an emotional formation. His growth in favor with men represents relational formation. His growth in wisdom can represent missional formation, among other

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\(^6\) Ibid., 65.

things, as his perspective clarified about his call to bring the kingdom and reign of
God to a lost world.”

Another passage central to understanding the holistic integration of living the
essence of the Ten Commandments is when the expert of the law poses this question to
Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and
with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Commenting on this verse,
Willard writes:

The salvation or deliverance of the believer in Christ is essentially holistic or
whole-life. . . A major part of understanding spiritual formation in the Christian
traditions is to follow closely the way the biblical writings repeatedly and
emphatically focus on the various essential dimensions of the human being and
their role in life as a whole (italics mine).9

Once again, there are parallels in Jesus’ command with the components of holistic
formation under consideration. Here, “heart” might represent formation in the spiritual,
“soul” represents formation in the emotional, both “strength” and “love your neighbor”
represent formation in the relational, and “mind” represents formation in the missional.

Of all human beings, Jesus is historically the only one who can truly embody a
holistic approach to living. Willard elaborates on this point:

Jesus’ enduring relevance is based on his historically proven ability to speak to, to
heal and empower the individual human condition. He matters because of what he
brought and what he still brings to ordinary human beings, living their ordinary
lives and coping daily with their surroundings. He promises wholeness for their

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8 Bischof, SouLeadership, 39.

9 Willard, Renovation of the Heart, 31.
lives. In sharing our weakness he gives us strength and imparts through his companionship a life that has the quality of eternity (italics mine).

In the Old Testament, David expresses his relationship with God through the various components of his heart, his soul and his body when he blurts out in praise in Psalm 16:7-9 (NRSV): “I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.”

Other New Testament passages also contain language reflecting how the various parts of one’s humanity make up the whole person. Ephesians 4:13 states the intended goal of the ministry of spiritual leaders: “Until we all reach unity in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, points out that sanctification is to cover the various parts of one’s being: “May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**Holistic Development Aims at Transformational Leadership**

In terms of transformational leadership, the priority of nurturing the “being” before the “doing” so that holistic integration is possible is further highlighted in these scriptural admonitions. Psalms 78:72 says: “And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.” Both integrity reflecting “being” and skills reflecting “doing” are important, but the missional aspect of doing ministry with

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competent skills must flow out naturally from a pure heart with integrity of character cultivated through such spiritual formation of a close intimate walk with God.

In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus’ invites those who feel burnt out in doing ministry, offering first God’s gracious acceptance and healing touch. This is best described by Eugene Peterson in his contemporary translation of the Bible in *The Message*:

> Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.11

Finally, the importance of holistic balance and development is evident from Paul’s stern warning to Timothy about the importance of the consistency of life and teaching as well as continual growth, as he writes in 1 Timothy 4:16: “Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both you and your hearers” (italics mine).

**Spiritual Formation**

The goal of spiritual formation and upward connectedness with God should be Christlikeness. The Apostle Paul boldly appeals to the Corinthian Christians: “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Yet this is not an easy process at all, likened in Galatians 4:19 to a childbirth experience requiring a lot of determination and perseverance: “My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of

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childbirth until Christ is formed in you.” The secret of success is a persistent gazing upon the Lord’s face through the medium of God’s revealed Scriptures with the aid of the Spirit to bring about real changes, hence transformational leadership. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:16-18:

But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

The whole of Scriptures is fulfilled in Christ. This is made clear by Jesus’ own explanation on the road of Emmaus to two distraught disciples after his resurrection:

“How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24:25-27).

Spiritual formation is thus accomplished essentially through the medium of the life-giving words of Christ which have become Scriptures and are being breathed by the Spirit to give life. “The Spirit gives life, the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and they are life” (John 6:63).

Definition of Spiritual Formation

Spiritual formation involves the dynamics of shaping the human spirit toward maturity and wholeness. Willard defines it as “the process by which the human spirit or
will is given a definite ‘form’ or character.”12 Peterson, in his book, *Subversive Spirituality*, emphasizes the interior aspects that ultimately affect the exterior:

Spirituality is the attention we give to our souls, to the invisible *interior* of our lives that is the core of our identity, these image-of-God souls that compose our uniqueness and glory. Spirituality is the concern we have for the invisibility that inheres in every visibility, for the *interior* that provides content to every exterior. It necessarily deals much with *innerness*, with silence, with solitude. It takes all matters of soul with uttermost seriousness.13

Marjorie Thompson, author of *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*, states that:

Scripturally speaking, the spiritual life is simply the increasing vitality and sway of God’s Spirit in us. It is a magnificent choreography of the Holy Spirit in the human spirit, moving us toward communion with both Creator and creation. . . . It has to do with God’s way of relating to us and our way of responding to God. . . . In Christ we are reshaped according to the pattern we were created to bear. This reshaping is the basic meaning of spiritual formation in the Christian tradition.14

**Contemporary Hindrances to Spiritual Formation**

There are four reasons cited by Bischof as contemporary hindrances to spiritual formation. The first is an increase in hurry and busyness, and the profusion of new technology and methodology which causes the jamming of time schedules with overwhelming activities. Believers ought to take heed of the Psalmist’s warning in Psalm 46:10 to “Be still and know that I am God.” The second reason is exaltation of

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knowledge and information. A myth of the twentieth-first century is that in this informational era, knowledge is everything and if anyone can master information at the fingertips of the digital technology, it is success. However Mulholland points out the pitfalls of such informational culture as exemplified in the way people read because it is too analytical, critical and judgmental. It is also characterized by a problem-solving mentality. The third reason is a prevalence of models and programs. The predominant pursuit of the North American mentality on success in marketing a one-size-fits-all method to the neglect of contextualization often causes church leaders to rush to the latest trend or fads. Leaders seek “success by association” with brand names that promise to enhance credibility and perceived significance in some Christian circles. Yet there is no shortcut to spiritual formation. The fourth and final reason is false spiritualities. A “false spirituality” is any belief or action that people believe will bring them closer to God, but in reality it is some misguided form of self-mortification. A common example would be “spiritual people do not play.” Instead of knowing the truth and experiencing Jesus’ promise of truly being liberated because the Son of God sets people free (John 8:32, 36), people rely on human strength of work-righteousness.15

Willard points out the fallacy of such distorted spirituality by quoting Lewis Chafer: “Overemphasis on the negative leaves the impression that spirituality is contrary to pleasure, liberty, and spontaneous expression.”16 Willard further elaborates: “Spirituality is not a pious pose. It is not a ‘Thou shalt not’; it is ‘Thou shalt.’ It is a

15 Bischof, SouLeadership, 80-84. Bischof references Mulholland, Shaped by the Word, 51-53.

serious thing to remove the element of relaxation and play from any life. We cannot be normal physically, mentally, or spiritually if we neglect this vital factor in human life. God has provided that our joy shall be full.\textsuperscript{17}

Spiritual formation is, in a sense, an education. Everybody is formed spiritually one way or the other. People have thought that spiritual formation is unique to only pastors, spiritual leaders, or people who choose a contemplative lifestyle. In reality, everyone goes through spiritual formation. It is a matter of whether you go through it positively or negatively as some people become life-affirming, like Mother Teresa, while others become life-destroying, like Adolf Hitler.\textsuperscript{18}

In conclusion, Christian spiritual formation has a distinct focus. The overlapping foci include: Jesus, the Scriptures, and spiritual disciplines. Spiritual formation is a process, not an instantaneous experience, although experiences may be part of the process. This process is highlighted by the constant activity of the Spirit on the individual: living by the Spirit; being led by the Spirit; bearing fruit of the Spirit; and walking in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 18, 22-23, 25). The outcome of such an ongoing spiritual formation process will enhance the other dimensions of emotional and relational formation which the next section will address.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{18} Bischof, \textit{SouLeadership}, 66.
Emotional Formation

Dealing with emotional issues is very much a part of spiritual formation, but formation in this area takes a person on an inward journey at a deeper level to discover more self-understanding. This is not an end in itself, but rather an effort to uncover root issues that short-circuit the energy and influence of a leader. These issues require healing in order to make the person whole again. Unfortunately, most ministry training tends to overlook or minimize this aspect, either due to stoic church traditions or ultra-conservative leanings, such that leaders are ill-prepared when they face crises. Leaders frequently have to face feelings like criticism, loneliness, fear of failure, bitterness, fear of rejection, and self-pity. However, facing up to the reality, even in personal crises, marital tensions, family problems, and ministry conflicts, all of these can lead into a process that opens up new opportunities for emotional formation.

Emotional formation is a process that begins with bringing the emotional parts of one’s being into consciousness and focus. This is also bringing issues that have been hidden in darkness out into the light. It is also a process of moving from the false self to the real self. This coming out of falsehood to become genuine and real is expressed in Ephesians 4:20-25:

You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.
Biblical and Theological Perspectives of Emotional Formation

In *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, Pastor Peter Scazzero calls emotional health “discipleship’s next frontier – the link between emotional health and spiritual maturity is a large, unexplored area of discipleship.”

Jesus freely expresses a wide spectrum of emotion with unashamed, unembarrassed freedom (see Appendix 3).

Emotional formation also has a lot to do with discovering one’s inner workings in terms of desires and motives. In Mark 7:20-23, Jesus disputes with the Pharisees and scribes on the concept of “cleanliness” when they accused Jesus’ disciples of not following the customs of washing hands before eating. Jesus retorts: “What comes out of a man is what makes him unclean. For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’”

It is important to realize that a lot of impure motives and evil desires originate from the heart, and leaders are not immune from such struggles of greed, immorality, envy, arrogance, and folly. For example, arrogance can be conveniently disguised as self-confidence or assertiveness. Leaders who have already gained some measure of outward success and recognition may be especially prone to justifying their attitude and behavior.

To discover the inner real self and discern our own motives, the process of reflection and self-examination is paramount. This can be more attainable by the practice of

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of solitude and silence. Ruth Haley Barton, in her book, *Invitation to Solitude and Silence*, uses the metaphor of the jar of river water settling to describe this emotional formation:

“I could not avoid the realization that I was the jar of river water all shaken up and the sediments that swirled inside the jar was the busyness, the emotions, the thoughts, the inner wrestlings I had not been able to control. It was a moment of self-discovery—which is where all good spiritual journey begins.”20

Commenting further on the value of formation after healing of our damaged emotions and faked self, Barton writes:

This self is smaller, in one sense, than the ego identity, because it does not need to be big in order to prove itself to the world. This self is truer, because it does not rely on image management to find acceptance in the world. This self is softer, because it does not rely on hardened defense structures to keep itself safe in the world. This self is freer, because it knows itself to be finally and ultimately held safely in a Love that is unchangeable and real.21

For emotional formation to occur, leaders often go through an experience called “the dark night of the soul,” a term coined by the sixteenth-century Spanish mystic, St. John of the Cross. This phrase means that God seems to be absent when the person goes through a trying period of spiritual dryness and emotional confusion, even a sense of abandonment and desperation. Christian psychiatrist Gerald May makes an insightful analysis and comparison of the theology of Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, summarizing the signs of the “night” as: 1) dryness and impotence in prayer and life; 2)


21 Ibid., 113.
lack of desire of the old ways; 3) a simple desire to love God. The value for emotional formation is that “the process of the spiritual life consists of an inward journey in which a person’s consciousness moves from the outer, sensory realm toward God at the inmost center. Prayer is the doorway through which one’s consciousness enters the castle, and the path along which it proceeds to the center.” May continues, “Since the night involves relinquishing attachments, it takes us beneath our denial into territory we are in the habit of avoiding.” After the process of purification enhancing the maturation of emotions, the ultimate goal of transformation can be achieved, bringing about three precious gifts for the human soul. First, the soul’s deepest desire is satisfied. Second, the delusion of separation from God and creation is dispelled. Third, the freedom of love and realization of union leads to active participation in God.

One biblical way of emotional formation is to learn to pray through the Psalms. The Psalms, poems and songs sung by the ancient Israelites, involve expressions of a whole spectrum of emotions of joy and sorrow, excitement and elation, confusion and bewilderment, disappointments, loneliness and depression, contrition and shame, dryness and abandonment, anger and indignation, betrayal and even the desire for revenge. The emotions of the psalmists also involve corporate feelings of national pride and shame, nostalgia in exile, as well as oppression while under God’s punishment.


23 Ibid., 53.

24 Ibid., 71.

25 Ibid., 74.
Philip Yancey says: “Because many psalms were written by Israel’s leaders, the book offers a unique behind-the-scenes view of a people’s emotional history. I know of no comparable collection of private reactions to ancient history.”26 Similarly, James Sire, in his book, Learning to Pray through the Psalms, confirms the whole gamut of emotions being covered and further encourages readers to express through prayers those emotions after feeling resonance with the emotions expressed in the Psalms.

What can we not say to God? Are we angry? Spill it out. Are we frustrated? Tell God about it. Let us make our case—whatever it is—before God. He alone is worthy to judge. He alone can take our muttering, sputtering, vitriolic words and make of them something worthy of his kingdom, if by no other means, by transforming our broken spirit, our corrupt will and our erring mind into something beautiful for him.27

Relational Formation

How people are formed emotionally rarely happens in a vacuum, but rather within interpersonal relationships. Therefore, the next important dimension of leadership formation is relational formation. Just as after the Fall, the first human couple not only became alienated from the Creator God, but also from one another. This first affected their emotions in that they took part in a “shame and blame game.” They experienced shame by noticing their nakedness and tried to cover up. Eve and Adam also took turns blaming others instead of owning up to their responsibilities, further alienating one another. The eventual curse caused them to be in a perpetually dynamic struggle of a

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26 Philip Yancey, The Bible Jesus Read (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 129.

27 James Sire, Learning to Pray through the Psalms (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 214.
love-hate relationship, a far cry from the original ideal of complementing one another in a “two become one flesh” harmony (Genesis 3:16). Jealousy, anger, and murder surfaced and occurred in the next generation among the first pair of siblings of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4).

Redemption in Jesus Christ reverses this downward spiral by rebuilding a new humanity where community centered in God’s rule is possible. Relational formation moves the person into a process of seeking others who can support, nurture, love, and care for one another in the midst of life’s crises and challenges on the journey towards wholeness. This relational formation is based on being deeply involved in authentic, transparent, and life-changing relationship with others.

The best terminology to describe the goal of relational formation is “community.” Gilbert Bilezikian strongly bases the argument in his book, *Community 101, Reclaiming the Local Church as Community of Oneness*, on the doctrine of the Trinity. God is presented as a Tri-unity of divine entities existing as Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is the eternal community of oneness from whom all other communities derive life and meaning. God values community supremely because all godhead members experience the dynamics and the synergy of three in one. Thus, when he creates in his image, he creates community. Scripture further teaches that, in this oneness, there is complete mutuality and equality (Genesis 1:27).²⁸

In Genesis 2:18, after creating man and having observed his interactions with the rest of creation, God says: “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper

²⁸ Gilbert Bilezikian, *Community 101: Reclaiming the Local Church as Community of Oneness* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 16-27.
suitable for him.” Of all the creation that God has repeatedly remarked as being good, it is only in regards to the human that his aloneness was considered “not good.” This is more than the institution of marriage, but also a manifesto of God’s desire for humans to live in community and enjoy the harmony and significance of unity in diversity, mirroring in his image the three-in-one community. Despite the loss of community after the Fall, the whole purpose of redemption history through Christ is the restoration of this community, first through the cross, and finally culminating in the blessed relationships in New Heavens and New Earth.

Besides echoing Bilezikian’s foundation of community on Trinitarian theology, Julie Gorman, in her book, Community that is Christian: A Handbook on Small Groups, also highlights Jesus model of community in his approach to ministry. In quoting L. Boff, she writes, “Jesus did not select the Twelve as founders of future churches. Jesus established the Twelve as a community; as messianic, eschatological church. The apostles are not to be understood first and foremost as individuals but precisely as the Twelve, as messianic community gathered around Jesus and his Spirit.”

The power of relational formation and maturity is manifested when the early Church was able to practice this love and oneness as recorded in Acts 2:44-47:

All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and good, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

In the New Testament epistles, there is a long list of fifty-one “one-another” passages of exhortation on how we should relate to one another in Christ. Gareth Weldon Icenogle emphasizes the importance of these in small group life:

This one-anothering ministry of Christians in small groups finds its identity and purpose through the setting of hearts and minds “on the things above” . . . They were to be advanced glimpses—although dim and obscured—of how heaven was to be. They were small beachheads, platoons of heaven’s army scattered over enemy territory, alien groups sent to occupy dark places as enlightened communities. The ecclesia were to reflect the heart of God among a heartless humanity. In each small group the eternal heart of God was to be formed as the heart of the group.30

Randy Frazee, in his book, The Connecting Church, names three obstacles preventing today’s church from being the intimate community that it is supposed to be: individualism, isolationism, and consumerism.31

**Missional Formation**

After spiritual formation of “looking upward,” emotional formation of “looking inward,” and relational formation of “looking around,” there must be the missional formation of the “looking outward,” or else the journey is not complete. Missional formation is the process whereby God focuses the leader’s heart, soul, passion, gifts, experiences, and energies to intersect with the mission of God. This ties in with the entrustment of the gospel and the Great Commission, and of participation in extending the kingdom of God.


Promoting missional formation requires a paradigm shift in many churches. The existing model in many churches is that “missions” is the department that handles missionary support and the decision on the budget. This assumes that “missionaries” are “someone else” who are being sent to a foreign land or urban place where the need is great. But being missional means educating every person to be a follower of Jesus, for the word “apostle” means “the sent ones.”

In the Old Testament, when Abraham was chosen, he was blessed in order to be a blessing to the peoples of all nations (Genesis 12:1-3). Despite the fallenness of humanity, God’s heart is to redeem people of all nations. Thus the psalmist proclaims in Psalm 67:2, “that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.”

The salvation history in the Old Testament begins in the Exodus, where God through Moses led the Israelites out of the bondage and slavery under Pharaoh into the Promised Land of Canaan. In the New Testament, Jesus takes on sin, death, and Satan to deliver sinners out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of light (Colossians 1:13). The new status of the Israelites is portrayed as “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). Peter, in referring to this verse, paints the missional role that believers are to fulfill: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9).

The whole of Jesus’ life is a model of missional formation when he cites in Luke 19:10: “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” In the last high-priestly prayer in John 17, he prays for the love and unity of a new people of God who
would be formed, fulfilled, and empowered as a new community created and sent by God.\textsuperscript{32}

Paul in his epistles repeatedly reminds his readers that as Christ’s followers, they are to be “men sent from God” (2 Corinthians 2:17b), “a letter sent from Christ” (2 Corinthians 3:3), and “ambassadors sent from Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20). Thus the “sentness” is a mindset regardless of whether there is a change of location. The clearest continuity and reproduction of mission was Jesus’ mandate to the disciples in John 20:21: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

\textbf{Missional Leadership in the Postmodern Context}

Reggie McNeal, in his book, \textit{The Present Future}, states:

The North American church is suffering from severe mission amnesia. It has forgotten why it exists . . . The need is not for a methodological fix. The need is for a missional fix. The appropriate response to the emerging world is a rebooting of missions, a radical obedience to an ancient command, a loss of self rather than self-preoccupation, concern about service and sacrifice rather than concern about style.\textsuperscript{33}

Alan Roxburgh borrowed the sociological term “\textit{communitas}” to express the challenge of missionary encounter with modernity:

\textit{Communitas} suggests the formation of a new peoplehood, the constitution of a new vision for being a group. The basis of recruitment is no longer status or role function but identity and belonging within a group that, in some clear ways, stands outside the mainstream of the culture. . . . A fitting image for this \textit{communitas} is the city on a hill that Jesus used to anticipate the new social reality


he was calling into being. . . . In this social reality, the core of identity has shifted from institutional to communal relationships. Instead of status, place, and law, there is the intersubjectivity of persons formed by a new center, Jesus Christ as the head of the *communitas*. 34

The key to the formation of such missional communities is their leadership. Roxburgh delineates several characteristics of missional leaders: “biblically and theologically astute; skilled in understanding the changes shaping North American society; and gifted with the courage and endurance to lead God’s people as missional communities.” 35

Robert Lewis, in his book, *The Church of Irresistible Influence*, uses Matthew 5:16: “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” as the motif of an “i2” vision, that is, a church of “irresistible influence.” Using the metaphor of a bridge, Lewis portrays:

The renewed congregation as a bridge over the troubled waters between an isolated church and a cynical culture. A bridge where credibility could be reestablished by God’s people before an increasingly skeptical and hostile world. A bridge where people would be drawn to cross over, rather than repelled. A bridge of proof, rather than hollow proclamation. A bridge of incarnation: the dynamic intersection of the divine and the human.” 36

Missional leadership integrates the holistic functioning of both spiritual leaders and congregations or missional communities they lead. It also integrates the church at its intersection between gospel and culture with the rule of God as manifested in his kingdom reign. Missional formation also contributes to holistic formation by addressing


the inadequacies of a reductionistic gospel. Where the Church has truncated the gospel and reduced it to a salve for sin and a secret password for a happy afterlife, missional thrust restores wholeness of the gospel message to what it truly is—the message and reality of the availability of life in the kingdom of God right now.

**Holistic Formation**

Perhaps one of the best demonstrations of a healthy, balanced combination of all four components of formation is exemplified by Doug Pagitt’s interpretative journal account of his church. In *Church Re-imagined*, Pagitt uses the experience of Solomon’s Porch Community Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota to illustrate an attempt of holistic formation. By organizing church activities to highlight one aspect of formation each day per week, they emphasize a weekly cyclic holistic formation. He cites:

Our efforts are built upon the assumption that we are able to imagine and create something of greater beauty and usefulness if we move away from speaking of spiritual life in dualistic tones, as if the spiritual part of a person is a separate component that can be worked on and developed in isolation from the rest of the person. . . . Instead [we] work with people as if there is no distinction between the spiritual, emotional, physical, social, professional, and private aspects of life. We hope the result of this vision of human formation will be a move toward a place where we focus on the holistic formation of people who are in harmony with God in all arenas of life, and who seek to live in the way of Jesus in every relationship, every situation, every moment.\(^{37}\)

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\(^{37}\) Doug Pagitt, *Church Re-imagined: The Spiritual Formation of People in Communities of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 19-21. Pagitt and his church leaders organize church activities highlighting one aspect each day to aim at holistic integration as follows: Spiritual formation through Worship (Sunday); through Physicality (Monday); through Dialogue (Tuesday); through Hospitality (Wednesday); through Belief (Thursday); through Creativity (Friday); and through Service (Saturday).
CHAPTER 4

SCRIPTURE AS ESSENTIAL FOR HOLISTIC LEADERSHIP FORMATION

The Christian Scriptures are the primary text for Christian spirituality. Christian spirituality is, in its entirety, rooted in and shaped by the scriptural text. Believers grow in accordance with the revealed Word implanted by the Spirit (1 Peter 1:23). In highlighting Scriptures as essential to holistic formation, Peterson asserts: “This Scripture text, in the course of revealing God, pulls us into the revelation and welcomes us as participants in it. What I want to call to attention to is that the Bible, all of it, is livable; it is the text for living our lives. It reveals a God-created, God-ordered, God-blessed world in which we find ourselves at home and whole” (italics mine).¹

Further using the metaphor of eating to describe the reading of Scriptures as essential for nourishing and forming of our lives, Peterson writes:

Holy Scripture nurtures the holy community as food nurtures the human body. Christians don’t simply learn or study or use Scripture; we assimilate it, take it into our lives in such a way that it gets metabolized into acts of love, cups of cold water, missions into all the world, healing and evangelism and justice in Jesus’ name, hands raised in adoration of the Father, feet washed in company with the Son.²

Indeed, if the goal of holistic formation is conforming to the image of Christ, 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 promises: “But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

¹ Peterson, Eat This Book, 15, 18.
² Ibid., 18.
Three biblical characters will be identified regarding how their lives were shaped by the Word of God in preparation for their leadership. They are Moses, Jesus, and Paul.

Engagement with Scriptures as Exemplified in Moses

In Moses’ case, there was no documented Scriptural antecedent in his lifetime. Even the first set of Scriptures, the Pentateuch, was penned by him after receiving revelation from God. So the notion of Moses’ life and leadership being shaped by Scripture has to be understood under the broader idea that “the Scripture” is the words of God. That his leadership influence was perceived as closely tied with the Word of God was attested to by Stephen in his speech before martyrdom in Acts 7:37-38: “This is that Moses who told the Israelites, ‘God will send you a prophet like me from your own people.’ He was in the assembly in the desert, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to us” (italics mine). Four examples illustrate the shaping influence of God’s Word that has pertinence in the holistic leadership formation of Moses.

First, the call of Moses in the encounter of the burning bush with the disclosure of God’s name becomes the key to understanding the nature and purpose of God’s ministry. Exodus 3:14 says: “God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” Hence, Ray S. Anderson, in his book, The Soul of Ministry: Forming Leaders for God’s People, explains the impact of these words upon Moses:
It is Moses who learns the content of the divine name through Yahweh’s encounter with the powers that hold his people in bondage. And it is Moses who expounds the inner mystery and meaning of that name through the formation of a people who are no longer merely the children of Israel (Jacob) but “children of God” . . . Yahweh is the theological beginning point for all concepts of the deity, for Yahweh is the God who breaks the “silence of the gods” and reveals a divine pathos in which both mercy and wrath are expressions of a love that is creative and redemptive. Yahweh is known as the God who sees, hears, and speaks.3

Anderson further elaborates the implications of encounter with God’s Word in defining what ministry truly is: “When we speak and act out of the authority of the church, we give others reason to think that God’s nature and character, as well as his will for persons, is embodied in our words and actions” (italics mine).4

Second, Exodus18:13-26 records that Moses’ father-in-law Jethro, seeing how Moses was overwhelmed and tired from judging the people’s cases, offered his advice on delegation and empowerment of other leaders. Exodus 18:19 likens Jethro’s words to being God’s advice to Moses: “[Jethro says,] Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people’s representative before God and bring their disputes to him.” Thus, Jethro, “the priest of Midian,” was God’s coach, sent to help Moses devise a structure of ministry and leadership development strategy that would reflect the character and nature of God.

In terms of leadership development, Icenogle explains:

Moses, as the primary redemptive leader, had to come to grips with the need to guide the people of God out from under their “kingly” expectations of leadership and into a new understanding of their “priestly” calling into mutual leadership and


4 Ibid., 7.
ministry. . . . Moses, however, grew up in the house of Pharaoh and suffered from the pharaonic complex of making the people dependent upon his own power and authority. Thus, he had to experience a personal transformation as a leader before he could lead the people into God’s way of more humanized community. . . . While Pharaoh’s leadership style was control and oppression, God’s leadership style was empowerment. God would first empower Moses. And then God would help Moses empower the people (italics mine).  

In terms of structuring small group ministry, Icenogle further elaborates: 

God’s pattern for empowerment of humanity is not in the building of hierarchical power structures but in the gathering of priestly circles of face-to-face communities. In the pyramid everything supports and points to the top. In the circle everyone faces each other. The pyramid suggests that humanity may lift itself to heaven. The circle suggests that God must come down to earth.  

Third, the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17 were God’s Word to the Israelites through Moses. Icenogle asserts that the Ten Commandments are the foundation of small group ministry. Quoting biblical theologian Paul Hanson, Icenogle explains that the Ten Commandments are the foundational “charter” for healthy covenant community that “embodies and immortalizes for all ages the essence of the covenant community ideal.”  

Icenogle also bolsters his argument by citing Louis Evans, Jr., who has written that the “foundation of the biblical small group movement” was the group of ten who kept the Law, the minyan, which emerged out of the leadership of Moses in

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6 Ibid., 101.  
proximity to the giving of the covenant Law. Icenogle formulates a summary of the Ten Commandments for small groups (see Appendix 4).

Fourth, the finest moment of Moses came in a dialogue with God in Exodus 32-34 after the Israelites sinned gravely in the idolatry of the golden calf. Moses interceded for the people in his great prayer in Exodus 32:31-32: “Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.” Later, when God threatened not to go up with the Israelites, Moses again pleaded for the presence and the glory of God, for which God restrained judgment by affirming in Exodus 33:19:

And the Lord said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name. . . . I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”

Thus God revealed his character once again to Moses in Exodus 34:6:

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ”The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”

Not only did Moses’ piety avert the national disaster of being wiped out, he also secured the reaffirmation of the covenant with God of his presence and glory, so much so that his own face became radiant with God’s glory because of his intimate encounter with God (Exodus 34:29-30).

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In summary, the engagement with Scriptures -- in Moses’ case, the Word and the presence of God -- brought about holistic formation for him to be a great leader in several ways. First, the word and presence of God led to his spiritual formation in that he experienced intimacy with God by speaking face-to-face as a friend (Exodus 33:11; Deuteronomy 34:10), and in that he was given the Word of God (the Ten Commandments) after spending forty days up on the mountain, beholding and reflecting God’s glory (Exodus 34:28-29). Secondly, the word and presence of God led to Moses’ emotional formation in that he shed his youthful impulsiveness, arrogance, and rage as a self-appointed deliverer in the killing of an Egyptian (Exodus 2:12). He became a broken man after forty years of life as a fugitive, and felt unworthy to be called by God at the burning bush experience. A remarkable transformation took place such that in Numbers 12:3, it was said that “Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.” Thirdly, the word and presence of God led to Moses’ relational formation in his ability to see others as gifted with the Spirit, gifts of prophecy, and zeal for God. For example, he modeled to his disciple Joshua a spirit of contentment rather than jealousy: “But Moses replied, ‘Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord’s people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!’” (Numbers 11:29). Fourthly, the word and presence of God led to Moses’ missional formation in that his leadership formation was ultimately outwardly focused. This was illustrated by his leading the people of God to leave the worldly bondage of Egypt and enter true worship of Yahweh by preparing to enter the promised land of Canaan. Moses was a model and
prototype of Christ, pointing others to Christ as a prophet and faithful servant of God’s household (Deuteronomy 18:18; Hebrews 3:3, 5).

**Engagement with Scriptures as Exemplified in Jesus**

As discussed in Chapter 3, the life of growth in Jesus himself is a paradigm of holistic development and formation. Luke 2:40, 52 summarized Jesus’ childhood in the following words: “And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. . . . And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” These verses encompass dimensions of physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and relational growth in a well-balanced fashion, all sustained by the grace of God.

Jesus’ holistic development was due to his active engagement and interaction with Scriptures. Even at an early age, this was evident in the incident when he disappeared from the family group after attending the Passover festival, causing his parents grave concern. Luke 2:46-47 reports: “After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.”

No doubt, he must have been in deep discussion with these religious scholars on the interpretation of Scripture and matters of faith. The result of such healthy balanced development culminates towards a missional understanding of himself as he expressed that enigmatic statement in Luke 2:49, “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” Jesus’ consciousness of his identity and mission in life for the Father’s cause
carried into his adult public ministry, evident when he cleansed the temple in John 2:16-17: “To those who sold doves he said, ‘Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!’ His disciples remembered that it is written: ‘Zeal for your house will consume me.’” These words recalled by the disciples come from Psalm 69:9, and this connection also reveals Jesus’ understanding of his life destiny being shaped by the Scriptures.

The Spiritual Disciplines of Jesus

The gospels illustrate the common practice of several spiritual disciplines by Jesus. Matthew 4:2 records Jesus fasting. Luke 5:16, among other passages, describes Jesus praying. The practice of solitude (in combination with prayer) is described as taking place in the wilderness (Mark 1:35-39; Luke 5:16), and in the hills and mountains (Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:46; Luke 6:12, 9:28, 22:39-40). Jesus engaged in public worship in Luke 4:16. He memorized, studied, and used Scripture (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10; Luke 4:17-19). Jesus also showed the discipline of discernment in the calling of disciples (Luke 6:12-16). The above practices reflect that Jesus’ engagement with Scriptures was not just a cognitive or intellectual exercise, but that he allowed contemplation and meditation to soak into his inner being so that his ministry would become a natural outflow of a constantly renewed life.

The Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew 5-7, represents a balanced spirituality reflecting a dynamic pattern of inner rhythm of intimacy with God and outer
rhythm of “diakaiosune-the kingdom righteousness” as the character of God. 9 Yet this spirituality is not just cloistered as some form of private devotion, but manifested in Jesus’ public ministry of healing the sick, casting out demons, delivering the oppressed, and implementing a social dimension of compassionate acts and justice. This was the mission of a holistic gospel that he came to present and demonstrate (Luke 4:18-19; Matthew 9:35-38). Jesus’ indictment of the religious hypocrisy of his day (Matthew 23:1-39) and his challenge for social justice (Matthew 25:31-46) were reminiscent of the teachings of the Old Testament prophets reflecting his conscious engagement, processing, and internalization of Scriptures into his own life and ministry (Isaiah 58:6-7; Jeremiah 22:15-17; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8).

Jesus’ Holistic Leadership Formation and Mission as Evidence of a Process of Shaping by Scriptures

The Temptation of Jesus

Jesus’ temptation by Satan in the wilderness after his baptism is one incident that reveals his deep knowledge of the Scripture. In the Matthean account (Matthew 4:1-11), the first temptation involved Jesus being asked to turn the stones into bread after fasting forty days and nights. Jesus countered by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3: “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” The second temptation involved being urged to make a spectacular jump from the top of the temple. Jesus retorted by quoting Deuteronomy 6:16: “It is also written: ‘Do not put

9 Willard, The Divine Conspiracy, 144.
the Lord your God to the test.’” The third temptation involved the devil offering the
kingdoms of the world in exchange for his worship. Again, Jesus successfully rebuked
the enemy by quoting Deuteronomy 6:13: “Away from me, Satan! For it is written:
‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

The key to Jesus success in spiritual warfare was that three times he based his
authority on God’s Word by saying, “It is written” and quoting Deuteronomy, an Old
Testament book highly reflective of the Israelites’ wilderness experience, testing their
trust on the provision and guidance of God expecting their allegiance to him. There is a
high probability that Deuteronomy was a Scripture that Jesus had memorized and
meditated upon. Thus, this was the way he was putting his spiritual disciplines into
practice, by fasting and praying in solitude in a wilderness setting, a most appropriate
context of achieving resonance and drawing strength from the ancient promises of God.
This also demonstrates how one’s “inner being” flows naturally into “outer doing” in this
hostile world of evil forces. Engagement with the Scripture that is fleshed out
uncompromisingly is the victorious way.

Henri Nouwen, in his book, In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian
Leadership, develops three principles of spiritual leadership using this story of Jesus’
temptation in the wilderness coupled with the account of Jesus’ re-commissioning of
Peter to shepherd his flock.10 The first principle of leadership is to move from relevance
to prayer. Nouwen explains that Jesus’ first temptation was to be relevant: to turn stones
into bread. Nouwen elaborates:

10 Henri J.M. Nouwen, In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership (New York: The
Crossroad Publishing Co., 1989)
One of the main sufferings experienced in the ministry is that of low self-esteem. The leaders of the future will be those who dare to claim their irrelevance in the contemporary world as a divine vocation that allows them to enter into deep solidarity with the anguish underlying all the glitter of success, and to bring the light of Jesus there.\textsuperscript{11}

The remedy Nouwen offers is to be a mystic whose identity is deeply rooted in God’s first love. By that he means to cultivate the discipline of contemplative prayer:

Contemplative prayer deepens in us the knowledge that we are already free, that we have already found a place to dwell, that we already belong to God, even though everything and everyone around us keep suggesting the opposite. . . . Christian leaders have to learn to listen again and again to the voice of love and to find there the wisdom and courage to address whatever issues presents itself to them. . . . For Christian leadership to be truly fruitful in the future, a movement from the moral to the mystical is required.\textsuperscript{12}

The second principle of leadership is to move from popularity to ministry. The second temptation to which Jesus was exposed was precisely the temptation to do something spectacular, something that could win him great applause. Nouwen, in reflecting on his own experience of resigning from his position as a university professor and public lecturer in order to serve among the handicapped, recalls his past:

I came to see that I had lived most of my life as a tightrope artist trying to walk on a high, thin cable from one tower to the other, always waiting for the applause when I had not fallen off and broken my leg. . . . But Jesus refused to be a stunt man. He did not come to prove himself. He did not come to walk on hot coals, swallow fire, or put his hand in the lion’s mouth to demonstrate that he had something worthwhile to say. . . . Stardom and individual heroism, which are such obvious aspects of our competitive society, are not at all alien to the church.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 31, 33, 35.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 43, 45, 47.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 55-56.
In counteracting this temptation, Nouwen suggests that believers need to cultivate vulnerability because ministry is not only a communal experience, but also a mutual experience. Instead of wearing a “professional” cloak, Christian leaders need to be like shepherds who are willing to lay down their lives. Hence, Nouwen proposes the discipline of confession and forgiveness: “What it means is that ministers and priests are also called to be full members of their communities, are accountable to them and need their affection and support, and are called to minister with their whole being, including their wounded selves” (italics mine).14

The third principle of leadership formation is to move from leading to being led. The third temptation of Jesus reveals that: “One of the greatest ironies of the history of Christianity is that its leaders constantly gave in to the temptation of power . . . Much Christian leadership is exercised by people who do not know how to develop healthy, intimate relationships and have opted for power and control instead.”15

To overcome this, Jesus has a different vision of maturity. It is the ability and willingness to be led where one would rather not go. Nouwen then proposes the discipline of strenuous theological reflection:

Just as prayer keeps us connected with the first love and just as confession and forgiveness keep our ministry communal and mutual, so strenuous theological reflection will allow us to discern critically where we are being led. . . . We are led to the cross and through the cross to the resurrection (italics mine).16

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14 Ibid., 67-69.
15 Ibid., 76-79.
16 Ibid., 85-87.
That this kind of formation is the direct result of engagement with Scriptures is attested to by Nouwen:

In short, they have to say no to the secular world and proclaim in unambiguous terms that the *incarnation of God’s Word*. This is a hard discipline, since God’s presence is often a hidden presence, a presence that needs to be discovered. The loud, boisterous noises of the world make us deaf to the soft, gentle, and loving *voice of God* (italics mine).17

Thus, Nouwen’s thoughts bring a fitting conclusion to the importance of holistic formation by the Scriptures as exemplified in Jesus Christ: “This cannot be just an intellectual training. It requires a deep spiritual formation involving the whole person—*body, mind, and heart*” (italics mine).18

The Manifesto of Jesus’ First Sermon

A second incident that reflects Jesus’ understanding of the Scriptures and the impact of this upon his holistic mission is the inaugural sermon of Jesus in the beginning of his ministry. Luke 4:16-21 records that Jesus preached his first sermon by appropriating the Scriptures in Isaiah 61:1-2 to himself. In claiming that the Spirit anointed him, the dynamic interaction of Word and Spirit is thus highlighted. The result is a holistic mission of five-fold coverage of needs of body, soul, and spirit—“good news to the poor; freedom for the prisoners; recovery of sight for the blind; release for the oppressed; and proclaiming the year of the Lord’s favor.”

17 Ibid., 88-90.
18 Ibid., 90.
The Post-resurrection Message of Jesus

A third incident also reveals Jesus’ deep understanding of Scripture. In Luke 24:25-27, the Master Teacher, disguised as a stranger, taught about his resurrection from Scriptures to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Luke records: “He said to them, ‘How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?’ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” Later, Luke writes that “their eyes were opened and they recognized the risen Lord” when Jesus broke bread and gave thanks in a shared meal (Luke 24:31). The power of combined synergism of Scriptures and sacrament for spiritual formation was confirmed when “they asked each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?’” (Luke 24:32). Jesus’ understanding and engagement with the Scriptures resulted in opening of spiritual eyesight and warmed hearts for others.

Engagement with Scriptures as Exemplified in Paul

The Apostle Paul had always been a zealous Jew, a diligent student of the Law, and he was well-versed in Scriptures under the strict training of the Gamaliel school (Acts 22:3). Yet all these human and religious achievements would only further alienate him from Christians, and set the stage for him to become the enemy of God and persecutor of the Church. He presents his “credentials” in Philippians 3:4-6: “If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcision on the
eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.” But he renounces his past pride in them as confidence in the flesh, asserting: “But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ” (Philippians 3:7).

On the Damascus Road encounter with the risen Lord, Paul experienced a radical revision of his understanding of the Scripture and the law. In Galatians 1:17-18, he recounted his retreat to the Arabian wilderness where he grappled with the Scriptures and was given a fresh understanding of who Jesus was and the essence of the gospel. No doubt, through his reflection, God had purified his understanding and given him a new theological framework so that he truly grasped the genuine gospel of Jesus Christ. Hence with this revitalized engagement of the Scriptures, he could declare in 2 Corinthians 5:16: “So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though once we regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.” There is now a new synergism of understanding Jesus and the Scriptures through the Spirit.

Besides radically altering his view towards Christ, the Spirit also imprinted upon him a new understanding of the Law and the Scriptures in their purposes for ministry and mission. The best example to illustrate this is in 2 Corinthians 3:1-18, where Paul compares and contrasts the Mosaic covenant with the new covenant. Regarding the role of the Scriptures in leadership formation, three themes are relevant from this text. First, the converts of one’s ministry are his or her “letters of recommendation,” written by the Spirit, sent from Christ as evidence of one’s integrity and labor. Secondly, believers
become competent as ministers of this new covenant, relying on God, according to the spirit of the law, not the letter of the law. And thirdly, this new covenant of Christ supersedes the Mosaic covenant (see Appendix 5).

In an article titled, “Beyond the Things that Are Written? St Paul’s Use of Scriptures,” written by Morna D. Hooker, the author explores the implication of this exegesis: “2 Corinthians 3-4 is an important passage, not simply because it is an interesting example of Pauline exegesis, but because in its central section it raises the question of the role of scripture . . . when scripture provides him with primary witness to Christ.”19 Then Hooker goes on to show that for Paul, the essence of the Scripture is not only its fulfillment in Christ, but that engagement with Scripture is also an active dynamic process of being changed by it: “In 2 Corinthians 3, Paul has moved beyond the idea of Christ as the passive content of scripture, to seeing him as the active agent; he is the Lord, whose glory is reflected in scripture; he is the life-giving Spirit, the one who writes in men’s hearts the truth to which scripture bears witness.”20 Thus, Hooker concludes the value of engagement with the Scriptures for transformation:

Paul’s interpretation of 2 Corinthians 3 is a classic example of genuine theological dialectic. He brings to the text the perspective of faith which [he] had learned to hope in Christ . . . Like Paul, we need to learn from the text all that it can teach us, but we need to bring to the text our own experience of the ongoing activity of God. Only in this way can the dialogue continue.21

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20 Ibid., 305-307.

21 Ibid., 307-308.
Another example of how Paul’s life and ministry were shaped through the Scriptures is provided in an article by David P. Moessner titled, “Paul and the Pattern of the Prophet like Moses in Acts.”

Moessner exegetes Acts 7, the account of Stephen’s martyrdom, which occurs in the context of Paul’s calling and journey to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. Comparing Paul’s experience here with Jesus’ rejection as described in the Gospels, Moessner puts forth his thesis: “In this way we shall show that Luke has carefully crafted his story in Acts in presenting the careers of Stephen and Paul as the culmination of Israel’s rejection of Jesus, the prophet like Moses, whose fate brings the long history of Israel’s obduracy to its fulfillment.”

Hence, Moessner concludes: “In this dynamic of the Deuteronomistic perspective of Israel’s history Luke closes his history with the new Exodus salvation, the ‘glory of Israel,’ brought by the prophet like Moses and extended as ‘light to the Gentiles’ ‘in the presence of all peoples’ (Luke 2:31-32) by the prophets like Moses, Stephen and Paul.”

Each servant of Christ, in one’s journey of leadership formation, needs to be shaped by Scriptures to be patterned after Christ. Though the degree of rejection may vary, and not everyone is called to martyrdom, yet the spirit of dedication to be like Stephen and Paul, patterned after the prophet like Moses, is expected, as exhorted in 1 Peter 2:21: “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps (italics mine).”

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23 Ibid., 203.

24 Ibid., 212.
CHAPTER 5

THE VALUES OF BIBLICAL MODELS
OF DISCIPLESHIP, MENTORING AND SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP

Discipleship

Wilkins defines discipleship as: “the ongoing process of growth as a believer learns how to become like Jesus in every area of life. Discipling implies a responsibility to help one another grow in the imitation of Jesus.”¹ Ogden states: “Discipling is an intentional relationship in which we walk alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ. This includes equipping the disciple to teach others as well.”²

James G. Samra, in his article, A Biblical View of Discipleship, further heightens the holistic sense of discipleship:

Since a holistic sense of “disciple” seems to be intended as the ideal in the Gospels, so that Jesus’ disciples were becoming so much like Him that they were identified with Him, a holistic sense of discipleship is necessary to encompass all the New Testament’s material on discipleship. Discipleship involves both becoming a disciple and being a disciple. At times the focus is on the entrance into the process (evangelism), but most often the focus is on growing in the process (maturity); it includes both teaching and life transformation. It is a general call for everyone and also an intense process for a select few. Therefore it is best to think of discipleship as the process of becoming like Christ (italics mine).³

¹ Wilkins, In His Image, 55.
² Ogden, Transforming Discipleship, 129.
Mentoring

Paul Stanley and Robert Clinton define mentoring as “a relational experience in which one person empowers another by sharing God-given resources.” In expanding on the aspect of empowerment, they further clarify the definition as follows:

Mentoring is a relational process in which a mentor, who knows or has experienced something, transfers that something (resources of wisdom, information, experience, confidence, insight, relationships, status, etc.) to a mentoree, at an appropriate time and manner, so that it facilitates development or empowerment.

They further subdivide eight mentoring types/functions under three categories (see Appendix 6). Each mentoring type is also paired with a “central thrust of empowerment.” (This is explained as a continuum: the higher on the list, the more deliberate in involvement; the lower on the list, the less deliberate.)

Although the concepts of discipling and mentoring overlap significantly, the third concept of spiritual friendship is also important. Spiritual friendship modulates the discipling/mentoring relationship so as to take away the hierarchical assumption and add an egalitarian flavor. Such an emphasis epitomizes that discipler and disciple are but fellow-sojourners supporting one another in this growth process.

Spiritual Friendship

Michael Foss, in his book, *Power Surge*, explains “Spiritual Friendship” as one of the six marks of discipleship:

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5 Ibid., 40.
I believe that the Protestant church has failed to create an environment in which spiritual growth is both expected and nurtured. Where growth is not expected, it rarely happens. Where it is not nourished, it is stunted... such growth is best nurtured through *spiritual friendships* and mutual accountability around our common commitment to the marks of discipleship... We are about the business of spiritual formation and have discovered that it is in interpersonal, caring relationships between committed disciples that real growth takes place. Disciples covet such *spiritual friendships* and relish in the accountability they bring to the practice of discipleship (italics mine).\(^6\)

Five pairs of relationships in the Bible will be discussed, from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. These relationship pairs will exemplify the many different aspects of discipleship, mentoring and spiritual friendships that help to consolidate the development of leadership selection, formation, and transition, often based on a strong common underlying principle of reverence and obedience to God’s Word. The pairs are Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Jesus and the Twelve, Barnabas and Paul, and Paul and Timothy.

**Moses and Joshua**

The Bible refers to Joshua as Moses’ aide or servant (Exodus 24:13; 33:11; Numbers 11:28; Joshua 1:1), even from his youth. Joshua served with Moses, accompanying him on the mountain and leading in his place (Joshua 17:8) and on his behalf (Numbers 32:28). Moses commissioned Joshua in the sight of the people and gave him authority from God (Numbers 27:18-23). Moses taught Joshua lessons Moses himself had learned from God (Deuteronomy 3:21; 31:7-8). Moses rebuked Joshua for

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narrow-minded thinking (Numbers 11:28-29; cf. Mark 9:38-41) and gave him a spirit of wisdom (Deuteronomy 34:9). Moses was instructed to strengthen and encourage Joshua (Deuteronomy 1:38; 3:28), both giving and teaching him the Law in order to make Joshua the leader he needed to be (Joshua 1:7). “Just as the Lord had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord had commanded Moses” (Joshua 11:15). In another words, Joshua’s life and ministry was shaped by the Word of God just as Moses was shaped by the same, and Moses set the example for Joshua.  

Robert Clinton delineates ten steps that give insight into why the transition from Moses to Joshua was successful (see Appendix 7).

In the recognition of a leader, modern practice often attaches some significance to the ordination ceremony with the laying on of hands. Keith Mattingly, in an article entitled The Significance of Joshua’s Reception of the Laying On of Hands in Numbers 27:12-23, reports that Jewish exegetes and Pentateuchal critical scholars have often adopted the view that ordination was performed for the first time when Moses ordained Joshua with the laying on of hands and that Joshua’s installation by Moses became the prototype of rabbinic ordination. Through detailed exegesis and meticulous word studies, Mattingly focuses on the four key action words of “lay,” “stand,” “command,” and “give” in the Numbers 27:12-23 passage. He explains how all have connotation and relevance to the Word of God empowering Joshua to a leadership that not only equipped him with an indomitable and courageous spirit, but also endowed him with the Spirit of YHWH. The

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7 Samra, A Biblical View of Discipleship, 227.
authority that came with the appropriating of God’s Word, accompanied with the
obedience of the congregation, is once again underscored as Mattingly summarizes:

Numbers 27:12-23 concludes by drawing attention to Moses’ hand in a different
fashion. Joshua’s installation took place “just as YHWH spoke by the hand of
Moses” (Numbers 27:23). Two important concepts are placed in juxtaposition
with each other, the “word” of YHWH with the “hand” of Moses . . . the “word”
of God denotes the acts of God’s revelation as embodying and charged with all
the characteristics of God. In and by the word, God acts, conveys, and
communicates himself . . . And when YHWH’s word comes, it possesses creative
power and effects what it signifies, for “when YHWH posits the word-thing,
nothing can prevent its emergence . . . By placing Moses’ “hand” in juxtaposition
with YHWH’s “word,” Numbers 27:23 makes a significant statement about
Moses’ hand. His hand became a visible representation of YHWH’s
communication and of YHWH’s power . . . Moses’ act of laying his hands on
Joshua became a visible enactment of the “word” of YHWH with all of its
attendant concepts of power and ability to create and effect what it signifies.8

In a sequel to his article, “Joshua’s Reception of the Laying on of Hands, Part 2:
Deuteronomy 34:9 and Conclusion,” Mattingly continues to enumerate the benefits of
such symbolic empowering of Joshua being filled with the Spirit of wisdom for
leadership. This sequence of formation from the more personal spiritual and emotional
aspects culminating to the more corporate relational and missional aspects is influenced
by the Word of God. This is evidenced in the way Mattingly develops his argument:

In listening to Joshua, Israel was listening to Moses, who had listened to YHWH.
Thus in “listening” to and “obeying” Joshua, as well as “doing” all that YHWH
had commanded through Moses, Israel was taking some of its first steps in
covenant fulfillment. Reception of Moses’ hand-lying gesture confirmed
Joshua’s role as leader of the covenant community. Only as Israel obeyed him
could it maintain the integrity of its covenantal relationship with YHWH (italics
mine).9

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8 Keith Mattingly, “The Significance of Joshua’s Reception of the Laying on of Hands in Numbers

9 Keith Mattingly, “Joshua’s Reception of the Laying on of Hands, Part 2: Deuteronomy 34:9 and
Thus the association between the power of the Word of God and the empowerment of the Spirit takes place through the obedient example of discipleship in leadership formation and affirmation. Mattingly adds a fitting conclusion:

Joshua received a portion of Moses’ honor, an extra measure of God’s Spirit in the form of the spirit of wisdom, and the obedience as well as loyalty of the Israelite congregation . . . Inasmuch as hands symbolized power and possession throughout these worlds, YHWH was easily perceived as passing his power to Joshua through Moses’ hands, and at the same time he was perceived as claiming Joshua as his possession through the instrument of Moses’ hands . . . Usage of the hand-laying gesture in Joshua’s installation service indicated an ordination to a special work of ministry for his people. Joshua was to lead his people out and bring them back in by becoming their shepherd. Hand laying indicated that he was indeed YHWH’s personal choice to be Israel’s shepherd.10

Joshua had a goal for his life that was established and ordained by God. Its parameters were outlined by Moses and direct revelation from the Lord. Joshua 11:15 declares that he completed his task and reached his goal: “As the Lord commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua, and Joshua did it; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses.” As an arrow Joshua hit the target, his ultimate destiny. Commenting on Joshua’s achievement as “Destiny Fulfillment” in reaching both personal and corporate goals, Katherine Haubert and Robert Clinton, in The Joshua Portrait, write: “There is a mark for everyone to hit and a time appointed by God in which the arrow is shot forth by the Holy Spirit to hit that mark. Whether or not one hits the mark depends upon a realization of God’s intentions, and upon the all-important preparation time in which character is formed and refined.”11

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10 Ibid., 101.

Elijah and Elisha

God told Elijah whom to choose as his successor (1 Kings 19:16). Elijah’s call of Elisha, comparable to Jesus’ call of his disciples, meant that Elisha had to leave everything and follow Elijah (1 Kings 19:19-21; 2 Kings 2:2, 6). Because of their close relationship Elisha referred to Elijah as his father (2 Kings 2:12). Elisha was so influenced by Elijah that when Elijah departed Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah’s spirit (2 Kings 2:9). Elisha, like Joshua, did things similar to what his master had done, thereby confirming that he had become like his master.

In that classic passage, 2 Kings 2:1-18, the mantle of leadership was passed on from Elijah to Elisha after the dramatic departure of Elijah in a fiery chariot. As Elisha became aware of his master’s imminent departure, his spirit of dedication and discipleship was even more heightened in his repetition three times of his allegiance to follow his master (2 Kings 2:2b, 4b, 6b). Scholars still debate about the meaning of Elisha’s request upon Elijah in 2 Kings 2:9: “Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” and whether this was being granted and materialized.

The fact that Elisha was able to immediately repeat the same miracle by striking the water with the rolled-up cloak of Elijah (the proverbial “mantle of leadership” from his master, so to speak) and walked past the parted Jordan River, resulting in the affirmative statement by the watching prophets: “The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha,” seems to indicate the point (2 Kings 2:8, 14, 15).

However, Mark O’Brien, in his article, “The Portrayal of Prophets in 2 Kings 2,” contends this view by arguing that Elisha could not claim this as his automatic right.
O’Brien’s study is not to dispute or negate the importance of reproducing the master’s ministry, but rather to warn against using prophetic charism as a measurement of successful discipleship or leadership transference.12 Elisha’s request might ultimately be fulfilled, but certainly not an instantaneous “one-time deal,” and more likely due to an accumulative time-tested process. Hence O’Brien’s caution should be rightly heeded:

Another point of criticism is undue preoccupation by prophets with the prophetic charism. Here the critique is directed mainly at Elisha who seems bent on getting a double share of the master’s spirit. At the outset of the narrative, he is a confident and dominant character who knows what he wants. His encounter with the divine leaves him unsure as to whether he has got what he wants. . . . It is only in responding to those in need that he successfully exercises his prophetic charism. Elisha learns through painful experience that the charism is not for oneself but for the service of others (italics mine).13

Aside from the above warning, Elisha is still to be commended for his vigorous seeking out of a good mentor as this often is a mutual reciprocal process. Every leader needs mentors, especially emerging leaders. After watching the great Elijah for many years, Elisha found the courage to ask Elijah for a double portion of his spirit.

God took Elisha through the preparation necessary under Elijah. The younger man waited for the right time, and then made his request. The result, according to Scripture, was that Elisha performed twice as many miracles as did his mentor. John Maxwell, in “Choose Your Mentors Well: Elisha Risks the ‘Big Ask,’” lists several principles outlined in 1 Kings 19 and 2 Kings 2 underlying his preparation (see Appendix 8).


13 Ibid., 15-16.
Mutual attraction is more than chemistry. At least four elements combine to make it happen. These factors of mutuality are further elaborated by Maxwell in “The Law of Magnetism: Elijah and Elisha Cut from the Same Cloth”: 1) mutual vision, 2) mutual expectations, 3) mutual contribution, and 4) mutual commitment. 14

Even though in discipleship and mentoring, the disciple ideally mimics the master in various ways, these practices should not involve “cloning” or a “copy-cat” approach, in which the uniqueness of each individual is lost. Nor should discipleship preclude the need for adaptation to each distinctive situation and the needs of different societies or cultures. Nachman Levine, in his article, “Twice As Much of Your Spirit: Pattern, Parallel and Paronomasia in the Miracles of Elijah and Elisha,” conducted a thorough study to compare and contrast the two prophets, their relationship to each other, and their relationship to the people of Israel to whom they minister. His findings confirm the difference of approaches:

Throughout the narrative of the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 2-13), Elisha’s miracles repeat and multiply elements of the miracles of his teacher Elijah (1 Kings 17-2 Kings 2). . . . Common words (or plays on words), constructs, and literary motifs are used to link thematically Elisha’s miracles with those of his mentor, from whom he draws his spirit, but differs markedly in his relationship to the society in which he operates (italics mine).15

Gerald Bostock, in his article, “Jesus as the New Elisha,” also sheds light on the importance of avoiding “cloning” and instead, custom-making each discipling process

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according to the personality of each person. This can also be an argument against a program-oriented approach instead of a process-oriented approach since a program orientation tends to cater to the masses instead of the personalized relationship of a mentorship pairing. Bostock assumes that since John the Baptist was regarded as the second Elijah, and since John was also Jesus’ forerunner, it is logical to investigate whether Jesus’ style is based upon that of Elisha. (Or should it be put the other way around: whether Elisha prefigures Jesus?) Besides citing evidence of parallelism in that seven most outstanding miracles of Elisha were echoed and fulfilled in the miracles of Jesus (as recorded in John’s Gospel), Bostock’s findings are astounding:

This similarity is well illustrated by the fundamental contrast which we find between Elijah and the Baptist on the one hand and Elisha and Jesus on the other hand. Both Elijah and the Baptist stand out as austere, puritanical figures who live a life of protest against the immorality and irreligion of their times. Elijah is a hirsute and forbidding figure (cf. 2 Kings 1:8), who lives in the hills and only descends to the cities to deliver a message of condemnation. The Baptist likewise stands out as a rough-looking figure, who lives in the wilderness and whose chief role is to warn and to reprimand (cf. Matthew 3:1-12, etc.). But Elisha, like Jesus, is presented to us as a home-dweller with a conventional job (cf. 1 Kings 19:20), who wears normal clothes (cf. 2 Kings 2:12), enjoys human companionship and is content to live an ordinary city life (cf. 2 Kings 6:32). The parallel with Jesus is clear, and is further highlighted by the readiness with which Elisha approaches all men both high and low. . . . Constantly greeted as “the man of God,” he retains the common touch. Like Jesus he was a man of the world, but succeeded in making ordinary life radiant with the divine. . . . In conclusion, Elisha stands out in the Old Testament as a prophet who combined clairvoyant gifts with a warm humanity. He could read men’s thoughts and knew what was happening at a distance (cf. 2 Kings 5:26; 6:12); he was able to heal the sick and transform the elements, but, despite his extraordinary powers, he was content to live as a man among men. It is hard to believe that Jesus was not influenced by the Old Testament picture of his predecessor Elisha. And if Jesus was thus influenced, the church which has often followed Elijah in giving men a puritanical code and the voice of judgment ought to seek also the role of an Elisha in offering men healing and irrefutable signs of the kingdom of God.  

Discipleship is such a vast subject, and the Jesus’ method with the Twelve has been written about by so many that it is almost an impossible task to condense it within the scope of this paper. Samra, after considering the data in all four Gospels, summarizes:

“Discipleship” in the time of Jesus was accomplished by literally following Jesus around. . . . Discipleship then is a journey that is taken with Jesus, a journey in which one suffers before arriving in glory. . . . Therefore in the Gospels discipleship (the process of becoming like Christ) was accomplished by being physically with Christ, seeing what he did, hearing what he said, being corrected by him, and following his example (italics mine).  

The phrase that best epitomizes Jesus’ spirit of cultivating “being” before “doing” in his discipleship strategy is recorded in Mark 3:14-15: “He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons” (italics mine). This is in accordance with the ideal but not rigid nor restrictive sequence of leadership formation proposed in this ministry focus paper—spiritual, emotional, relational and missional.

Probably the best classic and most often quoted study on Jesus’ training methodology belongs to A.B. Bruce’s The Training of the Twelve. Robert Coleman’s adaptation, The Master Plan of Evangelism, which has also become a classic, delineates eight steps: selection, association, consecration, impartation, demonstration, delegation, supervision and reproduction. The beauty of Coleman’s presentation is the tightly-knit balance of evangelism and discipleship that is so lacking in many other books.

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17 Samra, A Biblical View of Discipleship, 221-222.

Ogden quotes Bruce’s material and classifies Jesus’ approach in recruiting disciples as moving through three stages:

1. Stage one involves initial encounters with Jesus that initiated a period of examination. They were not at first encounter presented with the decision, “Follow me,” but instead, “Come and see.” There would soon come a time when a decision would have to be made, but first the authenticity and identity of this engaging person would have a chance to leave a growing impression.

2. Stage two involves Jesus defining the nature of the relationship through a summons that requires a decision: “Follow me” (John 1:43; Mark 1:20; 2:14; Luke 9:59; Matthew 8:21; 19:22). Speaking to the crowds, Jesus says, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23).

3. Stage three moves each of the Twelve from the category of one-among-many-disciples to a leadership role in Jesus’ intimate inner circle. If stage one is “come and see” and stage two is “follow me,” then stage three is “come and be with me.”

Jesus, besides investing in the Twelve, seemed to have an inner circle of three that he intentionally gave more time and attention: Peter, James and John. There were special occasions where only this triad was privy to some of Jesus qualities and revelation. They were included in the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51); at the mountain of Transfiguration (Mark 9:2; Matthew 17:1; Luke 9:28); and in the Gethsemane prayer on the night of betrayal (Mark 14:33; Matthew 26:37).

Some authors advocate this as an even more effective group for discipleship and leadership training, supplementing the traditional small group of ten to twelve people.

Ogden, in proposing a threesome called a triad as the ideal size for a discipleship-making group over the one-on-one Paul/Timothy style, gives the following five reasons as maximizing the transformative dynamics:

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1. There is a shift from unnatural pressure to natural participation of the discipler. When a third person is added, there is a shift from the discipler as focal point to a group process.

2. There is a shift from hierarchical to relational. The triad naturally creates a come-alongside journey.

3. There is a shift from dialogue to dynamic interchange. The presence of the Holy Spirit seems palpable.

4. There is a shift from limited input to wisdom in numbers. The book of Proverbs speaks of the wisdom that comes from many counselors (Proverbs 15:22).

5. There is a shift from addition to multiplication. A triad encourages multiplication because it minimizes the hierarchical dimensions and maximizes a peer mentoring model.20

Charles Talbert shows harmony of concepts of spirituality, spiritual formation and the discipleship journey in his article, “The Way of the Lukan Jesus: Dimensions of Lukan Spirituality.” He first delineates from the Luke’s Gospel the developmental nature in five stages of Jesus’ life: (a) his dedication to God by his parents as an infant (Luke 2:22-24); (b) his personal agreement with their parental decision as a youth (Luke 2:40-52); (c) his empowering by the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:21-22); (d) his acceptance of rejection, suffering, and death as part of his way (Luke 9:19, 22; 9:28-31; 9:44; 9:51; 18:31-33, etc.); and (e) his resurrection, ascension, and exaltation (Luke 24; Acts).21

Next, Talbert lays out three strands of evidence regarding how this Lukan perspective may feed into current constructs for spiritual formation. The first strand of evidence is that of the entire two-volume work, namely, the remarkable correspondences both in content and sequence between the events and persons found in Luke and those in Acts. What happens in the career of Jesus in the Third Gospel has its parallel occurrence

20 Ibid., 145-149.

in the history of the Church in the Acts of the Apostles. Clearly, the life of Jesus is the norm for the lives of his followers.

A second strand of evidence consists of a cluster of closely related concepts. First, Christianity is described in Acts as “the Way.” Second, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews 2:10 and 12:2, Jesus is described in Acts as the ἄρχηγος (“author” or “pioneer”). And third, a disciple in Luke’s understanding is one who follows behind Jesus (cf. Luke 23:26 where Simeon of Cyrene carries the cross “behind Jesus,” a distinctively Lukan note). Taken together, these components describe a Way opened up by Jesus, the pioneer, for his disciples to follow behind him.

The third strand is found in so many specifics of the Lukan story of Jesus where the Lord is depicted as a model for Christians to emulate (e.g. the temptation narrative in 4:1-13 and the prayer in the garden in 22:39-46). Among the items in which the Lukan Jesus is held up as a model for his followers is his suffering death. This is made very clear by the correspondences between the martyr death of Jesus in the Third Gospel and the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts 6-7 (cf. also Luke 22:28-30; Acts 14:22). Thus Talbert concludes:

Jesus’ way is normative for his followers. As a pioneer, the Lukan Jesus has opened a way for life to be lived from cradle to the grave and beyond. It is a developing way but with certain set components. Those who belong to him walk the way he has opened, energized by the same power-Spirit that led him (italics mine).  

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22 Ibid., 246-247.

23 Ibid., 247.
Alternatively, Bishop Demetrios Trakatellis from the Greek Orthodox tradition presents another comprehensive view of discipleship in its parallelism to priesthood. In his article, “‘Ακολούθει μοι/Follow me’ (Mk 2.14) Discipleship and Priesthood,” utilizing a study in the Mark’s Gospel, Trakatellis reflects six aspects of discipleship as: (1) a call; (2) a mission; (3) a *diakonia* (service); (4) a knowledge of Christ; (5) a total offering of oneself; and (6) a priesthood. For the last one, Trakatellis describes the congruence and reinforcement of the New Testament concept of priesthood as being almost identical to disciple that also encompasses the first five elements. Semantics aside, the value of such comparison reaffirms the normative standard for all Christians to be enlisted as disciples without exception (as part of the “universal priesthood of all believers”), and especially applicable to those being called into leadership.24

Finally, in terms of the corporate and missional nature of the implication of Jesus’ discipleship strategy, John Painter shows the strategic importance of the home or household as the basis and venue where potential disciples can be identified and nurtured towards leadership. In his article, “When is a House not Home? Disciples and Family in Mark 3: 13-35,” Painter concludes that this Mark passage serves as a critique which precludes tribalism in favor of a relationship appropriate to a universal movement when Jesus says: “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother” (Mark 3: 34b-35).25

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The practice of hospitality, a spiritual formation discipline, bears direct contribution to the corporate strategy of leadership formation as Painter concludes:

The Markan narrative also supports the view that the mission of Jesus depended on the hospitality of the households of his followers, that Jesus moved from one supporting household to another in the course of his ministry. He instructed the disciples to follow the same strategy of mission. The household of supporters is identified as his strategic base for mission and is perhaps related to the reinterpretation of discipleship in terms of the family.26

Barnabas and Paul

The first mention of Joseph the Levite (nicknamed Barnabas, meaning the “Son of Encouragement”) in the Scriptures (Acts 4:36) teems with implications of his hallmark feature as empowerer of other leaders in his future ministry.

From such an angle, the contribution of Barnabas to biblical Christianity is great. As a mentor, Barnabas linked Christianity into the Gentile world. He functioned as a mentor for Paul and John Mark. He linked Paul to the power base of Christianity in Jerusalem. He further linked Paul to a ministry growth experience at Antioch from which would come his apostolic recognition. Barnabas also linked the new form of Christianity back to Jerusalem. He played a major role in developing John Mark. He is a major New Testament model of the gifts of apostleship and exhortation. The admonition, encouragement and caring thrusts of exhortation are demonstrated in his ministry.

When Saul of Tarsus, who was bent on persecuting Christians, turned into Paul the believer after his Damascus Road conversion experience, there was a lot of skepticism when he tried to join the church in Jerusalem. Thus Acts 9:26-27 records,

26 Ibid., 513.
“When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.”

Maxwell, in a section of his *Leadership Bible* entitled, “Barnabas and The Law of Empowerment: Only Secure Leaders Give Power to Others,” explains how Barnabas was an empowerer of Paul. He writes, “Barnabas was definitely a lifter of people. It seems as though he let no opportunity escape to add value to others. And his greatest single contribution in terms of empowerment can be seen in his interaction with Paul. Maxwell describes three particular ways in which Barnabas empowered Paul: 1) Barnabas believed in Paul before anyone else did; 2) Barnabas endorsed Paul’s leadership to other leaders; and 3) Barnabas empowered Paul to reach his potential.27

Of the many different empowering functions that mentoring provides, one called “linking” is especially highlighted by Robert Clinton and Laura Raab in their book, *Barnabas, Encouraging Exhorter: A Study in Mentoring*:

Barnabas was able to *link* in the following ways:
1. Between people (Paul to the Jerusalem elders);
2. Between a church and an unknown potential church (church at Jerusalem and the Antioch group);
3. Between a church and needed resources (Antioch church and Paul);
4. Between a church’s corporate resources and needs of a group far away (marshaled financial resources from Antioch church for giving to the people of the famine in Jerusalem);
5. Between a mature church and cross-cultural gospel ministry needs (Antioch Church and lost Gentiles);

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6. Between theological positions (Paul’s advanced contextualized theology learned on missionary trips and the Jewish Christian theology at Jerusalem);
7. Between a young potential leader and needed experiential training (Mark and apprenticeship situations).

Linking usually requires a person who can give and take and work between situations in order to bring about the necessary bridging. It will cost. Yet it is an extremely important means for indirectly influencing many things. . . . Mentors who serve as linkers, such as Barnabas did, are needed today. Perhaps Barnabas’ “behind the scenes” influence may serve as an example to spur many on to mentoring. 28

In the Barnabas/Paul pairing, besides principles of discipleship and mentoring that have been demonstrated, there are also four relevant observations on spiritual friendship. First of all, spiritual friends engage in co-ministry harmoniously. It is recorded in Acts 11:25-26: “Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.”

Barnabas’ mentoring included the use of co-ministry not only as a training method but also as a way to increase the mentoree’s credibility, status and prestige. Barnabas did this with Paul and John Mark.

Second, spiritual friends in co-ministry can sustain the “authority switch principle.” The order was always “Barnabas and Saul” from Acts 9 to 13, up until their being sent from Antioch in the first missionary journey. Halfway through the trip, Luke changes the phrase to “Paul and his companions” (Acts 13:13), and when one gets to Acts 13:46 and beyond, the phrase “Paul and Barnabas” became decidedly more commonplace. Paul had obviously assumed leadership of the team, at least in Luke’s eyes. In mentoring

a developing leader, one must recognize that he or she may surpass the mentor. Barnabas sets a beautiful example of transitioning from a position of directive leadership to one of supportive leadership. And he did it in such a way as to build up of his successor, Paul.

Third, spiritual friends need the courage to confront one another at times. For example, in Galatians 2:14, Paul was uncompromising:

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The others Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?” (italics mine).

Maintaining unity and maintaining purity are both strong considerations in Christianity. Often these are at two ends of a continuum. Some are able to maintain a dynamic tension and hold both simultaneously, but one cannot maintain unity at the expense of core issues of truth. In this instance, the heart of the gospel was at stake and Paul obviously felt that Barnabas had succumbed to the pressure of the Judaizers, rightly comes down on the side of maintaining doctrinal truth. Clinton and Raab state: “Barnabas was not necessarily cowardly but was intent on bridging between Paul and Peter (or between Paul’s new theological views and those of the older established Christians from Jerusalem). In this case Paul and not Barnabas was operating more properly along that important truth/unity continuum.”

Nevertheless, these are the risks believers have to bear as they genuinely pursue spiritual friendships, as admonished by Proverbs 27: 5-6, 17: “Better is open

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29 Ibid., 63.
rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. . . . As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”

Fourth, spiritual friends ultimately come to terms and become reconciled with even deeper appreciation for one another. In terms of mentoring and spiritual friendship, the most idealistic picture was being shattered by these two painful verses in Acts 15: 39-40a: “They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left.” Even though the strain must be unbearable, and the negative impact to the Christian community recognizable, yet God’s sovereignty overrules to allow their conflict resolution to become a “win-win” situation of becoming two mission teams.

Years later, Paul obviously more mellowed from age, reversed his opinion when he mentions Barnabas in Colossians 4:10: “My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)” In sending greetings in Philemon 1:24, Mark was once again called his fellow-worker. And facing loneliness before his martyrdom, Paul’s affectionate tone towards Mark was completely restored: “Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry” (2 Timothy 4:11). At this point, it appears that Paul appreciates Barnabas, whose wisdom and patience determined to see Mark through, just as he had once seen Paul through.

Clinton and Raab quote Peter Wagner: “Do we realize that had not Barnabas used his gift of encouragement we might be missing half of the New Testament books?”

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30 Peter Wagner, as quoted in Clinton and Raab, Barnabas, 57.
They add, “Barnabas never wrote Scripture, but the people he helped did. Paul contributed 13 epistles, and Mark one Gospel.”\textsuperscript{31} Floyd F. Filson summarizes:

*Barnabas is the New Testament’s archetype of a mentor. Especially in his success in developing a leader out of a failure, Barnabas becomes an almost perfect representative of the worthy Christian leader. What is the gospel but a second chance for us all? Not only in drawing out the best that lies in people, not only in developing in such people possibilities which perhaps they themselves do not see, but even more in aiding them to overcome their record of failure and in leading them in to a life of usefulness, the Christian leader does a great work.*\textsuperscript{32}

**Paul and Timothy**

Two things should be noted about Paul’s practice of doing discipleship. Though as an apostle he was in a position of leadership within the church, he treated other believers as equals. For example, he referred to Timothy and Silvanus as apostles with him, even though they were clearly subordinate to him in both authority and Christian maturity. He called Apollos a co-worker (1 Corinthians 3:5-9) and Timothy a fellow worker (1 Thessalonians 3:2) and a brother (2 Corinthians 1:1; Colossians 1:1), even though Timothy was his son in the faith (1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2).

Nowhere did Paul identify the role of “discipler” as a spiritual gift or as an office of the Church. Rather all Christians, both those imitating and those being imitated, are equal in the body of Christ. Paul’s ability to hold these two in tension is a helpful example for spiritually mature leaders, who must acknowledge that they are on an equal footing with even the most immature Christian.

\textsuperscript{31} Clinton and Raab, *Barnabas*, 57.

\textsuperscript{32} Floyd F. Filson, as quoted in Clinton and Raab, *Barnabas*, 67.
The second aspect of Paul’s practice of discipleship was his willingness to invite people to imitate him. Though not the founder of Christianity, he could call others to imitate him as he imitated Christ (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1). The metaphor used is a father-son relationship as expressed in 1 Corinthians 4:14-17:

I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. Even though you have ten thousands guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

In Boykin Sanders’ article, “Imitating Paul: 1 Cor. 4:16,” he asserts that “imitating . . . my way of life in Christ” in the context of that letter refers to: not causing divisions; only boasting in the Lord; being able to accept suffering with joy; and having a communal concern insofar as it demands giving up self-interests which cause divisions.33

The significance of discipleship is a “mimicking” of one person of another, but always in Christ, through Christ, and reproducing Christ. Paul uses the formula “in Christ,” which occurs frequently in this context. The community was born “in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (4:15); Timothy is called Paul’s beloved and faithful child “in the Lord” and shall remind the Corinthians of Paul’s “ways in Christ” (4:17). This is significant to understand the meaning of “imitation” for Paul: it is closely related to Christ and to the gospel in which Christ is proclaimed as crucified (1:23-24; 2:2).

But the role of Timothy is peculiar. As Paul’s emissary, he is sent to remind the Corinthians of Paul’s ways which they should imitate. Timothy seems to have known

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what these “ways” were, or he must have embodied them in a special way. In 4:17 Paul speaks of him as his “beloved and faithful child in the Lord,” while he calls the Corinthians simply his “children” (4:14).

The ultimate aim of discipleship along this continuum of spiritual-emotional-relational-missional development is once again reinforced by Sanders as he reiterates: “To imitate Christ establishes the communal principle and excludes the divisiveness which is introduced by boasting in the name of particular leaders” (italics mine).34

Discipleship is for building community. Hence Sanders concludes:

The imitation of Paul’s “ways” should bring the Corinthians to an appropriate understanding of the message of the cross and its implications for their life as a community. . . . Timothy will remind the Corinthians not only by words, but he will represent in his own personal conduct the ways he has learned from Paul (cf. Philippians 2:19-22) and thus the patterns of behavior which can overcome the divisiveness in the church. . . . Since divisiveness in the Corinthian church is caused by the high regard for the apostles as teachers of wisdom, Paul does not use the teacher-pupil relationship in his exhortation, but speaks as a father to his children. As their father, he does not shame them or instruct them; rather, he urges and encourages them to imitate him and his example which is present among them in Timothy who is Paul’s beloved child and, as it were, their older brother.35

Ogden also adopts this spiritual parenting concept as Paul’s discipling and empowering model. The parallelism is self-evident: “In a healthy family, the goal of parents is to grow children into independent, responsible and caring adults. . . . For Paul the primary goal of the Christian life is to reach the state of maturity in Christ.”36 The stages and the roles of those involved in this growing process are depicted in the Table 1.

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34 Ibid., 362.

35 Ibid., 363.

Table 1. Paul’s parental empowerment model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIFE STAGE</th>
<th>LIFE STAGE NEED</th>
<th>DISCIPLES’ ROLE</th>
<th>PAUL’S ROLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infancy</td>
<td>Modeling and direction</td>
<td>Imitation</td>
<td>Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood</td>
<td>Unconditional love and protection</td>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>Hero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescence</td>
<td>Increased freedom and identity formation</td>
<td>Exhortation</td>
<td>Coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adulthood</td>
<td>Mutuality and reciprocity</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Peer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence Paul admonishes Timothy in the continuity of mentorship and leadership formation with the tool of Scriptures:

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through Jesus Christ. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:14-16).

And the call to discipleship and leadership formation for successive generations has never been clearer: “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Timothy 2:2).

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37 Ibid., 105.
CHAPTER 6

THE SMALL GROUP AS THE ARENA WHERE LEADERS ARE SHAPED FOR BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Potential leaders who have been discipled, mentored in spiritual friendships should be encouraged to receive further training in a small group setting, where both the conviction and skills of dependence on the Bible and a sense of community are deepened.

Biblical Foundations of Small Groups Nurturing Growth and Leadership Development

Principles of Small Group Relationships and Leadership in the Old Testament

God desires “face-to-face” relationships with humanity. And God desires to lead people into “face-to-face” relationships with one another. The very nature of God is face-to-face community. The Aaronic priestly blessings express God’s eagerness to bless his people: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace” (Numbers 6:24-26).

God made covenant with individuals through personal relationships with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses, and with their families through them. When God called the Israel nation into being, he wanted to make the covenant “face-to-face” with every member of the community at Horeb. Although Exodus 20:18-21 states that the people were so terrified of being in the presence of God that they said to Moses, “‘Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die’ . . . The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God
was.” While the people themselves were not ready to meet God face to face, from God’s perspective it was a face-to-face meeting where the people were invited into a community lifestyle of face-to-face relationships.

Although the call to a face-to-face encounter with God is risky and threatening because of his holiness, it is also hearkening because he would also reveal his welcoming face, one that lifts up a falling face and smiles on a wondering face. It is the responsibility of community leadership to encourage the community not to be afraid and to model a “coming out” and a “facing” lifestyle. Icenogle elaborates on this concept:

The face is the expression of the inner self, revealing the true nature of a person. The face reflects the heart and soul of what one thinks, feels and senses. It is the most vulnerable and transparent organ of being. The rest of the body is an expression of what happens through the face. The intimate foci of the face are the eyes, the window to the inner person. . . . God made humanity with faces to express the delicacies of the soul. . . . God’s circle of being is a face-to-face circle of persons who come together as “one face” and “One who faces” others. . . . Small groups are about face-to-face community. Roberta Hestenes defines a small group as “an intentional, face-to-face gathering of 3 to 12 people.”

Although fraught with danger, faces are powerful expressions of intention and intimacy. God’s face penetrates our hiding places. Those who dwell in the presence of the face of God can turn and face others with similar intensity and integrity. Thus a leader who spends time face-to-face with God in spiritual formation like Moses would shine with the “glory” of having seen the face of God, but the people could not stand to gaze upon the face of Moses. The small group can be a safe place where believers learn to meet God’s gaze and share the gaze of God’s people.

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Like Moses, the small group leader must have the personal faith and courage to risk the face-to-face vulnerability of encounter even though the rest of the group may turn away in fear. A leader who lets go of the personal protective shield and ventures into the presence of another beckons the whole group to consider doing likewise. Again Icenogle expands on the value of such leadership: “In the darkness we occasionally face the light of the moon which gives light as it faces and reflects the sun. So the group leader faces God and enlightens the group, inviting them to seek the primary source for more light.”

Using the story of Job’s three friends’ counseling encounter as a paradigm, Icenogle points out another important dimension of small groups: the confrontational community of a small group. Because Job was the courageous member of the group, and willing to say “no” to groupthink, the whole group (and the larger faith community) was called into confrontation, confession, repentance and new life together (Job 42:7-11). A good leader will promote prayer and confession in seeking the face of God.

Leadership is about having a dream, and about being open to the dream God has given an individual or group. Leadership is about having a strong sense of direction, and about the desire to help others go in the direction that will be most beneficial for them. It is about enduring the flak from others when they are not happy with this sense of direction. Leadership is about being led by God through tough times and leading others through stressful situations. Leadership is about settling quarrels, helping others to change and being good model to show others a better way. Icenogle uses the story of

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2 Ibid., 70.
3 Ibid.
Joseph’s dream when he was young and his latter reconciliation with his estranged brothers in fulfilling God-given dream of a bigger purpose as illustration of what a small group leader can accomplish. Thus Icenogle elaborates:

Good group leaders are God-centered and group-empowering. As we read in Genesis 45, Joseph, of all Israel’s leaders, stood out as one who struggled against the seductiveness of abusive masculine power. . . . He led groups with a strong sense of the present and active character of God. Grace, mercy, love and compassion were the results of God’s guidance. Joseph allowed his personal desires to be formed by God’s presence and character. . . . Such God-centered leadership, which gives away power and shares dominion, is an outpouring of love. . . . Leadership gives vision, direction, guidance, knowledge, wisdom and accountability to a small group.4

Hence the small group setting is beneficial for formation of empowering leaders. The development of small group leaders is crucial for the nurture of successful community.

Principles of Small Group Relationships and Leadership in Jesus’ Training Methodology

Jesus gathered people. The gathering process of Jesus carried the feel of family—of being part of Abba’s family. For Jesus, the gathering and grouping was best imagined as family—human family. God was the progenitor of this new family, with Jesus as the first Son and the Twelve as adopted brothers. They were to experience God’s presence in their midst as an adoptive and nurturing parent with an expanding household. Twelve was a continuing symbol of God’s adoption of Jacob’s twelve sons. Jesus’ intent was to gather humanity around himself as family, and to show them the way to be servants and partners together with Yahweh. They were to learn this first by joining Jesus in looking to Yahweh as Abba, the intimate Father.

4 Ibid., 88-89.
The Twelve were called to be “with him” as a deliberate strategy (Mark 3:14). They were to share in his humanity, his vision, his way of life, his feelings, his values, his vulnerability, his temptations (Hebrews 4:15), his prayer and his rejection. But most of all, they were to partake of and share in his struggle, passion and benefits of his relationship with Abba God.

Through the insights gleaned from the Gospels data, Icenogle’s observation of small group ministry implications can be summarized in eight principles in terms of training of small group leaders. First, small group leaders must be trained by being in good model groups and in real group situations. Small group leadership development is about making disciples first and leaders second. Second, good leaders need to be trained by a good primary leader. The primary modeling for being in small groups need to go all the way to the top leadership (or all the way to the center). Third, both men and women should be small group leaders—especially women. The women’s international culture is generally more personal, more intimate and more relational. Fourth, small group leaders should be trained in seeing the Gospels as a primary source for their content, purpose and direction. All four Gospels are crucial to a balanced long-term biblical foundation for small group leadership training. Fifth, small groups and small group ministry structures should not be launched until an intentional leader training program has been established. Leadership development should be the number one priority of a long-term small group ministry. Sixth, leaders should be taught spiritual disciplines before they learn group technique. This is where discipleship begins in Christ. Small group leadership is, first of

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5 Ibid., 213-215.
all, a spiritual discipline centered in the model of Jesus. Seventh, the technical expertise of small group process and dynamics must be servant to the Spirit and the Word. Eighth, sacramental community life is always bound to a focus on Christ, the empowerment of the Spirit and the authority of Scripture as the Word.

Principles of Small Group Relationships and Leadership in Paul’s Concept of *Ecclesia*

The Apostle Paul works out his theology of the church as the body of Christ more completely in his letters to the Corinthians, but the classic passage that ties the “body life” as a formational and transformational community is Romans 12. As soon as Paul finishes delineating the great doctrine of justification by faith in the first eleven chapters, he launches right into the transforming life of sanctification in Chapter 12. But his discussion does not refer to an abstract individual, but rather to a tight-knit community where living as a participant member of the body of Christ changes one’s values and lifestyle. Because Jesus is the preeminent member of the *ecclesia* (the assembled community as the body of Christ), the group members follow his model to see themselves and one another through new eyes—the eyes (and mind) of Christ. Paul writes:

> Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. . . . Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment. . . . So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. . . . Be devoted to one another in brotherly [*familial*] love. Honor one another above yourselves (Romans 12: 1-3, 5-6, 10, italics mine).
As reflected in Romans 12, this transformation comes about through the small group’s exercise of good thinking, mutual sacrifice, healthy self-awareness, sharing personal gifts and expression of familial love. Families form the character, ethics, beliefs and relational patterns of each human being. Every new relationship and group sets up a new arena for an unfolding family system. Every new small group gathering is a new family system, a gathering of persons, each of whom brings his or her own family systems, values, attitudes, and patterns of group behavior into the new group.

As the leader succeeds in modeling and coaching the members to practice the behavioral model of Jesus to be “living sacrifices” in honesty, confession, repentance and compassion, this continual process of a transforming community shows the world an alternative of a new family system.

Thus, a leader who matures through such small group process needs to be one who first and foremost aspires to be a servant. Such leaders are also eager to empower. Leaders who fully empower others find that their own paradigms of themselves change. They become servants. They no longer control others; they control themselves.

Empowering means receiving as well as giving. A leader is one who has the capacity for receptivity as well as initiation. Leading well means facilitating the capacity of group members to fulfill their functions. Relational power portrays the strength of being open to the influence of others. Servant leadership knows its boundaries, strengths, and limitations, and goes about releasing others to fulfill roles as influencers and initiators. Relational power leaders are lavish in cultivating and creating new freedom for people to grow.
Finally, leadership being a servant ministry is based on spiritual gifts, hence always plural. This highlights the importance of spiritual community. Where two or three come together, focused on the priority of Jesus, he is there in their midst (Matthew 18:19-20). This shared leadership engages heavenly input in corporate decision-making and keeps the servanthood of leadership in its rightful place. In the New Testament leadership is presented as collective. Leadership as individualism is not an option.

Ultimately, leadership development in a small group setting is the growth process of a transforming, life-changing self-recognition and self-disclosure. Icenogle concludes:

Growth cannot occur between two persons if the individual is not growing in self-awareness and personal honesty. One needs to be honest with oneself before one can be honest with another. . . . The process of “knowing and being known” is the primary ministry of God’s Spirit among humanity. The knowing and being known is essentially the spirituality of community.6

The Use of Interactive Bible Study as Corporate Spiritual Discipline

Since the goal of small group community is spiritual formation and behavioral transformation, rather than just information which is basically more pragmatic and utilitarian, thus the means of Bible study should also comprise of two levels. First, a preliminary unraveling of the meaning of the texts themselves which is mainly a matter of knowledge acquired by study; then a deeper level, a living insight which grows out of personal involvement and relatedness. Only on this second level is the Bible really grasped. The balance between the two should be a familiarization of both the Lectio

6 Ibid., 282.
Divina approach as well as the inductive Bible study method. The small group leader is encouraged to practice both, first in one’s preparation and then in the group setting.

Lectio Divina

The art of spiritual reading called Lectio Divina reaches back to the Benedictine tradition which comprises four phases termed in Latin lectio, meditatio, oratio, and contemplatio. For a basic English equivalent, add the letter n to each.⁷

Lectio literally means “reading,” from which terms like “lection” and “lectionary” are derived. It signifies the reflective, gently paced, one-bite-at-a-time reading. With Scripture, it entails reading each sentence as if for the first time, expecting that God will address the reader with a direct and personal message. Beyond the words, attention should be made particularly to the meaning behind them. By engaging in this deeper reading, the believer sees far more than discrete things, perceiving everything in dynamic tension and relationship with everything else. The process of lectio does not explain; it does not define; it draws the reader away from being an outsider into being an insider, involved with all reality spoken into being by God’s word.

Meditatio is the discipline of keeping the memory active in the act of reading. Meditation moves from looking at the words of the text to entering the world of the text. Meditation enters into large backgrounds that are not immediately visible, that the reader may have overlooked the first time around. Active imagination can sometimes help readers find connections between their life stories and the great story of God’s

⁷ See Peterson, Eat This Book, 90-117 and Thompson, Soul Feast, 25-31. Both authors give good concise treatment of Lectio Divina as a spiritual reading method.
redemptive work with his people. Meditation engages readers at the level of the “heart” in its biblical sense, where memory, experience, thoughts, feelings, hopes, desires, intuitions, and intentions are joined. This is where readers are likely to discover what a given passage means in their lives personally or as a community. However, it must not be confused with fancy or fantasy.

*Oratio* is related to terms like “oration” and “oratory,” which are associated with spoken words. In the context of *Lectio Divina*, it means the prayer that naturally flows out of meditation. *Oratio* is the direct cry of the heart to God that rises when readers have heard themselves personally addressed through the Word. Perhaps the Word has touched some pain, and the reader cries out in hurt, anger or frustration; perhaps God has revealed a sin, and the reader whispers in confession and repentance; perhaps the Word has evoked gratitude, and words leap up in thanksgiving; perhaps it has sparked joy, and the reader sings in praise. *Oratio* allows a full range of human responses to tumble forth in heartfelt prayer to the One for whom humankind was made. Just like using the Psalms as a school of prayer, readers not only can hear and understand God as he speaks to them, but they also can speak to him—respond, answer, converse, argue, and question.

*Contemplatio*, of course, means “contemplation.” Contemplation is essentially rest, play, Sabbath-time in God’s presence. Tom Schwanda calls it “the lap time with God.” Marjorie Thompson elaborates it as “here we allow ourselves simply to be,

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welcoming God’s own way of being with us in a ‘Now’ that transcends time.”9 Eugene Peterson however puts it more in an active sense as “living the read/meditated/prayed text in the everyday, ordinary world. It means getting the text into our muscles and bones, our oxygen-breathing lungs and blood-pumping heart.”10 There is no contradiction as Peterson wants to ensure that this communion with God is not misunderstood to be a static passivity, but rather to be embraced as incarnational lifestyle to be lived in the world. Hence Peterson summarizes:

Contemplation means submitting to the biblical revelation, taking it within ourselves, and then living it unpretentiously, without fanfare . . . Contemplation means living what we read, not wasting any of it or hoarding any of it, but using it up in living. . . . Contemplative in the context of lectio divina, our spiritual reading of Holy Scriptures, signals a recognition of an organic union between the word “read” and the word “lived.” . . . The assumption underlying contemplation is that Word and Life are at root the same thing. Life originates in Word. Word makes Life. There is no word of God that does not intend to be lived by us. All words are capable of being incarnated, because all words originate in the Word made flesh.11

Two images have been used to describe this process of Lectio Divina. The first one is that of a cow chewing its cud. The cow goes out and eats some good grass (lectio), then she sits down under a tree and chews her cud (meditatio) until she extracts from her food both milk (oratio) and cream (contemplatio).12 The second image is that of the choreography of a dance. Majorie Thompson describes this image as follows:

The image of a dance may be helpful in envisioning the movement between phases and the possibilities for changing “steps” as the “music” shifts . . .

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9 Thompson, Soul Feast, 27.
10 Peterson, Eat This Book, 109.
11 Ibid., 112-114.
12 Thompson, Soul Feast, 27.
Whatever pattern our steps take, and however the choreography shifts in this dance of *Lectio Divina*, our Partner remains the same—ever faithful and responsive, initiating new twists and twirls in the sacred movement of the divine-human relationship. . . . The dance of *Lectio Divina* may leave our natural energies drained or replenished, but when practiced faithfully it leads to a deeper knowledge of God and ourselves in relation to God in this world.\(^{13}\)

Inductive Bible Study

Besides the *Lectio Divina* approach, the employment of the inductive Bible study method (see Figure 2) with a bent on highlighting spiritual formation and transformation in small groups will reap tremendous benefits in building community.

**Figure 2. Inductive Bible Study Method**

**Step One: OBSERVATION**
- Locating the facts
- Key process: the art of noticing to make lists of above

**Step Two: INTERPRETATION**
- Discerning the meaning
- Key questions: What, Why, How
- Key process: Identify patterns

**Step Three: APPLICATION**
- Finding the significance
- Key question: How is it relevant?
- Key process: Moving from original to contemporary context

In an article, *From Discipleship to Spiritual Direction: The Changing Face of Evangelical Spirituality*, author Richard Peace strongly argues for utilizing small groups as the main avenue for spiritual formation:

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 25, 27.
And so we come to the edge of the twenty-first century. What lies ahead for evangelicals when it comes to spirituality? For one thing, I think we will maintain our more holistic grasp of spirituality. This is where small groups may come in. I suspect that in the millennium they may become the vehicle of choice for spiritual pursuits. Small groups will increasingly become the environment in which the Bible is studied. Bible reading in the twenty first century will be far more community oriented than in the past.14

In terms of methodology, Peace advocates that: “Balance is needed so that the Bible penetrates the whole of who we are. So perhaps a combination of Inductive Bible Study and Lectio Divina is how we will do our Bible study in the future.”15

Roberta Hestenes, in her book, Using the Bible in Groups, delineates three principles for successful execution of this process: (1) Good group Bible studies are discussions, not lectures; (2) The secret of good Bible study is knowing how to ask the right kinds of questions; and (3) The ultimate aim of group Bible study is application, not just the accumulation of knowledge.16

Parker Palmer, an educator, also highlights the value of small group in the learning of “the grace of great things” in his book, The Courage to Teach: “The community of truth is an image that carry the educational mission because it embraces an essential fact: the reality we belong to, the reality we long to know, extends far beyond human beings interacting with one another.”17 Palmer delineates six virtues of such group

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15 Ibid., 8.


learning: (1) People invite diversity into their community not because it is politically correct but because diverse viewpoints are demanded by the manifold mysteries of great things; (2) People embrace ambiguity not because they are confused or indecisive but because they understand the inadequacy of their concepts to embrace the vastness of great things; (3) People welcome creative conflict not because they are angry or hostile but because conflict is required to correct their biases and prejudices about the nature of great things; (4) People practice honesty not only because they owe it to one another but because to lie about what they have seen would be to betray the truth of great things; (5) People experience humility not because they have fought and lost but because humility is the only lens through which great things can be seen—and once they have seen them, humility is the only posture possible; and (6) People become free men and women through education not because they have privileged information but because tyranny in any form can be overcome only by invoking “the grace of great things.”

The ultimate goal of training for the small group leaders is transformation. Transformation involves the movement from egocentric control of one’s life toward a life centered on commitment to the will of God, whatever that might entail and however costly it might turn out to be. In affirming this process of leading Bible study as maturing towards transformation, Walter Wink, in his book, *Transforming Bible Study*, writes:

> It is a process, not an arriving; we are “transforming,” not transformed. But all along the way there are flashes of insight, moments of exquisite beauty, experiences of forgiveness and of being healed, reconciliations and revelations that confirm the rightness of our quest and whet our appetites for more.19

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18 Ibid., 107-108.

Transformation is not only something that Christian leaders should attempt to provide for others. It must be the leaders’ own deepest desire as well. Leaders do not need to have arrived, but they do need to be on the journey. They do not need to have all the answers, but they do need to be living the questions.

**The Balance between General Small Groups and Issue-based Groups**

Besides using the small group as a training ground for general leadership qualities, there should also be other special-issue-based groups where people with some specific passion can exercise their spiritual gifts so that there is even a wider spectrum of groups to meet the different social and spiritual needs of the congregation. As such, leadership development will be truly more holistic. The historical basis of systematic leadership selection and development in a holistic fashion through a primarily small group system is undoubtedly attributed to John Wesley’s legacy.

**John Wesley’s Small Group System**

Wesley founded an interlocking system of five different groupings covering various modes (see Figure 3).²⁰

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²⁰ The information in this section has been gleaned from the work of D. Michael Henderson, *John Wesley’s Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples* (Nappanee, IN: Francis Asbury Press, 1997), 83-126. Henderson offers an excellent concise historical development of Methodism and practical analysis on why it was so effective.
Figure 3. John Wesley’s Small Group System

| 1. The Society-The Cognitive Mode |
| 2. Class Meeting-The Behavioral Mode |
| 3. Band-The Affective Mode |
| 4. Penitent Bands-The Rehabilitative Mode |
| 5. Select Society-The Training Mode |

The Methodist society was the group which included all the Methodists in a given locality, synonymous with the term “congregation.” It was the hub of all other functions and the “umbrella” group of the organization. It was where cognitive instruction in which the tenets of Methodism were presented to the target population. The class meeting was an intimate group of ten or twelve people who met weekly for personal supervision of their spiritual growth, and as a tool for the alteration of behavior. This is the one closest to the modern-day small group. The band was a group of four people of the same gender for facilitating affective redirection. The group environment was one of ruthless honesty and frank openness, in which its members sought to improve their attitudes, emotions, feelings, intentions, and affections. Hence, Henderson succinctly explains: “It could be said metaphorically that the society aimed for the head, the class meeting for the hands, and the band for the heart.”

The penitent band was specifically designed for those who lacked the will power or personal discipline to live up to the demands of the class meeting but still had a desire to overcome their personal problems, primarily alcoholism in that British historical context. The primary goal was to restore its members to the mainstream of the society.

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21 Ibid., 112.
and its regular channels of growth. The select society was the uppermost group in the instructional hierarchy where a “select” company of men and women were hand-picked by Wesley to model or exemplify what Methodism was all about. Although this elite corps was touted to be the standard-bearers of the Methodist movement, membership in the select society was not allowed to be considered as a prize for the attainment of “perfection,” nor a static plateau at the end of the development process, but rather an intense association to facilitate further striving for growth and Christian service.

So Wesley was able to build a framework to shepherd the flock utilizing small groups, while at the same time develop sub-specialized groups to meet special needs, as well as provide training for leaders to emerge through this pathway. Henderson thus attributes the success of Methodism: “The genius of Wesleyan revival was an instructional tool, more so than a theological distinctive or an organizational structure.”

Again, Henderson acknowledges: “There is a unity to his system and symmetry of design which kept the disparate elements in balance.”

Henderson also gleans four leadership principles from the Methodist training philosophy. The first principle is that of using lay leadership. The second principle is appointed, not elected, leadership. The third principle is that leaders were recognized and trained, but not made. It has often been said that Methodism trained men in ministry, not for the ministry. The fourth principle is qualification by faithfulness.

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22 Ibid., 15.
23 Ibid., 139.
24 Ibid., 147-153.
Types of Small Groups

The Methodist paradigm is a good reference point for thinking of a small group structure that will address the diversified needs of a post-modern culture. The categories of designed purpose may be numerous. Julie Gorman suggests several major agendas with representative types of groups that carry out the primary goal (see Table 2).25

Table 2. Types of Small Groups26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Belonging</th>
<th>For Knowing</th>
<th>For Healing</th>
<th>For Serving</th>
<th>For Enriching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>New Believer</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Leadership Training</td>
<td>Covenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Member</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Recovery Awareness</td>
<td>Mission/Ministry</td>
<td>Affinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Church</td>
<td>Discipleship</td>
<td>Self-help recovery</td>
<td>Task/Project</td>
<td>Worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Group Counseling</td>
<td></td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[i^2\] Ministry

Another paradigm worth noting is the personal \(i^2\) ministry advocated by Robert Lewis in the small group system at Fellowship Bible Church in Little Rock, Arkansas. In his book, *The Church of Irresistible Influence*, \(i^2\) stands for “irresistible influence,” in which he argues convincingly of the important role of the Church being a two-way bridge to the post-modern world. He warns: “Bridges give life through two-way movement!

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25 The information in this section has been gleaned from the work of Gorman, *Community That is Christian*, 233.

26 Several groups are described briefly in Appendix 11 as a sampling of meeting the holistic needs of spiritual formation for people at different stages of pilgrimage and their special needs. This will also pose the challenge for putting the right kinds of leaders with the right groups.
Without its own bridges to the world, church life—in time—fades into isolation, self-congratulation and irrelevance.27

The Christian life is in the journey that matures fully, not just in growing and learning, but in serving as well. The Christian life is intended to crescendo around each person finding his or her place in the constantly unfolding fabric of kingdom work that engages the unique gifts and abilities with which each person has been endowed by God (1 Peter 4:10-11). Structures that ignore the development of this critical element of the Christian life will, in time, find people bored, restless, or stagnant.

Hence, Robert Lewis claims, “To counteract this, Fellowship Bible Church created a small group structure that intentionally processes people toward finding a personal ministry of influence” (see Appendix 12).28 And Lewis concludes: “Christianity becomes a continuing adventure, just as it was designed to be . . . many people finally connect with a special cause they are passionate about.”29

Conclusion

Finally, the balance in keeping the essential ingredients in tension in any small group is the key to success, especially the small group leader who has learned to master the skill of a holistic composition towards various challenges in life. Regardless of whether it is a general small group or a special needs group, these challenges are the

28 Ibid., 79.
29 Ibid., 85.
same towards transformation. Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, co-authors of *Walking the Small Group Tightrope*, express it this way: “The principles of polarity management suggest that in every area of life we must learn to manage the tension between two good things rather than choose one thing over another.”  

The authors summarize the six challenges that should be met in a small group, how these challenges pose a balancing act for leaders and members, and finally, the end purpose of each challenge (see Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge to Meet</th>
<th>Tightrope to Walk</th>
<th>Purpose to Achieve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Truth—Life</td>
<td>Spiritual Transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Care—Discipleship</td>
<td>Intentional Shepherding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Friendship—Accountability</td>
<td>Authentic Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconciliation</td>
<td>Kindness—Confrontation</td>
<td>Healthy Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Task—People</td>
<td>Serving Together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Openness—Intimacy</td>
<td>Inclusive Community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, for the training of such holistic leaders, learning the balancing act of walking the tightrope, Donahue and Robinson conclude:

Christ called us not to control a community but simply to enter it. We have no mandate to control people like we manage systems, checking off little boxes and systematically handing out little flash cards . . . The adventure and thrills come when a community enters the tunnel of chaos that is inherent in all authentic relational encounters. We must name our reality, express our needs and desires, and then courageously pursue becoming a true community.  

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30 Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, *Walking the Small Group Tightrope: meeting the challenges every group faces* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 16.

31 Ibid., 164. See Appendix 13 for the results of achieving these purposes.

32 Ibid., 168-169.
CHAPTER 7
CULTIVATION OF PERSONAL FORMATION

Spiritual Formation through Practice of Spiritual Disciplines

A discipline for the spiritual life is, when history is over, nothing but an activity undertaken to bring believers into more effective cooperation with Christ and his kingdom. Peterson puts it this way in his translation of 2 Peter 1:5-9:

So don’t lose a minute in building on what you’ve been, complementing your basic faith with good character, spiritual understanding, alert discipline, passionate patience, reverent wonder, warm friendliness, and generous love, each dimension fitting into and developing others. With these qualities active and growing in your lives, no grass will grow under your feet; no day will pass without its reward as you mature in your experience of our Master Jesus. Without these qualities you can’t see what’s right before you, oblivious that your old sinful life has been wiped off the books.¹

In order not to err by thinking that these can be achieved by human effort, people need to be reminded that grace (charis) is gift (charisma). To grow in grace is to grow in what is given to someone of God and by God. The disciplines are, then, in the clearest sense, a means to that grace and also to those gifts. Hence, Willard cautions: “Spiritual disciplines, ‘exercises unto godliness,’ are only activities undertaken to make us capable of receiving more of his life and power without harm to ourselves or others.”² Richard Foster, in his classic, The Celebration of Discipline, also concurs:

That is the way with the Spiritual Disciplines—they are a way of sowing to the Spirit. The Disciplines are God’s way of getting us into the ground; they put us where He can work within us and transform us. By themselves the Spiritual Disciplines can do nothing; they can only get us to the place where something can be done . . . In this regard it would be proper to speak of “the way of disciplined

¹ Peterson, The Message, 2 Peter 1:5-9.
² Willard, The Spirit of the Disciplines, 156.
grace.” It is “grace” because it is free; it is “disciplined” because there is something for us to do.³

Peace summarizes the goal of spiritual disciplines as follows: “Spiritual disciplines are never an end in themselves; not a set of rules; not a sign of spirituality. They facilitate our ongoing transformation and create the foundation for ministry.”⁴

There are several classifications of the spiritual disciplines (see Appendix 14 for classifications set forth by Eugene Peterson, Richard Foster, Dallas Willard, and see Appendix 15 for an additional classification by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun). For the purpose of this ministry focus paper, the classification set forth by Jan Johnson will be used as it is linked with a practical Bible study guide series that has already been adopted by TCCC as teaching tool in the Sunday school class setting.

*The Bible Study Series on Spiritual Disciplines* by Jan Johnson comprises of sixteen themes under eight booklets each covering two themes.⁵ Each booklet has six sessions of Bible study, thus totaling forty-eight sessions, quite ideal for a full year curriculum of a Sunday school class. Alternatively, selective booklets can be used in a retreat setting for a specific area of teaching and training, especially when the experience is to be enhanced with exercises. Each booklet also includes chapters on guidelines for Leaders and Study Notes with ample suggestions for transformation exercises. This is the set that TCCC has adopted for use beginning in 2008 because it is biblical, practical and

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⁵ Jan Johnson, *Spiritual Disciplines Bible Studies* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003). There are eight booklets, each covering two themes.
manageable. In addition, the Bible Study format is conducive to interactive sharing, building of community and cultivating consciousness to be shaped by the Word of God. The themes include: solitude and silence; prayer and listening; study and meditation; simplicity and fasting; reflection and confession; community and submission; service and secrecy; and worship and celebration.

“Solitude and Silence” focuses on spiritual formation in six sessions. The rushing pace of life makes it difficult to find a moment to oneself. Yet believers long to set aside time to be alone with God. How can one best spend that time? What will be the results in one’s life? This guide looks at the disciplines of solitude and silence before God. Developing these disciplines guides believers toward a more interactive relationship with God in which they can hear God’s voice and allow that voice to shape their lives.

“Prayer and Listening” focuses on spiritual formation in six sessions. Most people have experienced the “laundry list” phase of spiritual life, in which praying means giving God an agenda of needs to handle. How do believers move to having real conversations with God? How do they hear what God is saying? How can they make their experience of God being with them part of everyday life? This guide covers the disciplines of prayer and of practicing God’s presence. Going deeper in these areas helps believers to draw closer to God in everything they do.

“Study and Meditation” focuses on spiritual formation in six sessions. Reading the Bible is one of the most important disciplines believers can engage in. Why is Bible study so significant? How can attitude and approach affect what one gets out of reading? What does it mean to “meditate” on Scriptures? How can meditating on God’s Word
change people? The way believers approach the Bible affects their interaction with God.
Learning to immerse oneself in God’s thoughts through study and meditation allows one
to go deeper into God’s Word and live in a more Christlike way.

“Simplicity and Fasting” focuses on spiritual formation and emotional formation
in six sessions. It is said, “Less is more.” What would happen if people spent less, spoke
less, or ate less? What is the purpose of fasting? What are the benefits of leading a simple
life? This study guide explores the disciplines of simplicity and fasting, which are foreign
ideas these days. Yet leading a simple life can help believers focus on what is truly
important. Fasting helps one feast on God. It clears the mind of clutter so that one can
become hungry for the things that really matter.

“Reflection and Confession” focuses on emotional formation and relational
formation in six sessions. Confessing one’s sins is not easy. People are often reluctant to
admit their errors. Why do believers need to admit their sins? How can confessing sin to
God and to other people affect one’s daily life? This guide investigates the practices of
reflecting and confessing. Though it is often difficult, engaging in these disciplines
allows one to recognize, savor and respond to God’s abundant love and forgiveness.

“Community and Submission” focuses on relational formation and missional
formation in six sessions. Nearly everyone is part of a community, be it in the workplace,
a family or a church. Yet often these communities fall short of what God calls them to be.
What does God desire for one’s relationships with other people? How can believers build
true community? How does God use community to build believers into Christlikeness?
This guide covers the disciplines of community and submission. As believers practice submission to God, they develop into people who can build true communities.

“Service and Secrecy” focuses on relational formation and missional formation in six sessions. Serving others can be exhausting. So what is it that motivates people to serve? It is easy to serve for one’s own glory, to become wrapped up in one’s own goodness. Yet God challenges believers to serve not out of love of ourselves but to develop the heart of Christ for others. This guide explores the disciplines of serving and secrecy. Service done in secret can eliminate prideful motivations and help believers enjoy partnering with God. They learn to “be” even as they “do.”

“Worship and Celebration” focuses on all four aspects of formation. For some, worship means a dull sermon and lifeless music. For others it is a joyful highlight to the week. How can believers enrich their worship experience? Engaging in worship and celebration is a way of responding to God’s love. These disciplines can help people long for God and celebrate the life of God. Each theme covers examples, activities, and results, with Scripture for Bible studies linked to each of these.6

Emotional Formation through Facing Brokenness and Committing to Vulnerability

Cultivation of emotional formation aims at producing transparent leaders who are open with God and honest with others. The approach is to learn and practice two spiritual disciplines conducive to this inward journey: praying the Psalms and journaling.

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6 See Appendix 16 for the topics covered under “Solitude and Silence” as an example of the format.
A sampling of the most candid characters in the Bible include: Jonah, who was angry with God (Jonah 4:1-3); Elijah, who was afraid and ran away from God (1 Kings 19:3, 4, 10); David, who felt abandoned by God (Psalms 10:1-4); Jeremiah, who felt deceived by God (Jeremiah 20:7-9); and Paul, who still showed tender affection despite feeling let down by the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 6:11-12). Yet, all these leaders learned to be transparent with God and with others. Their honesty with God led to breakthroughs in their lives and firmer faith. Their honesty with others allowed them to tell stories of struggles which provided inspiration and modeling. Honesty with God, which is vertical transparency, is best cultivated by a candid prayer life; and honesty with others, horizontal transparency, is best cultivated by the practice of journaling.

Philip Yancey encourages honest prayer in his article “Grappling with Prayer.” He refers to Abraham’s intercessory prayer in which he bargained with God for the number of righteous persons in Genesis 18: 16-33. Yancey asks, “Why would God, the all-powerful ruler of the universe, resort to a style of relating to humans that seems like haggling?” His answer is: “God invites argument and struggle, and often yields, especially when the point of contention is God’s mercy. In the very process of arguing, we may, in fact, take on God’s own qualities.” Yancey concludes by quoting Archbishop Richard Trench: “Prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance; it is laying

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8 Ibid., 104.
hold of his highest willingness,” and E. M. Bounds: “Prayer in its highest form and
grandest success assumes the attitude of a wrestler with God.”

Learning to Pray Through the Psalms

TCCC will use an eleven-session series based upon James Sire’s Learning to Pray
through the Psalms either in a Sunday school setting or in a small group setting. The
book comes with a guide for small group leaders as well as study questions for
interaction. The eleven sessions include: (1) Becoming Right with God—Psalm 32; (2)
Waiting for the Lord—Psalm 130; (3) Night Thoughts—Psalm 4; (4) A Morning
Meditation—Psalm 5; (5) Thirsting for God—Psalms 42-43; (6) A Plea for Deliverance
from Slander—Psalm 7; (7) A Blazing Song of Joy—Psalm 84; (8) Praying Our Anger—
Psalm 137; (9) The God Who Knows Me—Psalm 139; (10) Our Mighty Fortress—Psalm
46; and (11) Teach Us to Pray. During the class and afterwards, participants will practice
by reading one psalm each day to complete all 150 psalms in a three-month period.

Journaling Practice

Journaling is the soul’s sketchbook. Douglas Rumford, author of Soulshaping,
says, “A journal is like a spiritual diary, with emphasis on the condition and responses of

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9 Ibid., 106.

10 James Sire, Learning to Pray Through the Psalms, 7, Table of Contents.
Journaling enhances the inward journey by allowing the Spirit to illumine the dark recesses of the soul (Psalm 139:23-24). Journaling helps people pay attention to God. It is a way of hearing and responding to God. Journaling helps people understand their unfolding stories. Knowing one’s story helps that individual to see what God has been doing in the past, is doing now, and is calling him or her to do in the future. The book, *Spiritual Journaling: Recording Your Journey toward God*, by Richard Peace, will be employed, once again in a Sunday school class or small group setting. There are eight sessions within the book, all beginning with “Using a Journal to”: (1) Capture Your History; (2) Understand the Present; (3) Recover Your Past; (4) Interact with Your History; (5) Realize Your Future; (6) Explore Your Emotional Responses; (7) Nurture Your Spiritual Life; and (8) Reflect on the Bible.12

To augment Peace’s book, I have created six additional studies. Each study is based upon a biblical character: (1) Jonah’s anger (Jonah 4:1-3); (2) Elijah’s fear and depression (1 Kings 19:1-9); (3) David’s disappointment (Psalm 10:1-4); (4) Jeremiah’s burning passion (Jeremiah 20:7-9); (5) Paul’s affectionate appeal (2 Corinthians 6:11-12); and (6) Habakkuk’s complaints (Habakkuk-whole book).

The overall aim of emotional formation is to increase transparency by extending the “Johari window” (see Figure 4) described by Paul Hershey and Kenneth Blanchard.13

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By receiving feedback from others and increased sharing with others, the boundary of the public self is extended to the other three quadrants of private, blind and unknown self. Thus, the journaling practice is helping to enhance authenticity.

Figure 4. The Johari Window of Transparency

Relational Formation through Building Spiritual Friendships

Potential leader recruits will be required to join discipleship triads (which will be described in more detail in Chapter 8 on “Cultivation of Corporate Formation”). This requirement is in place in order to enhance relational formation. Two practices will be

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used to brew such an atmosphere in the church in general: (1) In any given regular small group of eight to twelve people, part of the session should be subdivided into groups of three or four for more intimate sharing; and (2) In church prayer meetings, the participants are asked to huddle into groups of three or four.

There are five reasons given by Neil Cole as to why such discipleship triads (or “Life Transformation Groups”) are the best context for relational formation building towards transforming lives. The first reason is community (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). Cole explains that life change does not occur in a vacuum; it happens in relationship with others. From the beginning God has said that it is not good to be alone. People need each other for strength and support (Proverbs 27:17). The second reason is accountability (1 Timothy 5:19). Few things would get done in life without accountability. The New Testaments lists at least twenty-eight types of “one-another” commands. There is no doubt that believers need one another to live the life Christ intends. The third reason is confidentiality (Matthew 18:15-17). It is easier to maintain confidentiality in a group of only two or three rather than a larger group of ten or twelve. The Lord specifically designated that two or three is best for the confession of sin. The fourth reason is flexibility (Matthew 18:20). It is much easier to coordinate the calendars of only two or three rather than a typical small group of ten or twelve. A triadic group can meet anywhere. The fifth and final reason is reproducibility (2 Timothy 2:2). It is easier to reproduce a smaller group than a larger and more complex entity. Perhaps that is why the

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command is to make more disciples rather than cell groups or churches (Matthew 28:18-20). Transformed disciples in community are the basic unit for the kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{16}

In the spirit of James 5:16 (“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed”), Cole has prepared a list of character conversation questions which will be asked of one another in weekly meetings of accountability (Proverbs 27:17) (see Appendix 17). They are designed to stimulate conversations of character and confession of sin in a safe environment which values honesty, vulnerability, confidentiality, and grace.

**Missional Formation through Being Equipped as Servants**

Jan Johnson quotes Hildegard of Bingen, saying: “To serve is to be ‘a feather on the breath of God’” to reinforce that doing flows out of being.\textsuperscript{17} People burn out on service when their doing overshadows their being. Believers often do good things that good folks are supposed to do without remaining inwardly connected with God. Running on no reserves, they wear themselves out. But when they stay connected to God through disciplines such as solitude, worship, prayer and community, their inner selves are filled with thanksgiving and remain alert. Practicing these disciplines on a regular basis provides the opportunity to pour one’s heart out to God when one is troubled, and then service remains passionate. This back-and-forth process and rhythmic cycle of spirituality and ministry brings about compassion and patience, and people serve with a full heart.

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\textsuperscript{17} Jan Johnson, *Service & Secrecy: Spiritual Disciplines Bible Studies* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 13.
On the other hand, a spiritual leader who has successfully journeyed through the minefields of emotional formation must inevitably come to a place of either hoarding the riches found or offering them to others. The nature of the gospel is to take one’s pain and suffering, submit it to the redemptive work of Christ, and then to promote healing among others as part of one’s calling in the mission of God.

Similarly, putting emphasis on relational formation, so that friendships are treasured and people are valued not for what they do but for who they are, is especially pertinent in today’s evangelism approach in the postmodern world. Hence, believers need to rid themselves of their guilt-ridden motivational strategies. Robert Webber highlights this point: “Postmodern church needs to be characterized by ‘humility.’ Humility is a quiet, patient evangelism that not only ‘tells’ the way but ‘shows’ the way.”18 While mission has often been done in un-relational ways in the past, it is now more paramount than ever that community bonding and building is the medium and means where people are to be reached. Community is an inclusive concept. There is a paradigm shift of allowing people to “belong” before they “believe.” This is especially prevalent in the so called “emerging churches” today that are made up of younger constituents.

In order to remedy the deficiency of mentoring and modeling in service, due to the neglect of relational bonding, two practices will be introduced at TCCC that will address this need. First, small group leaders will be mentored by small group coaches. And second, a more mature discipler will lead and act as mentor in a discipleship triad.

This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8 on “Cultivation of Corporate Formation.”

Icenogle has developed a five-stage discipleship pathway for the First Presbyterian Church of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The third stage is called, “Teamed as Gifted,” and refers to the calling of a disciple to ministry; and the fifth stage is called, “Tempered for Good,” referring to the calling a disciple to mission. Under a consciously constructed discipleship philosophy model, Icenogle presents items on a checklist for both the disciple and the discipler (leader) to learn and practice at each stage (see Tables 4 and 5). These checklists show the ingredients of missional formation that are couched in a mentoring/modeling context.

Table 4. Checklist for Missional Formation for Both Disciples and Leaders, Stage 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Discipleship</th>
<th>What Disciples Learn &amp; Practice</th>
<th>What Leaders Learn &amp; Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teamed as Gifted Called to Ministry</td>
<td>Discover Spiritual Giftedness Discover Natural Giftedness Experiment &amp; use Giftedness Join a Ministry Team Join a Mission Team Become an Apprentice Leader Learn Basic Cross-culture Skills Commit to Serve &amp; Give Generously Venture into Service</td>
<td>Help Others Discover Their Gifts Learn to Lead a Team Lead a Team in Ministry Lead a Team in Mission Apprentice A Leader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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19 Gareth Icenogle, “Corporate Disciple-making Models,” Lecture notes from CF765 “Growing a Disciple-making Congregation,” Fuller Theological Seminary, August 1-12, 2005. The five stages of discipleship, the so called “TG” series, are: Touched by Grace (Called to Follow Jesus); Trained in Groups (Called to Community); Teamed as Gifted (Called to Ministry); Tested with Grief (Called to Intimacy) and Tempered for Good (Called to Mission).
Table 5. Checklist for Missional Formation for Both Disciples and Leaders, Stage 520

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Discipleship</th>
<th>What Disciples Learn &amp; Practice</th>
<th>What Leaders Learn &amp; Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

George Cladis, in his book, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, uses *perichoresis* (which literally means “circle dance”) as the image of teamwork of the triune God. Thus Cladis advocates:

A perichoretic image of the Trinity is that of the three persons of God in constant movement in a circle that implies intimacy, equality, unity yet distinction, and love. . . . The depiction of God as perichoretic Trinity is an excellent biblical and theological model for building meaningful ministry teams in the church of the twenty-first century.21

Cladis suggests seven qualities of the dance of leadership in building graceful ministry teams for missional formation. They are described as follows in his chapter headings: (1) The Covenanting Team, (2) The Visionary Team, (3) The Culture-creating

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20 Ibid.

The Collaborative Team, (5) The Trusting Team, (6) The Empowering Team, and (7) The Learning Team.\(^\text{22}\)

**The Precedence of Being Face to Face with God in Personal Formation and Leadership Development**

Although the aforesaid four dimensions of formation are equally important and theoretically sequential in nature in an ideal setting, life is not always so perfect. The more common paradigm displayed in Scriptures often comes through one’s one-on-one encounters with God, often in a personal “wilderness” experience. There is no fanfare of the spotlight or even the assistance of a small group. For Joseph, Moses, John the Baptist, Jesus and Paul, transformation and leadership development took place as a result of their personal encounters with God.

**Joseph**

Joseph’s life demonstrates the law of process in which leadership develops daily, not in a day. Becoming a leader is a lot like investing in the stock market. If one hopes to make a fortune in a day, that person is doomed. It is what one does day by day, over the long haul, which matters most. If one continually develops leadership, letting one’s “assets” compound over time, the inevitable results is growth.

In Joseph’s case, his wilderness experience was due to the jealousy of his brothers, selling him as slave to Egypt and later causing him to be unjustly jailed. Despite the

\(^{22}\) Ibid., 31-154.
spiraling downfall, it was his alert consciousness of God’s presence, thus avoiding sin (Genesis 39:9), and unwavering commitment to obey God which merits the recurring refrain that “the Lord was with him” (Genesis 39: 2, 3, 21, 23) regardless of adverse circumstances. Such personal formation actually accrues interest, for at the right time, God brings his ascent to be the most powerful official just under Pharaoh in the land.

Leadership has so many facets: respect, experience, emotional strength, people skills, discipline, vision, momentum, timing, and so on. That is why leaders require so much seasoning to be effective. Joseph’s character development exhibits all of the above through his wilderness years from the time of being sold as a slave at age seventeen until becoming prime minister at age thirty. His climactic reunion with his siblings took place at age thirty-nine. Through it all, the wilderness experience is worthwhile because character breeds perspective.

Joseph puts his entire life in perspective in the final chapter of Genesis (Genesis 50:15-21). During the height of a terrible famine, his brothers humbly come before him and bow down, just as he had predicted decades earlier. But instead of using his enormous power to punish them, he said, “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives” (Genesis 50:20).

It was Joseph’s godly character that enabled him to refrain from exacting vengeance. Because Joseph had spent years in God’s character-building course, he could maintain a proper perspective and use his power to bless his brothers rather than curse them. How a leader deals with the circumstances of life explains much about his or her
character. Crisis does not necessarily make character, but it certainly reveals it. Adversity is a crossroads that makes a person choose one of two paths: character or compromise. Every time a leader chooses character, he or she becomes stronger even if that choice brings negative consequences (which is what took place when Joseph ended in prison). The development of character is at the heart of leadership development.

Moses

Moses’ wilderness experience spanned forty years in the Midian desert where he worked as a shepherd after he fled from the Egyptian palace (Exodus 2:11-25). This experience taught him to be humble with a servant attitude, but totally dependent on God. Many leaders want to climb the corporate ladder, hoping that freedom and power wait at the top. They do not realize that leadership requires sacrifice. Moses, in his calling experience at the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-4:13), demonstrates the law of sacrifice: that a leader must give up in order to go up.

Four significant experiences and attitudes reveal how Moses was able to give up so much and make such great sacrifices without growing bitter or resentful toward God. These four attributes also made him willing to return to Egypt as God’s servant after he had enjoyed the best the country had to offer. They are: 1) his time alone with God; 2) his honesty with God; 3) his hunger for God; and 4) his brokenness due to God’s intervention in his life.

First, Moses was alone with God. Had Moses stayed in Egypt, perhaps he would not have listened when God had called him. But Moses’ exile in Midian gave him forty
years of reflection time. When God finally appeared to him in the burning bush, Moses had grown quiet enough to hear God’s voice. Leaders today spend too little time alone with God. Most seem continually on the go and rarely quiet themselves.

Second, Moses was honest with God. By the time Moses met God at the burning bush, no trace remained of his cockiness from his previous time in Egypt. He knew his weaknesses. When God told Moses that he would bring the people out of Egypt, the chastened man replied, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” (Exodus 3:11). Only as an older man, humble before God, could Moses be of any use to God.

Third, Moses was hungry for God. For a person to become truly hungry for God, different experiences will take place. Some desire to know God even from childhood. A personal tragedy may realign the priorities of others. And some never turn to God. For Moses, it took four decades in the wilderness. It is possible that Moses had given up all hope of doing something worthwhile with his life before God finally spoke to him. A person cannot be staunchly self-reliant and hungry for God at the same time.

Finally, Moses was broken by God. God did not force himself or his will on Moses. God waited for Moses to willingly come to him (Exodus 3:4). Once Moses turned to God, he could be broken. Brokenness involves two things: removing inappropriate pride and self-reliance and building healthy God-reliance. God already tamed Moses’ self-reliance and pride in the desert, but to create trust he had to break the man’s fears: fears concerning himself (Moses doubted his own value—Exodus 3:11); fears concerning God (Moses wanted to know God’s name—Exodus 3:13); fears concerning others (how
God’s people would respond—Exodus 4:1) and fears concerning his ability (Moses doubted both his speech and ability—Exodus 4:10, 13). With his willfulness broken, his fears overcome, and his purpose reaffirmed, Moses finally placed himself in the hands of God.

Again, in leadership development, there is nothing more powerful than modeling. Moses sets the example of intimacy with God (Exodus 33:7-11). The people watched him as he spent time with God, interceding for them in intimate, personal communion—and it changed them more than any sermon could have done. Leaders need to model like Moses did. First, he separated himself regularly (Exodus 33:7). He came apart from the crowd. The key phrase is: “outside the camp.” Second, Moses sought God with all his heart (Exodus 33:7). He pursued truth over popularity. The key phrase is: “sought the Lord.” Third, Moses was watched by the public (Exodus 33: 8). He was willing to take a risk, even though it felt intimidating to be watched and scrutinized. The key phrase is: “they watched Moses.” Fourth, he learned to listen and obey God’s voice (Exodus 33: 9). He practiced the patience of silence and submission. The key phrase is: “the Lord talked with Moses.” Fifth, Moses entered into covenant partnership with God (Exodus 33:10, 11). He was faithful and committed, a trustworthy partner with God. The key phrase is: “the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.”

The outcome of Moses’ commitment to God was powerful. Exodus 34:29 declares, “When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had
spoken with the Lord.” Moses’ personal formation had corporate ramifications in that he shone God’s glory on his people.

John the Baptist

The best single word to describe John the Baptist might be “passion.” John’s passion began even before he was born. He leaped in his mother’s womb when Mary spoke of her pregnancy (Luke 1:41). His passion for God grew so great that before he began his public ministry, he lived alone in the desert, wearing camel’s hair and a leather belt and eating locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3:4). He was a radical and unafraid to let anyone know it. His formation took place in the wilderness, as he was to fulfill Isaiah’s prophecy as the herald to prepare the way of the Messiah by being the voice in the wilderness (Mark 1:2-3).

John needed passion to fulfill his God-given calling. Every pioneer needs passion. Pioneers cannot be satisfied with maintenance, for they have nothing yet to maintain. They create from nothing. Common folk often view them as eccentric, but their passion attracts other pioneers, just as John attracted Jesus to the Jordan. Six qualities gave John his passion. First, he spent time in solitude. Before John began his public ministry, he lived in the wilderness and spent much time with God. He boiled with the presence of God and could hardly stay quiet. Second, he felt consumed with his mission. John knew of Jesus’ identity and his soon advent. John urgently tried to prepare the way for him. Third, he possessed a magnetic temperament and wiring. John is described as a voice crying out (Luke 3:4) and as an exhorter (Luke 3:18). Like a magnet, he attracted many
but repelled others. Fourth, he possessed a strong sense of justice. When people asked John what they should do, he told them to do justice (Luke 3:10-14). This hunger for justice drove him. He would not sit still until he saw results. Fifth, he saw things as black and white, similar to others with prophetic gifts. While this may sound narrow-minded to many, this is part of what gave John his passion. Sixth, he felt dissatisfied with anything but action. John was a doer. He did not want people to merely talk about repentance and faith. He told the Pharisees they should bring forth fruit to prove their repentance.

**Jesus**

The Holy Spirit led Jesus out into the wilderness right after his baptism by John, so at least part of his preparation for ministry came from a wilderness experience. Quality leaders can almost always point to a wilderness experience as part of their leadership formation, and Jesus was no exception. During this time, motives are purified, backbone solidifies, and callings become clarified.

The devil tempted Jesus for forty days in the wilderness—a screening process to see what Jesus would give up and how he would trust God to provide. Nouwen writes of the three temptations faced by Jesus that leaders still face today. First, Jesus faced the temptation to be self-sufficient (Matthew 4:2-4). Jesus did not become controlling, even with his legitimate needs. He trusted God. Second, Jesus faced the temptation to be spectacular (Matthew 4: 5-7). He refused to become a stunt man. He did not perform in order to become a celebrity. Third, Jesus faced the temptation to be powerful (Matthew 4: 8-10). He would not take a shortcut to gain power or worship. By studying Jesus’ method
for combating these familiar perpetual temptations of legitimate needs, gifting, and fame, he will empower leaders today to overcome.

Paul

Paul changed from the “number one” persecutor and Judaizer to “number one” apostle as a result of his Damascus road encounter with the risen Lord. Yet it was his wilderness experiences that became pivotal in his leadership formation. These came in two forms: first, his active pursuit of spiritual experience in Arabia (Galatians 1:17) where his calling was reaffirmed, and second, his prison experiences, where he penned the great epistles classics that became such treasures for edification.

In terms of leadership formation, Paul integrates all elements of spiritual, emotional, relational and missional formation in a holistic expression. This is especially evidenced in the books of Philippians and Ephesians. In Philippians 1:12-18, Paul models spiritual and missional formation. Paul stayed on mission, even in prison. Paul might have been forgiven had he chosen to take a sabbatical as he sat in prison, awaiting his trial. Yet he used even this opportunity to advance the gospel (Philippians 1:12). Paul was a leader who never drifted from his mission. Paul’s sense of purpose kept him in the battle as he sat in prison. He models the following: 1) A purpose will provide motivation; 2) A purpose will keep one’s priorities straight; 3) A purpose will develop one’s potential; 4) A purpose will give one power to live in the present; and 5) A purpose will help one evaluate his or her progress.
In Philippians 2: 1-11, Paul writes of Jesus as a model of spiritual, emotional, and relational formation. He uses Jesus as the ultimate example of servant leadership. After urging his audience to humble themselves and live selflessly, he reminds them of Christ’s incarnation and crucifixion. Here the Ultimate Leader made the ultimate sacrifice. He left the glories of heaven and the highest position in heaven, not only to join his creation, but to take on the lowest form of the creation. Jesus stepped downward through six levels modeling to us the law of sacrifice: 1) he gave up his divine form; 2) he emptied himself of any rights; 3) he became a man; 4) he became a servant; 5) he was obedient to the point of death; and 6) he died a terrible kind of death—a death on the cross.

In Philippians 4:11-13, Paul modeled spiritual, emotional and missional formation. Paul maintained a positive attitude of contentment yet confidence even on rotten days. He teaches that: 1) attitude has little to do with circumstances; 2) attitudes can change, just like circumstances; 3) attitudes can be improved if one learns the secret; and 4) attitudes have a source for their strength.

In Ephesians 4:1-8, Paul models relational and missional formation. Paul builds unity amidst diversity. Paul reminds the Ephesians of the attitude of the individual players (Ephesians 4:1-3), then discusses the attitude of the corporate body (Ephesians 3:4-6). Paul insists there is only one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father. He says each player has been given certain grace and particular gifts. Paul is a coach who is building his team. Leaders today should ask themselves the following questions as they build diverse groups into unified teams: 1) Am I building people, or building my kingdom and using people? 2) Do I care enough to
confront people when it will make a difference? 3) Am I listening with more than my ears? 4) Am I asking the right questions to develop the right relationships? 5) What are the major strengths of each individual? 6) Have I placed a high priority on their jobs? 7) Have I shown the value they will receive from this work? and 8) Are their goals compatible with mine?

In Ephesians 4:12-16 Paul models relational and missional formation. Equipping for ministry is the leader’s job. Equipping is a tough job, much harder than shepherding. Paul explains the goal of the shepherd (Ephesians 4:12) and the goal of the sheep (4:13), then describes the result of cooperation (4:14-16). If leaders wish to equip their people, they must: 1) CARE for them (Communication, Affirmation, Recognition, and Example); 2) work on their weaknesses, but work out their strengths; 3) give them myself (time, energy, and focus); 4) give them ownership of the ministry; 5) become a resource person (atmosphere, training, support, tools); 6) make expectations clear; 7) eliminate unnecessary burdens; and 8) catch them doing something good, then reward them.

The common denominator of these five biblical characters is that they all had shaping journeys in their respective wilderness experiences. They met God, heard his Word and were touched by the Holy Spirit. Spiritual formation is still paramount, and is accomplished essentially through the medium of the life-giving words of Christ which have become Scripture and are breathed by the Spirit giving life. The other aspects of spiritual formation, that is, emotional, relational and ultimately missional formation, will flow out naturally just like the promise of streams of living water pouring out from within a Spirit-filled person (John 7: 38-39).
CHAPTER 8
CULTIVATION OF CORPORATE FORMATION

While there is no particular order that formation must take in the life of a spiritual leader, the order presented in the previous chapter (spiritual, emotional, relational, and then missional) is meant to provide insight and understanding for leaders who are newly embarking on a pilgrimage of holistic formation. Each area of formation as presented opens up into next area in such a way that it adds to the depth of one’s formation.

Spiritual formation is the overarching category that centers the life of the spiritual leader. An extensive spiritual formation will always bring challenges and healing to one’s emotional formation. For example, it is impossible to integrate the humility and servant nature of the Lord Jesus into one’s life and continue to lead with patterns of grandiosity and narcissism. At the same time, true humility is not the result of self-deprecation. Realistic self-assessment is the “sober judgment” Paul speaks of when he urges that “you not . . . think of yourselves more highly [or more lowly] than you ought to think” (Romans 12:3). The result of this self-acceptance is that one can appreciate the gifts of others without feeling threatened by them. With no need to put others down in order to build oneself up, it is possible to humbly work with other people, focusing on the task rather than on oneself. Relational formation is, then, the necessary result of self-examination, and people are God’s greatest resource. Finally, the more time one spends with people, the more one will hear and sense God’s heart for all people, which leads to missional formation. For the mission of God is to redeem every person to himself. Missional formation is the expected outcome of a life that has been formed in spirit, in
emotions, and in relationships. Yet the more this process is being engaged, whether along
a linear spectrum the first time or in repetitive movements of the cycle, it is inevitable
that there will be more and more corporate formation taking place since the ultimate aim
is to enhance community. At TCCC, corporate formation will come in the two groups of
leadership training: the training of the small group leaders and the training of the
discipleship triad leaders.

**Training of Small Group Leaders through Mentoring and Coaching**

**Enlisting Small Group Leaders**

In addition to the existing small group leaders who are required to go through the
qualification training (this will be described in Chapter 9 on “Implementation Strategy
and Assessment”), people with core leadership characteristics are being sought out and
encouraged to participate in training. Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson define these core
leadership characteristics with the acrostic in the phrase “Look at Who They A.R.E”:
Affections, Reputation, and Expectations.¹ “Affections” reflect passion for God, people,
truth, and the church, which is the mark that a person whose heart is in line with God’s
heart. “Reputation” dictates that the candidates’ need to be put through reference checks
to ensure that there are no character issues. “Expectations” answer the question of
whether the candidate understands the commitment necessary to be in participating

¹ Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, *Building a Church of Small Groups: A place where nobody stands alone* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 124.
church membership, submit to spiritual authority and pursue a lifelong learning posture.²

At TCCC, potential leaders are also screened in terms of their spiritual, emotional, and social qualifications (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. TCCC Screening Process for Potential Leaders³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual qualifications:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are they self-feeders? (Do they consistently spend time nurturng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their own spiritual growth through time in God’s Word and in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prayer?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are they eager to learn? (Do they actively participate in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spiritual discussions?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do they share the vision of small group?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional qualifications:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are they secure enough to be vulnerable and honest with the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are they emotionally stable? (Are they aware of their own</td>
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<tr>
<td>strengths and weaknesses and not subject to mood swings that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affect the group dynamic?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do they respond to confrontation and character development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defensively?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsively?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social (Relational) qualifications:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do they openly participate without dominating? (If this is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an issue, how did they respond to confrontation on the issue?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are they able to listen to others in a caring way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are they able to facilitate discussion?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Training in Bible Study Methods

As discussed in Chapter 6, *Lectio Divina* and Inductive Bible Study are the two basic approaches that TCCC will use both for spiritual reading as well as preparation to lead a small group. Three stages are important to communicate to leaders, regardless of what method is used, so that the leader will use the same basic process regardless of the

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² Ibid., 124-126.
³ These categories and questions were created by the pastoral team of TCCC in July 2003 and were modified in November 2007.
approach. These stages are: (1) The passage(s) of Scripture chosen must be introduced. (2) There must be group interaction with the passage; and (3) An opportunity should be given for some personal reaction or response to the passage. These stages follow the steps of the Inductive Bible Study, and they will be followed as the basic foundation to all other variations of study methods:

1. Observation—looking at the facts contained in the passage and what is happening.
2. Interpretation—determining the author’s meaning and purpose.
3. Application—the relevance of this passage for contemporary faith and life.  

Roberta Hestenes, in her book, *Using the Bible in Groups*, offers several good suggestions for each of these three stages (see Appendix 18).

Training in Shepherding and Caring Issues

Donahue and Robinson discover from a survey of Willow Creek Community Church’s 2,700 small groups that there are five time-tested practices that are absolutely essential for building authentic relationships through small groups. These five are: self-disclosure, care-giving, humility, truth-telling, and affirmation. At Willow Creek leaders are trained in exercises to practice and promote these in providing shepherding care. TCCC will educate all small group leaders on these five concepts during their training sessions.

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4 Hestenes, *Using the Bible in Groups*, 57. Using Inductive Bible Study and calling it Discovery Bible Study as the basic foundation, Hestenes also lists and gives examples of other forms as variations: Chapter Study; Book Study; Thematic or topical Study, Word Study and Biographical Study.

5 Donahue and Robinson, *Building a Church of Small Groups*, 60-70.
The first practice, self-disclosure, is to know and be known. Deep down, all people want others to know who they are—to care about their stories, their pain and their dreams. To allow others to see deeply into one’s life is the greatest gift one can ever give. The second practice, care-giving, is to love and be loved. Loving requires active listening and thoughtful remembering, especially in a small group relationship. The knowing and loving quotient in a group will be evidence of authentic relationships. To merely connect and not know fosters the veneer of sociability; to know and not to love produces only collegial familiarity. The third practice, humility, is to serve and be served. Being served by others means that leaders too, are needy, which is something one’s pride denies. Christlike giving includes discovering needs, then serving and loving someone who may be unable to give back. The fourth practice, truth-telling, is to admonish and be admonished. Truth-telling creates problems when neglected, but it creates spiritual growth when done right. The ministry of admonishing calls people to change, and then provides encouragement and teaching in order to help them change. The fifth practice, affirmation, is to celebrate and be celebrated. Some church culture believes that the grumpier one is, the holier one is, but the Bible does not equate gloominess with holiness. Jesus was a master of celebration. Countering the joy-robbing Pharisees, he had a contagious love for real people in real life, overflowing with joy with people who seek his kingdom with open hearts. The small group leaders are taught to promote mutuality in such principles so that caring and shepherding can become closer to the practice of “one-anothering” in the New Testament.
Training in Alpha Course Training for Outreach

The Alpha course is a fifteen-session practical introduction to the Christian faith. It addresses foundational questions while providing guests with an opportunity to explore the meaning of life. It is based on the book, *Alpha—Questions of Life*, by Nicky Gumbel. In addition to the book is a course manual with notes and stimulating questions for discussions corresponding to the lessons in the book, as well as a DVD series which accompanies the teaching curriculum. The philosophy of using a small group and relational approach with lay-led leaders in outreach is expressed by Alpha in its acronym:

- **A**nyone can come—seekers and Christians alike are welcome
- **L**earning and laughter—barriers are broken down in a relational context
- **P**asta—an opportunity to eat together to foster friendship
- **H**elping one another—small group setting helps ministry and prayer for one another
- **A**sk anything—no question is regarded as too simple or too hostile.

Leaders who are being trained to lead Alpha groups participate in three training sessions on the following topics: (1) Leading a Small Group; (2) Pastoral Care; and (3) Praying for Others. Leaders-in-training also review the material that will be covered in the lessons. At TCCC, The Alpha Group is considered as a specialty small group, and small group leaders who are passionate about evangelism are encouraged to receive the

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Alpha training in order to lead an Alpha group or just to augment their own evangelistic zeal in leading the general groups. The church facilitates the conducting of new Alpha groups twice a year, from January until April and from September until December. TCCC also welcomes home groups to be formed as a result of Alpha, provided they are led by a trained Alpha small group leader.

Training in Integrating the Seven Functions of a Biblical Community

The purpose of any biblical community (terminology used by Frazee for “small groups”) is to focus internally on helping each other grow in love for God and neighbor, and externally to work together and express that love for outsiders just as Christ would have them do. In an attempt to be holistic and balanced, as well as gearing small groups towards community, Frazee devises seven functions for members to covenant with one another covered under the acronym SERVICE: spiritual formation, evangelism, reproduction, volunteerism, international missions, care, and extending compassion.¹⁰ TCCC will follow this guideline for training leaders in the importance of biblical community.

Through Bible study, prayer and mutual encouragement, TCCC small groups will pursue spiritual formation by annually assessing their own development in Christ. They will confess their areas of struggles to one another and set personal goals for their growth in Christ in the year to come. Through the year they will share their progress and encourage one another monthly in their pursuit of Christlikeness.

¹⁰ Frazee, *The Connecting Church*, 81-83.
In pursuing evangelism, each household within the biblical community will commit to pray for at least three households within their neighborhood who need to embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ. The community will pray together monthly for the personal requests of these neighbors. The community will set an empty chair policy during group meeting and hold one another accountable to prayerfully reach out to these families with the hope that the chair will be filled and that at least one household come to faith in Christ each year.

In commitment to reproduction, each biblical community will be open to welcoming new members and will have at least one “leader apprentice in training” who is preparing to launch a new group as the Lord adds to their number. Each group will seek to reproduce another group at least once every two years.

In pursuing to volunteerism, members of the biblical community will commit themselves to support the greater body of Christ at TCCC through involvement in ministries and service opportunities such as youth, children, worship, ushers, and greeters. They will celebrate what God is doing in the greater body of Christ through a special quarterly gathering.

As an expression of our desire to share Christ with the world (international missions), the biblical community will pray regularly for one missionary supported by TCCC and also support at least one international missions project through increased awareness, financial contribution, and hands-on involvement, even joining a short-term missions team.
The foundation of biblical community will be the commitment to care for one another. This will be manifested in practical help for those in difficult and crisis situations—hospital or home visits, meal preparation, prayer, referral to church and community resources, and the like.

In response to the social needs of the community, each biblical community will extend compassion by commitment to participating in at least four on-site compassion projects throughout the year. Monthly, the biblical community will select, prepare for, or celebrate their involvement in their compassion project.

These biblical functions are not departments within the church that people pick and choose. Rather, they are relational gatherings committed to embracing together all of the seven functions of SERVICE. Small group leaders are educated and trained to be conscious in reminding the group members to cooperate and fulfill these seven functions throughout the year. A campaign called “forty days of community-building” was conducted from April 22 to June 3, 2007 synchronizing a sermon series with small group Bible study material to educate members on the importance of these seven functions. From then on, small group leaders have been encouraged to remind, reinforce and monitor progress on the holistic integration of such activities.

Besides looking at the content and functions of the group to be holistic, another way of ensuring holistic involvement of the small group leader is provided by Joel Comiskey. In his book, How to Lead a Great Cell Group Meeting: So People Want to Come Back, he skillfully uses the different human body parts to portray the various preparation and operational steps of the successful leader:
1. A pure heart—Prepare yourself spiritually to hear God during the meeting.
2. Gathering arms—Structure the meeting so that it flows.
3. Legs that support—Spur people in the group to participate and share their lives openly.
4. An open soul—Practice transparency and share your life with others in the group.
5. An inquisitive mind—Create stimulating questions.
6. Listening ears—Listen carefully to discover what is transpiring in others’ lives.
7. An encouraging tongue—Encourage and edify group members.
8. Warm hands—Open the group to non-Christians.
9. Walking together—Moving through the stages of life.
10. Eyes that see the details—See the details that create a warm atmosphere.\(^\text{11}\)

Training, Support and Empowerment through Coaches

Although there exists classroom training, apprentice training, and even on-the-job training, by far the most important and effective training is be provided by coaching and supporting leaders. Since the gist of this ministry focus paper is to highlight the importance of discipleship and mentorship to bring holistic transformation, the best resource one can give a small group leader is a person.

The coach’s smaller span of care (ideally for no more than five small group leaders) makes sense when one understands the coach’s role, ministry setting, place within the church structure, and relationship with individual leaders. Small group leaders depend on their coaches for shepherding, support, prayer, new ideas, and sometimes just a kind voice on the phone. Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson outline a coach’s ministry description (see Table 6).

Table 6. The Role of the Coach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Development</th>
<th>Huddle</th>
<th>Visiting the Group</th>
<th>One-on-One</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• vision casting</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Affirm</td>
<td>Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>• skills</td>
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<td>• apprentices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastoral Care</td>
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<td>and</td>
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<td>• relational</td>
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<td>• personal</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry Support And Expansion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Observe</td>
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<tr>
<td>• prayer</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• affirmation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• resources</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The left column describes the coach’s role: to help develop leaders by keeping them equipped, helping them grow, and looking for potential leaders within each group. The top row of the above table describes the three primary settings—huddle meeting, group visit, one-on-one—in which a coach interacts with leaders. Coaches are primarily lovers of leaders. A leader who is loved is a leader who will serve well for a long time.

In TCCC, qualifications of being a small group coach include: being a church member; being a “TCCC trained” small group leader; having led a small group within the past three years or recommended by the Small Group Ministry Pastor; and being

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12 Donahue and Robinson, *Building a Church of Small Group*, 146-147.
recommended by the Small Group Ministry Team and approved by the Small Group Ministry Pastor with consensus from the Pastoral Team.

At TCCC, the role of a small group coach to his or her small group leaders is to support to the assigned leaders by coaching them (ideally no more than five), acting as a liaison between the Small Group Ministry Team and the small group leaders, and committing to a two-year term of service. Coaching the small group leaders involves: modeling care-giving and empowering leaders to provide care for their members; encouraging leaders to grow spiritually and to care for each other; equipping, motivating, and challenging the leaders; helping the leaders to identify and develop potential leaders, and to plant new groups; meeting with the small group leaders for group-building activities at least quarterly; and holding a celebration gathering at least once a year.

Acting as the liaison between the Small Group Ministry Team and the small group leaders involves: helping support the vision and direction of Small Group Ministry; encouraging leaders to share their experiences with God as they lead their groups; visiting the groups, affirming leaders and group members, observing group dynamics and relationships; and initiating one-on-one dialogue/meetings to provide care for the leaders.

**Training of Discipleship Triad Leaders**

With the previous discussion in Chapter 5 on discipleship, mentoring and spiritual friendship, being able to walk with a few in difficult times so the impact is life on life is the most precious thing that one can gain in life. When entering a covenantal relationship where people will stay together for a year or longer, they will have the opportunity to
address life’s highs and lows. Paul captures the rhythm of relationships in the body: “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26). This is especially true in a triad.

Yet this has to be first demonstrated by pastors who truly model Paul’s spirit of caring for the Thessalonians when he portrays a balanced parental love with both motherly and fatherly overtones: “But we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. . . . For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory” (1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11-12). Therefore the first step is to require that all employed full-time pastors embrace this philosophy so that this ministry strategy runs from top down. Starting from 2006, all pastors at TCCC were encouraged to start their discipleship triads, and from the year 2008 onwards, this practice is strictly enforced as an employment requirement with no exception.¹³ This is paramount as the intent is such that eventually the atmosphere will be contagious and will encourage all deacons (the second level of leadership) to do the same. Regardless of their portfolios, the pastors’ job descriptions have to be re-written to include this as a priority.

Training through Emphasis of a Process-oriented Approach

The danger of this training becoming just another curriculum or program can never be over-emphasized. Right from the first step of recruitment, in the orientation and

¹³ I gained conviction regarding the importance of pastors modeling triads after completing the course CF 765 “Growing a Disciple-making Congregation” taught by Dr. Gareth Icenogle and Dr. Greg Ogden, Fuller Theological Seminary, August 1-12, 2005.
in all subsequent training meetings, the importance of conducting this as a process of relationship and community building is drilled repeatedly. In an impersonal world, people hunger for intimacy, personal care, deep friendship and spiritual bonding. This is particularly true for men. Though TCCC has thus far followed the structure of a discipling curriculum, the relationship has always remained paramount. Relationships adjust to the needs and dynamics of what is happening in the lives of the people at the moment. For TCCC, it is proposed that three people journey together for a year to eighteen months while they grow toward maturity and readiness to disciple others. As the triad comes to a close, the challenge comes to each person to invite two others into the same walk of faith and then reproduce, and so on.

Training through Adopting “3S” and “DNA” as Ingredients

Ogden suggests three necessary ingredients as climatic conditions in bringing growth: “When we (1) open our hearts in transparent trust to each other (2) around the truth of God’s Word (3) in the spirit of mutual accountability, we are in the Holy Spirit’s hothouse of transformation.”14 In a similar vein, Cole uses the “3S” disciplines as a way to memorize and practice for each triad meeting encounter: sin is confessed; Scripture is planted; souls are strategically prayed for.15

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14 Ogden, Transforming Discipleship, 154.

15 Cole, Cultivating a Life for God, 64-70. Alternatively, the “3S” disciplines can also be expressed by the acronym “DNA” which is conducive for cell replication: D stands for Divine Truth = Scripture is Planted; N stands for Nurturing Relationships = Sin is Confessed; A stands for Apostolic Mission = Souls to be Strategically Prayed For.
Sin Is Confessed

Beginning each meeting with the confession of sin tends to sanctify the rest of the time together. The “character conversation questions” described in Chapter 7 are used. Each person in the group takes a turn answering each question honestly. The group must be a safe place where the participants feel they can be honest and vulnerable. It is important that this checklist does not degenerate into a legalistic system of self-righteousness. These questions are meant to stimulate discussion and open sharing. The goal of having accountability is to foster an honest relationship that is transparent, caring and where healing can come through the confession and forgiveness of sin.

Scripture Is Planted

Cole suggests a large portion of Scriptures to be read to build a pattern of twenty-five to thirty chapters per week for the members to meditate on personally before sharing in the group. However this volume might be too overwhelming for some, especially new believers. This method is also a bit contradictory to the slower imbibing approach of the Lectio Divina Bible reading method recommended as part of the strategy for building spiritual formation at TCCC. Cole’s spirit of the exercise of sharing at least one nugget of truth that is a direct revelation and nourishment from the Lord is well taken. But since TCCC has adopted the curriculum of Discipleship Essentials and MasterLife (to be described in next section) for this discipleship triad purpose, the triads shall follow the designated topics and Scriptures in these two books.

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16 See the section on “Relational Formation through Building of Spiritual Friendships.”
Souls Are Strategically Prayed For

A list of accountability questions targeted for encouraging ministry will be asked during the final part of each triad meeting. Each member is to identify the two or three people who are the highest evangelistic priorities that God has laid on their hearts. Each person should have listed all the names represented in the group, totaling six names. With this system, the person who is targeted for strategic prayer is prayed for two to three times by two or three different people every week. The prayers that are offered (taken from Cole’s book, *Cultivating a Life for God*) are specific, progressive and extensive. They are also in accordance with biblical principles of prayer and the salvation of lost souls. (See Appendix 19 for the prayer format.)

Training through Using *Discipleship Essentials* and *MasterLife* as Curriculum

The reason that two different books have been chosen for the triad curriculum is that there are not many good quality choices either written in or translated into Chinese. For English-speaking members, they are encouraged to use *Discipleship Essentials* by Greg Ogden.17 For those who definitely need to use a Chinese language text, the *MasterLife* series by Avery T. Willis, Jr. and Kay Moore is recommended.18

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There are three specific reasons for the choice of these two books. First, these two books both carry a strong emphasis on the covenant principle, requiring participants to adhere to high commitment and signing a covenant (See Appendix 20 for “A Disciple’s Covenant” from *Discipleship Essentials*)\(^{19}\) and (Appendix 21 for “Discipleship Covenant” from *MasterLife*).\(^{20}\) Second, both emphasize building relationships and modeling. Third, the time frame for the discipleship process is quite compatible: each book aims at ideally a twenty-four week curriculum. *Discipleship Essentials* covers twenty-four topics under four sub-headings: Growing Up in Christ; Understanding the Message of Christ; Becoming like Christ; and Serving Christ. *MasterLife* comes in four volumes: *Volume 1 The Disciple’s Cross*—“You will develop a deeper relationship with Christ as you practice the six biblical disciplines of a disciple”; *Volume 2 The Disciple’s Personality*—“You will develop Christlikeness in character as you learn to live in the Spirit”; *Volume 3 The Disciple’s Victory*—“You will experience victories over the world, the flesh, and the devil in spiritual warfare”; and *Volume 4 The Disciple’s Mission*—“You will join God’s mission of making disciples by identifying your stage in growth and your role in ministry.” Each volume covers six weeks of daily regimented activities with assignments to also cover six components: Spend time with the Master; Live in the Word; Pray in faith; Fellowship with believers; Witness to the world; and Minister to others. This is expressed in pictorial form in Appendix 22 which also resembles the holistic

\(^{19}\) Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials*, 6-7, Table of contents.

formation of spiritual, emotional, relational, and missional components. Thus, they also total a twenty-four-week time-frame.

However, most people’s busy schedules would find such weekly meeting quite challenging if not impossible, especially considering the sizable amount of daily assignments. So, consistent with the principle to allow customization of the process to each group’s life stage, TCCC allows for completion of the process anywhere from six months to eighteen months. The majority find one year an optimal span for completion.
CHAPTER 9
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND ASSESSMENT

Sequence of Recruitment and Training

Small Group Leadership Training

In order to steer and restructure the congregation from a church with small groups to a church of small groups, a full-time pastor was assigned in January 2007. This pastor leads the small group ministry under the Fellowships and Body Life Department, providing all the coordination, training and support to the small group ministry.

Orientation Training

Potential small group leader recruits are recommended by existing small group leaders, small group coaches and pastors to attend orientation training. They base their scouting effort on observations according to the principles of “ARE” (Affections, Reputation, and Expectations) as well as the criteria of Spiritual, Emotional and Relational Qualifications, already outlined and explained in Chapter 8.¹ This orientation training is a one-time, three-hour session to give an overview of different elements of the small group ministry which covers the following ten topics: (1) Definition of a Small Group; (2) The Mission Statement of Your Group or Starting a Group; (3) The Main Functions of a Small Group; (4) The Five Main Types of Small Groups; (5) Developing a Purpose Statement; (6) The Agenda of a Small Group; (7) The Four Fundamental Strategies/Concepts in Small Groups; (8) Understanding the Three Stages of the Life

¹ These principles are found under the subheading, “Enlisting Small Group Leaders.”
Cycle of a Small Group; (9) The Seven Principles of Running a Small Group; and (10) Developing Apprentice Leaders. Much of the orientation concepts and material is taken from *Serendipity’s Small Group Training Manual* by Lyman Coleman.

**Level One: Basic Training**

Those potential leaders who express interest and willingness for commitment are then invited to join the Level One Basic Training comprising of four two-hour sessions totaling eight hours of classroom training. The sessions are based on the *Basic Training: for Small Group Ministry in Your Church* from the Serendipity Video Training Series.

In each session, there is a thirty-minute video presentation followed by ninety minutes of further instruction, group discussion and sharing. The four topics covered are: (1) Process; (2) Bible Study; (3) Agenda, and (4) Caring (see Appendix 24 for further detail). Of course, this is still primarily theoretical training. The practicum takes place by apprenticing with a home small group leader according to the confidence level of the trainee. The small group coach will provide further support, supervision and empowerment as the trainee continues in on-the-job training.

In order to emphasize the integration of holistic formation of the other components, trainees are also required to enroll also in the following Sunday school

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2 See Appendix 23 for details of the topics. They have been compiled by Dennis Mok, Pastor of Fellowship and Small Group Ministry of Toronto Chinese Community Church. Pastor Mok is also responsible for the orientation training.


classes: “Spiritual Formation Bible Study Series” (Jan Johnson material); “Learning to Pray Through the Psalms” (James Sire material); and “Spiritual Journaling” (Richard Peace material). The timing of taking these classes is quite flexible, that is, the trainees can take whichever one is being offered first by the Sunday school curriculum nearest to their Small Group Level One: Basic Training dates. They are encouraged to complete all three classes within two years. Those who have successfully completed the Level One: Basic Training and are actively serving in small groups will be recognized with a certificate in a small group leaders commissioning ceremony during a Sunday worship service. The commitment is two years and renewable.

Level Two: Advanced Training

Small group leaders who have served actively for more than one year are invited back to undergo the advanced training. This is again comprised of four two-hour sessions totaling eight hours. The training is based on a video series titled, “Nine Facets of the Effective Small-Group Leader,” by Carl George. In each session, there is a thirty-minute video presentation followed by ninety minutes of further instruction, group discussion and sharing. The nine facets covered are: (1) CONNECT-Relating to Church Leadership; (2) RECRUIT-Training Someone to Replace You; (3) INVITE-Cultivating Your Network of Relationships; (4) PREPARE-Determining the Agenda and Contents; (5)

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5 Each of these three studies was described in Chapter 7 as part of the discussion on emotional formation.

MEET—Keeping the Group on Target; (6) WORSHIP—Staying Connected through Worship Services; (7) SERVE—Meeting Needs In and Beyond the Group; (8) WIN—Reaching People With the Gospel; and (9) SECRETS—Communing With God.

The book that accompanies this video series, also by Carl George, is called *Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership: How lay leaders can establish dynamic and healthy cells, classes, or teams*, and it is recommended reading for the trainees.7 Completion of the Level Two: Advanced Training is a pre-requisite for qualification as small group coach in addition to having led a small group for at least three years.

**Monthly Bible Pre-study Meeting**

This is a ninety-minute meeting where all those small group leaders who are utilizing the Bible study material supplied by the church come together for discussion, practice and prayer support for one another under guidance of the Small Group Ministry pastor, together with the coaches. This is a “huddle meeting” where a lot of modeling, mentoring and coaching take place.

**Quarterly Enrichment Meeting**

This is another opportunity for the pastors and coaches to support and empower the small group leaders. Emphasis is on celebration through testimonies and sharing as well as an important communication meeting so that the major Small Group Ministry vision and direction is being conveyed and consolidated. In another words, the big picture

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is painted so that small group leaders see their contribution to the overall ministry of the church. Any good resources and new ideas are also shared, and help is given to leaders needing to tackle any unresolved issues.

Discipleship Triad Training

Recruitment for discipleship triad leaders is open through a promotion and recruitment booth set up after Sunday worship service three times a year. The main objective of the booth is to heighten awareness regarding the different Fellowship Groups so that interested and potential discipleship trainees are encouraged to inquire and be channeled to the Christian Education Department. Those registered will be invited to a four-hour (lunch included) Discipleship Triad Formation and Matching Meeting. The process may be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6. The Sequence of Recruitment and Training for Discipleship Triad Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matching meeting (four hours - from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm on a Saturday):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st hour-Brief introduction of discipleship ministry and program but emphasizing the relational process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd hour-Training of the discipleship triad leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd hour-Meeting of the leaders and members in triad groups. Text books are distributed and coach is assigned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th hour-lunch and fellowship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly or bi-weekly meetings on their own to engage in the discipleship process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders’ meeting every six months and ongoing monitoring by the coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition and certificate awards at year-end upon completion as well as a chance of promotion to attract new recruits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Identification of Discipleship Triad Leaders**

TCCC leaders seek “FAT” (Faithful, Available and Teachable) people to be discipleship triad leaders. They can be recommended by pastors, Sunday school teachers or Fellowship Group counselors and they must also be current discipleship triad participants. The formation and matching meeting is a one-hour training session on the following three aspects, delineated by Willis in *MasterLife*:

1. **Four Roles of a Discipleship Triad Leader**[^8]:
   - **Servant.** Avoid feelings of superiority or specialness. Remember that Christ himself said that he had come to serve and not be served (Mark 10:45).
   - **Spiritual Parent.** We do not cause growth; God does. We do all we can to facilitate that growth. We appeal to others to demonstrate more maturity. We encourage others “to grow up in all aspects unto him, who is the head, even Christ” (Ephesians 4:15).
   - **Steward.** As we approach the task of making disciples, we are to be wise master builders who build on the foundation of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10; 4:1). We assess where persons are in their development and give them the right kind of help.
   - **Encourager.** At every stage of development disciples need encouragement. Encouragement creates the right conditions for disciples to grow to their potential.

2. **Five steps of modeling in leading disciples on how to experience truth**[^9]:
   - **Imitation.** You do what the model does. You may not understand the actions, but you do what you see the model doing.
   - **Experimentation.** You try out the truth in real life on your own. You believe it enough to experiment but are still not convinced. You begin trying it in non-threatening situations.
   - **Application.** You apply the truth in more complex situations. You say you believe the truth, but you may still have occasional reservations about it.
   - **Demonstration.** You show proficiency in living the truth under various conditions and situations. It has become a conviction and is part of your value system.


[^9]: Ibid., 12.
• **Representation.** *You model the truth as a characteristic of the life of a disciple.*

3. Five principles that Jesus used in developing disciples toward the ideal of Christlikeness:

- **Modeling.** Doing something you cannot visualize is difficult. Once you have seen it modeled, forces in your personality combine to help you imitate it.
- **Explaining.** Modeling does not stand alone. It needs explanation. Jesus often explained the things he modeled so that his disciples would not misunderstand. The disciples respond by experimenting.
- **Coaching.** The discipler guides the disciple to do something more skillfully until the disciple becomes comfortable with the new way of doing things. This helps the disciple applies what he or she has learned.
- **Supporting.** The discipler supports the person in living the truth after he or she has mastered it. As disciples begin to live their new lifestyles and demonstrate what they have learned, they feel support of someone more experienced backing them up.
- **Commissioning.** The discipler validates the disciples’ ministries and sends them out with specific tasks to do. Jesus’ urging of Peter to “feed my sheep” (John 21:15-18) is an example of how Jesus used this principle to help his disciples represent him in the world.

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**Matching of Discipleship Triad Participants**

A second one-hour session is held for the matching process. The new discipleship triad leaders and the registered participants are matched according to age, educational background, and approximate years of conversion. They are same-gender groups. There will be ice-breaking games for them to get to know each other. As much as possible, those who already have prior friendship and relationship may form their own triads first.

The *Leader Guide* and the *MasterLife Volume 1: The Disciple’s Cross* are distributed and a sample lesson is explained. The Discipleship Covenant is signed (see Appendix 21).

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10 Ibid., 12.
Curriculum and Discipleship Process Timeline

The standard textbook is the *MasterLife* series (translated into Chinese), comprised of four volumes. *Discipleship Essentials* can be used as an alternative for those who prefer English. The recommended meeting frequency by the author of *MasterLife* series is weekly for twenty-four weeks, but TCCC allows for some flexibility so that groups can complete the process in one year rather than rushing through it in six months. Alternative meeting schedules would be either bi-weekly meetings or weekly meetings but completing one lesson over two weeks. Again, TCCC emphasizes the bonding process more than simply completing the program. Each group is assigned to a Discipleship Ministry Committee member of the Christian Education Department. These individuals act as coaches, serving as resources and support. There will be leaders’ meetings two times a year for the purpose of consultation, testimonies and celebration. The discipleship triads who finish the program will be awarded completion certificates publicly in a Sunday worship service, and are encouraged to enroll in Sunday school Class 301 on “Ministry Equipping According to Your S.H.A.P.E.” so as to engage in service opportunities right away. Although all disciples who successfully complete the process are expected to recruit more new disciples for training, those with good evaluation and feedback from the Discipleship Ministry Committee will be invited back to be discipleship triad leaders for the next round of recruits. (Figures 7 and 8 provide illustrations of the entire process of leadership development planned for TCCC.)
Inspired and challenged to become a better disciple of Christ

Attend Sunday School

Joint DT

Serve in Ministry

Small Group Leadership Training
Orientation- Level 1 – Level 2 (24-36 months)

Mentored by Small Group Coach (With Emphasis towards Team Building Mentality & Practice)

Serve as SG Leader

Discipleship Triad Training (12-18 months cycle)

Mentored by Discipleship Triad Coach

Serve as DT Leader

SS Teacher

All encouraged to help in identifying new potential leaders for training

Key SS = Sunday School
SG = Small Group
DT = Discipleship Triad
Figure 8. Flow Chart of Leadership Development with the Baseball Diamond Pathway

Key:
- SS = Sunday School
- SG = Small Group
- DT = Discipleship Triad
Measurement of Maturity in Character, Skills and Teamwork

Since the goal of leadership formation is holistic development and there should be some objective way of gauging the comprehensiveness of all the four components (spiritual, emotional, relational and missional formation), a few assessment tools are suggested. The categories of character, skills and teamwork are evaluated.

Character

In The Connecting Church, Frazee explains that rediscovering biblical purpose is loving God and loving neighbor (Luke 10:27). From this premise, he then suggests thirty qualities that he identifies as the “Christian Life Profile,” representative of a healthy, holistic, mature developing leader.\(^\text{11}\) They are further broken down into three groups of ten called: Ancient Christian Beliefs (what believers need to know); Ancient Christian Virtues (what believers need to be); and Ancient Christian Practices (what believers need to do).\(^\text{12}\) Although there is no scale performance attached, this thirty-item checklist can be used as a survey and gauging system to measure how far along the potential leaders are in their pilgrimages, and in which areas they need to grow.

Skills

Since the goal of the small group leader is to build holistic transformational community, TCCC will use the eleven objectives laid out by Comiskey in How to Lead a

\(^{11}\) Frazee, The Connecting Church, 74.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 79.
Great Small Group Meeting as a checklist for skill acquisition.\textsuperscript{13} These objectives were listed in Chapter 8, and are elaborated upon here to be used as a checklist.

The first is “a pure heart.” Cell leadership begins with heart preparation. A heart that is pure before God is the only foundation for leading a cell meeting. Without a heart for God, the meeting consists of only dry routines and rituals. The second objective is “gathering arms.” Just like the arms gather and hold things together, a proven small group strategy will help the cell leader gather people from the initial welcome time to the closing prayer. While the Holy Spirit might guide the cell meeting in unexpected ways, the small group leader should always have a plan. The third objective is “legs that support.” Legs support the entire body and allow people to walk, run, and jump. Small group facilitation supports group members by empowering them to exercise their spiritual muscles, apply the Word of God to their lives, and minister to one another. The fourth objective is “an open soul.” The soul is the gateway to the rest of the body. It is that immaterial part that reflects who one really is. Great small group leaders do not hide their souls behind superiority and superficiality. They share honestly and intimately, starting a chain reaction among the members. The fifth objective is “an inquisitive mind.” The human mind enables small group leaders to think, reflect, and make decisions. Using the mind, a leader can prepare questions that draw out participation and stimulate lively discussion. Well-designed questions turn dry and boring meetings into creative interaction. The sixth objective is “listening ears.” Great cell leaders prioritize listening to others, knowing that everyone has a story that needs to be heard. God has given people

\textsuperscript{13} Comiskey, \textit{How to Lead a Great Cell Group Meeting}. 
two ears and only one mouth for a reason. The small group environment is perfectly suited for active listening to occur. The seventh objective is “an encouraging tongue.” The tongue can encourage, discourage, or even destroy. A small group leader must choose words that encourage, as Proverbs says: “From the fruit of his mouth a man’s stomach is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied.” (Proverbs 18:20). The eighth objective is “warm hands.” Cell leaders need hands that reach out and point others to Jesus. Such hands help cell members reach out together and warmly welcome the hurting and disillusioned into the group. The ninth objective is “walking together.” The journey of a thousand miles begins with a small step. The feet provide direction to the rest of the body. Knowing which steps to take will help the small group leader chart the journey, knowing that a predictable road lies ahead. The tenth objective is “eyes that see the details.” Cell leaders with 20-20 vision see the smaller details (refreshments, temperature, and the like) as well as larger issues (cell lesson, multiplication, and so on). To really see the details requires thoughtful reflection before and after the meeting. The eleventh objective is “keep learning and growing.” The best leaders never stop learning. One could call them lifetime learners because they realize there is always more to learn and room for improvement. They grow as they go.

Teamwork

In order to evaluate TCCC leaders for their ability to work with others in a team setting, Patrick Lencioni’s book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, will be used.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{14}\) Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 188-190.
Lencioni discusses dysfunctions, so his list will be used as a negative example, with an eye towards the leader having as few dysfunctions as possible. A summary of the five dysfunctions follows:

1. The first dysfunction is an absence of trust among team members. Essentially, this stems from their unwillingness to be vulnerable within the group. Team members who are not genuinely open with one another about their mistakes and weaknesses make it impossible to build a foundation for trust.

2. This failure to build trust is damaging because it sets the tone for the second dysfunction: fear of conflict. Teams that lack trust are incapable of engaging in unfiltered and passionate debate of ideas. Instead, they resort to veiled discussions and guarded comments.

3. A lack of healthy conflict is a problem because it ensures the third dysfunction of a team: lack of commitment. Without having aired their opinions in the course of passionate and open debate, team members rarely, if ever, buy in and commit to decisions, though they may feign agreement during meetings.

4. Because of this lack of real commitment and buy-in, team members develop an avoidance of accountability, the fourth dysfunction. Without committing to a clear plan of action, even the most focused and driven people often hesitate to call their peers on actions and behaviors that seem counterproductive to the good of the team.

5. Failure to hold one another accountable creates an environment where the fifth dysfunction can thrive. Inattention to results occurs when team members put their individual needs (such as ego, career development, or recognition) or even the needs of their divisions above the collective goals of the team.

Thus the positive opposites of these dysfunctions that make a cohesive team are: (1) They trust one another; (2) They engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas; (3) They commit to decisions and plans of action; (4) They hold one another accountable for delivering against those plans; and (5) They focus on the achievement of collective results.

**Assessment Tools**

In order to help gauge more objectively the development of each leader and cover the various components of formation, several assessment tools can be employed by the
pastors, small group coaches and disciplers whenever they find it appropriate. The first is
the thirty-item checklist of the Christian Life Profile (presented above) taken from *The
Connecting Church* by Randy Frazee. The second tool is the list of sixty-one practices
from the book, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun. This list was
discussed in Chapter 7, and it can be used as a survey list of how many practices the
potential leader has engaged and progressed along his or her spiritual journey.

The third tool is taken from *Having a Ministry that Lasts: Becoming a Bible
Centered Leader* by Robert Clinton. It is a three-part Bible quiz to help leaders assess
their present level of mastery of the Bible, especially from a leadership slant.15 Part 1
contains the Bible Mastery Proficiency Inventory (BMPI), a 300-question test evaluating
one’s comprehensive grasp of the Bible as a whole. Part 2 is a Geographical Evaluation
which contains a 100-question assessment of one’s grasp of geographical terms in the
Bible. And Part 3 is the “Leaders in the Bible” evaluation that contains a 126-question
assessment of one’s grasp of biblical leaders.

The fourth tool specifically evaluates emotional and spiritual health. It is taken
from *The Emotionally Healthy Church* by Peter Scazzero. It is a 40-question survey that
covers “General Formation and Discipleship” (Part A) and “Emotional Components of
Discipleship” (Part B).16 Part B is further subdivided to cover six principles: (1) Look
beneath the Surface; (2) Break the Power of the Past; (3) Live in Brokenness and
Vulnerability; (4) Accept the Gift of Limits; (5) Embrace Grieving and Loss; and (6)

15 Robert Clinton, *Having a Ministry that Lasts: Becoming a Bible Centered Leader* (Altadena,
CA: Barnabas Publisher, 1997), Appendix B: Three Bible Assessments, B1-B50.

Make Incarnation Your Model for Loving Well. There is an interpretation guide on the score sheet to show whether one is currently an emotional infant, emotional child, emotional adolescent or an emotional adult.

The fifth tool is used currently at TCCC as a ministry matching survey. In the Sunday school class called “301: Ministry Equipping According to Your SHAPE,” Rick Warren’s acronym is used to study and help individuals discover their shape for ministry: spiritual gifts, heart, abilities, personality, and experiences.\(^\text{17}\)

The sixth tool relates to evaluating one’s competency in teamwork. This is taken from Patrick Lencioni’s *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. It is comprised of fifteen questions with a scoring guideline that will indicate the level of teamwork and reveals which dysfunction (if any) needs to be addressed (see Appendix 25).

All six assessment tools have been introduced recently. They are meant to cover the three areas of character, skills and teamwork. TCCC pastors and coaches are currently being educated and starting to use them sporadically. The results have not yet been reported. It will take about a year before the effectiveness of the assessment tools can be evaluated.

The one that has borne some fruit already is the SHAPE evaluation criteria for ministry matching. As a result, more people decided to engage and join ministry teams. At the conclusion of the Ministry 301 class in September-December 2007, twenty-five people expressed more satisfaction after ministry matching and joining some sort of

\(^{17}\) Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 370.
ministry. As a souvenir gift and encouraging reminder, each individual received a pebble painted with a Bible verse and motto expressing one’s passion in service.

**Integrating Principle: Lifelong Bible Mastery Paradigm**

Clinton admonishes all to become Bible-centered leaders, and he gives this definition: “A Bible Centered leader refers to a leader whose leadership is informed by the Bible, who has been personally shaped by Biblical values, has grasped the intent of Scriptural books and their content in such a way as to apply them to current situations and who uses the Bible in ministry so as to impact followers.”

This conviction is based on a lasting source: “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever” (Isaiah 40:8). The guarantee about the efficacy of that source is found in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Aspiring leaders should have the proper response to that guarantee as recorded in 2 Timothy 2:15: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” Effective leaders should have an appropriate, unique, lifelong plan for mastering the Word in order to use it with impact in their ministries. There is no better way than to be immersed in small group leadership training and discipleship triad training that emphasizes being shaped by the Bible in a mentoring approach, yet always moving toward missional community formation.

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18 Clinton, *Having a Ministry that Lasts*, 17.
CONCLUSION

Why is Holistic Formation so Difficult?

When coming to the end of a description of something as challenging as holistic formation, the question might naturally arise: Am I going to be able to accomplish this? As a concept, holistic formation might even seem doable and somewhat encouraging. In day-to-day reality and ministry, however, implementation might be much more difficult. Why is holistic formation difficult for spiritual leaders to grasp, no less apply to their lives?

Holistic formation is not easy because change usually flows from crises or places of pain and desperation. Another reason why it is difficult to implement is that it involves a cost. Holistic formation requires time, energy, resources and the priority of plenty of attention. It involves the feelings and emotions of losing prestige, position, and power. A commitment to holistic formation is a commitment to caring for oneself. When spiritual leaders take the time and space to implement the various components of holistic formation, there is enough nourishment for a leader to be involved in ministry over the long haul. Implementing holistic formation also requires a great deal of humility. Contrary to the way the culture and the Church often pursue success and significance, holistic formation requires being emptied before having anything of substance to offer. It also forces believers to shift from a focus on competence in ministry to a focus on character. Holistic formation aims at wholeness. The whole is good and is much more than the sum of its parts.
The great weakness of North American spirituality is that it is all about “us”: fulfilling our potential, getting in on the blessings of God, expanding our influence, finding our gifts, getting a handle on principles by which we can get an edge over the competition. Unfortunately, the more there is of us, the less there is of God. Hence, Eugene Peterson cautions, “This is slow work and cannot be hurried. It is also urgent work and can’t be procrastinated. . . . But in the Christian way, patience and urgency are yoked. . . . Formation of spirit, cultivation of soul, realizing a lived congruence between the way and the truth—all this is slow work requiring endless patience.”

Realizing Value to and from Leaders in Holistic Leadership Formation

On the other hand, the labor and patience of leadership development is worthwhile when one sees the value being added to the new leaders formed as well as benefit to the organization. It is the enrichment of people’s quality of life. It is the expansion of their life purpose and capabilities. In his book, Developing the Leaders Around You, Maxwell lists the following as tangible results which can be recognized and later passed on to others: modeling, vision and direction, encouragement and affirmation, belief in oneself, willingness to try new things, personal development, commitment of personal growth, empowerment and being a part of something greater than oneself.

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Reciprocally, there are also values added back to the trainer by the people whom he has developed: loyalty, encouragement, personal counsel and support, follow-through, time, balance of gifts, attraction of others, people development and increased influence.3

In switching to this paradigm of holistic formation, TCCC is at a threshold of the old meeting the new. The “old” is the guilt-ridden approach to coercing participation in service stemmed largely on the urgency conversion pushed by the “evangelists.” The “new” is the grace-filled approach where leadership development is based on continual learning, renewal and upgrading of a discipleship journey where a servant lifestyle is a step-by-step following of the Master’s footsteps.

A Personal Commitment

It is with such incentive that I, as senior pastor of TCCC, am determined to reproduce the next generation leaders, for it is in producing other leaders that one’s influence is multiplied, and this ensures that the original leader and his or her people have a future. I aspire to be a dreamer, an inspirer, the visionary and the ultimate leader. Yet the more challenging task is to prayerfully and discernibly select pastors and deacons who will join me in forming mentor-apprentice relationships through the network of small group coaches/leaders and discipleship triad leaders. These pastors and deacons will then work with me to widen the shepherding circles.

True success comes only when every generation continues to develop the next generation. Relational skills are the most important abilities in leadership development as

3 Ibid., 189-196.
leaders grow in all four dimensions of spiritual formation because they are constantly working with people. My first goal is to encourage followers to become leaders, and I will do so by maintaining a positive environment, expressing high belief in them, empowering them, and by playing to their strengths. My second goal is to upgrade the managers to become leaders by helping them think big, think in terms of other people, think continually and think in terms of intangibles. People who are not leaders automatically gravitate toward limitations set by others. Perhaps people are taught this in kindergarten when they are instructed to stay within the lines while coloring. But leaders are more creative than that. Progress and innovation are made by people who think without lines. My final goal is to stretch myself by helping good leaders become great leaders. This will take place by putting them on personal growth plan, creating opportunities to stretch them, and personally humbly learning from them. By doing so, the message will be: “It is not what happens to you; it is what happens in you that matters.” Leadership is a lifelong growing exercise.

Panoramic Holistic Convergence

If each area of formation (spiritual, emotional, relational and missional) is viewed like a river, it might be said that some are spending their time at the banks of only one river. Others are spending time rafting a segment of the river. Some have even explored other rivers and are learning about the currents and where they are going. Few have experienced the variety and pleasure of all these bodies of water.
Yet something is happening with these rivers. They are flowing in the same direction. They are gaining speed and breadth as they flow. Best of all, the rivers are beginning to come together. In some cases, deltas are being formed where observers can linger long enough to see connections and enjoy the life of the rivers. Others are becoming aware that these rivers contain many streams, creeks, and tributaries. In fact, these are coming together and are forming an ever-increasing body of water.\(^4\) That coming together, in this analogy, is holistic integration. That body of water is holistic formation.

It used to be that spiritual leaders were very content to spend their lives on one river, or maybe even merely observing the river from a distance. The nature of the twenty-first century is to not only jump in and ride a river, but to benefit from and utilize as many of the rivers as one can experience. As leaders commit the time and energy necessary to make it to the end of a river, they will see, perhaps for the very first time, that there are other rivers to experience as well. They will participate in the joy of realizing how these streams flow into the same body of water. It is an ocean which nourishes and supplies the kingdom of God with the resources it needs to allow all who would be disciples of Jesus to experience the fullness of God’s resources for wholeness.

APPENDIX 1
THE SEVEN MYTHS OF LEADING FROM THE MIDDLE OF AN ORGANIZATION

# 1 The Position Myth: “I can’t lead if I am not at the top.”
# 2 The Destination Myth: “When I get to the top, then I’ll learn to lead.”
# 3 The Influence Myth: “If I were on top, then people would follow me.”
# 4 The Inexperience Myth: “When I get to the top, I’ll be in control.”
# 5 The Freedom Myth: “When I get to the top, I’ll no longer be limited.”
# 6 The Potential Myth: “I can’t reach my potential if I’m not the top leader.”
# 7 The All-or-Nothing Myth: “If I can’t get to the top, then I won’t try to lead.”

Maxwell then poses the challenge to be a 360° Leader: no matter at what level of leadership in the organization, one can still exert his or her influence in all directions by leading up, leading across, and leading down.

Infinite Environment

APPENDIX 3

EMOTION EXPRESSED BY JESUS

- He shed tears (Luke 19:41; John 11:35)
- He was filled with joy (Luke 10:21)
- He grieved (Luke 14:34)
- He was angry (Mark 3:5; John 2:15)
- Sadness came over him (Matthew 26:37)
- He felt sorrow (Luke 7:13)
- He showed astonishment and wonder (Mark 6:6; Luke 7:9)
- He felt distress (Mark 3:5; Luke 12:50; John 11:33)
- Jesus was anything but an emotionally frozen Messiah.

1. This group may have many leaders, but only one Lord, God (“You shall have no other gods before me,” Ex 20:3).
2. This group will discern all persons, relationships and things in recognition and measure of the ever-present Creator God (“You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below,” Ex 20:4).
3. This group will speak of and address God with creativity, sincerity and passion (“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God,” Ex 20:7).
4. This group will set aside prime and regular times to meet God in solitude and in community (“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy,” Ex 20:8).
5. This group will treat one another with dignity, honor and respect, as members of one family in God (“Honor your father and your mother,” Ex 20:12).
6. This group will practice giving and receiving forgiveness in the process of dealing with conflict and anger (“You shall not murder,” Ex 20:13).
7. This group will nurture healthy relationships between men and women (“You shall not commit adultery,” Ex 20:14).
8. This group will give just time and space for each member to share who they are and what they have (“You shall not steal,” Ex 20:15).
9. This group will encourage each member to speak truthfully, in love, confidentiality and integrity, to and about every other group member (“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor,” Ex 20:16).
10. This group will affirm the gifts of each member and every relationship for sharing, in compassionate service, its life together with people outside itself (“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house,” Ex 20:17).

APPENDIX 5

TABLE OF CONTRAST BETWEEN THE MOSAIC COVENANT AND THE NEW COVENANT (2 Corinthians 3:1-18)

(Suggested by the author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mosaic Covenant</th>
<th>New Covenant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Engraved in stone (v. 3, 7)</td>
<td>• Engraved in heart (v. 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Written in ink (v. 3)</td>
<td>• Written by the Spirit (v. 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resulting in condemnation (v. 9)</td>
<td>• Resulting in righteousness and freedom (v. 9, 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gospel veiled due to hardened hearts (v. 14)</td>
<td>• Gospel unveiled in Christ (v. 14, 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fading glory (v. 11)</td>
<td>• Eternal glory (v. 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Minds made dull with no further revelation (v. 14)</td>
<td>• Reflect Christ’s glory and transformed into his likeness (v. 18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 6

#### EIGHT MENTORING TYPES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MENTORING TYPE/FUNCTIONS</th>
<th>CENTRAL THRUST OF EMPOWERMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensive</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Discipler</td>
<td>Enablement in basics of following Christ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Spiritual Guide</td>
<td>Accountability, direction, and insight for questions, commitments, and decisions affecting spirituality and maturity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Coach</td>
<td>Motivation, skills, and application needed to meet a task, challenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occasional</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Counselor</td>
<td>Timely advice and correct perspectives on viewing self, others, circumstances, and ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Teacher</td>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of a particular subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sponsor</td>
<td>Career guidance and protection as leader moves within an organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passive</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary</td>
<td>A living, personal model for life, ministry, or profession who is not only an example but also inspires emulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>A past life that teaches dynamic principles and values for life, ministry, and/or profession.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TEN STEPS FOR TRANSITIONING LEADERS: THE MOSES/JOSHUA MODEL

1. Define Leadership Selection
Make a deliberate and definite leadership selection. Moses chose Joshua (Exodus 24:13; Numbers 27:22-23: Have a support position that can move into full leadership at a later time).

2. Ministry Task
Give your future leader ministry tasks with significant responsibility. Moses asked Joshua to select recruits and lead battle among the Amalekites and to spy out the land (Exodus 17:9; Numbers 13:16). Moses could measure Joshua’s faith, faithfulness, and giftedness (charismatic ability to lead) with these increasing responsibilities.

3. Spirituality/Tandem Training
Include your leader in training in your own spiritual experiences with God. Moses took Joshua with him into the Holy of Holies (Exodus 33:11), and up on the mountain when he was alone with God (Exodus 24:13). This was tandem training in spirituality using mentoring as the means.

4. Leadership Span
Recognize the complexity of the leadership position and what it will take to fill it. Moses realized Joshua was a charismatic militaristic leader who needed a supportive spiritual leader, Moses publicly set up Eleazar in that role, bolstering him in the eyes of the people (Deuteronomy 10:6; Numbers 27:18-21). Sometimes it takes shared leadership to fill the shoes of an outgoing leader.

5. Public Recognition
Recognize the importance of followers knowing who has been appointed to be the next leader. Moses settled it ahead of time in a public ceremony, leaving no room for ambiguity, or a scramble to seize Joshua’s new position after Moses’ death (Numbers 27:12-23; Deuteronomy 31; 34:9).

6. New Challenge
New leaders following an old leader must not look back and compare. One way of overcoming this tendency is to have a big challenge not met by the old leader. For Joshua, it was to possess the land (Deuteronomy 31:1-3; Joshua 1:2).

7. Divine Affirmation
The new leader has to know he is God’s appointment. Joshua knew Moses had appointed him but also that God had confirmed this appointment (Deuteronomy 31:14-18; Joshua 1).
8. Public Ceremony
   There must be public recognition of God’s appointment. “What I do today will make all the people of Israel begin to honor you as a great man, and they will realize that I am with you as I was with Moses” (Joshua 3:7).

9. Initial Success
   A leader moving into full responsibility needs an initial success that can strengthen spiritual authority and demonstrate that he/she receives revelation from God in his/her own right. Joshua’s experience with the Captain of the Lord’s Army did this, giving him vision – a tactical plan with strategic implications (Joshua 5:13-15). This success came early on, resulting in public assurance that brought closure to the whole transition experience (the fall of Jericho in Joshua 6).

10. Initial Failure
    A final thing that ensures a successful transition is early failure, after initial success. Leaders learn they are not infallible and must trust God in their leadership, a major deterrent to pride (Achan’s sin causing defeat in Ai in Joshua 7). This underscores the need to always move followers along toward God’s purposes for them in God’s way.

Elisha’s Preparation | Leadership Principle
---|---
1. He was anointed to replace Elijah. | 1. Leaders must understand their call and role.
2. Elijah found him plowing a field. | 2. Leaders must have a servant’s heart.
3. Elisha touched Elijah’s mantle long before he entered his ministry. | 3. Leaders must wait patiently on God’s perfect timing for their authority.
4. He asked to kiss his parents good-bye. | 4. Leaders must respect parental authority.
5. He burned his farming tools. | 5. Leaders must surrender former ambitions.
6. He stuck with Elijah wherever he went. | 6. Leaders must pursue good mentors.
7. He absorbed all he could from Elijah. | 7. Leaders must hunger to grow and develop.

1. Mutual Vision
Followers do not naturally line up with a leader whose vision they don’t respect. Both Elijah and Elisha possessed a vision to serve God for the sake of Israel. When Elisha had the opportunity to share Elijah’s work, he turned away from his old life of farming and adopted Elijah’s vision of leadership.

2. Mutual Expectations
Mutual expectations develop naturally from mutual vision. Both Elijah and Elisha expected to do great things for God. Elisha expected and received a double portion of the anointing on Elijah.

3. Mutual Contribution
Individuals follow leaders because they believe those leaders can take them where they want to go. Leaders enlist followers because they understand that followers help them to realize their vision. Each contributes something to fulfill the other’s expectations. Elijah led and mentored Elisha, giving him the opportunity to learn how to be a godly leader. Elisha needed to humble himself, follow the older prophet, and learn. The arrangement made both of them better leaders.

4. Mutual Commitment
Without a strong mutual commitment, leaders and followers cannot achieve their mutual goals. As Elijah neared the end of his leadership, Elisha renewed his commitment to his mentor. Three times when Elijah offered to release his protégé, Elisha responded, “As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!” (2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6). Elijah’s commitment to Elisha had grown equally strong, culminating in his offer to do whatever he could for his servant—including the blessing of a double portion of his spirit.

APPENDIX 10

BARNABAS AND THE LAW OF EMPOWERMENT

1. Barnabas believed in Paul before anyone else did.
   It is easy to give an opinion about a controversial person or subject after other
   leaders have given their support. It is something else to step up and speak
   before anyone else does. That is what Barnabas did. He did not wait until the
   apostles endorsed Paul before believing in him. In fact, he believed in Paul
   while Peter and the others feared him.

2. Barnabas endorsed Paul’s leadership to other leaders.
   Scripture says that Barnabas took Paul and brought him to the apostles. Can
   you imagine how things might have gone in Jerusalem in those days? Once
   Paul arrived in the city, words reached the apostles that he was claiming to be
   a supporter of Christ. They must have thought it was a trick. Here was the
   same man who had stood by and approved the stoning of Stephen, the first
   Christian martyr!

3. Barnabas empowered Paul to reach his potential.
   The connection between Barnabas and Paul did not end in Jerusalem. After
   Barnabas’ endorsement enabled Paul to move freely throughout Jerusalem,
   teaching the people and debating the truth of Scripture, it was not long before
   Paul became an enemy of nonbelievers. The apostles wisely sent him back to
   Tarsus for his own safety.
   But later, when Barnabas was assigned to help the church in Antioch, he
   found Paul and made him his companion. Through that action Barnabas
   empowered Paul to take his first “assignment” as a leader, and it led to Paul’s
   partnership with Barnabas as a missionary—the role for which God had
   destined him.

Leaders Give Power to Others,” The Maxwell Leadership Bible, 1334-1335.
Support and Recovery Groups

A support group is a fellowship of people who come together to share their common experiences and strengths, learn about life and relationships, and grow in the ability to trust God and become all that he created them to be. Recovery groups, while not therapy groups, incorporate information about mutual help in finding healing in regard to an issue that is a problem in members’ lives. The church must become a safe place for this process of finding acceptance, admitting need, discovering God’s strength and the corporate support of his people in a spirit of hope. These subjects include alcoholism, codependent relationships, addictions, and abuse. Support groups include engaged couples, blended families, aging parents, single parents, and the like.

Intergenerational Groups

Intergenerational groups can model what it means to nurture faith within the family. It also allows people from different generations to share their experiences and perspectives, a feat that enhances understanding and promotes transformation within the members of the group.

House Churches

These are small groups that meet in homes to worship, fellowship together over a meal, and carry out active ministry as highly involved, committed people. Members cultivate a sense of family by celebrating each other’s victories, pouring out care in times of need, and being there for one another’s growth in Christ.

Spiritual Direction Groups

Three or four people are the maximum for this type of group. Members of spiritual direction groups want to be more intentional about their spiritual lives and choose to do that through contemplation. They ask questions such as, How does God appear to be part of this circumstance? Or, What might be God’s perspective on this issue? This is accompanied by silent prayer and listening to the Spirit.

Alpha Groups

Taking its name from Nicky Gumbel’s Alpha course, this popular group has become an effective outreach for the local church. Alpha groups are friendship-based groups, consisting of informal lectures about the Christian faith, eating together, and experiencing open discussion and questions about Christianity in small groups. Pastoral care with prayer and healing is administered so each person is loved into knowing Christ and then nurtured towards spiritual maturity.

APPENDIX 12

SMALL GROUP STRUCTURE OF FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH
IN LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

The small group ministry moves through phases of “Discovery” (8-10 weeks) to “Season of Life” (3 years) to “Common Cause” (year-to-year). “Discovery” is the assimilation ministry of fellowship. It welcomes newcomers, orients them to the church, and readies those who are willing to join the church for their first small group experience. “Season of Life” addresses a specific life stage: single adults, young married couples, middle-aged couples, empty nesters and so on. After three years of being relationally connected, spiritually grounded, and philosophically equipped, the next phase is toward finding one’s usefulness in the kingdom of God. “Common Cause” groups are lay-led small groups that also employ various kinds of Bible studies for their members’ spiritual development. But rather than form around specific seasons of life, these small groups are formed for a specific service and last only one year. The diversity and variety is that some groups serve needs within the church while others serve causes outside the church, either in the community or in other parts of the world.

APPENDIX 13

RESULTS OF THE SIX LIFE CHALLENGES FOR BALANCING IN SMALL GROUPS

- *Spiritual transformation*—People’s lives are changing in conformity with truth.
- *Intentional shepherding*—Caring leaders are moving people toward growth.
- *Authentic relationships*—Friends care enough to challenge one another.
- *Healthy conflict*—Problems are resolved and people are reconciled.
- *Serving together*—Community is fostered while tasks are accomplished.
- *Inclusive community*—New people are enfolded into ever-deepening relationships.

Source: Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, *Walking the Small Group Tightrope: meeting the challenges every group faces* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 163-164.
## APPENDIX 14

### CLASSIFICATION OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE: PETERSON, FOSTER, WILLARD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peterson’s Categories</th>
<th>Foster’s Categories</th>
<th>Willard’s Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taken from <em>Under the Unpredictable Plant</em></td>
<td>Taken from <em>Celebration of Discipline</em></td>
<td>Taken from <em>Spirit of the Disciplines</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### The Regula (rule)
- Weekly Common Worship
- Daily Praying the Psalms
- Recollected Prayer (throughout the day)

#### The Inward Disciplines
- Meditation
- Prayer
- Fasting
- Study

#### Disciplines when needed
- Spiritual Reading
- Spiritual Direction
- Meditation
- Confession
- Bodily Exercise
- Fasting
- Sabbath-keeping
- Dream interpretation
- Retreats
- Pilgrimage
- Almsgiving (tithing)
- Journaling
- Sabbaticals
- Small Groups

#### The Outward Disciplines
- Simplicity
- Solitude
- Submission
- Service

#### The Corporate Disciplines
- Confession
- Worship
- Guidance
- Celebration

#### Disciplines of Abstinence
- Solitude
- Silence
- Fasting
- Frugality
- Chastity
- Secrecy
- Sacrifice

#### Disciplines of Engagement
- Study
- Worship
- Service
- Prayer

#### Additional Disciplines
- Spiritual Friendship
- Celibacy
- Poverty
- Evangelism
- Vigils (Watching)
- Feasting
- Noticing God
- Peregrinatio (Voluntary Exile)

#### Source:
## APPENDIX 15

CLASSIFICATION OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE: ADELE AHLBERG CALHOUN

**Worship God**
- Open myself to God
- Relinquish the false self and idols of my heart
- Share my life with others
- Hear the word of God
- Incarnate Christ’s love for the world
- Pray to God

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worship</th>
<th>Open Myself to God</th>
<th>Relinquish the False Self</th>
<th>Share My Life With Others</th>
<th>Hear God’s Word</th>
<th>Pray</th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th>Incarnate The Love Of Christ</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>21. Silence</td>
<td>41. Care of the Earth</td>
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<td>22. Solitude</td>
<td>42. Compassion</td>
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<td>23. Spiritual Direction</td>
<td>43. Control of the Tongue</td>
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<td>24. Submission</td>
<td>44. Humility</td>
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<td>45. Justice</td>
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<td>25. Accountability Partner</td>
<td>46. Stewardship</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>26. Chastity</td>
<td>47. Truth Telling</td>
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<td>27. Community</td>
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<td>28. Covenant Group</td>
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<td>29. Discipling</td>
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<td>30. Hospitality</td>
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<td>31. Mentoring</td>
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<td>32. Service</td>
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<td>33. Small Group</td>
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<td>34. Spiritual Friendship</td>
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<td>35. Unity</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>36. Witness</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX 16

EXAMPLE OF THE SESSION TITLES FOR “SOLITUDE AND SILENCE”
IN JAN JOHNSON’S THE BIBLE STUDY SERIES OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

2. Examples of Solitude: Jacob’s Transformation—Genesis 28:10-22; 32:22-33:3.

Source: Johnson, Spiritual Discipline Bible Studies: Solitude & Silence, 3, Table of Contents.
ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS FOR LIFE TRANSFORMATION GROUPS

1. Have you been a testimony this week to the greatness of Jesus Christ with both your words and actions?
2. Have you been exposed to sexually alluring material or allowed your mind to entertain inappropriate sexual thoughts about another this week?
3. Have you lacked integrity in your financial dealings or coveted something that does not belong to you?
4. Have you been honoring, understanding and generous in your important relationships this week?
5. Have you damaged another person by your words, either behind their back or face to face?
6. Have you given in to an addictive behavior this past week? Explain.
7. Have you continued to remain angry toward another?
8. Have you secretly wished for another’s misfortune?
9. ----------------------------------------------(Your personalized accountability question)
10. Did you finish the Bible reading and hear from God? What are you going to do about it?
11. Have you been completely honest with me?

APPENDIX 18

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STAGES OF A SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY

Stage 1: Introducing the text—possibilities include:

- Silent reading of the text by all
- Oral reading of the text by one member, or in turns
- Group oral reading of the text in unison or antiphonally (alternating verses and readers)
- A role-playing or dramatization of the text
- Copying the text
- Hearing or singing a song, hymn or oratorio which uses the text
- Reciting the text which has been previously memorized
- Viewing works of art based upon the text.

Stage 2: Interacting with the text—possibilities include:

- Asking and answering questions about it individually and together
- Sharing answers to questions worked on before the group meeting
- Individual and/or group paraphrasing or restatement of the text in their own words
- Discussing issues arising from the text
- Group or sub-group dramatization of the passage
- Creative movement expressing the feelings conveyed or stirred up by the passage, e.g. in the Psalms
- Doing individual and group study of the passage such as listing characters, defining terms, identifying elements in the text like comparisons, contrasts, repetitions, instructions; using resources to aid in the interaction with the text such as concordances, Bible atlases, Bible dictionaries, and commentaries
- Meditation upon the passage and a sharing of the results with other group members
- When the text is a story, retelling the story in fresh words
- Listing the issues raised by the text and discussing contemporary attitudes and responses to these issues, etc.

Stage 3: Responding to the text—possibilities include:

- Application questions to be discussed together or thought about individually
- Adopting spiritual disciplines which aid the application of biblical truth, such as prayer, keeping a journal, financial giving, time spent in service, personal Bible study, etc.
- Scripture response exercises; mission or action discussions and assignments
- Accountability questions
- Missions questions
- Relational exercises
- Times of silence
- Individual and corporate prayer, etc.

APPENDIX 19

PRAYERS FOR UNBELIEVING FRIENDS

1. I pray Lord, that you draw _____ to yourself (John 6:44).
2. I pray that _____ seek to know you (Acts 17:27).
3. I pray that _____ hear and believe the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13).
4. I ask you to prevent Satan from binding _____ to the truth (2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Timothy 2:25-26).
5. Holy Spirit, I ask you to convert _____ of his/her sin and his/her need for Christ’s redemption.
6. I ask you to send someone who will share the gospel with _____ (Matthew 9:37-38).
7. I also ask that you give me (and/or my fellow disciple) the opportunity, the courage and the right words to share the truth with _____ (Colossians 4:3-6; Ephesians 6:19-20).
8. Lord, I pray that _____ turn from his/her sin (Acts 17:30-31; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10).
9. Lord, I pray that _____ would put all of his/her trust in Christ (John 1:12; 5:24).
10. Lord, I pray that _____ confess Christ as Lord of his/her life, take root and grow in his/her faith and bear much fruit for your glory (Romans 10:9-10; Colossians 2:6-7; Luke 8:15).

A DISCIPLE’S COVENANT

In order to grow toward maturity in Christ and complete *Discipleship Essentials*, I commit myself to the following standards:

1. Complete all assignments on a weekly basis prior to my discipleship appointment in order to contribute fully (see “Suggested Study Format”).

2. Meet weekly with my discipleship partners for approximately one and one-half hours to dialogue over the content of the assignments.

3. Offer myself fully to the Lord with the anticipation that I am entering a time of accelerated transformation during this discipleship period.

4. Contribute to a climate of honesty, trust and personal vulnerability in a spirit of mutual up-building.

5. Give serious consideration to continuing the discipling chain by committing myself to invest in at least two other people for the year following the initial completion of *Discipleship Essentials*.

Signed__________________________________

Dated_______________________

(The above commitments are the minimum standards of accountability, which are reviewed and renewed after lessons eight and sixteen. Feel free to add any other elements to your covenant.)

APPENDIX 21

DISCIPLESHIP COVENANT

To participate in *MasterLife*, you are asked to dedicate yourself to God and to your *MasterLife* group by making the following commitments. You may not currently be able to do everything listed, but by signing this covenant, you pledge to adopt these practices as you progress through the study.

As a disciple of Jesus Christ, I commit myself to—

- acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord of my life each day;
- attend all group sessions unless providentially hindered;
- spend from 20 to 30 minutes a day as needed to complete all assignments;
- have a daily quiet time;
- keep a Daily Master Communication Guide about the way God speaks to me and I speak to Him;
- be faithful to my church in attendance and stewardship;
- love and encourage each group member;
- share my faith with others;
- keep in confidence anything that others share in the group sessions;
- submit myself to others willingly in accountability;
- become a discipler of others as God gives opportunities;
- support my church financially by practicing biblical giving;
- pray daily for group members.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Signed: __________________________

Date: __________________________

APPENDIX 22

SIX DISCIPLINE LOGOS THAT REPRESENT DAILY ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

APPENDIX 23

ORIENTATION TRAINING
FOR
EXISTING SMALL GROUP LEADERS

Nov 4, 2007

Fellowships & Small Groups Ministry (FSGM)

Fellowship & Body Life Ministry (FBL) Department

By Dennis Mok, Pastor of Fellowships & Small Group Ministry of TCCC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Definition of a Small Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Mission Statement of your Group or Starting a Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Main Functions of a Small Group</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The Five Main Types of Small Groups</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Developing a Purpose Statement</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>The Four Fundamental Strategies/Concepts in Small Groups</td>
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</tr>
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<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

多倫多華人基督教會
Toronto Chinese Community Church
1) Definition of a Small Group

A Small Group (SG) is an intentional face-to-face gathering of 3-12 peoples who come together regularly with the common purpose of developing close relationships with one another to foster Christ-like personal growth and congregational growth.

1. Intentional: You make a decision/commitment to join with a specific purpose.
2. Face-to-Face: You need to see each other and sit close together (90% of all communication is non-verbal).
3. 3 to 12 People: When the number gets over 12, the attention to each individual’s non-verbal communication decreases.
4. Regularly: The meetings should be at least monthly (most effective – weekly or biweekly). There is just not enough time for good bonding if you meet less than once a month.
5. Common Purpose: A clearly defined purpose will keep the group from floundering. Two questions: (1) Why are we here? (2) What do we want to do?
6. Developing: Discovering and encouraging one another – seekers are welcome
7. Foster: The group is a place for each Christian to grow and mature in Christ

2) The Mission Statement of your Group or Starting a Group

Sample (from Willow Creek):

“To connect people relationally in groups for the purpose of growing in Christlikeness, loving one another, and contributing to the work of the church, in order to glorify God and make disciples of all nation.”

The Mission Statement answers two questions:

a) Relational Purpose: Why do small group exist? (Characters of Being)
b) Contributing Purpose: What purpose does it serve? (Characters of Doing)

The Purpose of a Small Group would be:

1. Cell Reproduction – To give birth to another SG.
2. Outreach Oriented – To reach out to Non-believers by providing a seeker-friendly environment.
3. SG Leader Training – To provide a practical platform to develop another SG leader.

3) The Main Functions of a Small Group

1. Personal Exploration
   - Learn in the presence of others and be enriched by the experiences of others.
   - Help people say what they believe, express and articulate their faith journey.
   - Seekers could ask specific questions about faith and Christianity.
   - Can do discipleship or explore practical issues together.
2. Laboratory
   - Where you learn how to love others
   - Where you can express verbally; no longer a “secret” in your heart
3. Permission to be Spiritual
   - You are given the permission to be spiritual or holistic – putting down masks; caring for the soul!!
   - “Who ask you about spiritual things during your coffee breaks last week?”
4. Place to Discover Spiritual Gifts
   - A Place where you are known and affirmed concerning your talents/giftedness
5. Centre for Christian Ministry
   - A Place where you learn how to minister to one another or serve the world

4) The Five Main Types of Small Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Target Audience</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Biblical Support</th>
<th>Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Covenant</td>
<td>Committed</td>
<td>Long-Term Relationship</td>
<td>O.T. Covenants</td>
<td>Built-in Balance with the 3-stages in Group Lifecycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integral</td>
<td>Church Attendance</td>
<td>Link between Pulpit and House Groups</td>
<td>Temple Courts &amp; House to House (Acts 2:42-47)</td>
<td>Strong Teaching with Bible Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell/Care</td>
<td>Entire Church Congregation</td>
<td>Multiplication &amp; Caring Network</td>
<td>Exodus 18:25; Matt. 28:19-20; Eph 4:16; 1Cor 12:25-26; 2Tim 2:2; Acts 20:20</td>
<td>De-centralizes the caregiving responsibility so that everyone is cared for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support &amp; Recovery (S/R)</td>
<td>Inactive members &amp; Outsiders</td>
<td>Help People in time of need where they have felt needs</td>
<td>Upper Room; Broken Home</td>
<td>Cross the Church barrier with short-term entry group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipleship</td>
<td>Highly Committed</td>
<td>Accountability &amp; Mentoring Leadership</td>
<td>Jesus and The Twelve; The Inner Circle of 3</td>
<td>Lasting reproduction of the faith through faithful men &amp; women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5) Developing a Purpose Statement

The Purpose Statement of your Small Group may consist of the following:

1. The Purpose of Our Group is…

2. Our Specific Goals are…

3. We will meet ___ Times, every ___ weeks, after which we will evaluate our group before continuing.

4. We will meet on ____ (day) from _____ (time) to ______, and strive to start on time and close on time.

5. We will meet at _________________ (place) or rotate where we meet.

6. We will agree to one or more of the following disciplines:
   a. **Attendance:** To give priority to the group meetings.
   b. **Participation:** To share responsibility for the group.
   c. **Confidentiality:** To keep anything that is said strictly confidential.
   d. **Accountability:** To give permission to group members to hold each other accountable.
   e. **Accessibility:** To give one another the right to call upon one another in time of need.

6) The Agenda of a Small Group

Depending on the “stage” of the Group, the agenda of a typical SG (90 minutes) would be as follows:

1) Gathering (15 minute): To break the ice (All Together)
2) Bible Study (30-45 minutes): To study the Bible and share your spiritual journey (Group of 4)
3) Caring/Outreach (30-45 minutes): To share prayer requests (All Together)

7) The Four Fundamental Strategies/Concepts in Small Groups

These strategies are called the "**Big Four**" – the Serendipity philosophy of ministry for small groups in the church. They are interconnected and each builds upon the one before.

**Strategy 1: The 3-Legged Stool**

This strategy emphasizes the essential elements for a healthy small group. It needs 1) Bible Study, 2) Group Building and Support, and 3) Outreach or Mission. It is called “The 3-Legged Stool”
(There was a time in the early '50s when people believed that small groups should only focus on Bible study and prayer. Then, in the '60s, the emphasis changed to outreach. Finally, in the '70s, small groups began to highlight group building and support over the other two. All of these movements floundered because they tried groups with a single focus to the exclusion of the other two essentials. Today, many churches are turned off because they tried groups with a single focus and the groups burned out. Dawson Trotman, the founder of the Navigators, said: "The greatest danger to any chain is its strongest link.")

1. Bible Study: Studying the Bible
2. Group Building (Caring)
   i. Requires Time & Commitment, if not – no significant bonding; if too much – unhealthy “codependence”
3. Outreach (The Empty Chair)
   i. Who are the people we try to reach? People who are on their ways back to God? People who after hurting want to come to get healed? People who desire to have answers to their problems?
   ii. Put a name on the Empty Chair and start praying for him/her

**Strategy 2: The Flying Wedge**

Here we will learn how to develop the elements of the 3-legged stool strategy to get the most “mileage” out of it. Basically, we have 2 options:

**Option 1: Static Agenda (90 minutes)**
- Bible Study (30 min.); Group Building (30 min.); Decision Making; Prayer (30 min.)
  *(May be inflexible, insensitive to group dynamic)*

**Option 2: Dynamic Agenda, called the Flying Wedge (90 minutes)**
- During the lifespan of a group, one element is given priority over the other two. This emphasis tends to prioritize the needs of a group at a particular stage in its life.
- The lifecycle of the group could be divided into 3 stages. In the first stage, the most important aspect would be Group Building. Once the members know one another, the need for deeper Bible Study would take priority. In the last stage of the group, Group...
Building again would increase as the group seeks to become a community in need of rebirth, shown as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Stage</th>
<th>Second Stage</th>
<th>Third Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birthing</td>
<td>Growing</td>
<td>Re-Birthing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|    | Bible Study |
|    | Group Building |
|    | Outreach |

**Strategy 3: The Baseball Diamond**

This strategy helps us when we try to help the group to do some Group Building. It is best illustrated by using a Baseball Diamond. Each base represents a particular step in the formation of the group.

**First Base: My Story** – History Giving; A simple “get-acquainted” time that you can share your spiritual journey like your past, your present and your future. Share your “story”, your spiritual beginnings, journeys, and where you are right now in your life with God.

**Second Base: Affirmation** – Affirming one another’s story; It creates a relationship between people who show unconditional acceptance. Respond to each other’s story with “thanks for sharing”. This would encourage love and acceptance towards one another.
**Third Base: My Needs** – Goal Setting; sharing on a deeper level by risking and venturing out into uncharted waters. It is a place where the Holy Spirit bonds people, heals people and creates people. Share the personal needs of your life right now. Each should set some new goals for themselves.

**Home Plate: Bonding** – Koinonia (Fellowship); a communion of shared faith that represents a genuine unity and caring among the members of the group.

**Strategy 4: The Empty Chair**
Place an empty chair in the group as a constant reminder that your group is open to reach out to others:

- i. **who are on their way back to God**
- ii. **who are hurting and need a place to belong**
- iii. **who after hurting want to come to get healed**
- iv. **who desire to have answers to their problems?**

You may put a name on the Empty Chair and start praying for a non-Christian friend to come.

8) Understanding the Three Stages of the Lifecycle of a Small Group

The lifecycle of a group can be summarized and tabulated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Birth</th>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>Rebirth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>First 7 Meetings</td>
<td>About 12 Meetings</td>
<td>Last 7 Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda</td>
<td>Fixed</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>Fixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>History Sharing</td>
<td>Deeper Bible Study</td>
<td>Preparation for Release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Bonding as a Group</td>
<td>Spiritual Formation</td>
<td>Graduation as a Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible Study</td>
<td>Right Brain – Feelings; Multiple Choice; Non-Threatening Discussions</td>
<td>Left Brain - Intellectual; Inductive Study</td>
<td>“Spiritual Gifts” Discovery “Needs” Assessment Networking &amp; Skill Inventory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stage 1: The Birthing Process
This stage is the first 7 meetings when the members start to “become” a group. During the stage, Group Building is of ultimate important.

Stage 2: The Growth Process
This stage usually allows a deeper Bible Study for each person to grow mature. It lasts about the total meetings minus the 14 meetings of the Birth/Rebirth.
Stage 3: Rebirth

This stage is called “rebirth” because the ultimate goal of the group is multiplication. The Outreach/Mission component of the 3-Legged Stool comes into focus as the group is challenged to give birth to a new group. This stage lasts about 7 meetings. The Group Building should progress in a stage that could be illustrated by a similar baseball diamond as follows:

1st Base: Our Story – Reminiscing about our time together: the high points, struggles, victories, unforgettable moments, spiritual journeys, etc.
2nd Base: Affirmation – Affirming one another’s gifts. Now you know each other, you can do the gifts assessment with one another. Try to affirm one another by saying: “This is where I have seen you use your gifts…”
3rd Base: God’s Calling – once affirmed by your group, you are more likely to hear “God’s Calling” for the next step in your spiritual journey. A Special “Needs Assessment” could then be done for each member in the Group.
Home Plate: Community – a genuine unity and caring group that form a community to outreach to others.

9) The Seven Principles of Running a Small Group

1. Share and distribute the work

It is wise that the SG leader would not be the one leading the Bible Study. Not everyone would be comfortable in leading Bible Study. Therefore, it would be wise to have it limited to just a few members who are experienced or trained in leading Bible Study. However, the hosting of the SG could be rotated among members.
2. Start with the “Child”
   Using icebreakers and structured exercises, appeal to each person’s sense of fun and hilarity. Keep the activity and conversation light and easy-going. Help the group come to the Lord as children, full of wonder and excitement. Pray, as this is the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

3. Ask non-threatening questions
   - Use Open-ended questions instead of closed questions. Open-ended questions allow for options, observations, and a variety of opinions in which no one is right or wrong.
   - Use “Right-brained” questions. They are better than “Left-brained” questions. Right-brained questions seek out your first impressions, color, tone, texture, motives and subjective “feelings” about the text. Right-Brain oriented questions are especially good in narrative stories where you are asked to share what you would do in that situation.
   - As an option, use Multiple-choice questions. They encourage people who know very little about the Bible. Given a set of multiple-choice options, a young Christian is not threatened, and a shy person is not intimidated. Everyone has something to contribute.

4. Share things outside
   It is easier for people to share and learn when the lesson begins at a distance. Use objective “things” (weather, sports, etc.) to help people learn and grow as a group. Once the group has shared on this impersonal level, help the group to discover meaning for themselves through personal application. The process of learning and sharing as a group creates a common experience, and then individuals can share in a more relaxed manner.

5. Keep a tight agenda
   Plan well in advance. Start on time and finish on time. A tight and structured format communicates to the participants that things are under control, and they do not need to worry about the ground rules, the time, or if there will be refreshments.

6. The Fearless Foursome
   Groups of four are better than groups of ten or twelve for sharing/discussion. Not only are smaller groups more intimate, fewer people also means that everyone gets time to share. It has been proven that four is the ideal number in a group that no one gets intimidated/embarrassed by not sharing if he/she really doesn’t want to.

7. Affirm the person and their story
   As the group begins to bond, it is very important that sharing be affirmed without reservation. Unconditional love and acceptance is the rule. Affirm the person and their story by thanking them for sharing, and by asking them for prayer requests.
10) Developing Apprentice Leaders

1. Spotting Rising Apprentice Leaders
   o Look for group members who take the group seriously.
   o Consider those people who challenge your leadership. They may be potential leaders who are frustrated.
   o Look for gifted people whom you can recognize and affirm.
   o Pray regularly for new apprentices.
   o Look for people who embrace the small group vision.
   o Observe people in your ministry as they serve or work with people. Allow additional opportunities and responsibility for their ministry to see if they could be potential leaders.
   o Look for people who exhibit the following spiritual, emotional, and social qualifications:
     1. Spiritual qualifications:
        a. Are they self-feeders? (Do they consistently spend time nurturing their own spiritual growth through time in God’s Word and in prayer?)
        b. Are they eager to learn? (Do they actively participate in spiritual discussions?)
        c. Do they share the vision of small group?
     2. Emotional qualifications:
        a. Are they secure enough to be vulnerable and honest with the group?
        b. Are they emotionally stable? (Are they aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and not subject to mood swings that affect the group dynamic?)
        c. How do they respond to confrontation and character development? Defensively? Responsively?
     3. Social qualifications:
        a. Do they openly participate without dominating? (If this is an issue, how did they respond to confrontation on the issue?)
        b. Are they able to listen to others in a caring way?
        c. Are they able to facilitate discussion?

2. Information Needed By a Potential Apprentice
   o Help them understand the job description of a leader. They are expected to fulfill the job description requirements to the same degree as a leader would because they are still developing (apprentice) leader.
   o Give them a time frame for their apprentice development. It usually takes 12-18 months before they would be able to lead a small group on their own, depending on their maturity and ministry experiences.
   o Affirm them that adequate training and resources are available for their growth and encouragement.
Ensure that they understand clearly the vision and values of the small group ministry. They should attend all the required training events of the church.

3. Responsibilities of an Apprentice (4 L’s)
   a. Love:
      Love and support your leader and your group, doing all you can to be an example. Be active in loving and caring for them.
   b. Learn
      Learn from what your leader does and from what your leader does not do. Talk with your leader and debrief each meeting, discussing the pros and cons of the process. At this point, leadership is both caught and taught. Also, take advantage of skill training as it is offered or recommended.
   c. Lead
      Ask your leader to give you experience leading the group in various ways. The “Learning while Doing” principle is: I Do You Watch → I Do You Assist → You Do I Assist → You Do I Watch. Begin by leading the prayer time or one or two discussion questions. Over time, work and gradually take more ownership and leadership in the group.
   d. Look
      Throughout your ministry as an apprentice you ought to be looking for an apprentice as well. Ask yourself questions like:
      - Who looks like they might have leadership potential (Talk to your leader to learn what criteria they use to recruit you!)
      - Who has a servant’s heart?
      - Who is willing to commit to learn?

Source: This material was developed by Dennis Mok, Pastor of Fellowship & Small Groups of TCCC.
APPENDIX 24
LEVEL ONE BASIC TRAINING

The four topics covered are: (1) Process (2) Bible Study (3) Agenda (4) Caring.

Lesson 1 Process

1. A small group is a group of people who covenant to care for one another.
2. It is an intentional face-to-face gathering of 3-12 people with the provision of an empty chair to welcome a newcomer.
3. Each meeting’s time span is 90 minutes beginning and finishing on time; starts with light refreshment; establishes regularity; has a common purpose and the mission is to reach out to seekers.
4. There are four kinds of audience in any given Sunday service:
   (1) 10% is the Core (which typically forms Discipleship Groups). (2) 30% is the Congregation (which typically forms Covenant Groups). (3) 60% is the Crowd. (4) The rest are seekers/outsiders (which can be formed into Felt-need Groups).
5. There are four types of group formations:
6. All small groups should use the first six meetings to achieve bonding by history giving; affirmation; goal setting and koinonia.

Lesson 2 Bible Study

1. The first six meetings are mainly for the purpose of bonding; hence the Bible study is to facilitate the sharing of history giving and life journey.
2. Avoid the danger of just studying the Bible.
3. Group versus Personal Bible study. The purpose of group Bible study is different especially in the beginning stage is “to become a group”—and the way to do that is by sharing your spiritual stories with one another.
4. There are five basic principles:
   (1) Start with Bible stories to draw each person into the narrative. This is called “leveling the playing field.” Learning from biblical stories is always more interesting than direct instruction.
   (2) Open questions/Right brain approach. Open-ended questions allow for options, observations and a variety of opinions in which no one is right or wrong. Right-brain questions seek out your first impressions, color, tone, texture, motives and subjective “feelings” about the text.
   (3) Multiple choice options encourage people who know very little about the Bible.
   (4) Tight agenda. People that are used to structure need a whole lot of structure to feel comfortable. The tighter the agenda with time limit, questions to discuss,
options to choose from…the better. This is especially true in the beginning stage of the group.

(5) The Fearless Foursome. If you split into groups of four, everyone will be able to participate and experience more intimacy. The closer you sit, the closer you feel.

Lesson 3 Agenda

1. There are two extremes of unwise small group leaders’ training: either there is no designated leader with everyone just rotating or a leader is expected to undergo intense theological training to be like an experienced professional before he/she can lead.
2. A tight agenda can minimize the pressure that the leader might face.
3. A small group leader needs to show commitment to (1) Jesus Christ (2) Mission of Small Group Ministry (3) A learning posture (4) Keeping the small group open and welcoming (5) Reproducing the small group (6) Seeking out new apprentice for training to groom for a successor (7) Utilize Bible study material supplied by the church.
4. Regardless of what types of groups, the first six meetings must aim at achieving bonding. There are the three components: (1) Refreshment time (15 minutes) can be used for follow-up of the prayers/special needs from last meeting. It can also act as buffer time for late-comers to catch up. (2) Bible study (30 minutes). This includes introduction, reading of Scripture and sharing through the Fearless Foursome approach. (3) Mutual caring (30-45 minutes). This allows sharing of prayer items to pray for one another (if the matter is urgent, there is no need to follow this sequence).

Lesson 4 Caring

1. The dimension in caring. Behind every presenting need, there is always a spiritual dimension. The way is to discern it by prayer.
2. The source of caring. Remember that the Holy Spirit is co-working with us and the driving force has to be the love of God through the compassion of Christ.
3. The effect of caring. The real healer is Christ himself. We are to facilitate by providing the favorable conditions of confidence, acceptance and love. This will help us to be relieved from the anxiety or false expectations about the outcome.
4. Caring for the whole person. The holistic needs of body, soul and spirit need to be taken into consideration, so that the help offered can be down-to-earth.
5. Some practical steps of caring include: (1) prayer (2) listening (3) sincere concern (4) encouragement (5) commitment to follow-up (6) forgiveness.

Source: Lyman Coleman, *Basic Training: For Small Group Ministry in Your Church*, Serendipity Video Training Series (Littleton, CO: Serendipity House, 1995), four VCR tapes and material modified by Dennis Mok, Pastor of Fellowship & Small Groups of TCCC.
APPENDIX 25

TEAM ASSESSMENT

The questionnaire on the following pages is a straightforward diagnostic tool for helping you evaluate your team’s susceptibility to the five dysfunctions. At the end of the questionnaire, there is a simple explanation of how to tabulate the results and interpret the possible conclusions. If possible, have all members of your team complete the diagnostic and review the results, discussing discrepancies in the responses and identifying any clear implications for the team.

Instructions: Use the scale below to indicate how each statement applies to your team. It is important to evaluate the statements honestly and without over-thinking your answers.

3 = Usually
2 = Sometimes
1 = Rarely

_____ 1. Team members are passionate and unguarded in their discussion of issues.
_____ 2. Team members call out one another’s deficiencies or unproductive behaviors.
_____ 3. Team members know what their peers are working on and how they contribute to the collective good of the team.
_____ 4. Team members quickly and genuinely apologize to one another when they say or do something inappropriate or possibly damaging to the team.
_____ 5. Team members willingly make sacrifices (such as budget, turf, head count) in their departments or areas of expertise for the good of the team.
_____ 6. Team members openly admit their weaknesses and mistakes.
_____ 7. Team members are compelling, and not boring.
_____ 8. Team members leave meetings confident that their peers are completely committed to the decisions that were agreed on, even if there was initial disagreement.
_____ 9. Morale is significantly affected by the failure to achieve team goals.
10. During team meetings, the most important—and difficult—issues are put on the table to be resolved.

11. Team members are deeply concerned about the prospect of letting down their peers.

12. Team members know about one another’s personal lives and are comfortable discussing them.

13. Team members end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action.

14. Team members challenge one another about their plans and approaches.

15. Team members are slow to seek credit for their own contributions, but quick to point out those of others.

**Scoring**

Combine your scores for the preceding statements as indicated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dysfunction 1: Absence of Trust</th>
<th>Dysfunction 2: Fear of Conflict</th>
<th>Dysfunction 3: Lack of Commitment</th>
<th>Dysfunction 4: Avoidance of Accountability</th>
<th>Dysfunction 5: Inattention to Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Total:** _____ **Total:** _____ **Total:** _____ **Total:** _____ **Total:** ____

A score of 8 or 9 is a probable indication that the dysfunction is not a problem for your team.
A score of 6 or 7 indicates that the dysfunction could be a problem.
A score of 3 to 5 is probably an indication that the dysfunction needs to be addressed.

Regardless of your scores, it is important to keep in mind that every team needs constant work, because without it, even the best ones deviate toward dysfunction.

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