Designing, Activating, and Evaluating a Training Program for Small-Group Leaders in the Cleburne First Seventh-day Adventist Church

Richard William Peterson

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ABSTRACT

DESIGNING, ACTIVATING, AND EVALUATING A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SMALL-GROUP LEADERS IN THE CLEBURNE FIRST SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

Richard W. Peterson

Adviser: Kenneth Stout
Title: DESIGNING, ACTIVATING, AND EVALUATING A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS IN THE CLEBURNE FIRST SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

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Date completed: July 1997

Problem

The Cleburne First SDA Church was growing and the church board was considering ways to meet the needs of the membership. The board was interested in increasing church growth, enhancing membership nurture, and expanding its leadership.

Method

After examination of various training programs for small-group leaders, a ten-week training program was designed and implemented. Those trained were asked to form and lead small groups for at least a seven-week course of
Bible study. At the end of the entire process an evaluation was made by trainees, small-group participants, and the group coordinator.

Results

The seventeen who took part in the first training seminar started seven groups. The eleven who were trained in the second seminar teamed up with those from the first seminar and together they led seven small groups.

Conclusions

The small-group leadership training did produce a number of the desired effects upon the Cleburne First SDA Church: outreach was broadened, membership needs were more effectively met, and the pastor was given additional lay leadership support.
DESIGNING, ACTIVATING, AND EVALUATING A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SMALL-GROUP LEADERS IN THE CLEBURNE FIRST SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Ministry

by
Richard W. Peterson
July 1997
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Cleburne First Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church was beginning to grow. The church board and I were wrestling with how to meet the needs of our growing congregation. The church was struggling to meet the needs of our ever-growing community. We were facing a shortage of leaders and a lack of cohesion. It was out of this need that this dissertation began to take shape.

Purpose of the Dissertation

The purpose of the dissertation was to develop a seminar to train members to lead small groups in the Cleburne First Seventh-day Adventist Church. The goal of this training was to encourage caring and sharing by the members both within and without the church.

Justification of the Project

First, the Cleburne First SDA Church has grown to 440 members. The needs of a membership this size exceeds the shepherding and leadership abilities of a single pastor. One of the pastor's duties is to help equip members to use their God-given gifts.¹ In fulfilling this duty new leaders will be created with the result that pastoral care will improve in the

¹Jeffery Arnold, The Big Book on Small Groups (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 33.
Cleburne Church. The leadership pool will be increased, and the overall administrative duties will be more widely distributed throughout the congregation.

Second, there are members who are not receiving the help needed to keep them active and interested. As these leaders are trained and start small groups, they will stimulate more member interest and involvement on many levels. Small groups can amplify the overall ministry of the church. It will be possible to inspire small groups to take the responsibility for such things as outreach, visiting the sick, and greeting at the church.\footnote{Ibid., 35.} It is planned that after the training, members will lead their groups to care for the church membership.

Third, Jesus calls for fellowship among the faithful. In more than one text, such as Eph 4, unity is referred to as one of the important goals for the church. Members are called to share, encourage, and help one another grow in Jesus' image. Small groups with trained leaders can help nurture interest and activity by fostering dynamic interaction among members. Leaders can pattern groups to provide a loving community to strengthen Christian life.\footnote{Ibid., 37.}

Fourth, church members are also responsible to reach beyond the walls of the church in service and evangelism. Small groups can help facilitate this outreach responsibility by providing organization, inspiration, and preparation. Evangelism will become a "person-to-person process" of sharing the Gospel rather

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\footnote{Ibid., 35.}
\footnote{Ibid, 37.}
than a mere program.¹

Fifth, small groups can offer an economical way to increase the church's work force. Many conferences and churches do not have the funds to hire more personnel. Work can be accomplished by small group volunteers rather than by paid professionals.

Sixth, training leaders harmonizes with the scriptural leadership principles modeled by Moses and the apostles. Moses' great work was not only in leading Israel, but in teaching the people. The principle put before him by his father-in-law was the institution of delegated leaders who would be responsible for specific segments of the nation. The apostles used this same principle as new churches were formed. Individuals were placed in leadership roles over groups of members.

Limitations of the Dissertation

It is not the purpose of this dissertation to explore all the theories of small group leadership. It's purpose is to use those principles which are helpful to train well-balanced small group leaders. The principles used are based on my discretion and the result of my research into effective principles for small group operation.

A set of lessons for ten meetings were written for use in the initial training of the small group leaders. Although development and implementation of this training class is the main goal of this project, it needed to be proven in real life. Groups were formed by those who have taken the class. At the end of this time there was a period of reflection and evaluation on

¹Ibid, 36.
what took place. Of course, such evaluation will be an ongoing process.

There are many types of small groups.¹ My focus for this training class centers on one at the exclusion of others. The purpose of this study was to develop "covenant groups." The model for this group type is found in the lessons and works of Lyman Coleman.² The groups set a covenant to meet and establish its purpose and goals. A course of Bible study was determined. Emphasis was placed on each member sharing and asking questions. Time for prayer was reserved for the end of each session. As the small groups grow, other forms of groups may be developed, but these additional groups were not examined in this project.

This dissertation looks at leadership training from the viewpoint of the small groups already described. Some leadership skills do not require a small group. Small group leadership, as noted here, emphasizes "listening skills." Overall, the leader was encouraged to look for and employ the best style of leadership for his/her immediate context.³

Methodology of the Dissertation

This was a "program development" dissertation. It followed


²Lyman Coleman, Beginning a Serendipity Group (Littleton, CO: Serendipity House, 1991), 3-5.

the steps as outlined in the Andrews University Guidelines for the Doctor of Ministry Dissertation, 1995. I began by defining the problem with the Cleburne Church Board. The problem was defined as the need for fellowship and leadership in the Cleburne Church.

The goal was to design a seminar to train group leaders. The ultimate objective was to implement this training in the formation of numerous active small groups to be led by the newly-trained group leaders. This was discussed and voted on by the Cleburne Church Board.

The dissertation is organized as follows: Chapter 1 introduces the task of the project and some definitions. Chapter 2 begins by investigating the topics of small groups and leadership in the Scriptures. This is rounded out by an examination of pertinent statements by Ellen G. White. While there are no comments about the specific topic of "small group leadership training" in either of these sources, each will be studied for potential insights and principles that have either direct or indirect bearing on the concept of small group leadership training.

In chapter 3, I examine selected "in print" literature, most of which, were published in the last fifteen years to discover the best ideas about how to activate and train small group leaders. Since the literature dealing directly with training small group leaders is limited, sources dealing with "leadership" and "the small group process" will also be examined.

Chapter 4 of this project includes several stages. In stage one, I focus on the preparation for training and cover issues
such as the selection of small group leaders and content development. I geared my preaching to share the need for small groups and leaders. With the help of present church leaders, I invited members to participate in training for the purpose of learning how to share their faith and provide nurture.

In stage two, I targeted the issue of training people to lead small groups. Training was done over ten weeks. It included group dynamics and theoretical lessons which were to be practiced by the participants in a small group setting. In stage three, I dealt with implementation. I preached a series of sermons aimed at inviting people to join a small group. Leaders and assistant leaders were designated for each group. Once formed, groups began functioning.

Chapter 5 examines the evaluation of the small group leadership training program and its application to care giving and Gospel sharing. In Chapter 6 I share my conclusions and recommendations. These conclusions and recommendations will be used to enhance future presentations of the small group leadership training class.

Definition of Terms

The following are defined in order to clarify their usage in this study.

**Cleburne Church** or the church: The Cleburne First Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cleburne, Texas.

**The church board:** The governing board of the church.

**Small group:** "An intentional, face-to-face gathering of 3-12
people, with a common purpose of discovering Biblical truth."

Small group of four: A further division of a small group to foster discussion. The group leaders were divided into these groups of four to get practical training in leading small groups.

Icebreaker: The opening exercise which is geared to help members of a group get ready for group discussion by addressing specific questions. The questions often asked of the group members relate to either telling about the past or surmising what they would do or be.

Quaker Question: Refers to any one of several questions often used as the ice breaker in the first session of a small group. They are called the "Quaker Questions" because they were used by the Quakers. The questions are: Where did you live when you were ten? What was your home heated with in the winter? (If your home was centrally heated, share what winters were like.) What was the center of warmth in you life at ten? (This can be a person, place, or time.) When did you understand God's salvation for your life? What was your conversion like?

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'Johnson, 26.'
CHAPTER II

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR LEADERSHIP IN SMALL GROUPS

In carefully looking in the Scriptures, I discovered numerous principles about small groups, leadership, and training. These principles were used to lay the foundation for lesson development in training small group leaders. Then I looked at the writings of Ellen G. White for further consideration of small groups. Ellen White is considered an authority on spiritual matters and an insightful commentator on spiritual teachings within the Adventist tradition.

The Biblical Witness

There are three issues which the Scriptures illuminate in support of this dissertation. First, we are made in the image of God, and this image includes the aspect of community, which is the basis of small groups. Second, small groups provide better leadership for the whole. Last, the training of people should be an ongoing process in the church.

Image of God—Community

At creation, God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, in Our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Gen 1:26, 27, NIV). In these words is packed the essential fact
that God made us. Later, the mechanical action of clay formed into substance enlivened with God's breath tells us how, but here we are told what we are, "in God's image."

One attribute of the image that God instilled in us is "community." God is one, and yet God is the community of three persons working in continual concert with one another. The creation of humans was an act of moving beyond individuality as the three-in-one God formed us as a communal fellowship. From creation, humanity is seen not in singular form, but as the unity of two beings: man and woman. As Moses pointed out, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to His wife, and they shall become one flesh." (Gen 2:14, NIV).

Sin caused a disruption within this human community, and unless actions were taken it would have been destroyed and humankind would never again have reflected the image of God in its fullness. ¹ The focus of humans became self-centered, the image of God was now negativized. ² The negative actions and attitudes forced God to suspend full, direct communion with humans. ³ The human-to-human communion was disrupted as humans did as they wanted without regard to others. ⁴

In Rom 8, Paul shares the great actions of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to restore both human/human community and God/humankind community. The Father sent His Son to make

¹Gen 3:15, Rev 12:10-12.
³Isa 59:1-3.
⁴Gen 4:1-16.
connections with us to recreate the eternal bond of community on both vertical and horizontal levels. Finally, we find that nothing can separate us from a personal relationship with God and those fellow humans who reflect His love.¹

When Jesus was about to be arrested, He prayed for His mission, his present followers and those to come.² Throughout the prayer, Jesus made reference to the fact that He wants us to be one as Jesus and the Father are one.³ Unity with one another is how we show that we are like our Master.⁴ Christ's reflection can be seen in the harmonious dependency, intimacy, and the open trust of a small group.⁵

Jesus preformed many great acts of healing and presented the message of God's love. Jesus, however, made it clear that He could do nothing without the Father, including every word and deed.⁶ Jesus further expressed that He was sending a Comforter. The Comforter or Holy Spirit was going to share Jesus' words.⁷ So, Jesus had an active relationship with both the Father and the Holy Spirit. We see, then, that each person of the Godhead interacted with one another; thus a pattern of communal involvement was established for mankind to follow as they reflected the Trinity's image.

¹Gorman, 24.
²John 17:6, 20.
³John 17:17, 18, 23.
⁴John 13:34, 35.
⁵Gorman, 42.
⁶John 8:28, 38.
⁷John 16:13, 14.
The image of God is seen then in the interdependent community and not in the independent person. The reason for having small groups is to better exhibit this image of God. This was not lost on the Early Church. As members were added they worshipped together in the temple and then got together in their homes. The leading example of small group community is found in Jesus' joining the "twelve" together. This communal unity, reproduced as members today interact in the life of the church and in the church's relationship to Christ, is another example of the importance and power of the small group.

Leadership for the Larger Community

The second issue is seen clearly in the story of Moses leading the Children of Israel. With the Lord's help, Moses led more than six hundred thousand men out of Egypt. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, came out to meet Moses with his family after Israel successfully left Egypt for the Promised Land. The first night was a celebration as Moses shared all the good things that God had accomplished.

The next day, Moses took his place as the judge of Israel. People gathered from morning to evening to present their cases to Moses. Afterwards, Jethro asked the important questions: "What are you doing?" and "Why?" Moses answered that the people came

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1Gorman, 28.
3Gorman, 49.
4Num 1:46. This number does not include women, children, men were too old to serve in the army, and the tribe of Levi.
5Exodus 18:5-11.

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and he judged their cases. Moses, however, failed to see the
wrong example he was setting for the people as a leader, and the
physical and emotional wear and tear he was causing himself.

The people began to see Moses as the answer to all their
problems. The result was that Moses began to experience burnout.
Jethro recommended a change of perception and behavior; Moses was
the people's representative to God and God was to handle the
disputes. The people must be taught the laws and decrees of God.
Not only were they to be taught, but they were to be demonstrated
in Moses' life. Finally, capable leaders, God-fearing and
honest, were selected to take care of the people as they were
designated into various-sized groups. These leaders were chosen
down to the small group level, where a leader was appointed over
bands as small as ten people.

Jethro laid out a model that is still effective in the
operation of the church today. As the church grows, leadership
must be shared and authority delegated even to the small group
level. No one person can or should even try to take God's place.
Overburdened leaders will eventually burnout and lose their
usefulness. It is not best for either the leaders or the people
of God, as a whole, to have individuals assume too much
responsibility and/or control.

As the early church exploded on the day of Pentecost, the
church faced numerous problems. People were not being

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1 Exod 18:13-16.
2 Exod 18:17-23.
3 Carl F. George, Prepare Your Church for the Future (Grand
sufficiently serviced by the church leadership. In one case, this caused a certain group of women to be upset. The issue was brought to a church council. At this time, the disciples defined their role as being the leaders in teaching and praying. They felt that their effort should be focused on providing leadership in "ministering the Word," i.e., in teaching and proclaiming the Word of God. The problem of the Greek women was solved by choosing undershepherds or "deacons" to take care of these subgroup's needs.¹ This freed the disciples to keep their focus on preaching and teaching the word of God.

As a church grows today, we should, likewise, restrict the size of the burden that a pastor, leader, or group of leaders handle to that which is manageable. The church must be divided into workable units, and leaders, who fear God and are honest, must lead reasonably-sized groups as designated to them.² The leaders of smaller units within the church will work alongside the pastor, thus sharing and distributing the heavy burdens of pastoral oversight. Then the pastor can keep doing what he/she was primarily called to do: pray and teach the people, and more effectively nurture them for Christ by proclaiming the Scriptures in word and deed.³

Training Leaders

This leads us to the final point. Leaders within the church community should be trained. Moses set down the criteria for

²Arnold, 23.
those who were to be the leaders of groups. His criteria was that the person should be wise, understanding, and respected.1 These qualities do not come automatically into a person's life, they take time and development. Surely, Moses taught his leaders—if not explicitly—by daily example, through his own handling of the most complex problems as their overall leader.

Wisdom and understanding are often linked together in the Scriptures. As Job is talking to his comforters, he made it clear that wisdom from God is different from human wisdom, it brings a person back into the creator's will.2 Wisdom is tied to fearing God and shunning evil with understanding.3 How does one come to divine wisdom and understanding? David made it clear that he needed to be taught by the Lord. Through this instruction he gained the fear of God.4 God's Instruction in divine truth enabled David to find that true knowledge and wisdom. This knowledge, applied with wisdom, enabled him to be a wise leader over small bands of men as well as an entire nation when he later became king. David was trained, therefore, by a combination of God's written (Torah) and oral instruction (prophets), and practical experience.

Jesus used small group training to start His church based on the twelve disciples.5 He told two of His disciples that He

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1Deuteronomy 1:13.


4Ps 25

would make them "fishers of men." (Matt 4:19). Jesus kept His
disciples close to Him so that through their eyes and ears they
could witness the Christ in action as the supreme model and
teacher. This time of observing the master was the means by
which Jesus imparted many great lessons to the twelve.¹

Jesus developed a picture of the principles of God's kingdom
and used it to strike at the core of their selfishness.² The
swelling desire of their lives was to know the Giver of eternal
life and to gain this life if possible.³ The desires of the
secular minds were replaced with those from heaven.⁴ They were
trained to put their reliance on things above rather than that
which is considered prudent here on earth.⁵ The disciples
reproduced this model of training as they won converts to
Christ.⁶ They met together with the believers in the temple and
then met with them in homes.⁷ The church grew as new members
were taught the teachings of the Christ and trained according to
Christ's pattern.⁸ The fact is that training and instruction is
the foundation of the Church's method of integrating new
believers.

¹Alexander Balmain Bruce, Training of the Twelve (New
²White, The Desire of Ages (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press
Publishing Association, 1898), 295.
³Ibid., 148.
⁴Ibid., 294.
⁵Arnold, 17.
⁶Coleman, 40.
⁷Acts 2:40.
⁸White, Desire of Ages, 297.
Jesus was given authority by the Father to teach the Word of truth to humanity.¹ The disciples were commanded to "go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them . . ." (Matt 28:19, NIV). People are to be invited to make their stand in baptism, but this is not the end of the action of "making disciples." Christ's disciples are to teach, not only to increase the church's numbers, but to build it up qualitatively.² That is, they are to continue training the members, constantly increasing their knowledge and practical skills. The disciples were taught the Scriptural truths. Jesus made it clear that the law and the prophets were not to be done away by His teachings but respected and used to complement those teachings.³ But, more than being just words and teachings, they were to be brought to life in word and deed. They were to be a part of the very being of the believer. Action and factual instruction were united in Jesus' teaching method.⁴ Making disciples, therefore, requires an ongoing work of training by the church and its leaders until the Master returns.

To sum up this section, my understanding of Scripture—as it relates to my dissertation—is that there are three important facts:

1. God's image is seen in the community of believers and this community is enhanced through the functioning of small groups.

¹Coleman, 51.
³Matt 5:17-20.
2. Small groups are a vehicle to rebuild the image of God in the church.

3. Through these small groups or cells the church can be trained and organized to function better in meeting the needs of its members, rather than relying on one person or a few key individuals. The pastor can best lead by facilitating the training of other members, through example, and by organizing these members into leaders of small groups.

To meet this goal, the church needs to work with the pastor in dividing itself into small groups and in seeing to it that leaders are prepared to lead these groups. These leaders need help with gaining wisdom, understanding, and practical skills. This can only happen when the church uses divine training methods. This training must involve more than the transfer of information, but incorporate proper modelling and direct, personal experience!

The Writings of Ellen G. White

Ellen G. White is both one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and--in the view of SDA's--a messenger from God; therefore, she has a special status and authority within the church. In a number of places she refers to "small groups" or "small companies." Many of these have a bearing upon the focus of this study.

Ellen White was raised a Methodist. One of the practices

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1 SDA Encyclopedia, 1975 ed., s.v., "White, Ellen Gould (Harmon)."

well established among Methodists was the use of small groups by John and Charles Wesley. These were implemented in the late 1730s and 40s. These groups were known by the name of "class," "band," or "select society." It is more than likely that Ellen White observed and even participated in small groups in the Methodist setting.

Ellen White had another chance to observe the working of small groups during her stay in Australia (1891-1900). Clergy, in and around the Melbourne area, came together to pray for the spiritual well-being of their constituents and the country. The clergy involved their churches and soon 2,000 Bible study, prayer, and fellowship meetings were being held. An American evangelist was called in and many gave their hearts to the Lord. This revival in Australia spawned what is known as the "Welsh Revival" and was viewed favorably by White.

White wrote an article promoting small groups that has been used in a number of her publications. It raises some important questions:

Why do not believers feel a deeper, more earnest concern for those who are out of Christ? Why do not two or three meet together and plead with God for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another? In our churches let companies be formed for service. In the Lord's work there are to be no idlers. Let different ones unite in labor as fishers of men. Let them seek to gather souls from the corruption of the world into the saving purity of Christ's love.

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1 How to A. Snyder, The Radical Wesley and Patterns for Church Renewal (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1980), 53-64.

2 Johnson, 19.

Here she states clearly that the forming of small groups should be carried out in the Seventh-day Adventist church. She saw small groups doing two things: building up the members and evangelizing the world. By using Scripture and prayer, small groups were to use Jesus' method to teach people. Individuals were to lift up one another by prayer and "encouraging one another to advance, each gaining encouragement and strength from one another."\(^1\)

White saw that during times of discouragement the members will help each other out. They will present one another in prayer so that they will be strengthened to follow Jesus more closely.\(^2\) They will press forward to the goal of being like Jesus. So the work of making disciples would progress mightily. Then the members of the group are ready to reach out to non-members. They will find support in small groups where they can be educated and equipped by gifted leaders, and be encouraged by peers.

As the new members will draw non-members into a group, they will specifically work to meet the needs of these individuals. This will keep the group active, strong, and intimately tied together. There should, ideally, be a continual action of bringing in, uplifting, and training new people for the kingdom. The group dynamics of such a process will encourage the pastor and the church to continue reaching out for the lost.\(^3\) This

\(^1\)Ibid., paragraph 20.

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Ellen G. White, "Followers of Christ Will be Missionaries," *Review and Herald*, January 8, 1895, paragraph 5-7.
group concept is backed by "one who can not err,"¹ according to White.

White stresses that even large churches should use these small groups, suggesting that it would be good to divide the membership into smaller units and get the people involved in, not only witnessing, but all aspects of church life.² In her view, these groups should focus on Bible study and prayer with the result that members will be strengthened and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.³

In one article, Ellen White encouraged that all should be missionaries wherever they go.⁴ She encouraged the realization of this goal through small companies. She believed that as members met together there would be a flow of God's spirit of love. This "vital current of His love," she said, would then be evident to those whom these members would contact.⁵ She believed that the Church should put away elaborate plans favor of emphasizing these groups, which would lead to the enhancement of the talents and abilities of Church members.⁶ The members do not have to be taught to give sermons, but should be made more effective in performing other functions by training in groups.

²Ibid.
³Ibid.
⁴Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Assoc., 1948), 7:195. This volume was first published in 1902 as Volume 35.
⁵White, "Followers of Christ Will Be Missionaries," paragraph 5-7.
⁶Ibid.
⁷Ibid.
Another benefit of small groups, according to White, is that the needs of others will become clear. As needs surface, the members can meet those needs through the mutual interaction of the group with those inside and outside the group. By becoming close to the people they are sharing with, they will knit the hearts of all with that of Jesus.¹

In summary, both the Scriptures and Ellen G. White highlight the advantages of small groups. Small groups hinge upon the nature of God to bring people back to the relationships God created us to have: God-to-human, human-to-human. The dynamic interaction of small groups make for an efficient way to help people meet needs of others and to handle issues. Leadership is a shared action that is enhanced by the operation of small groups. Leaders are taught, and their numbers increase, in the same manner that Jesus trained the Twelve. Through intimate contact, the message and life of Jesus is passed from one person to another until Jesus comes again.

¹White, Manuscript Releases (Silver Spring, MD: The Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), 12:240-241.
CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE ON TRAINING
AND DEVELOPING SMALL-GROUP LEADERS

Limitations

The literature on small groups has sharply increased over the last forty years. It was important, therefore, to select a representative group of books for use in this dissertation. I have chosen to limit the books and articles to those published in the last fifteen years (1981-1996). Another limitation has been to narrow the sources used to the training of small-group leaders and the development of small groups. There are many fine books suggesting a curriculum for small groups, these are not examined. There are publications which deal with specialized groups, i.e., the "Twelve Step" and the "Stephens" programs. This material is also excluded from this dissertation. Two technical books on small group theories are included, one from a non-Christian viewpoint and one from a Christian perspective. Most of the books chosen specialize in small groups in the church.

There is one more limitation. The type of small-group leader I am aiming to train are those who will focus on Bible study groups. These are typified by the "Serendipity" Group based on Lyman Coleman's materials. The basic format of this


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type of group is explored and examined.

Small-Group History

In his book, *Discussion and Group Method: Theory and Practice*, Ernest Borman explains that the resurgence in the study and use of small groups began as a shift in American higher education. As the twentieth century began, there was an increase in land-grant colleges and state universities. By the end of World War II, this increase was even more marked. This encouraged a more diverse curriculum aimed at meeting the realities of daily living. Knowledge was broadly increased and the classics were no longer deemed the only subject necessary for a thorough education.¹

Adding to this shift was an important societal change. The nation was moving from an agricultural to an urban setting. This meant a change to a more organized society and a change from distant to a close setting. The industrial age dawned. Industry changed to find ways to improve the actions of workers. Colleges sought to address the needs of workers by adjusting their curriculum; ultimately, small groups became part of the altered American scene.²

Just as small groups became a part of American life and culture, so the Christian church began to rediscover small groups. Roberta Hestenes, whom many consider the authority on small groups in the church, suggests that by the 1950s and early 60s mainline denominations were using small groups. These groups

²Ibid., 7.

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were without direction and had few trained leaders. "Shared ignorance and an excessive emphasis on self-disclosure" caused many to feel that small groups were not for them.¹

Organizations such as Faith at Work, Yoke fellowship, Campus Crusade, Inter-Varsity, Navigators, brought small groups to age. They combine evangelism and discipleship to make small groups effective for the church. Lyman Coleman started with workbooks for youth and has now expanded to many subjects and age groups. His emphasis is on the development of relationships between members in the group.²

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has not been un affected by this movement towards small groups. Kurt Johnson points out that a number of SDA congregations experimented with small groups in the 60s and 70s. He shared two examples of small-group programs used by SDA churches in 1986, which have produced a fair number of books and articles. In Texas, the Home Revelation Seminar was developed. In Oregon, over 220 outreach/nurture small groups were started.³

Small groups have used in the Christian Church before the twentieth century. As discussed earlier, the Bible's description of Jesus and the Twelve tells us that they formed a small group. It was this small group that kept the disciples together after the crisis of the crucifixion.² Howard Snyder makes the point

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²Ibid., 7.

³Johnson, 22-23.

⁴Bruce, 39.
that the pattern of church renewal can be found in the work of John Wesley.\textsuperscript{1} The foundation of what Wesley was to do in England can be traced by to Count Zinzindorf. He organized the church of the United Brethren, commonly known as the Moravian Brethren. An important feature of this organization was the formation of small groups. Zinzindorf saw his small groups as the "'Ecclesiola in ecclesia' or 'little church in a church.'"\textsuperscript{2}

When the Wesley brothers visited London, they would often stay with James Hutton, a bookseller. Through John Wesley, Hutton had been introduced to Moravian missionaries in 1735, the year Wesley traveled to Georgia.\textsuperscript{3} By 1738 many religious societies in England were on the decline, including the "Holy Club," which the Wesley Brothers had formed.\textsuperscript{4} In this year, John Wesley had met Peter Bohler, who was on his way to America. He invited Bohler to stay at Hutton's as he had no acquaintance in England.\textsuperscript{5}

During Bohler's stay at Hutton's, he and Wesley joined efforts to create the "Fetter Lane" Society. It is not clear who authored the rules for the new society, but both had a hand in their implementation.\textsuperscript{6} The rules were based on Jas 5:16 which encourages members to confess their faults one to another and, therefore, experience healing. This society had weekly meetings

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1}Snyder, 5.
  \item \textsuperscript{2}Ibid., 24.
  \item \textsuperscript{3}Ibid., 26.
  \item \textsuperscript{4}Ibid., 27.
  \item \textsuperscript{5}Ibid., 24.
  \item \textsuperscript{6}Ibid., 27.
\end{itemize}
for prayer and confession. The bands numbered five to ten people. Each person had the privilege and duty to share in the conversation. The way new members were enlisted into the bands was by means of a monthly love feast to which group members invited prospects.¹

John Wesley continued to follow the example of the Moravians by encouraging the societies to remain a part of the Church of England and modeling "the church in the church" principle. Weekly classes were smaller divisions of the societies.² These societies were bolstered by "bands" which divide people by age, sex, and marital status. Bands were for the purpose of evangelistic outreach and the performance of good works.³

The way that John Wesley formed and regulated his groups is very interesting. It seems to me that Wesley's rules and organizational patterns are similar to Coleman's "covenant" groups. From this simple beginning, small groups emerged and prospered within the modern Christian Church. I more fully discuss the "covenant" idea in a section below on the design of the small-group material.

This brief overview of small-group history is not meant to be exhaustive. It simply makes two points:

1. Small-group study and implementation have been recently renewed both outside and inside the SDA Church.


²Snyder, 54.

³Ibid., 59.
2. Much of what is used in this project has its foundations in the work of John Wesley and the Moravian Movement.

**Cell Church and Small Groups**

Ralph Neighbour, Jr., has come to the conclusion that a "cell" group ministry is not for established churches. "Cell" group ministry suggests that the whole church be divided into small groups or "cells" to do the ministry of the church. He bases this on the experience of pastors who have worked with this program, and the Bible philosophy of the wine skins. This would seem to discourage my actions with small groups. The problem with this view, however, is that it refers to changing an established church into a "cell church." A "cell church" has a particular connotation that differs from a church which simply operates small groups, which is my plan at the Cleburne Church.

The idea of the "cell church" is centered around the concept that there are many small cells (groups) making up one large body. The cell church is more suitable for an environment moving toward an urban way of life. It is more efficient in reaching the urban community because it can penetrate and influence a more concentrated society. It is, therefore, a

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3. Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here?: A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church* (Houston, TX: TOUCH Publications, 1990), 198. Ralph Neighbour is advocating a slightly different meaning than I am proposing in my dissertation. My church is not ready to become a cell group church. Yet his principles of division of the church as Moses' division of Israel are my goal.
specialized approach for urban areas.¹

Carl George makes the point that the future of the Christian church is the "meta-church." This term is the same as the "cell church." Groups within the "meta-church" design are made up of small home groups with no more than ten members. In these small groups, the plan is for members to care for one another's needs.² These small home groups are designed to meet together periodically with other groups in a celebration service. Large sporting facilities can be rented to hold such gatherings.

Implementing the "cell" church strategy may eventually be a goal of the Cleburne Church but it is not the present goal. Currently, the church is situated in a rural setting that will likely become a part of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex in the next thirty years. This church may not face the trouble of new wine in old wine skins if the change is slow. The goal is to encourage more and more people to become involved. It, also, seems that in the "Cell Church" or "Meta-Church" model that there is tight control over the formation of the groups. This would be a problem in an establish American church, such as the Cleburne SDA Church.

The "cell church" model has proved to be successful around the world. When C. Peter Wagner wrote in 1976, he pointed out that cell groups were one of the signs of a growing church.³ In Korea, Argentina, Nigeria, Chile, Philippines, Brazil, and the U.S. large churches have been formed. All of them must have

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¹Ibid., 20-21.
²George, 59.
³Wagner, 22-27.
small groups to maintain the internal health of the church and close interaction between the members.¹

**Evangelism Groups**

There are several books which focus on "evangelistic small groups." Richard Peace suggests in his book: *Small Group Evangelism*, that the evangelistic small group is the place for continual spiritual breakthroughs. In such groups, there is interaction between the members and Scriptures. Non-Christians can watch as Christians put their faith to work with Bible study and prayer.²

We are familiar with small groups. Small groups are a part of our life. They are in casual settings like homes, work, and school. An evangelistic meeting does not provide this type of familiar setting. In a small group, however, the gospel can be shared face-to-face in a relaxed context. It allows for the interactive flow of thoughts, feelings, and caring among several people. In this setting, the non-Christian is known by and knows those who are sharing the message and is likely to be more comfortable and responsive.³

Peace does include good materials on planning in his book a small group for evangelism. According to him, one must consider whom one is trying to reach with the gospel. This can affect those whom the leader chooses to help with the group. The

¹George, 50-51.


³Ibid.
location should be carefully targeted to reach those one wishes to reach. The content should be suitable to first attract others and then maintain interest for deeper studies. Of course, all planning must be based on prayer.¹

Peace also has a helpful section on dividing the group.² In his view, the hardest matter to deal with is the fact that the group is going to eventually split. As a group talks, shares, studies, and prays, a deep relationship develops. Individuals within the group need to keep in mind that they must continually bring in new members. This means that the group will always be changing.³

Joseph Aldrich, in his book *Life-Style Evangelism*, looks more at reaching out beyond the church into the community. Most of his book is spent discussing the importance of a church establishing a "culture" of evangelism. He agrees with much of what Peace says about small groups as a "comfortable place to share the Gospel."⁴ He also adds a list of subjects for discussion. Some of the subjects might be good in some contexts and not in others, "creation and evolution", for example, might be a good subject in a college town; "contemporary theology" could be interesting to people who are curious about modern religion. I was especially attracted by his suggestion of a study on the "home." All of Aldrich's subjects would be

¹Ibid., 82.
²Ibid., 126-128.
³Ibid., 128-129.

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appropriate to study at one time or another and are worthy of consideration.¹

These two books are representative of the view that small groups should be an evangelistic tool. Evangelism was part of our small-group leadership training in Cleburne. If groups are not growing and going beyond their present size, there will be problems. Evangelism and growth can help keep our groups from becoming stagnant and cliquish.

Training in Small Groups

The next body of literature is about training, but not always training the small-group leader. Julie Gorman has written a book that talks about small groups as a community entitled Community That Is Christian. In part one and two, Gorman exposes the problem of sin as being the destruction or distortion of the image of God. This destruction came through the breakdown of community: God-to-human, human-to-human. To her, the place to restore the original image is in the small group setting.²

In part three, Gorman begins to define a small group. In her view, a small group is an "intentional face-to-face encounter of no more than twelve people who meet on a regular basis with the purpose of growing in the knowledge and likeness of Jesus Christ."³ This is similar to the definition I have adopted for use for the Cleburne project. Gorman explains how groups will struggle to fulfill this purpose of growth. One of the first

¹Ibid., 197.
²Gorman, 28.
³Ibid., 121-122.
issues is "disclosure" which, when secured, brings trust and intimacy.¹

Gorman states that there is a tension between being an individual and the fear of being alone.² This and other tensions can have a profound affect on how a small group communicates between its members. She writes about the "dual responses for four functions" people use in "processing life."³ She shares that the "metamessage," i.e., people's tone of voice or body language, may have more meaning than what they actually say.⁴

Gorman writes that groups need to understand that people are taught that conflict is wrong or abnormal. It is normal, however, for conflict to develop within a group and should be expected by those leading and participating in them. She makes it clear that we need to have a planned response in case conflict develops.⁵ She develops the stages of growth that a group will go through as relationships between members grow and deepen. Each stage carries its own problems and conflicts, and every small group should understand this.⁶

¹Ibid., 139.
²Ibid., 166.
³Ibid., 166. Carl Jung is sited as the one who identified the four functions and their duel responses. There functions and their dual responses are: (1) Information gathering--Sensing or Intuiting. (2) Decision Making--Thinking or Feeling. (3) Source of energy for gathering information and making decisions--Extrovert vs. Introvert. (4) Life-style orientation--Judging or Perceiving.
⁴Ibid., 181.
⁵Ibid., 197.
⁶Ibid., 229-230. She lists four stages of growth in a small group: (1) Exploration, (2) Transition, (3) Action, and (4) Termination.
Ernest Gorman has written a technical textbook on small groups from a non-Christian perspective. His book focuses on small groups gathered for a project within a company, yet there are some good concepts which can be adopted by small-group leaders for use within the church. One concept, for example, has to do with "styles of leadership." He suggests that there are: authoritarians, democratic, and laissez-fair.\(^1\) Each has their good and bad points. The proper leadership style depends on the individual group's needs.

In her book, *Using the Bible in Groups*, Roberta Hestenes increases styles of leadership from three to four by adding "authoritative" as a style to be distinguished from "autocratic" (seems to be the same as "authoritarian") and "democratic."\(^2\) She suggests that the "authoritative" approach may be good in the group's startup phase, but she recommends the "democratic" style for long-term small-groups operation.\(^3\) This will be helpful for leaders to understand as they evaluate and employ their own leadership style. Many of Hestenes' other instruction are used in small-group leadership training books, which are examined later.

I read one book which was written by a functioning small group. While it covered much that is found in other books, I found a table on "troubleshooting" that makes a positive contribution to my understanding because it is very concise and

\(^1\)Borman, 224.


\(^3\)Ibid., 40.
practical. It is laid out in three columns. The first column describes the "symptoms" of a specific problem. The authors then describe what the problem could be. The last column is an approach to each problem. It is important to give such concrete solutions to the small-group leaders so that they can better manage problems they may face.

Neal McBride has written a book which gives an excellent description of how to start a small-group ministry. In it, he includes a chapter on training small-group leaders. He starts by setting out what to do to recruit leaders for small groups. McBride suggests that leaders must be educated (i.e., have their minds broadened) and training (i.e., have their viewpoints narrowed). One must accept the natural skills of the potential leader and work at strengthening them, before moving to introduce new ones.

Adventist Sources

There are three books with Seventh-day Adventist authors which are written from the standpoint of evangelism and church growth using small groups. In the first book, Roger Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., began their work to help SDA pastors by publishing the book Adventures in Church Growth. They began by looking at the factors which contribute to church growth. They

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3. Ibid., 128.
reported that churches that had higher percentages of small groups were prone to experience church growth.¹

In the second book, Monte Sahlin, in his work *Sharing Our Faith With Friends Without Losing Either*, has a whole chapter dedicated to small groups. Sahlin relates the recent history of small groups in the SDA church. He explains that most SDA churches will not continue a ministry to the unchurched in our society without exploring small groups.² Then, he suggests the appropriate size of a group and how sharing can and should take place in the group. He also talks about the study of the Bible. Sahlin shares how Stephen Haskell’s "question and answer" style has been used by the SDA church since the 1880s.³

Sahlin also discusses the significance of the biblical instructions to "bear one another’s burdens." He relates that at any time we must be ready to help people who have problems.⁴ He encourages churches to watch out for the development of cliques which can be harmful. He goes on to encourage SDAs to activate leaders who are trained to guide and sustain small groups. He does not, however, mention how to do this. He finished by talking about what works best. His approach seems to lean towards the "cell" type of church, often seen in Hispanic SDA

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¹Roger L. Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., *Adventures in Church Growth* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1983), 34.


³Ibid., 139.

⁴Ibid., 142.
Churches.¹

Craig A. Dossman, Sr., in his book *From House to House*, bases his small-group model on the ideals of our SDA ancestors and the practice of the New Testament church. He explains that there are three "relational needs" to be drawn from Matt 22: (1) believer and God, (2) believer and believer, and (3) believer and non-believer.² In his view, all of these are met in small groups. He also stresses the significance of effective, well-trained leadership, but doesn't offer a plan of training for such a leadership.³

A portion of Dossman's book is written to encourage lay members to move forward in establishing small groups. He offers a good list of "steps" to take in starting small groups. His list includes the "step" of setting up a commitment or covenant.⁴ Dossman shares the experience of the Ephesus Church in California, which he pastored. Of special importance are the seven qualities he identifies as necessary for effective leaders of small groups: (1) Commitment, (2) Enthusiasm, (3) Testimony, (4) Dedication, (5) Spirit-filled, (6) Powerful Prayer Life, and (7) Time.⁵

Dossman continues by explaining that small groups are not to be separate "kingdoms" within a church. He suggests that leaders

¹Ibid., 149.


³Ibid., 45.

⁴Ibid., 53-54.

⁵Ibid., 78-79.
should be taught to pray and to welcome new members into small groups. He proposes that small groups be seen, also, as a way to reach inactive members of the church. He finishes with three steps, which must operate in a small group:

1. One must see God—"I saw the Lord" Is. 6:1.
2. One must see themselves—"Woe is me" Is. 6:5.
3. One must respond to God—"Here I am; send me" Is 6:8.
The challenge is to, "Go, and tell this people," Is. 6:9.¹

There was one book which was written by a Seventh-day Adventist which deals with how small-groups function. The author, Clarence Schilt, has a well-rounded book on small groups entitled Dynamic Small Groups. His book is easy to understand, and is suitable for use by lay people. Like many, he focuses on the "covenant" type of small groups.² His book reflects the teachings of Roberta Hestenes, and most of his information can be found, in more detail, also in Gorman's book.

In addition to the above material, there are a number of books and pamphlets which have come from the Oregon Conference of SDA. Kurt Johnson, in his book Small Group Outreach, has a good section on the history of small groups in the SDA Church. From his perspective, the personnel needed for a small group is a leader, an assistant leader, and a host/hostess. He suggests two tracks for Bible study in a small group: a "need-oriented" track to meet the needs of those invited or "Bible-oriented" to study Bible books and subjects.³

There are three other small books of pamphlets that are a

¹Ibid., 83-87.
²Schilt, 38.
³Johnson, 48-52.
part of the Oregon Conference material. One is by Larry Evans, entitled *From Cell to Celebration*. He shares the importance of small groups, and twenty "essential principles."	extsuperscript{1} These offer many good insights to help leaders do a good job. The goal of this book is to move the church beyond the small groups stage to become a "cell" church, as described earlier.

Kurt Johnson in his small book, *Small Group Evangelism Guide for Successful Nurture and Outreach Ministry*, gives good material which can function as a leader's reference guide. He begins by discussing the spiritual essentials for group leaders. He moves on to talk about the distinction of the small group. He deals with the issues of planning, forming, and movement of the small group. Finally, he shares how pastors need a vision to make small-group ministry successful.\textsuperscript{2}

The last pamphlet reviewed is written by Garrie Williams, and is entitled *Twelve Steps to Leading Better Bible Studies*. He first makes it clear that a person will find that leading a small group is not as difficult as one might expect.\textsuperscript{1} He encourages leaders to plan out the details of what they are going to do. He suggests that the first meeting should be a get-acquainted

\textsuperscript{1}Larry R. Evans, *From Cell to Celebration: A Leader's Guide to a Dynamic Small Group Ministry* (Clackamas, OR: Neighborhood Home Bible Study, 1989), ii-iii.


\textsuperscript{3}Garrie F. Williams, *Twelve Steps to Leading Better Bible Studies* (Clackamas, OR: Neighborhood Home Bible Study, 1990), 1. This booklet is an adaptation and revision of idem, *12 Steps to Leading Better Bible Studies* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navigators, 1982).
meeting that ends with the creation of a covenant.¹ The book includes other practical suggestions, which serve as a good reference material for small-group leaders.

**Training Programs for Small-Group Leaders**

I have been able to find five actual training courses for small-group leaders. Some of the books mentioned above could also be used as a basis for a training course. Most of the courses I found were intended for a one- or two-day intensive training format. I will discuss in the program design how I believe that trainees will have more time to study and absorb concepts and methods, and trainees will have more time to cover group theory and provide more lab experience with a ten-week seminar. Each of the seminars and books to follow has been helpful in the design and the implementation of this project. My study of the various formats and training schedules has only deepened my conviction of the need for training of small-group leaders.

**Don and Ruth James**

Don and Ruth James have developed a Leadership Training Seminar. This was the culmination of their work in the Gresham, Oregon, SDA Church.² In their seminar, they begin with an extensive study of the biblical background of small groups.³ They proceed to give a study on the history of small groups.

¹Williams, *Twelve Steps*, 4.

²Sahlin, 132.

This seems to be a little too detailed and time consuming for the training program I planned to conduct.

They continue by defining a small group. They use the description of Jesus and His disciples from the writings of Ellen White. They draw five points about small groups from Jesus' example.

1. Small groups should have three to twelve persons.
2. Small groups are relational.
3. Small groups seek biblical truth in these relationships.
4. Small groups continually lift up Jesus.
5. Small groups are involved in reaching friends and neighbors for Jesus.

The Jameses include a discussion of the possible "types" of small groups. They list eight types. The main focus of their training is the "covenant" type of small group. They talk about the work of the host or hostess as the fielder of all the problems, from taking care of refreshments to baby sitting. Another section deals with the materials and advertisements to be used.

The Jameses seminar moves to a discussion of the things to do to have a successful small group. They suggest that there be three meetings before the group begins its series of studies. The first meeting is to set the time, place, and choice of study. The initial group can also decide whom they want to invite to the group. The second meeting should be centered around a potluck or

2James and James, 5-6.
3Ibid., 8-9.
dinner to announce the plans of the small group. An "icebreaker" should used to start the fellowship. The third meeting begins with another icebreaker and then proceed to the first lesson. The fourth meeting focuses on the next lesson and the group covenant.¹

The Jameses continue by giving the basic schedule and timing of the meetings. They suggest that there be a special social event every one to three months. It might be a dinner or outing, at which time family members can be invited.² They explain the need for prayer, sharing, and Bible study. They further talk about the leadership team, consisting of the leader, the assistant leader, and the host and/or hostess.

They share the five essentials of conversational prayer:

1. Do not spend time on prayer requests, since these will come up during an appointed prayer time.

2. Encourage the prayer to proceed as members are moved to pray, rather than by going around the circle.

3. Have the leader pray first as an example.

4. Deal with one topic at a time (e.g.; praise, needs in the group, needs outside of the group).

5. Have each person pray briefly, and be able to do so more than once.³

The next section deals with music. This is followed by a

¹Ibid., 15.
²Ibid., 16.
³Ibid., 19.
discussion of "lay pastors."¹ In their training class, these lay pastors are the leaders and assistant leaders. They talk about spiritual gifts and limitation of the group to no more than twelve members. Both men and women are encouraged to be lay pastors. They discuss the "call" to a lay pastor. They list a number of ways a person can know whether or not he or she is called.² Then a number of "qualities" which lay pastors should exhibit are highlighted. The Jameses include supplementary material at the end of their book including: record forms, sample icebreakers, sample lesson plans, and so on.

On May 8-12, 1994, the Southwestern Union sponsored a "Conference on Prayer and Spiritual Renewal." I was able to observe Don James teaching most of this material. It seems to me that the James' method and the accompanying training material will work best within a short-term framework, given in one or two days for a number of hours each day.

Dr. Judy Hamlin

Dr. Judy Hamlin divides her training course into five sections.³ She begins her training course with an introduction including the biblical witness and the need for small groups.⁴ She proceeds to talk about getting to know one another. The

¹Ibid., 25. There are some similarities to the work of Dale E. Galloway, 20/20 Vision: How to Create a Successful Church with Lay Pastors and Cell Groups (Portland, OR: Scott Publishing Co., 1986), 128.

²Ibid., 26-27.


⁴Ibid., 20-27.
introduction is like an icebreaker for the training course members.

Hamlin's first section deals with leadership. She lays out five characteristics of a Bible discussion leader. They are: obedience, prayer, belief, compassion, and study to prepare. Hamlin moves to the "four winning qualities," which are: determination, pure motive, gentle style, and personal focus. She presents eight "obstacles;" most are the opposite of the "winning qualities." After giving a questionnaire, she shares the "four styles of leadership." She finishes this section by talking about "conversational" prayer.

In section 2, Hamlin discusses communication and questions. Of course, good communication begins with interpersonal skills. She shares "five levels of communication": cliche conversation, sharing information and facts, sharing ideas and opinions, sharing feelings, and peak communication. She gives a number of further skills to deepen communication, such as paraphrasing, justifying, and affirming. Then she presents nonverbal communication skills. She looks at the differences between a healthy and unhealthy group. She finishes with how to use questions in a small group. Questions are the vehicle to deepen the communication of the group.

The third section is committed to witnessing. After showing how witnessing is important to small groups, Hamlin shares the "four steps" of witnessing used by Campus Crusade. She presents effective ways to witness. After showing the differences between the 60s and the 90s, the way is prepared for her to discuss how "relational evangelism" works in small groups. She asks the
members to start thinking about whom to invite to the group. She encourages them to appraise their community and those around them.

The fourth section explains "relationships." She begins with the components of small-group life: Nurture, Worship, Community, and Mission. She then shares about how to create a covenant. In two parts she deal with "choke points" and "problems" to group relationships. Hamlin has a clever section about things to "Be" in order to make the group a success. This is followed by a group exercise, where the trainees are to learn follow-through by passing a straw through a potato. She lays out how to conduct a meeting. She suggests activities to create a successful Bible study. After sharing the "five finger prayer," she examines selected case studies.

Section five shows how to promote and review small groups. Hamlin begins by setting out what needs to be done to get the group started. Then she helps the training group to think of ways to promote a small group. She shares some samples of flyers and invitations. After this section, she gives other materials that will add to a small-group leadership training seminar.¹

Lyman Coleman-"Serendipity"

Lyman Coleman's training manual has six lessons, which are delivered from a "football" perspective, with the leader as coach.² Each lesson has four "downs" and is similar in format to

¹Ibid., 155-201.

the lessons published by "Serendipity." This is an organization that Coleman heads, and is dedicated to nurturing small groups. The first lesson deals with the importance of small groups. All "first downs" are getting acquainted exercises. The "second down" shares what a group is and its biblical basis. The "third down" shares the "Jethro Solution." The "fourth down" is sharing what was learned in a group of four.

Lesson two shares what a leader of a small group needs to know. In the "first down" the group of four participate in an "icebreaker." An icebreaker is an exercise to encourage each member to become involved in the group discussion. The "second down" gives three emphases of a good group: Bible study, Group building, Mission. The group should move through four activities: history giving, affirmation, goal setting, and koinonia. The "third down" covers six principles for a Bible study. "Fourth down" reviews this lesson in the groups of four.

Lesson three helps the group develop its own game plan. After the "first down" icebreaker, the "second down" explains the four types of groups: Discipleship/Growth, Covenant/Discovery, Support/Common Concern, and Recovery. The "third down" has the person share his or her story from the Bible. The "fourth down" asks the person to examine who is in charge and the attitudes of the church. This lesson is followed by a section that gives model advertisements for small groups, and models of different churches with small groups.


2Ibid., 32-65.
The fourth lesson shows what a successful group looks like. After the "first down," Coleman gives us the three stages: Beginning (6-8 weeks), Advanced (12-15 weeks), Graduation (12-15 weeks). He gives different types of covenants, each depends on the level of the group's relationship. In the "third down," Coleman begins to give the groups of four a chance to decide on the Bible study. The "fourth down" is a further evaluation of the church.

Lesson five deals with problems and solutions. The icebreaker has the groups of four examine affirmation. The "second down" deals with aimlessness, exclusiveness, the reason for dividing into groups of four, and group burnout. The "third down" suggests looking at how to tell one's own story. The "fourth down" has the groups of four talking about where they go from here.

Lesson six discusses the agendas of small groups. In the "first down," participants share what their best group would be. In the "second down," leaders are defined as committed, guiding and managing, heading towards the goal. The agenda for a small-group meeting is detailed with eight main activities. A leader is encouraged, however, to be flexible. The "third down" examines the Early Church as shared in Acts 2:42-47. The "fourth down" is the touchdown or "what do we do from here?"

Jeffery Arnold

Jeffery Arnold, in his book The Big Book on Small Groups, has not written a small-group Leadership training course, but includes an appendix suggesting how to use it as one. Arnold sees that small groups can make disciples and help churches to...
grow. To do this, he sees that small groups must become a community through the five basics: study, worship, prayer, evangelism, and mission. After he examines small-group leadership, he reviews each of these five basics in details. He includes a weekly Bible study to be used for training small-group leaders.

Carl George

The fifth training course is a videotaped course with a workbook by Carl George. George has nine tapes with a facet of small groups on each tape. Facet 1 deals with relating to church leadership. This tape deals with keeping the church leadership and groups together. It introduces the ideal of the "huddle," which is a group of small-group leaders cared for by a coach.

Facet 2 deals with recruiting someone to replace the group leader. George shares the idea of Elijah training Elisha. Facet 3 is called "Cultivate Your Network of Relationships." This facet dwells on inviting people to become a part of a small group. Facet 4 examines the agenda and content of a group. George talks about content with the actions of love, learning,
tasking, and maintenance. His sample agenda has six items.1 Facet 5 is "Keeping the Group on Target."2 Along with the development of the goals, the leader must be ready for distractions, children, and latecomers. Facet 6 draws the connection between small groups and the worship service. Small groups are part of a larger whole and find their proper place.3 Facet 7 deals with "Meeting Needs in and Beyond the Group."4 Facet 8 talks about "witnessing." George relates how to bring people to conviction and move them toward the cross. As the members of the groups spend time together they should move closer to one another.5 Facet 9 is "Communing with God." Three elements to bring balance to this communion are identified: solitude-knowing God yourself; Community-support from one another; Simplicity-freedom from material things.6 His presentations have material which was used as added material to this project.

Summary

The church has been the place for small groups from the time of Moses. Jesus used a small group to begin the New Testament church. Wesley used small groups to change England. The modern Christian church has returned to using small groups as an

1Ibid., 16.
2Video, # 5.
3Workbook, 23.
4Ibid., 24.
5Ibid., 29.
6Ibid., 31.
effective way to do ministry.

I do not see the Cleburne SDA Church as ready to become a "Cell" church. I do believe, however, that the "covenant" idea, focused on Bible Study, can make the Cleburne Church more effective and help it achieve most of the goals that I set out to achieve for it. I have found good overall material on developing content for organizing and conducting small groups in a church. There is ample material to help pastors and other leaders train lay leaders for effective small-group ministry. Most of the available training materials, however, are geared for a one-weekend or two-day seminar. This did not seem best-suited for the Cleburne Church program and, therefore, required modification.
CHAPTER IV

PROJECT DESIGN

Preparation for Training Small-Group Leaders

This dissertation began in the Fall of 1993. The Cleburne First SDA Church board members were struggling with how they could meet the needs of our growing church. After years of declining membership and attendance, the church was beginning to grow. A portion of the board complained that some of the members of our church were being left out of its caring atmosphere. One of the solutions suggested was to start small groups to help people relate with others and care for one another's needs.

As we struggled over the next few months on how to establish small groups, I suggested that we needed to begin by training leaders and offered to develop a recruitment and training program for small-group leaders. It was my belief that this would help our church to become more successful in meeting the numerous needs of our members. The church board also was interested in seeing new individuals prepared for leadership in the church.

There were three things which needed to be done to prepare for the leadership training: (1) develop the content, (2) select the leaders, and (3) choose the site and scheduling for the training sessions.

Development of Content for Training Seminar

My goal was to develop a training course that included both
theoretical training and practical experience in the actual leading of a small group. I began my search for appropriate content for this training course by first searching for and reviewing existing training courses and materials about small groups. As Clarence Schilt has stated, "There are very few training courses for small group leaders, but many books on small groups."¹

To meet this need, I decided to develop a ten-week training course. This training course would require only a few hours each week, but would cover a number of weeks. I did not want a seminar that was simply geared toward one intensive weekend. My reasons for this were as follows: first, it is difficult for members to give a whole weekend. Second, I believed that an extended, but regular training program would allow membership skills to be developed, over time, and, therefore, be more firmly rooted and finely tuned.

In the early 90s, one seminar on small groups gave me some ideas on formatting the content. It was directed by Lyman Coleman on small groups at the Fort Worth First SDA Church. I saw several distinct benefits in his approach. First, it offered the possibility of working with a fairly large group of trainees while providing them with solid "lab" experience. He had the large group of pastors and church leaders divide into smaller groups of four.² This allowed every potential leader to receive the practical training in leading and being a part of a small

¹Clarence Schilt's introduction of George, Effective Small-Group Leader, Tape #1.

²Coleman, Small Group Training Manual, 5.

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group that he or she needed. Second, it gave each person participating a chance to become a part of the discussion group in the small group context. Another idea I brought from this training program was the concept of the "Icebreaker". The "icebreaker" is meant to be a way to get people sharing. I planned to use the "Quaker Questions" as the first icebreaker in the training seminar.¹

I decided on the following content. In the first session, the background or reasoning for this training and the need for small groups were examined.² Some Scriptures and statements from Ellen White were shared. The context of our own church was looked at. The covenant, which sets the tone and the direction of the group, were then established, bringing the first session to a close. My past experiences suggested that the covenant was basic and important to most groups. Likewise, most small-group literature highlights the fact that the covenant contributes largely to the success of the small group.³

In making a covenant, there are six basic statements to which the group agrees. They are:

1. The purpose of the group is ____________.
2. Our Goal is _____________. (to multiply or nurture.)
3. We will meet for _____ weeks, after which we will decide if we wish to continue as a group.
4. We will meet from _____ to _____ and we will strive to start on time and end on time.

¹Ibid., 4.
²Hamlin, 20-23; James and James, 1-5.
In my groups, the icebreaker came at the beginning of every meeting. This consisted of questions which invited members to share about themselves. This usually moved from general to more personal information. The purpose was to prepare people for sharing by starting at a safe place. For example, after dividing the group into pairs, members were asked to choose the animal, car, and boat (from a prescribed list) that best described themselves, and share it with everyone.¹

The second thirty minutes was devoted to Bible study. There were usually specific passages of the Scriptures which were studied by the group members. The study moved from "content" questions to "application," i.e., the group members took the information developed in the first phase of the Bible study and applied it to their own life. The goal was to make Scripture applicable to a person's everyday experience.²

The "caring time" centered around bringing the members closer together. This was done by helping members learn to appreciate each other's stories. Affirmation built the togetherness of the group. Then prayer requests were taken. These requests often started out impersonal and moved closer to the personal level. Finally, the group finished with each member praying.³

Jeffery Arnold suggested that the ultimate goal of small groups was to build up the community of believers. Some might call this disciplining or assisting members to become like Jesus.

¹Ibid., 6-7.
²Coleman, Small Group Training Manual, 10, 11.
³Ibid., 18, 19.
There were four main emphases to help the small-group participants reach this goal. They were: study, worship, prayer, and evangelism/mission.\(^1\) I believed that if the leaders knew what their goal was and how they could attain it they would be greatly encouraged. They would also be in a better position to know when they achieved the goal and recognized when a group had formed a healthy community.

The primary task of these small groups was "to get know God," i.e., who He was and what He wanted. The "inductive" Bible study method was employed, because of its ease of use by lay leaders.\(^2\) This method began with careful observation of the text. The text was first examined to find the vital facts. The leader and the members of the group noticed who were involved and what was said or done by each participant. Questions were then used to guide the group in finding answers.\(^3\)

The second thing to be done was "interpretation" of the text. The group searched for the meaning of the text. This included discovering the purpose of the original author for writing this text. This was where the group attempted to find out the "why" and "what" of the Biblical author's meaning by noticing his choice of words.\(^4\) This was a good time to check out what commentaries said or to look for complementary texts.

The third thing to be done with the Scripture was to "apply"

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\(^1\)Arnold, 42. Arnold has five, and I have chosen to combine evangelism and mission.

\(^2\)Ibid., 43.

\(^3\)Hestenes, *Using the Bible*, 58.

\(^4\)Ibid., 43.
it. In other words, the question was asked: "What does this Scripture mean for us today?" The group brought personal observations to the Scripture, and sought to bridge the gap of the "there and then" and the "here and now." The question was asked and answered, "Does this have continuing meaning for life in our community?"¹

The leader needed to be concerned about other matters when sharing the Scriptures, as well. The leader needs to know the context of the portion of Scripture being studied by the group. This meant knowing such things as the time, circumstance, place, and authorship of the book. This information helped guide the group.²

Bible study led the group to the next emphasis, "worship." "Worship" was defined as "praising and magnifying God by focusing on his nature, action, and word."³ Praise was often extolled by David in the Psalms. David had three emotions. The first was "anticipation" about learning what God has and will do. The second was "appreciation" for God's nature and activity. The third was "awe" for our God who is powerful, Creator, and Redeemer.⁴

To "magnify" meant to give thanks and offer oneself to God. Thanksgiving reminded us of the wonders God has performed for us. It moved us away from the thought that we take care of

¹Ibid., 59.
²Arnold, 48.
³Hamlin, 109.
⁴Arnold, 137.
ourselves. The ultimate action of worship is offering oneself to God. In this act we put ourselves in the complete control of our God.

"Prayer" was the third emphasis of building community through the small group. Prayer included the element of "confession." It was made clear that as the members came into contact with a pure God, the sin in their lives would become clear. Confession restores the members of the group to a relationship with God. The other element was "petition." We began by praying for ourselves, then others, and finally for specific needs. Other highlighted elements of prayer were "adoration" and "thanksgiving."

It was explained that there were many possible models of prayer. "Conversational prayer" is encouraging members to pray short sentences and many times. Another model can be a "five finger prayer." In this, each figure represents a certain person or concern: thumb--a family member; index--teachers; third--those in authority: fourth--the weak (widows, orphans, etc.), smallest--yourself. The "Lord's prayer" is offered as another good model.

The last key to building community through the small group

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1Ibid., 138.
2Ibid., 139.
3Ibid., 152-153.
4Ibid., 153-155.
5Schilt, 84.
6Ibid., 85.
7Hamlin, 131.
was referred to as "evangelism/mission." Evangelism was defined as the conscious attempt of the group to share the gospel with others so they will follow Christ.¹ The group must have a love for Christ and the desire and ability to show this love to one another. Only then can they share three objective truths: We are all sinners, Christ died for all, and we must all respond.² The reason we added the empty chair each time the group met was to create a consciousness of the need to evangelize others and enlarge the size of the group.³

The five "principles" for evangelism in the small group context were underscored. The first principle stated that small groups existed to evangelize and make disciples. According to the second principle, the leader must uphold the soul-winning vision, but evangelism happens only when the whole group catches that vision. The third principle was that a good small-group environment must be created for evangelism to ensue. The fourth principle was that evangelism must be intentional. The fifth principle was that evangelism will, by its very nature, bring people together and cause new groups to be formed.⁴

It was made clear that mission is similar to evangelism, except that it involves living and proclaiming the gospel beyond one's immediate area or culture. In mission outreach, one tries to extend the kingdom of God to every people group, language, and

¹Arnold, 163.
²Ibid., 164-166.
³Coleman, Small Group Training Manual, 79.
⁴Ibid., 170-171.
nationality. It uses the compassion of the Christian group to meet the needs of those who do not know Christ. It was important for each group to have a specific mission project.

I decided to direct the lessons to address the question: "How do I start a group?" The first step was to develop a prospective list of those to be invited. This list can include neighbors, friends, relatives, church members (active, inactive, and especially new), and those who provide us services. There are a number of ways to invite them: by telephone, mail, posters, or handbills.

My next step was to share the stages of growth. The first stage was called the "infancy" stage. This is when the group first forms and the group's action and direction centers around the leader. The second stage was said to be like "childhood." In this stage the leader was still the head and yet the boundaries were tested. The third stage was compared to the "teenage" years. This was said to be rewarding and yet contentious, as the group experiments with new things. The fourth stage was likened to "college." The relationship, during this time, is maturing into something deep. The last stage was called "old age" or "demise." At this point, the class came to an end. It was suggested that this was the best time for the old

Arnold, 177.
Hamlin, 109.
Ibid., 139.
Johnson, Outreach, 55-56.
Ibid., 57-59.
leader to leave and a new leader to take his or her place.¹

After this, the lessons covered the issue of what to do in a group session. This is where we talked about taking about an hour and a half for a session. It was proposed that the session be divided into three parts: the Icebreaker, Bible study, and the Affirmation.² It was at this time that the "groups of four" were discussed. It was noted that once a group is larger than seven members, people may begin to feel left out.³ This is when the larger group divides into groups of four. This division into smaller units allows everyone to talk and makes it easier on those who are shy to join in. It was then pointed out that Coleman suggests that the group start big, divide, and then come back together for the caring or affirmation period.⁴

The discussion next moved to the seven C's of how to keep the group from pitfalls. The seven C's were identified as:

1. Covenant or contract: the shared understanding of what the group is and will do.

2. Commitments: the disciplines the group is willing to adopt (set in covenant).

3. Caring: learning how to love and care for one another's needs.

4. Content: working together on understanding the Scripture.

5. Communication: what binds the members to God and one another.

¹McBride, 44-53; Hestenes, Using the Bible, 31-34.
²Coleman, Small Group Training Manual, 80.
³Ibid., 7.
⁴Ibid., 80.
6. Crying, conflict, and congruence: the knowledge and emotional experience that life together will bring to those in the group.

7. Christ: the center and the heart of our group.¹

In the next session, we talked about problems. It was explained that the main problems came from those who talk too much or too little. The leader needs to gently confront those causing a problem, but in a private setting. The leader must confront excessive talkers with the need for silence and the need to allow for others in the group to talk. The quiet members, on the other hand, need to be encouraged to participate more readily and to be assured that there is time for them to speak out.²

It was made clear that there is another person that the leaders needed to be prepared to meet. This person is called the "extra-care-required" person or ECR. This is a person who will take more than he or she gives the group. All of the group's empathy can be monopolized by such a person. This person must be tactfully removed from the group before he or she destroys it.³

The last session was dedicated to the actual organization of small groups. The large, overall group decided how to divide up into smaller groups and then planned when and how they would start. Once decided, a person was chosen to coordinate the materials and timing of the groups. It was proposed that as the groups grow, a more complex leadership structure should be put in place.

¹Schilt, 44. This was developed in Roberta Hestenes and was part of her course taught at Fuller Theological Seminary.

²Barker et al., 106.

³George, Nine Facets, 20 or Take
place based on the "huddle" idea.¹

Selection of Small-Group Leaders

The place to start in selecting group leaders is to see what qualifications we want our group leaders to have. One way is to look for "F-A-T" people.² "F-A-T" means: Faithful, Available, and Teachable. The first quality of "F-A-T" people is that they be faithful to God and to fellow believers. The person should love Jesus and have accepted Him as Lord and Savior. The outgrowth of this relationship is that this person will show this relationship in action.

The second quality is that they be available. The person must be willing to give the necessary time to make a group work. Now this does not mean that a person is not busy. Often, those who are already busy may be willing and able to be a group leader. The person's willingness to spend time is crucial as it takes time to study and prepare for each lesson. The small group and its well-being must become their priority.

The third quality is that they be teachable. The fact is that a leader must be able to receive instruction. He or she must be able to hear what other members of a group are saying, comprehend it, and be flexible enough to adopt to group needs and wishes. There is a lot to learn about how people communicate and interact, and prospective leaders must be open to new insights and approaches to group leadership.

The church board decided that the elders and pastor would

¹George, Tape #1.
²McBride, 31.
first select a number of specific people to be invited to be a part of this training program. The invitation was extended in the form of a letter to the person, which was followed up by a call from the pastor. It was felt, however, that this was not to be the only way people could be a part of this training. An invitation was also extended to all members through the bulletin. A few members expressed their interest in response to this general invitation. Their names, however, were then submitted to the elders to be evaluated for their suitability and commitment to the church. In all, eighteen people were invited to attend the first "Caring & Sharing" leadership training seminar and consented to participate.

For the second training seminar a different selection process was used. The newly trained group leaders were asked to choose someone whom they would like to mentor as a prospective group leader.1 The group leaders' suggestions were again submitted to the elders for approval. A letter was then sent to each invitee. Eleven people became a part of the second training seminar.

Selection of the Training Site and Scheduling

There were a number of considerations for selecting the training site. There had to be enough space for all the participants. I wanted a room where the seating could be arranged in a circle. It was also important for space to be ample for the small groups of four to meet. The logical place, it was determined, was the fellowship hall in the church.

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1: George, Tape #2.
The first meeting was set for March 25th, 1995, at 5 P.M. None of the other sessions were scheduled. I felt that if I was going to train the leaders to set the times for their group meetings, based on the group's input, I would ask the leaders-in-training to do the same. The future place and times were put to a vote as part of the covenant for our leadership group. This helped the group participants to make a commitment to faithfully attend the training sessions and to "own" the process.

The group members decided to continue to use the fellowship hall for the training. Each group of four claimed a Sabbath School room for their place of meeting. The members chose to keep the time slot from 5 to 6:30 P.M. on Saturdays. It was agreed, however, that we would skip one Saturday, April the 22nd, and have a double session on April 29th. This session began at 2:30 P.M. and continued until 6 P.M.

The first session of the second training seminar was scheduled for February 10, 1996, at 5 P.M. The place was the church fellowship hall. When this group discussed the best time and place for future sessions, they chose a different schedule and location. The sessions ran from 1:00-2:30 P.M. The appointed place was the Kindergarten Sabbath School room. The final session was scheduled for 5 P.M. on April 20th in the fellowship hall and included all trained small group leaders from both seminars.

The Process of Training Small-Group Leaders

The training process, itself, was not difficult to organize. I had observed more than one seminar or class on small groups. Many of them offered formats that were helpful to draw upon. The
method that I recommended—and that was agreed to—was developed and adopted by me from a combination of sources.¹ I was reminded that there are different ways that people learn and that this should be taken into consideration as the process was shaped.

Training Format

The sessions began with prayer. We spent a little time talking about things which happened to us during the week. During this time the handouts were passed out to each member. The handouts contained the basic outline of the items we were discussing. There were spaces for the trainees to fill in the answers. Questions were encouraged during the discussion time. This took about a half hour to forty-five minutes.

The trainees then went to their groups of four. There they participated in a Bible study. I found Bible lessons which were specially geared to help the trainees understand the group process. The lessons were based on a study of the book of Luke and were written by Jeffery Arnold.² I revised some of the questions to fit the subjects of discussion.

Each session ended with a time of prayer. Prayer is part of the process of developing a deep relationship with God and others. For the first few sessions prayer was offered in the large group. As the small groups of four deepened their relationship, prayer was eventually carried out in these groups. I made sure that each group took ten to fifteen minutes for prayer.

¹The main sources were: Arnold, Coleman, Hamlin, Hestenes, and James.

²Arnold, 235-245. Arnold sites that Stephanie Black helped him write the Bible lessons.
Training Method

One training theory recognizes that people are taught best by one of four different styles of learning, and that each learner will respond best to a particular style.\footnote{1} The first learning style is called the "Imaginative Learner."\footnote{2} This person needs to be shown the need for what is being done. He or she will need to be shown the broad reason for this training seminar and the small groups. These people are valuable to a small group because they can hold everyone together by embracing the valid reasons for the group's existence.

These people need to have a demonstration of a small group in action. Group discussion is their specialty, so this will be encouraged throughout the training. These learners will respond most positively when they see how each person enhances the small-group process. During the covenant and organizing phase, the Imaginative Learner will be a great help to the group.\footnote{3}

The second learning style appeals to those classified as an "Analytic Learner."\footnote{4} This represents the person who devours books for the knowledge in them, is observant of what is going on, and is a very rational thinker. This learner is going to need a strong dose of logical reasoning. He or she is often the quiet person who needs to be drawn out.

This person needs a well-reasoned learning atmosphere. To

\footnote{1}Marlene D. LaFever, Learning Styles: Reaching Everyone God Gave You to Teach (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1995), 24.

\footnote{2}Ibid., 40-42.

\footnote{3}Ibid., 80, 83, 86.

\footnote{4}Ibid., 49-51.
meet their need, I needed to make sure that my presentations were well-structured, clear, and supported by strong evidence. I made additional books and resources available so that they could further pursue answers to their questions. These learners needed to see the inductive reasoning used in small groups. Once they mastered this method of reasoning they were able to function well because of their ability to effectively communicate information to their group.¹

The third style appeals to the "Common Sense Learner."² This is the person who likes to experiment with concrete things. They want to have things tied to the here and now. If a small group task seems impossible to do, this person will be easily discouraged. This person is going to be very practical. He or she wants to learn how things work and make it work right.

Filling in the blanks on handouts were helpful to this learner as was group discussion. The Common Sense learner observed and participated in the action of the small groups to see that the process was practical. He or she needed to see that small groups can be improved by training, and that his or her participation and contributions made a difference.³

The last learning style is called the "Dynamic Learner."⁴ The person with this learning style has an eye on the future, will move from idea to idea until something works. This person will help the group to see different ways to do things. This

¹Ibid., 81, 84, 86.
²Ibid., 57-59.
³Ibid., 82, 84, 86.
⁴Ibid., 67-69.
person is full of enthusiasm and will try to run ahead of the teacher and control the flow of the class.

I wanted this person to begin to envisioning leading a group, and seeing that groups are fun places to interact with others. These individuals loved to see the group move towards worship. From time to time, I had "brainstorming" sessions with them to benefit from their creative vision. I, also, wanted them to share what they had done and learned with the group, sometimes in an interview style.¹

The seminar training method which I used included a combination of techniques. There were lectures with handouts that required the participant to write out answers. There were experimental exercises. The members were given opportunity to try out what they learned in the small groups of four. They had the experience of preparing for each lesson in the small group. There were Scripture readings and prayers in each meeting.

I shared the leadership role during the training sessions and in the small groups. My role was not to be the dominating master. As the group leaders grew, they gained the right to influence the group more and more. This helped build unity and cooperation. I sought to have a consensus in creating the small-group community and to gain the strong backing of the new leadership during and after their training.² It was not "my" program, but "our" program.

¹Ibid., 96.
²Baker et al., 52.
Description of Training Sessions

The first training seminar began March 25, 1995, at 3 P.M. in the church fellowship hall. There were eighteen people who were part of the training. The second training seminar began on February 9, 1996, at 6 P.M. in the church fellowship hall. This second group was made up of those who were suggested for training by those who took part in the first training session. There were eleven people who were part of this training.

Session 1

The first session began by highlighting our mission based upon the commission in Matt 28:18-20. That commission is to make disciples for Jesus Christ. I talked about Jesus' method in making disciples. Jesus began to make disciples by asking those who would to "Come and follow" (Mark 1:17). With this command began the transformation of the twelve men who became His key leaders. Jesus and these men lived together for three and a half years. They were able to see, hear, and experience the way that Jesus lived, ministered, and discipled others. So it is that if we want to make disciples for Christ we, too, must be willing to spend time together.

I defined a disciple as "a committed follower of Jesus Christ who seeks to live a life marked by persistent growth in the understanding of and obedience to God." 1 I stated that there has to be intentional effort to make disciples through small groups in our church. The goal of our groups was to make disciples by becoming close to people as Jesus did.

1Arnold, 19.
I read Eph 4:11-16 to the trainees. I shared the idea that a body is similar to how individual members should be a body. I talked about how cells shared some quotes from Ellen White on small red for them in the church.

Of this first session, I asked the trainees to form groups of four. In these groups they were to talk about the described covenant. They then came back and voted what would include for this training seminar. The members voted that the sessions would be a double meeting.

I started with a lecture suggesting a definition for a small group. The reason for defining a small group was that different interpretations of what a small group used Johnson's definition: "A small group is an inter-face gathering of 3-12 people, with a common ering Biblical truth, of growing in the abundant ist, and of leading others to accept Jesus as life." I suggested this as our working

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definition of a small group. I expected that most would not remember this definition, so I shared a story about Vince Lombardi teaching the Green Bay Packers the fundamental: "This is a football!"

I shared the idea that, in order for us to become a group according to the above definition, we had to develop community, or "Koinonia." I read 1 Cor 1:9 and a quote from Ellen White about the "formation of small companies." I stated that to have community, two things must be developed. One is relationship. Community is developed when people are in committed relationships to one another as they are to Jesus Christ. The second is communication. Communication is not just talking, it is information, feelings, ideas moving to and from people. The problem we face is that of the breakdown of communication.

The four fundamentals to accomplish "Koinonia" were explained to be: Study, Worship, Prayer, Evangelism/Missions. Over the next few weeks we would be studying these fundamentals. It was at this point that we chose the permanent small groups of four. The only condition was that the husbands and wives would not be together in the same group of four. The large group was given the choice of how to divide up into smaller groups. They then shared the four "Quaker Questions."2

Each person received the first Bible study for the small groups. The Bible lesson came from the Book of Luke, and each lesson had four parts. The first part was a daily Bible reading,

1White, Testimonies, 7:21, 22.
2Coleman, Beginning, 7-8. See the definition of "Quaker Question" on p. 7 above.
aimed at having the members comprehend the contexts of the immediate Bible study. The second part was called "Think About It." In this part, the members were asked to consider a story or event from their experience. The idea was to get the members of the small groups prepared to open up and talk about the Bible lesson.

The third part was called the "Dig In," and began with the portion of Scripture to be studied. The groups answered questions related to the text. This portion of the lesson moved from the ancient context of the passage toward the present. The last part was called "Make It Personal." This section encouraged the group members to apply the Bible study to their own lives.

The second session Bible study was based on Luke 1:46-56. This lesson was aimed at having the small groups talk about responding to God. It is the story of Zecharias and his failure to respond to God's message with immediacy and acceptance. Mary, on the other hand, did respond to God wholeheartedly. At the end of the session, the next study was passed out to the trainees so that they could prepare for the next week.

Session 3

The third session dealt with the study of God's word in the small-group context. I felt that it was best to teach an "inductive" style of Bible study. I explained the three steps which must be taken in this type of study. The first step was identified as "observation." This means that the group searches

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1 The Bible Lesson were taken from Arnold, pp. 235-247, and modified.
2 Ibid., 43-45.
for the facts involved in the text. This means answering the who, what, when, and where questions. The main goal is to find what the author was trying to say in his day. This means learning who he was writing to and when he wrote.

The second step was identified as "interpretation." Raw facts need to have something added to them to make them worthwhile. The small-group members were encouraged to become a "witness." As a witness, they were asked to probe the question "why." This means that they were asked to take apart the facts of the text to find the answers behind it. We, eventually, began to move the message from the past into the present.

The third step was identified as "application." This is where those in the small group react and apply the message to their life. As the group considered what the message meant to those in the past, they asked, "How does this affect us now?" They were encouraged to go beyond merely "proving" their faith to experiencing a change in their "actions."

I moved on to talk about the leaders' role in guiding the study. I suggested that there are five things that a leader does to foster the study of God's word in the group. First, the leader makes him/herself aware of what is being studied. This does not mean that the leader is a "know-it-all." The leader gains knowledge to guide the group through the study. I offered a number of good resources to help the participants in their study: different translations, a study Bible, a concordance, a

\[\text{Ibid., 45-47.}\]

\[\text{Ibid., 47.}\]
Bible dictionary, and a commentary.¹

Second, the leader studies before the group meets. The thing the leader has to guard against is letting other things get in the way of his/her own study.² Leaders also need to be vulnerable. If a question is asked that he or she cannot answer, it should be admitted and commitment made to find the answer. Third, the leader directs the discussion to keep it flowing. The leader makes sure that every person has an equal chance to share. The leader must also keep the group on the subject.³

Fourth, the leader shares open-ended questions. Discussions end if the group is simply giving "yes" or "no" responses. Good leaders ask questions that help group members probe issues such as: "What does it say, mean, or how does it apply to me?"⁴

Fifth, the leader gives value to each person in the group. This involves making each member a vital part of the group and helping each to mature. Each member should be made to see that everyone has a vital role to play within the group. This affirmation will enhance each group member's sense of his or her own value.⁵

I felt that it was important to share a number of possible "pitfalls" in the operation of group Bible studies. Thus, I shared such things as the pitfall of "shared ignorance." In this pitfall I referred to the danger of the group approaching the Bible in the wrong way. It is easy to take a verse out of

¹Hestenes, Using the Bible, 48.
²Arnold, 127.
³Schilt, 61.
⁴Hamlin, 71.
⁵Ibid., 123.
context and make it fit an individual's agenda. I described another pitfall as, "riding a hobby horse"; this refers to the practice of overemphasizing certain themes or ideas. Other pitfalls were identified as "the experts," "making the study academic," and the "mono-method."¹

The Bible study centered around Luke 5:1-11. The focus was on the call of Peter, James, and John. The small groups were asked to consider what it might have been like when Jesus called His disciples. This helped the group to experience what it was like to follow Jesus' call in their own lives.

Session 4

The fourth session was about prayer. I shared a quote from Ellen White which says, "Let them [little companies] have a season of prayer, that they may be strengthened, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit."² Prayer is communication with God. It is knowing God, and being known by God. The act of praying is often frightening to people, especially in public. It can, however, be very rewarding, particularly in a small-group setting.³

I suggested that prayer involves three actions. The first action was said to be "worship" (covered in more detail in the next session). The second action was termed penitence. When sinners come in contact with the Divine, they should respond by confessing their sins. Confession allows us to reestablish a

¹Arnold, 129.
²White, Testimonies, 7:195.
³Schilt, 84.
connection with God. This restoration with God is made possible
because of Jesus' death on the cross.¹

The third action was highlighted as "petition." Most are
tempted to begin with this action instead of worship and
penitence. Petition begins with asking God to be a part of our
life. Once this is accomplished--and only then--we can move to
work for others, such as helping someone find a job. We can then
pray more powerfully for individuals as well as the corporate
church. Our prayers give God the ability to move in a person's
life.² I finished the presentation by sharing a number of ways
to pray, for example, "conversational" and the "five finger"
prayer. Each group was asked to decide which method they
preferred. Some of the leaders were willing to experiment with
new approaches to prayer, while others were wary of new methods.

The Bible lesson for the fourth session was based on Luke
5:27-32. It began by asking people to consider how they would
prepare for a guest to come to their home. The passage
considered Levi Matthew. The Pharisees saw him as a sinner, yet
Jesus saw him as a potential disciple. The group was challenged
to consider if they view others as Jesus did or as the Pharisees?
They were asked if they needed to change their view of others in
need.³

Session 5

In session 5, I had the trainees consider the issue of

¹Arnold, 152.
²Ibid., 153-155.
³Ibid., 238-239.
worship. I began with the examination of Luke 7:36-38. This is the account of the woman who did everything she could to show her love and adoration for Jesus. She spared no expense in preparing for Jesus' impending death. This woman was so overcome with love that she poured expensive perfume on Jesus. No one else at the banquet had their priorities in the right place—as she did. She had performed an act of authentic worship. All worship begins by putting our lives in proper order by making God first. It involves proclaiming that He is worthy by our actions and words.

Three actions are necessary to worship God genuinely. First, we must act in praising God for His actions in our lives. Ps 138 suggests three attitudes which make up the act of praise: Anticipation, Appreciation, and Awe. We anticipate that God is going to act in our behalf. We appreciate the way God has acted in the past. We are filled with awe as we sense that God is the One who has created all things and saved us from all our sins.

Thanksgiving is another action of worship. We must answer the question: "What has God done for us?" It reminds me of the song about counting our blessings. Our great problem is that we forget what God has done in the past. It is possible to think that we have been the ones who have brought ourselves success. This action of thanksgiving will prepare us for eternity as it is a key part of what we will be doing throughout the ceaseless ages.

The real goal of worship is to bring us to the point of

\(^1\)Ibid., 137.
\(^2\)Ibid., 138.
offering our lives to God. In Rom 12:1, the apostle Paul tells us that we should give our lives as a "living sacrifice." In summary, I highlighted the fact that worship cannot be forced on the members of the group. The leader can lead the group through the actions of worship, but cannot force it. Worship must come as a natural reaction to an encounter with God through the activities of the group.

The Bible lesson in session 5 was drawn from Luke 9:1-17 and dealt with "community." The group was asked to look at a life of drudgery and how having help might make it better. The Bible study here looked at the sense of community that developed among the disciples. In the application, the question raised was: "How can what is learned in the small group be used in our everyday life?"

Session 6

Session 6 tackled the issues of evangelism and missions. I began with a warning of how the great problem for the group was that the members of the group might get too comfortable with one another. The goal of both small groups and evangelism was to make disciples. I read Acts 2:46, 47. Here, Luke informs us that the church was added to daily. The small group must grow numerically, and that means bringing new people to the group.

It is important to remind one another that the small group centers around Jesus Christ. The small group must show that the

\[1\text{Ibid., 139.}\]
\[2\text{Ibid., 240.}\]
\[3\text{Hamlin, 85.}\]
gospel really does work. The first evidence is the fact that God first loved us and that we love Him back. The small group should answer the question, "Do we love Jesus?" This moves into the second evidence, which is the reality that we love one another, because we love Jesus. In John 13:34-36, Jesus admonishes His disciples that their love for one another was how the world would know that they belonged to Jesus.

I shared a way to keep the idea of evangelism before a group. An empty chair was pulled into the group circle each meeting. We prayed that God would give us someone to fill the empty chair. When a group reached fifteen it was divided, so that there were two groups growing.

Missions is similar to evangelism but different. The difference is that missions is a vision to share Christ beyond our community or culture. The call of Jesus is never to keep our message to one place, but to give it to the entire world. I suggested that there are a number of ways a group can be involved in missions. The group can take time to learn about and pray for another place in the world. The group can collect funds or find other ways to support missions. There are even ways to get some personal experience, some of which are not expensive.

The Bible lesson for the small groups was on pride and was based on Luke 9:46-50. The study began by having the group talk about possessive people. The study set the context in terms of

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1Arnold, 164-165.
2Coleman, Small Group Training Manual, 79.
3Arnold, 177.
the disciples' competitive attitude towards one another. Jesus made a point about who was the greatest by referring to children. The groups were to apply this to what might happen in a group.

Session 7

Session 7 began by looking at some of the other facts about operating a group. First, I discussed the dynamics of how to start a small group. I suggested the place to start was with the decision about who will lead and help with the group. Having a leader, assistant leader, and host/hostess guarantees a start with at least three.¹ Then a list of prospective members should be compiled and prayer offered for each one. I listed a number of ways to invite people: by mail, telephone, or personal invitations.

I proceeded from a discussion of how to start a group to an exploration of the various stages which a group goes through in its development. These stages were: Infant, Toddler, Adolescent, College, and Graduate.² As I described these stages, the trainees talked about how they could see how the group had, unknowingly, moved through the stages. They laughed about how it was true that they did not listen or follow my lead as well.

The Bible lesson for this session was taken from Luke 15:11-32, and dealt with the lost son. In the beginning of the lesson I had the members consider what events or situations made them most upset when they were young. The group considered what kept them from or caused them to run away. The question in the study

¹James, 12.
²Schilt, 45, 46.
was, "What did it take to get the young man home?" We looked at the steps he took before going to his father. I then challenged the groups to analyze what might have caused them to leave Christ. I asked if they could help a person come home to God?

Session 8

In the eighth session I shared an agenda for group meetings based upon the plan of Lyman Coleman.¹ We had been using this agenda for the Bible lessons of each session. The first part was referred to as the "icebreaker." This was a non-threatening way to get members of the group to start sharing. In the first meeting this segment took longer because each person in the group was getting to know one another. For the Bible lessons, I called this section "Think About It."

The second part of the agenda is called the "Dig In" section.² There were two types of questions in this part of the agenda. The first type consisted of "discovery" questions, because the goal was to observe or research the text.³ The second type of questions dealt with the interpretation or understanding of a text.⁴ The leaders were asked to get the members of their group to find the reason for what was written.

The last part was called the "Make It Personal" section. The group worked to apply the text to the present day.⁵ This

¹Coleman, Small Group Training Manual, 2.
²Ibid., 80.
³James and James, section 5, 2.
⁴Ibid., 3.
⁵Coleman, Small Group Training Manual, 80.
called for the members to respond to what the text was saying. The group also moved towards each other. This was done through the sharing of concerns or prayer requests. The closing was when the group prayed together. I shared that by "rule of thumb" each part of a group session should take about thirty minutes, although the leader should be flexible. The total time for a group meeting should be an hour and a half, and no more then two hours long.

I then shared the seven "C's" of small groups. They were:
(1) Covenant, (2) Commitment, (3) Caring, (4) Content, (5) Communication, (6) Crying, Conflict, Congruence, and (7) Christ Jesus. These are the seven things that the leader needs to know to keep his or her group on the right path. If the leader pays attention to these, the group will most likely be healthy and successful.

Then I shared the types of leaders. The four types of leaders were: Autocratic, Authoritative, Democratic, and Laissez-Faire. I asked them to consider the good and the bad of each type of leader. My goal was to get the trainees to think about their own styles of leading. I suggested that as they led a group they might find that their leadership was a problem, and that they might have to adjust their style of leadership.

The Bible lesson for this session centered around Luke 16:19-31. This text shared the story of the rich man and Lazarus. The members of the group considered what they would do if a homeless person set up his or her place in their front lawn.

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1Schilt, 44.
2Hamlin, 40-43.
How would they respond? Then they considered the who, where, when, and what of the Scripture. The small groups were asked to study a commentary and a passage from Ellen White. At the end of the study, the members were asked to talk about the person they related to most in the story. The group was asked to consider what their response to God and the poor should be.

**Session 9**

The ninth session was dedicated to "problems." The two main problems I talked about could be considered as one overarching problem: There tended to be two different kinds of difficult group members the quiet person and the talkative person. The quiet person may have a number of problems. He or she may not understand the questions or may not be properly prepared. The cure may be to direct questions to these individuals or to check on their study time.

The talkative person does not know when to be quiet. These individuals always have the answer for every question, and need to be encouraged to let others participate. They should be approached tactfully and privately. The talkative person could also, be privately asked to aid the leader in getting the quiet person to talk.

I shared the fact that over time the members of a group may face other difficulties, i.e., death, sickness, or financial troubles. These individual needs must be met with care by the

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2Baker et al., 106.
3Ibid.
group. I related that as a leader they would also have to watch out for the "extra-care-required" person or "ECR."1 This person takes advantage of the empathy of the group, and leaves nothing for others with real needs. We talked about how to ask this person to stop or to remove him/herself from the group.

The Bible lesson for this session was taken from Luke 19:28-40 and gave an account of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The "Dig In" called for each member of the group to share a past worship service that was exceptionally meaningful to them. As the group looked at the Scripture text, we examined why there was rejoicing and what people were saying. The group was asked about how people felt by the time of the crucifixion. The group members were asked to give their lives in offering to God.

Session 10

Session 10 ran differently than the other sessions. All of us joined together for a "celebration meal." After the meal, I asked the members to fill out a survey. Then I asked them to plan with me on how we would start the "Sharing & Caring" Groups. It was decided that by Labor Day all of the small groups would be functioning. The group members decided who they were going to work with and what they wanted to use as a method of invitation. One individual was chosen to coordinate the distribution of materials from the church office.

The Activation of Small-Group Leaders

The first "Caring & Sharing" small group started in June. There was little talk in the church before this group started.

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1George, Tape #5; idem, Nine Facets, 20.
It seems that the invitations and church bulletin announcements were not sufficient to generate broad interest. The small group had only one person beyond the newly trained leaders. It was clear that we needed to find a better way to prepare the church and that summer would be a hard time to start. I began to work on two sermons to prepare the way for the start of the bulk of the "Caring & Sharing" groups.

Sermon on the Need for Participation in Small Groups

On August ninth, I preached from Acts 2. The focus was on the fact that Jesus had just ascended and left the disciples behind. They had gone back to the Upper Room to pray and study. The eleven remaining disciples and the other followers of Jesus were reflecting on what Jesus had said and done. They began to understand as they met together what Jesus had intended them to do. Their thinking was maturing in preparation for what God was going to do next. I read and tied in Joel 2:28, 29, at this junction, and made three points.

First, God is now going to pour out His Spirit in great measure. On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit was unleashed on the followers of Jesus. This "baptism of the Spirit" transformed the disciples into powerful communicators of Jesus' gospel. Peter believed that this event was the fulfillment of Joel 2:28, 29. This prophecy, however, is also aimed at those in the last days—in our time. We too can have this power of the Holy Spirit, if we do as the disciples did.

Second, the people were given dreams and prophecies. Too often we think this refers to the future but, in many cases,
prophecies and dreams were also given for today. Dreams and prophecies are to help sharpen our relationship to God, in the present. As the city of Jerusalem was turned upside down when the disciples, anciently, hit the streets--so it will happen in the last days, i.e., in the near future.

Third, the people were changed by knowing Jesus as their Lord and Savior. As the fullness of their surety for salvation was made clear by the Spirit, the disciples were dramatically changed. They went out into the streets and proceeded to reach and baptize 3,000 people for Jesus. The church grew dramatically as the Spirit moved on their hearts.

In the book of Revelation, John wrote to a church that was being changed by the world instead of by the Spirit. Their first love was slipping away. We are like that church. Our church needs to be transformed by the Holy Spirit today. We need the preparation experienced by the Apostolic Church. We are to be ready to change the world for Christ. We must go back to what the disciples did, who met in Bible study, prayer, and fellowship. This experience made them malleable to the Holy Spirit's influence. It will, likewise, enable us to receive the power and renewal that they enjoyed.

The following week, I preached a sermon on the latter portion of Acts 2. I focused on how the disciples had grown into a group so large it no longer fit into the Upper Room. They were faced with the fact that there were many new members who needed to be taught and nurtured. They repeated what had been done in the Upper Room, on a new and larger scale as the members met

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"Rev 2:4-5"
First, they devoted themselves to the teachings of the apostles. These men who had been with Jesus day in and day out, now shared their experiences with the new believers. As the disciples taught what Jesus did, they led out in fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. This was done to keep the new members growing in their faith. They spent time in training and fellowship as Jesus had done with them earlier. Many miracles and wonders took place in the name of Jesus.

Second, they dedicated themselves to building "community." All material wealth was shared. There was nothing that held one member back from another. If one was in need, funds were provided by others to care for those needs. Those of the "Way," as the band of Christians were then called, came to match the pattern described in John 13:34, 35. They came to love and care for one another.

Third, the members of the early church met daily. The disciples of Jesus met in the temple every day. They used this as a regular meeting place to join with fellow believers. It seems from there that they eventually moved into private homes where they continued to meet in groups. Once again they affirmed one another in the faith of Jesus, and spent time praying and getting to know one another. As the Scriptures say, new members were added to the church every day (Acts 2:47).

I, next, shared the message that Ellen White wrote: "The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort is a plan that has been presented by One who cannot err." The

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starting of small groups was a plan that God had ordained. To bring our church into a community like that of the disciples, we, too, needed small groups. As we break bread, study, and pray together in our homes, we will be brought closer together.

At the end of the sermon, I announced that our church was following in the footsteps of the Early Church by starting "Caring & Sharing" small groups. I briefly explained what the groups were about. Every member was invited to join in a small group and bring a friend. With the foundation laid in the two sermons, my hope was that we would have an enthusiastic response.

Selection of Sites

On August 16, 1995, I met with the "Caring & Sharing" group leaders who went through my first training seminar to make final plans for the start of the small groups. To begin the meeting, we prayed that God would direct us. Six groups of leaders were asked to choose a time and place to meet. A few who had taken the training either moved or had decided not to lead a small group.

Six groups were planned as an outgrowth of the first training seminar. Three of the groups chose to meet in the homes of one of the leaders. Two groups of leaders chose to use homes that were offered by non-leaders. One group chose to use one of the rooms in the church. All but two groups chose to have their group meet on Sabbath afternoon. Of the two, one met on Mondays, and the other met on Wednesday mornings.

After the second training seminar, the new leaders and those from the previous sessions met together. The initial issue was to get the leaders together to refine plans for the future small
groups. It was decided that there would be seven definite groups started, with one more possible at a later time. A month later a meeting was held to choose the sites and times. Five chose to meet in the homes of leaders. One asked to use the home of a church member. One chose to use the church facilities. All but two chose to use Saturday afternoons to have their meetings. One group chose Monday evenings, while the final group chose to use Tuesday evenings.

Launching Groups

With the times and places set for the start of the "Caring & Sharing" groups, the church bulletin of August 23, 1995, listed the times and places for the groups to begin. The newsletter, which goes to the home of each member, also carried the information. Each group had a list of people they wanted to invite. General invitations were printed, and each group took these and added their own specific information. During the announcement time, preceding the worship service, each group was highlighted and an appeal was made for participants.

Two groups began on the Saturday after Labor Day, 1995, starting with a total of twenty people. Another group--devoted to women--began on the following Monday with five participants. A week later, a youth "Caring & Share" group started with seven attendees. By the end of the month, another group started meeting on Saturdays with seven participants, while a final Wednesday group started with four people on the last Wednesday of September.

All of the groups met for at least seven weeks. At the end of this time period, each group decided what they would do from
then on. The one on Wednesday morning disbanded. The five other
groups took a break and started again in February 1996. The
youth group divided into two groups, and started anew. The
remaining groups grew and prospered until the summer of 1996.
The groups took a break during Net '96.

During January 1997, leaders from the first and second
training seminars formed new groups. It was decided to begin the
small groups soon after February the 8th. The bulletin was used
again, as well as personal invitations. A group began meeting on
February 15 with eight people and doubled its size by the second
week.

The other groups began a week later. Two of the groups that
began with seven members have stayed at that size. One that
began on Monday began with four and doubled the following week.
The Tuesday group began with four and is holding its own. The
Friday night group had eight people out for the first meeting.

Time will tell what will happen with these groups in the
long run, but it appears that they will be successful. Only one
shows signs that it may not survive. I believe that the new
groups will experience the same success as the previous set of
groups. The leaders are excited by how many have come out to
participate in the "Caring & Sharing" groups.

To summarize the chapter on "program design," I was able to
find an ample amount of good material to present during the two
training seminars for small-group leaders. Each training seminar
had ten sessions and met weekly, with a few exceptions. The two
seminars were conducted in the Cleburne SDA Church. The seminars
bore fruit with the organization of seven or more groups.
effectively led by trained lay leaders.
CHAPTER V

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The evaluation of this project comes from three sources: (1) those who participated in the leadership training program and functioned as leaders of small groups, (2) those who became a part of the small groups, (3) my experience as leader and coordinator. The group leaders shared their insights after receiving their training and then actually leading a small group. Group participants gave their input after full participation in a group over the prescribed period of time. The evaluation vehicle was a question survey filled out by both group leaders and participants. My evaluation was based on my total experience in both conducting the training seminar and subsequently observing the groups.

The Group Leaders' Critique

The first question dealt with the location of the training course. Those who participated were asked if the fellowship hall was beneficial to the training course. Most reported that the room was large enough to meet the needs of the class and yet close enough to small rooms for the groups of four. When asked about using the Sabbath School rooms for the groups of four, two suggested that they would have preferred better chairs.

The second question had to do with identifying the most useful part of the training. Twelve of the seventeen who took
the leadership training and filled out the questionnaire appreciated the small groups of four. Ten expressed that the handouts were helpful in learning the lessons. Five mentioned that the lessons on how to do the Bible studies were very helpful. Five mentioned that the covenant was helpful to keep the group moving in its learning. The problem-solving lesson, the lesson on communication, and the Bible lessons, in general, were also positively noted.

The next question was: "What was the part you liked the least?" Eight of those who took the training left this blank. Four people mentioned that they thought that it was difficult at times to know what answers to put down in the session handout blanks. Two people thought we did not have enough time for the small groups of four. Other concerns expressed were: the strict adherence to time limits, the time of the week for the sessions, and disappointment that the group was ending.

The last question was: "Do you feel that you could lead or help lead a small group after being a part of this training? If 'no,' why?" Only one person said that she did not feel that she could lead a group. When explaining why, she indicated that she did not like participating in a group. Nevertheless, she felt that the small group training had been good.

The real test of the training came when the small groups were formed. The members of the training session chose how they would divide and form the small groups on their own. Each leadership group had three to four people: leader, assistant leader, and host/hostess. The training was completed in May. Summer commitments and plans prevented most leaders from starting
a group at that time, i.e., immediately. Only one group started in the summer. Results for this group were meager at best.

Those involved in the training decided to have a big push for small groups in the fall. Beginning with the second week of August, we started to ask the church to join a small group. After Labor Day, seventeen of the eighteen who took the training program were involved with small groups. The one person who did not participate had moved out of the area. Five groups started during the two weeks that followed Labor Day.

After being involved with a small group for seven weeks, a second survey of the small-group leaders was taken. Each active leader was asked, if he or she felt that the training was useful. The leaders verbally responded unanimously that the training had helped them to more effectively lead their group. When asked if there was something that was missing from their training, all responded that the training covered almost everything that they needed.

An additional insight into how the newly trained leaders felt was revealed, informally, at a board meeting. Some of my trained leaders were talking about what happened in their small group. One leader encouraged every board member to become involved in a small group. He said that this was one of the best things in his life. Other leaders present agreed with him. Some of these leaders have become great recruiters for small groups.

It would appear that the training of small-group leaders was successful from the point of view of those who had taken the training. Now the question was, "Would those who were a part of their group feel the same?"
The Small-Group Participants' Critique

In November, a questionnaire was passed out by the group leaders, at my request, to forty small-group participants. Of those passed out, twenty responded to the questionnaire. Some of the questionnaires did not get back to me from the small-group leaders for the two reasons: the coordinator did not get them to some of the group leaders, and some of the leaders lost them. Next time I plan to make sure that each group leader gets the questionnaires and that they are mailed directly to the church office after they are completed.

Some of the questions on the questionnaire were taken from the questionnaire presented by Neal McBride. The first question dealt with the covenant. Eighteen of the twenty respondents felt that their group had kept the covenant agreed upon. Two did not know for sure if their group had kept the covenant.

The next question asked how they would appraise their group. Their choices were: "Helpful," "Insightful," "So-So," or "Bad." Fifteen circled that their group was "Helpful." Four circled that the group was "Insightful." One wrote in that he saw the group as "Excellent." None responded that the group was "So-So" or "Bad." This seems to be an exceptionally positive response.

The next two questions asked about the group leaders. The questionnaire asked the participants to rate the leaders of their groups. The rating went from "1--Bad" to "4--Great." All twenty circled the number "4." The next question asked if the leaders were prepared to lead their groups. Every person circled "yes." It appears, then, that those who were trained as group leaders

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McBride, 198.
were highly rated and well thought of by the small-group participants.

The next question asked "how their group worked together." The options ranged from a rating of "1 -- did not work together" to "4 -- worked well together." Everyone circled number "4." Then respondents were asked if they would join another small group. All said that they would be interested in joining a new group.

Finally, members were given a chance to give specific suggestions. One suggested that we should keep the groups going as her group had helped her significantly. Another commented that his group had helped him survive a hard time in his life. Another commented on how she felt that her teacher was a "natural." One even sent a message to me to "keep up the good work." Though this sounds as though all went perfectly well, I am aware that I did not hear from everyone and that there were likely some unexpressed problems. Overall, however, there is much to be encouraged about in the above evaluations.

The Trainer's Critique

Concerns

There are several areas of concern that I have about the training of small-group leaders:

1. I felt that I was struggling each week to stay ahead of those I was teaching. Though I had been studying many books, the lectures sometimes did not become clear until just before I taught them.

2. I did not have the answers for the handouts underlined in my own notes. This created a few uneasy times as I presented the
lecture, and I, sometimes, struggled to readily offer the answers. The handouts also would have been more appealing if I had added some art work.

3. I did not feel that the first training seminar fully supplied all that was needed in terms of group organization. Although we chose a person who was to be Group Coordinator, unfortunately, these coordinators never functioned as I had hoped. This person was supposed to be responsible to make sure that each group had the lessons, to gather and maintain information about the groups, and to keep the pastor informed. However, it just did not happen.

The reason for this problem may have been the lack of training regarding paper work. Things did not "flow" as intended, because I did not receive information back from the Group Coordinator as fast as I needed it. It was easy to get information when I was leading a group, but not when I was absent. After the leaders were working with their groups for a time they knew what was happening, but they did not always see to it that the information was communicated back to me as overall coordinator. There was a need, therefore, to improve the flow of information back to the pastor.

4. I felt that the winter-spring time frame was not best, due to the fact that it led to conflicts with the members' plans and schedules for summer. Trying to conduct a group during this time of year created absenteeism and a lack of continuity for the trainees. I think it would be best to have the training program in the fall. This would allow the leaders to begin their small groups within weeks of their training, i.e., in the winter.
Successes

Some things I am pleased with regarding the program.

1. I think that starting with the "reasons for small groups" and the training process itself allowed those who participated to better understand the process and to form close bonds amongst themselves and with the coordinator. This was helpful because the reason for small groups is to rebuild the bonds broken by the introduction of sin.

2. I kept the issue of "group growth" until the last few lessons. This turned out to be good as those involved could see firsthand the growth that they and their fellow group members had experienced. By the time I shared it, the leadership group had already moved into the "collegiate" stage. They leaders-in-training were excited as they saw that they were already experiencing what was being taught about growth.

3. I found Arnold's Bible lessons from Luke to be very helpful for training.\(^1\) After reworking and modifying some of the questions and choices of Scripture, and shortening the number of lessons from thirteen to nine, I found these lessons to work well. They provided meaningful practice in leading small groups in Bible study. Each member of the group of four received time to put their skills to practice.

4. I found that, overall, the training went better than I had thought it would. I was not sure that the project would be well received in my church. I have found that those who have gone through the complete training have done a great job, and,

\(^1\)Arnold, 235-249. These lessons were in an appendix. Arnold sites that Stephenie Black assisted him in preparing these studies from Luke.
consequently, have made a very positive impact on the church. Most small groups lasted through two or three complete Bible studies. Each group grew in size and we had little or no problems with the development of cliques.

Summary

In summary, I felt that both the training seminar and the small groups went well. The changes I would make in the program are slight. I am happy that the members of the Cleburne Church are positive about what transpired in this small-group project. I hope that we are able to keep these small groups active and growing. I can see that training has to be an ongoing process as, inevitably, some leaders will drop out due to relocation and/or personal schedule changes. There will always be a need for new leaders to take the place of those who can no longer lead and to minister to the needs of a growing and vibrant church.
Conclusions

I have always thought that the small group would be helpful for ministry in the church. In the past, I have tried to lead small groups, but with little result. After this current experience, I have come to the conclusion that part of my earlier problem with groups was the lack of training for new leaders. I now feel that increased knowledge, fellowship with peers, and practical experience contribute to the success and confidence of group leaders and, therefore, to the success of the groups which they oversee.

My first conclusion is that my newly trained leaders have become authentic shepherds over their groups, and have lightened my load as pastor by nurturing fellow members. For example, one group had a participant who lost a child due to a traffic accident. The members of the group helped this person deal not only with the immediate loss, but also helped her by providing continuing love and support.

My second conclusion is that members were activated by the small groups. The group participants were more involved in the activities of the church. One group invited an inactive SDA couple from another church to join them. The husband especially was bitter toward the way he and his wife had been treated in a
previous church, and showed this during his involvement in the small group. As they came each week, the Bible study and prayers touched their hearts. They began to attend the worship service and to see that the Cleburne Church is a caring place—a place they could call home. When they moved back to New England, they looked forward to being a part of another small group in their new church.

The third conclusion is that fellowship has grown in the Cleburne Church. A number of new members joined small groups. These members formed relationships with other long-time members. These ties have helped them to stay involved and grow in the church. The church now encourages all new members to join a small group.

My fourth conclusion is that these groups are beginning to reach beyond the church walls. This is, of course, an ongoing process, but there has already been some actual results. First, we have two or three prospective members meeting with small groups. It looks like they soon will be baptized. Another group has started to help with a mission project in Mexico. Small groups have invited people to attend who, otherwise, would not have come to the church. We expect that more of these invitees will come in the future.

My fifth conclusion is that this is an economical way to train leaders. Our conference has organized many expensive meetings to train leaders. Most are poorly attended. This training program cost our church very little, yet, it has encouraged new leaders to be involved in the activities of the church. Some of our young people would not have been leaders if
they had not been given the training and then the responsibility to lead a small group, afforded by this program.

My sixth conclusion is that this training program has helped build a strong biblical model of leadership in the church. Members are beginning to see that they have a part in the mission and ministry of the church. The members have been able to watch me lead and then to practice what they saw modeled. I have been able to give them some of my responsibilities. It is true that there have been some shortcomings, but the members have done quite well in providing new and improved leadership in the Cleburne Church.

Overall, I feel that this program has been a success in meeting my stated goals for starting this project. I would like to test this out in another church to see if the results are as good. I am sure that there are more changes that should and could be made in this program, in order to better meet the needs of those who are going to take this training program in the future. I expect these adjustments, however, to be few and minor.

Recommendations

After leading the training over a ten-week period, I feel that this was very effective for a church. A pastor can teach this program in the church and prepare the church for small group ministry. Its pluses are:

1. It offers an adequate time frame.
2. It fits the Biblical model.
3. It is workable within a pastor's skill and schedule.
4. It allows for close contact between the pastor and the
leaders of the church.

There are a few changes that I would recommend for the future use of this training program. The worksheets should be made to go into a notebook. This will help the leaders look over their notes for future reference. As the leaders participate in future training they can, then, add to their notebook. Additional topics need to be covered. The goal should be ongoing training, i.e., continuing education. There are still many more things to learn about small groups.

I would recommend that the ten-week training program be carried out in the fall so as to avoid the pitfalls of summer conflicts and scheduling, as pointed out earlier. It would be good if it could be held every year or at least every two or three years, and that "refresher" training course be planned.

When the number of those being trained reaches twelve or more, the church should be used as the training site. Most homes are not big enough to have the group break into small groups of four. With twelve there is a need of at least three rooms for small groups of four to meet. These rooms need to be big enough for the members to meet in a circle. The church setting usually provides ample space.

The one-and-a-half-hour time frame works well. Most people are willing to give this much time each week. It is possible from time to time to extend the time to two hours or to combine two sessions on one afternoon, but these occasions should be the exception, not the rule.

I would recommend that the sessions include the small groups of four Bible studies. This gave most leaders sufficient time to
lead a small group at least twice, and, therefore, boosted their confidence. If there is some question about the lesson or how to lead the group in this group-of-four setting, the trainer is close by to provide help and instruction.

One area that I did not cover but should have, is detailed instruction regarding paperwork. If there is one area where there was trouble, it was in keeping the pastor informed. As the small groups form, there is a need for leaders to communicate certain facts about their groups to the pastor. I needed to know how many were coming, any changes in the schedule or place of meeting, etc. This enhanced communication is needed to better coordinate the program and assist leaders. It is also needed to avoid or deal with problems.

The proper selection of a Group Coordinator is crucial. The Group Coordinator is the liaison between the small groups and the church. The coordinator keeps materials flowing to and from the small group. As the number of leaders and groups increases, I like the suggestion of Carl George of having "huddles." "Huddles" are groupings of leaders who meet to share and encourage one another. Each of these "huddles" should have a leader who will work closely with the Group Coordinator.

At the final meeting of the training program, I had the members of the class choose those whom they will work with. There has to be at least two or three leaders working together. As there is further training, old and new leaders should be brought together. Many of those suggested for the new training will likely be submitted by the present group leaders. The new

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1George, Tape 1.
leaders can be teamed up with the leaders who suggested them for training, creating a positive bond. The experienced leader will continually be looking for potential new leaders.

A training program is important to any church that desires to seriously get involved in small-group ministry. It will take time and the strong commitment of the church and its key leaders to get small groups off the ground. It will likely take a number of years to achieve a mature, effective, functioning small-group ministry. The results, however, will be a dynamic church that is doing the things necessary to meet the needs of every member. As it grows, non-members will be added to such a church. From what I have seen, the investment of time in small-group ministry will be well worth the effort.
APPENDIX I

Caring and Sharing
Session # 1

INTRODUCTION

As you listen to children there are a number of words that stand out. One of those words is "why?" So lets begin with why we have this training for Caring and Sharing Leaders. This seminar is given to share with our church the skills that will be needed to do its ministry. These skills will help us meet out mission statement, which was given to us by Jesus. Matthew 28:18-20. "Then Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.'"

The mission of our church is to make disciples, but how do you and I do that? Let's start where our forefathers would start. We want to make disciples the way that Jesus made disciples of the twelve, so let's explore how Jesus made the church.

JESUS' METHOD

"As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will make you fishers of men.' At once they left their nets and followed him." Mark 1:16-18.

With this simple command, by calling them away from their life, Jesus began to change these men's lives. These two fishermen understood the call and left everything behind. In the same way, we must draw people from the world and call them to follow Jesus. Everything in life must be put aside to follow Him.

For over three years, the disciples saw Jesus in every part of His life, because He lived with them. The twelve observed Jesus' way of handling people: the sick, the hard to deal with and the searching. Then when Jesus went back to heaven they were left to do the same tasks Jesus performed. To make disciples, we must spend time together and open our lives to be examples.

Jesus took those who were not considered of the highest quality, the brash self-centered, ones who did not care about the needs of those around them. This is the type of people Jesus took to be disciples. When we see that, we know that there is hope for us, for we are just like those men.
Jesus made them disciples by being committed to them, despite their failings. He allowed them access and confided his teachings in them, and had great expectations for His disciples. Yet even when they failed Him, our Master stayed committed. They responded by being committed to Jesus.

Jesus, most of the time, modeled that a disciple was to share the Gospel by sending them to do the same type of work. The first time he sent the twelve out two by two, then it was repeated by the seventy. As they went out they did the same work that they saw Jesus do.

The methods I am teaching you on caring and sharing are similar to what Jesus did in making His disciples.

**DISCIPLING**

As you can tell, the goal of this seminar is to make disciples. Like all words in the English language, it has been diluted. So, what is it that I mean by 'disciples', and how are we going to do it? A disciple is a committed follower of Jesus Christ who seeks to live a life marked by persistent growth in understanding of God and obedience to God.

Disciples are made by intention. Jesus told us that we must become like little children. Well, children do not come out of the womb ready to be adults. They have to be trained to do math, reading, writing, and even thinking. So it is that we must make an effort to make and become disciples.

The word 'disciple' means "imitator" (Christian = Imitator of Christ). "We first imitated the Lord and then you learned from us how to imitate the Lord." I Thess. 1:6. We will be modeling to others how Jesus was modeled to us. The idea is not to duplicate your pastor or any one of us, but to duplicate Jesus. The source of what we are to become is here in the Bible.

Humans learn by watching and copying others. My son and daughter learned to tie their shoes by watching me, then they tried to do the same process over and over. Finally succeeding, they tied their shoe laces. This is how we are to make disciples in our church. Disciples are created in this type of relationship.

**SMALL GROUPS**

Read Ephesians 4:11-16.

Paul talks about the body and for years, we have talked about how the body of believers is to be unified. Well, the problem is that we have failed to understand that each organ in the human body is made up of a grouping of cells. Once we understand this principle, We can grow disciples like the body does. Groups of people get together and grow.

Often people can not see what their spiritual gifts are, but as we draw them into small groups we will begin to see what gifts

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they have. They may be new and need help to see the way that they can work in the church, but as we meet together we will learn about one another and what they can do in the body of believers.

The church is always in need of people to lead in new areas, to expand God's Church, and within these small groups, we will be able to find new leaders for our church. Because we are so busy tending to the needs of the forest, we often fail to notice the individual trees. In the same way, there are people who can do things for the church but, in our haste, we do not see it. In a small group however, with less trees, the leader will many times see other leaders.

In our church there are so many people with needs, yet on Sabbath morning we do not see them. Often small needs are not seen until they become great big monsters. However, a small group can see these and deal with them, because in a group the needs of others are no longer hidden. When it comes to listening, this is also true.

On Sabbath morning and at Sabbath School, only a few people can be heard by the group. Yet when we meet in a small group, the thanksgiving and praise of each member can be heard. Later in the seminar I will tell you about a way to even hear the shy person, by having the group small enough.

Due to contact with our Institutions, many in our area think they know what Adventists are. But when they join us in an informal Bible study and in prayer, they meet a real Adventist. In this way, we can reach our community even better than before. Read Kurt Johnson page 20.

Finally, as an example of how small groups draw and help keep new church members, look at our Hospitality Dinners. Due to these gatherings, our church has added about 10 members. With small groups, where all can participate and not just a few, we can keep our church growing and moving forward.

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'Ellen G. White, Australasian Union Conference Record. August 15, 1902.
Tonight, to begin the process, I would like you to break up into groups of four. Choose one of your group to lead you through these questions. In fifteen minutes we will come back to make our covenant for our seminar.

After Fifteen Minutes:
This covenant is a commitment that we will make together. It covers what we will do and when we will do it and that we will do it and has the following parts.
1. The purpose of this group is to learn how to make disciples.
2. Our goal will be to train leaders for Caring and Sharing Groups.
3. We will meet for 10 weeks.
4. We will meet on form to , and we will strive to start on time and end on time.
5. We will meet at the church.
6. We will agree to following ground rules for our group:

   PRIORITY: While we are in this course, we will give priority to the group meetings.
   PARTICIPATION: Everyone is given the right to their own opinion and "dumb questions" are encouraged and respected.
   CONFIDENTIALITY: Anything that is said in the meeting is never repeated outside the meeting.
   EMPTY SEAT: We will keep an empty seat until the third class.
   SUPPORT: Permission is given to call upon each other in time of need--even in the middle of the night.

"Coleman, Beginning, 12-13."
Caring and Sharing
Lesson # 1

MISSION = __________

JESUS' METHOD

1. Jesus command was "______ __"
2. Jesus ____ with the Disciples.
3. Jesus ____ those where considered of low quality.
4. Jesus _____ Himself to the twelve.
5. Jesus ____ what a disciple was to share, the Gospel.

DISCIPLING

A disciple is a _____ follower of Jesus Christ who ____ to live a life marked by _______ _______ in understanding of God and ________ to God.

1. Disciples are made by ________.
2. Disciple means ________.
3. Disciples are ________ in ________.

COVENANT

Our Covenant is a commitment that we will make together.

1. The purpose of this group is to learn how to make disciples.
2. Our goal will be to train leaders for Caring and Sharing Groups.
3. We will meet for 10 weeks.
4. We will meet on _____ from _____ to _____, and we will strive to start on time and end on time.
5. We will meet at the church.
6. We will agree to following ground rules for our group:

   ____ PRIORITY: While we are in this course, we will give priority to the group meetings.
   ____ PARTICIPATION: Everyone is given the right to their own opinion and "dumb questions" are encouraged and respected.
   ____ Confidentiality: Anything that is said in the meeting is never repeated outside the meeting.
   ____ EMPTY SEAT: We will keep an empty seat until the third class.
   ____ SUPPORT: Permission is given to call upon each other in time of need--even in the middle of the night.1

1 Coleman, Beginning, 12-13.
WHAT IS A SMALL GROUP?

'Small Groups' often seem to be a catch phrase of churches today. So what is the definition of what a small group really is. "A small group is an intentional, face-to-face gathering of 3-12 people, with the common purpose of discovering biblical truth, of growing in the abundant life in Jesus Christ, and of leading others to accept Jesus as Lord of their lives."

As good as this definition is, most of us will remember very little of it. It is a place to start our understanding of what a group is all about, but it does not have any character to it. For many seasons, the great Vince Lombardi led the Green Packers to the championship, but in success, people can forget what is most important.

One afternoon, the Packers were playing a game against an inferior team and they expected an easy win. Instead the great Packers were soundly whipped that day. All the players feared what the coach would say about the loss. Lombardi stormed into the locker room, but only said I will meet with you at the next practice.

With fear they came to the practice, knowing that the coach now had time to really be mad. Lombardi came in with a flourish and said "This team has lost, because we have forgotten the fundamentals." He reached out for a football and bellowed, "This is a football." We have to know the fundamentals.

What are we doing?

Our purpose is to build up the believers and to win the non-believer. Another way to say it is that we are building a community. The Bible has a term for community, it is Koinonia. Read I Cor. 1:9. Koinonia is the relationship between God and His people. Read 7T 21,22.

As I read this, two words come to mind. The first word is commitment and describes being in relationship with one another. Unity can only be achieved when we will make a commitment to one another just as Jesus did. I am committed to having a relationship with my wife and this commitment helps us have unity.

The second word is communication. It means two-way transmission of thoughts and feelings, so that growth occurs in the relationship. Talking does not guarantee this will happen. "Healthy communication brings together many ('comm' means 'with, together') into one ('uni' means 'one') by breaking down the barriers that exist between people."

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2Arnold, p.43.
HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO IT?

We will use five fundamentals to build community through our commitment and communication. They are: study, worship, prayer, evangelism, and mission. The lessons we study over the next five weeks are going to deal with each of these fundamentals. The last three lessons will cover leadership, how to get groups started, and dealing with problems.

START GROUPS OF FOUR.

I would like you to break up into groups of four with husbands and wives not in the same group. Choose someone to lead for now, later you will all get a chance. The first, I would like you to do is to get to know one another better.

Four Quaker Questions:

Then share the lesson from Luke 1-2.

Next week Luke 3-5.

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Caring and Sharing Seminar
Session #2

WHAT IS A SMALL GROUP?

"A small group is an intentional, _____ - ____ gathering of ____ people, with the common purpose of discovering ______ truth, of growing in the abundant ____ in Jesus Christ, and of ______ others to accept Jesus as Lord of their lives."¹

What are we doing?

Our purpose is to ________ the believers and to win the non-believer.

Koinonia - It is the ______ between ____ and His ______. I Cor. 1:9, 7T 21,22.

A. ______________________
B. ______________________ ("Comm" means "with, together"; "Uni" means "one").

HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO IT?

A. ______________________
B. ______________________
C. ______________________
D. ______________________
E. ______________________

Four Quaker Questions³

1. Where were you living at age 7 and how many brothers and sister were in your household?

2. How did you heat your home when you were 7 years old? (If you had central heat, switch this question to: What were the winters like?)

3. What was the center of warmth in your life when you were 7 years old? (This can be a person, specific place, or time)

4. When did God become more than just a name to you?


²Arnold, p.43.

Bible Study #1
Luke 2:8-20


Think about it: Think about what stands out from your youth about Christmas. Have you changed some of your understanding about this special holiday? Share something from your past that stands out in your memory about this holiday?

Dig in: As the shepherds were living on the field, how was their contact with the angel different from Zechariah's (1:8-9)? Was it different from that of Mary (1:26-27)? Why were the shepherds chosen to receive the angels message of Jesus coming?
Is there any similarity to the angels rejoicing and Mary's song (1:46-55)? How do you think the shepherds felt as they beheld the savior in the stable?
What do you think Mary pondered in her heart?
How do you think the people took the message of the shepherds as they passed through the town? Do you think there was a response?

Make it personal: The angels appeared with a message to Zechariah, Mary, and the Shepherds, as they were working. They were doing their natural things. How has God spoken to you in the normal action of your life?
Others did not hear the angels. Why? How can you be open to God in your life?
Think about it: Imagine yourself busily involved in a project at work or home. You have to get the project done today. Suddenly, the phone rings. When you answer it, you are talking to the president of the United States. The president tells you: "Drop everything! I have an important assignment for you." Assuming you respected the president, how would you react? Why?

DIG IN:

WHO: ____________________________

WHAT: How well do you think Simon Peter knew Jesus before this event?
       How did Jesus get Peter's attention while he was working?
       Why do you think Peter said what he did?
       Why did Jesus use the term "fisherman?"
       How did they respond to Jesus call?

MAKE IT PERSONAL: Think of a time that Christ was "calling" you to something; such as, salvation, a particular ministry, or to reach out to a friend. How did you know He was calling?
       How did you respond?
       What is it about Jesus that attracts or impresses you most?
       What is it about Jesus that might make you willing to leave other things behind to follow Him?

From The Big Book on Small Groups, p. 237-8.
Studying Basics

The best way to study the scriptures in a group seems to be inductive Bible study. A person needs no special training to do this type of study, but there are a few basics steps to a successful study of God's word. Before you do anything pray and ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to truth.

First: Observation. You and your group has to find the facts relating to the situation of the Scripture. You start by seeking the answers to these questions: who, where, when, and what. For example, you need to know who was talking to whom? Or, where exactly did it happen? When in history? What happened? You become like an investigative reporter searching for answers.

Second: Interpretation. Stop being an uninvolved person, instead become a witness. Facts can be quite helpful, but they do not tell you everything. You need a story to understand what occurred. Start looking for the answer to "why?" Boil it down to what is important, then add life to it. It is the difference between a photo, and a family memory.

To come to a good interpretation you must do two things. The first is to find what the writer was trying to say to the people of their day. To do this you have to read the scriptures leading up to and after the section of study. You have to look at the conclusion others took, including how some Old Testament text are used in the NT.

The second is how does it apply to us today. The lessons of the past may need to be considered in modern terms. There are differences in the way people live, work, or transport themselves. There is one constant however. How can we relate this to living as God wants us to live?

Third: Application. What is your response to what the Bible has said? Once you understand the author's intent, then we must take a look at how it compares to us. Are there similarities with our attitudes, understanding, and circumstances with those that the writer was writing to? What is this saying to our lifestyle and beliefs? How should we respond?

YOUR ROLE IN LEADING THE BIBLE STUDY

In leading the study, you do want to stimulate learning and application but not to be the "know-it-all" for the group. First, as a leader you should know what you are studying. This means even seeking resources beyond what is given in the lesson. As you begin to know your study, plan your course of discussion. Here are a number of sources for good Bible study. A) a study Bible, such as the NIV Thompson Chain-Reference Bible. B) a concordance, C) a Bible dictionary, D) a Bible Commentary (The SDA Bible Commentary is good, but others may be used).

Second, be sure to do your study ahead of the group's meeting time, so you know what you are going to do. It is often hard to be ready ahead of time, but it is important. You will need time to prepare to answer questions for members of the
group. If you do not know the answers, even after preparing, admit it, and then seek to bring answers by the next meeting.

Third, direct the discussion so people feel they can express themselves. There does have to be some limits however. If your subject is about faith, don't get onto how one should decorate their house unless it relates to the subject. People want a leader who keeps the group moving in a right direction, yet allows them to share.

Fourth, ask open-ended questions. One of the quickest ways to end a discussion is a question that demands a yes or a no. Use those famous who, what, where, when, how, and why questions. The best question leads to further discussions of the subject you are studying.

Fifth, each person must be affirmed, so they are given value. There are many around us who are afraid to say anything for fear that someone will criticize. No one wants to be considered the fool or seem that their answer is wrong. One way to affirm a person is to paraphrase back to them what they have said. You do not have to say it in exactly the same way that they have said it.

PITFALLS

1. "Shared Ignorance" - The group approaches the Bible with no clues.
2. Taking texts out of contexts. This makes the Bible say what you want it to say.
3. "Riding the Hobby horse." This is keeping to the same idea and emphasizing it to the exclusion of others.
4. The expert: this is the person who puts others down because of their ignorance.
5. Making academic study the heart of what the group does. Often application is never made, only mental stimulation.
6. Using only one method of study. Book study, subject study, memorization, and other methods can be used.
7. An unprepared group leader.
8. Group members unprepared.

CARING AND SHARING
Session #3

Studying Basics

Before you do anything _______.
First: ____________________ . Seek the answers to these questions; who, where, when, and what.
Second: ____________________. You become a _________.
   A. What the ______ was _____ to say to the _______ of their day.
   B. How does it __________ to ________.
Third: ____________________. What is your ______ to what the Bible has said?

YOUR ROLE IN LEADING THE BIBLE STUDY

Our role is not to be the "____-____-_____", for the group.

1. As a ______ you should know what you are _______. Sources:
   A. __________ B. __________ C. __________
   D. ____________ for what you are going to do. Prepare ________ questions for group members. If you do not know the ________,
even after studying, ________.
2. ________ the discussion so people feel they can ________
3. ________ the discussion so people feel they can ________
4. ________ open-ended questions.
5. Each ________ must be ________ .

PITFALLS

1. "_________" - The group approaching the Bible with no clues.
2. Taking _______ out of _______. This is make the Bible say what you want it to say.
3. "Riding the _________." This is keep to the same ideas and emphasizing to the exclusion of others.
4. Giving group '_________' to make others feel inadequate.
5. Making _________ study the heart of what the ________ group does. Often application is never made, only ________
   stimulation.
6. Using _______ method of study. Book study, subject study, memorization, and other methods can be used.
   7. An _______ group leader.
   8. Group members unprepared.'

Bible Study #3  
Luke 5:27-32


Think about it: Imagine that the General Conference President or another respected church leader is coming to stay in your home. What would you do to prepare for his coming? What would you want him to think of you after he stays in your home?

Dig in: Luke 5:27 says, "Jesus saw a tax collector by the name of Levi." (Levi here is also called Matthew). Look up "tax collector" in a Bible dictionary. According to what you know about tax collectors, what type of person must Levi have been? What is Levi's response to Jesus' call, "Follow me"? Part of Levi's response was to throw a party for Jesus. Who attended? What do you think the atmosphere was like? Now look up "Pharisee" in the Bible dictionary. What did you find out that was new to you? What is the complaint of the Pharisees? Jesus responded, "I have not come to call the righteous." If you were a Pharisee, how might you feel when Jesus said this? How did the sinners feel about what Jesus said?

Make it personal: Who do you identify with most in this passage, Levi, the disciples, the tax collectors and sinners, or the Pharisees? In what ways have you or other Christians you know acted in your faith like the Pharisees? Why did Jesus extend his hands to the needy and ignore those who were outwardly righteous? What do you think Luke wants us to discover about Jesus?
PRAYER BASICS

"Let small companies assemble together in the evening and early morning to study the Bible for themselves. Let them have a season of prayer that they may be strengthened and enlightened and sanctified by the Holy Spirit." Prayer is communication - there is both being known and knowing - with God. In a group this can be very rewarding and yet can be a little scary. People see what your relationship with God is like.

There are three actions in prayer. The first is worship. The next lesson will look at worship in detail. As we have shared before, the basics of worship is ascribing that Jesus is worthy of praise, honor, and authority.

The second action is penitence. When we as sinners come in contact with a pure being, confession should be our response. On the cross Jesus forgave our sins, but it is essential that we confess our sins. This reestablishes our relationship with God. It may be hard for people to confess their sins in a group. It can be done in silence to start with, however it should be kept in general. Specific confession may not be best.

The third action is petition. Many would rather just jump into this action, and spend little time with the others, but the first place to start our petition is with ourselves. By this I mean that we need to pray that God will be with us. Every day, before we start our lives we should plead that the Lord will help us.

All around us are people who stand in need, and those we come in contact with must have our prayers. God will work in people’s lives, if we will pray for them, but it is only when we have prayed that God will change us, that we can move on to pray for others. Then there are special needs, such as our church programs. These problems need to have our prayers so God can lead to bring the problem to a conclusion.

WAYS TO PRAY

There is no one way to pray, but every time our group comes together prayer is needed. The group can spend time in having as many as want to, pray very short prayers, about a sentence long. This is called sentence prayer. In sentence prayer, the individual prays very short prayers as often as desired. As others pray, someone may be moved to agree with them and so they may pray several times during the session. Or, they can each take time to state a longer more conventional prayer. Another way is for one person to be chosen each week to pray for the group. You can think of as many ways to pray as there are people.

PRAYER BASICS

"Let small companies assemble together in the evening and early morning to study the Bible for themselves. Let them have a season of prayer that they may be strengthened and enlightened and sanctified by the Holy Spirit."¹

Prayer is ______________ - there is both being known and knowing - ____________.

1. ____________

2. ____________

3. ____________
   A. ____________
   B. ____________
   C. ____________

WAYS TO PRAY

What have we done in our group?

________________________________________

What do we want to try? ____________________

Bible Study
Lesson #4


**Think about it:** Read Luke 9:1-17. You are one of the twelve disciples. For about a year you have been with Jesus. You have seen the way that He healed and the way that He talked to people. Jesus calls you and the other disciples to go to the surrounding area to share the good news. He sends you out with nothing, but the clothes on your back. How would you feel about how Jesus prepared you for this outreach?

When you come back, a group joins you to hear this Jesus you preached about. It is late and Jesus turns to you to get a meal together for the thousands. How would you feel about feeding this group with no preparation?

**Dig In:** In Luke 9:3-5, What were the disciples told to do? Why? How do you surmise the disciples were able to have the confidence to share Jesus' great message? What happened when they returned from their trip? Why was it so important for Jesus to be alone with them when they came back? What was the difference in how Jesus saw the needs of the crowds and the way the disciples saw them? As they were picking up the leftovers, what do you think they were thinking about?

**Make it personal:** Jesus reinforced the training of the twelve by having them come back to a group. How can our group be the type of community that portrays things this same way? What can you share about how Jesus met your needs?
INTRODUCTION

The goal of our groups is to get people to the point where Mary was when she anointed his feet. Luke 7:36-38. Jesus had captured her heart and was receiving her praise. In doing this, Mary was not thinking about herself, but was setting Jesus as her goal. Mary learned what God is and what he does for her, this is the beginning of worship.

Mary's objective was to declare Jesus as worthy. Our objective in Caring and Sharing Groups is declaring Jesus worthy. We can worship God or show God is worthy through praise, thanksgiving and giving our lives.

PRAISE

In praise we realize that our meaning and joy comes from God. Psalms 138. This is seen in the three emotions David gives us. The first is anticipation. David is excited about what he has learned about God, he knows that it is not going to end with this experience, but will continue throughout his life. Expectation of God's work in our lives will excite our groups into deeper relationship.

Another emotion is appreciation. Have you ever watched someone who has been given a meal that they love. Each bite is savored. It is impossible to worship God without appreciation. He has done so many wonderful things for us, so as we consider what God is and what God does for us, we appreciate it. What does your group appreciate about God and what He is doing for you.

The last emotion is awe. God, even with all his power and creative abilities still loved us so much that He made salvation available to you and I. What can we do, but stand in awe of this magnificent being.

THANKSGIVING

What has God done for you? If you can answer this question you are ready for thanksgiving. The problem with us is that we forget so let's write down some things God has done for you. Writing down things of thanksgiving helps us to remember. In the group we can spend time thanking God for His actions towards us. We of all people have something to live for when we consider that God is preparing for us to live with Him forever.

OFFERING OUR LIVES

So far we are warming up for true worship. Romans 12:1. When we praise and give thanks it becomes personal and we begin to comprehend what worship is. "Worship is a personal expression, a deeply rooted response." The outcome is that we become fully given over to following Jesus.

Arnold, p.139.
In the group, you are going to be the model of worship for the group. Don't push it on the group, but model it. As you keep learning about God in Bible study, prayer, and sharing, worship will come. Try different ways to foster worship.
INTRODUCTION

Read Luke 7:36-38.
Mary _______ what _______ and what _______ for her, this
is the beginning of worship.
The Mary's objective was to declare _______ as _______.

PRAISE

Read Psalms 138.
1. ______________
2. ______________
3. ______________

THANKSGIVING

What has God done for you? _____________________________

___________________________

Thanksgiving helps us to ____________.

OFFERING OUR LIVES

Read Romans 12:1.
"Worship is a ___________ expression, a deeply rooted
__________.

Notes:________________________________________________

__________________________________________________

Arnold, p.139.
Bible Study
Lesson #5


Think about it: Two boys are arguing close by you. You can hear the one boy say, "My dad is the greatest dad in the world!" The other boy says, "No, he isn't! My dad is." What do you suppose the real issue in this fight is? Is it the dads or which boy is the best?
   It seems that both boys are protecting their territory.
   What did you do to protect your territory?
   Why do you think it is important to be so important?

Dig in: Read Luke 9:46-50. How are the disciples gauging importance?
   What is John's root concern in bringing up about the man driving out demons in Jesus name?
   Did the transfiguration or the healing of the boy with the spirit affect the disciples most in the argument of who is the "greatest"?

Make it personal: How does this passage tell us to be the greatest in the church, or in heaven? Is this problem present in your small group? Why?
   What can this teach us about ministering in small groups?
Caring and Sharing
Session #6

WHAT IS EVANGELISM?

The greatest pitfall with small groups is getting too comfortable with one another. Small groups and evangelism have one thing in common, MAKING DISCIPLES. Read Acts 2:46,47. The purpose of the groups that we form in our church is to have them grow, to add new people to our church!

"Evangelism is the conscious attempt, through word and deed, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others, so that they can be disciples of Christ."1 The place where you begin in this procedure of sharing the message is with the message itself.

THE MESSAGE

The place to start is to share what we know about Jesus Christ. Share how Jesus has, is, and will love you. This requires proofs that the Gospel is really working in your life. The first proof is that you have answers to the following questions. Are you in love with God? Do you have a relationship? The answers to these questions will show up in the way that you think and act.

The second proof is that you have the facility to love others. John 13:34, 36. Sin has caused us to break our relationships with one another, but the world needs to see that we can and do care for one another. One of our greatest failings is that we have often failed to show this. Perhaps part of the reason is that we don’t know one another, which is one of the reasons for the groups.

As we show our proofs, we will eventually have to share the objective form of the Gospel. 1. All of us are sinners. Rom. 3:9-12. 2. Jesus died to save sinners, and we need Him. John 3:16. 3. Now is the time to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. 2 Cor. 6:2. 4. The probing question - If you were to die today, would you be acceptable to be saved? 1 John 5:11-13.

When you start a group they will not always be ready to evangelize, which is why you pray for God to create an atmosphere for evangelism. You are the key to keeping it before the group, so that non-members will be invited to join. Keep an empty chair, it continually says to the group that we want someone to fill it. Then, have the group pray for someone to fill that chair.

MISSION

Mission and evangelism go hand and hand. Mission is evangelism beyond our community. When we study, worship, pray, and evangelize, we realize that there are so many more who need to hear the Gospel. We can:

Learn about areas of concern.
Pray for that area.

Arnold, p.163.
Provide support for the work of that area.
Get experience.
You may not be able to do all this right away, but after the second or third set of lessons, spend some time setting up a plan for mission.
WHAT IS EVANGELISM?

Small groups and evangelism have one thing in common, ______. Read Acts 2:46,47.

"Evangelism is the conscious attempt, through word and deed, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others, so that they can be disciples of Christ."

THE MESSAGE

What do we ______ about ______.

Proof #1 - Are you in ______ with God? Do you have a __________? This will show up in the way that you think and act.

Proof #2 - You have the ______ to love ______. John 13:34,35

Gospel Presentation

1. All of us are ________.
2. Jesus _____ to _____ sinners, and we need Him.
3. Now is the time to ______ Jesus as your Lord and Savior.
4. The probing question - If you were to die today, would you be acceptable to be saved?

Pray for God to ______ an atmosphere for evangelism.

Have an ______ chair.

MISSION

Mission is ______ beyond our ______ community.

What would be a good mission project?

________________________

Arnold, p.163.
Caring & Sharing
Lesson #6


Think about it: It was one of the most upsetting experience in your short life. It made you so mad that your parents would treat you in this manner. So in your anger you have decided to run away from home. How would you feel if you were running away? What would keep at home?

Dig in: Read Luke 15:11-32 a number of times. Each time look at it from the viewpoint of a different person, such as, the father, the run away boy, the boy who stayed home, or the "friends."

What are the different stages that the young son goes through as he leaves and then comes back?

What was the father doing while the son was gone? How did he really receive his son?

What struggle was the older brother facing as his brother came back home? Did he stay for the right reasons?

What is Jesus point in giving this parable? What does this story tell you about salvation?

Make it personal: Put yourself into this story. Which one of the characters is most like you? Why? Are you interested in what you can get now or down the road? Are you on your way home to the Father? Is there any change in comparison to what you were like one, five, or even ten years ago?
HOW DO I BEGIN A GROUP?

To start a group, first, you decide who will be part of the leadership of the group. Don James in his seminars suggests that you have a leader, assistant leader, and a host and/or hostess. The host or hostess does not have to have Caring and Sharing training. They will however need some instruction in their duties, which includes seating, refreshments, or other amenities for the group. This will automatically start you with 3-4 people or a small group. Usually, the home of one of these people will be used as the place where the group will meet. There are other places to meet, such as, a school, church, or so on, but the home is the most common.

Second, Pray that God will lead you to the people that need to be invited, then start a prospective list of those you want to be a part of this group. Pray before you invite them and pray after you invite them. For the invitation, you might want to use "Invitation Cards" or a phone call. Another way is through a church announcement. What ever method you use, you need to realize that only about a fourth to one half will respond.

Of course you need to plan in advance, what the group you are starting will be doing. Bible studies can be designed to meet the needs in what ever direction your group wants to go. Soon, we will choose "Huddle" leaders to help coordinate our groups and talk about what we want to do in the last class.

THE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Every group goes through growth, so I would like to share some of the stages of small groups. The first stage is called Dependence (Infant-parent). Everything is directed towards the leader, who is expected to establish the boundaries and give the participants guidance as to where they stand.

The next stage is called Resistance to Freedom (toddler). The leader is still in the lead, although the members of the group have become more involved. As members realize that they are free to do things there is some discomfort and anxiety aroused. The boundaries are tested, but not to far.

The middle stage is Adolescents (teenager). Now there is some struggle for the leadership in the group, which may include

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some hostility towards the leader. The directions of the leader may be questioned or ignored. As leaders, we must avoid the power struggle and accept any rejection and hostility.

Now the group is ready for the **Celebration & Independence stage (College)**. There is joy and laughter, and the leader is often ignored by the group. There is also a resistance to serious business. Be prepared to die to self, and accept this rejection. As a leader, at this point, you want to look for new leadership for the group.

Finally, the **Interdependence stage (College graduate)**. The freedom and responsibility are taken seriously and the members accept the leader. Discussion is more considerate, deep, and personal. The group can become creative and productive. This is the time when the leader is able to leave.

Some have added another stage which is called the **good-bye stage**. This may be a part of any of the previous stages. No group is the same. They may not go into each stage or follow a certain order. You as a leader need to understand what is going on and be prepared for what your group is doing.
HOW DO I BEGIN A GROUP?

First, you decide who will be part of the ______ of the group.
Suggestion: ___________ ___________ ___________ ___________.

Second, start a ___________ _____.
Use to invite: ___________ ___________ ___________ ___________

THE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

1. The first stage is called _______ (______) _______ _______.
Notes: ______________________________________________________

2. The next stage is called _______ _______ _______ _______.
Notes: ______________________________________________________

3. The middle stage is _______ (______).
Notes: ______________________________________________________

4. Now the group is ready for the _______ _______.
Notes: ______________________________________________________

5. Finally, the _______ stage (____ _______). 
Notes: ______________________________________________________

Possible 6th stage: _______.

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1Don James, Open Home Small Group Bible Studies, (Berrein Springs, MI: North American Division Evangelism Institute), p. 12.


Think About it: Read Luke 16:19-31. Consider the facts of this parable Jesus is telling. The city of Dallas has cleared out the shanty towns under the overpasses. Some of those living in there did not want to go to the shelters provided. One person chooses to build a shanty on your front lawn by the mailbox. How would you respond? What do you feel about people who live this way?

Dig In: Study this section of Scripture in a commentary And Christ Object Lessons, PP 260-271. Then write a question that requires more than a single word answer to:
1. Who ________________________________
2. Where ________________________________
3. When ________________________________
4. What ________________________________

Then, why was this parable told by Jesus?

Make it Personal: Choose a character you identify with in the parable, and tell how your attitude and/or situation is like that character's?

If the lack of knowledge is not the problem here, what is?

How do you feel talking about the "Judgement" with others? Do you feel that you are ready to face the Master?
WHAT DO YOU DO IN A MEETING?

There are as many ways to have a meeting as there are people. In the sixties and seventies, Serendipity was a radical way out ministry started by Lyman Coleman. Today it is being used as the established and successful model of small group actions by many people.

The Serendipity model has three parts. The first is called icebreakers. This is where the members share about themselves in a non-threatening way. This is basically using the "Quaker Questions, but in different subjects. At the first few meetings, this is very important and can be cut back a little as the group gets to know one another. Carl George calls this the Love stage. This is where we build the love of the group.

The second section is the Bible Study. In this stage the group tries to understand the Bible in its context. We are answering the who, what, where, and why of what the author is saying to us. This is not a threatening section to the class, yet it is needed to build the group. George calls this the Learning stage.

The last section is called Caring time. This is when the application is made from what was gleaned from the lesson in the study and prayer time. This is where the lesson becomes real to the here and now and we begin to see that we need to make changes. It ends with prayer. Carl George calls this the task.

Carl George adds a fourth - Maintenance. This is the normal actions of setting times and making announcements.

Each section lasts about thirty minutes. Remember: Be Flexible. Time in each section can be adjusted up or down as needed by the group. This process takes about an hour and a half to complete, but you may want or need to take two hours because of the nature of the people in your group. Be sure to always begin on time.

THE SEVEN "C"

1. **Covenant or Contract**: A shared understanding of what the group will do, and the means that will be used to achieve that purpose.
2. **Commitment**: The disciplines which the group is willing to adopt in order to accomplish its purpose.
3. **Caring**: The quality of life together in which members learn how to love each other and develop caring in all of life.
4. **Content**: The growing edge of the study and reflection centered in the Scriptures in order to know God and ourselves better.
5. **Communication**: The glue which binds all relationships

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*Developed by Roberta Hestense*
together, providing connection with God and each other.

6. **Crying, Conflict and Congruence**: Feelings are given to us by God, they do not need to be denied or despised.

7. **Jesus Christ**: Center of all groups.

**STYLE OF LEADERSHIP**

**Autocratic** - This is the person who controls the group. Nothing can happen without them saying it can happen. This style is unseemly for the small group setting.

**Authoritative** - This is the person who controls, yet gives other power to help in the decisions. There are defined plans and goals. At the beginning this is helpful, yet flexibility and understanding will be needed as the group matures.

**Democratic** - This person shares control with others. They believe in others as they are involved in the group. They provide for other leaders to grow and eventually evolve into new leaders. This is a good style for Bible study groups.

**Laissez-Faire** - Very little control is exerted by this person. The group will get very little done because there is drift and not as much caring as people need. This is not good for the group, for it allows an authoritative person to take over.¹

WHAT DO YOU DO IN A MEETING?

1. ______. This is where the members share about themselves in a non-threatening way. ______.

2. __________. This is trying to understand the Bible in its context. ______.

3. ______. This is when the application is made to the lesson gleaned from the study, and the prayer time. ______.

A fourth: ____________________.

Each section lasts about ______ minutes. Remember: Be ______

THE SEVEN "C":

1. ____________________: A shared understanding of what the group will do, and the means that will be used to achieve that purpose.

2. ____________________: The disciplines which the group is willing to adopt in order to accomplish its purpose.

3. __________: The quality of life together in which members learn how to love each other and develop caring in all of life.

4. ______: The growing edge of the study and reflection, usually centered in the Scriptures in order to know God and ourselves better.

5. ____________________: The glue which binds all relationships together, providing connection with God and each other.

6. ____________________: Feelings are given to us by God, they do not need to be denied or despised.

7. ____________________: Center of all groups.

STYLE OF LEADERSHIP:

1. ____________________ -

2. ____________________ -

3. ____________________ -

4. ____________________ -

____________________

1Developed by Roberta Hestense

Caring and Sharing
Bible Lesson #8


Dig In: Read Luke 19:28-48. Think about a worship time that was most meaningful to you. What made it so wonderful and touching to your heart? Is there ever a way to have that experience again in your life?

Dig In: Consider what it must have been like seeing all those people coming to Jerusalem. Why were the followers of Jesus so happy? Was it for the right reason?

Jesus was accosted by the Pharisees. He was told to make the people be quiet. Jesus told them that if the people were quiet the rocks would shout. What does Jesus answer imply?

Jesus reaction to coming to the hill top was different than that of the crowd. What were they expecting?

Think It Through: What would the reaction be if Jesus came to our town on the back of donkey?

How will you respond when Jesus comes again in the clouds?

How would reactions be like those of the crowd in Jesus day?

What can you do to be a true worshipper of Jesus?
Dealing with the Most Common Problem

There is never going to be a perfect group, because every group is made up of people who are sinners. This will always give you problems that will have to be dealt with. Yet if we remember that the goal is that we will grow closer to God, it will help. With this in mind, here are some of what you might face.

The most common problem that you will face will be the issue of the quiet person or the opposite, the talkative person. Both will become a problem for the group, because they effect the group process. When one is left out or one heard too much, it will distort our understanding of Christ. It is not bad to have one talk less or more, it is when we get to extremes.

First, we need to understand what causes this problem. People come to Caring & Sharing groups with certain skills in communication. However, in discipling, we are teaching all to share with each other. Some of the reason for inequities are as follows. A. This may be due to a lack of preparation. Those who are prepared talk and those who do not, listen. B. The questions used by the leader are too hard or easy. C. Often a person jumps in too quickly without considering others.

What you do to handle the quiet person, affects the talkative person, and visa versa. Some ways to handle them are: A. As a leader, ask them to read a Scripture text. B. Direct questions to them. C. Talk to those who are verbal and encourage them to wait out the silence. D. On application questions go around the circle.

To keep close to this problem, Keep the groups small. Four is a natural number for every one to talk, yet not so large that the shy person can not get a word in edgewise. You can handle up to five, but when a group grows to six divide up. You can meet together for the opening and closing prayer, then divide. This will allow people to grow closer.

The Crisis

The purpose of our groups is to grow in the stature of Jesus Christ. Eph. 4:29-5:2. As the "Caring & Sharing" group is growing, each person will grow with Christian love. Yet problems may arise in the life of members, personal, financial, or spiritual crises. If we love each other then we will be there for the those members.

It is a principle of Christianity that we can not do it all on our own; therefore the group should help those who are facing troubles, because every burden can be made easier with the help of others. Remember, God saves us as a people, and so we are to help one another. There is only one warning - watch out for the Sponge. The sponge is the person who has continual troubles and sucks all the empathy form the group. You will have to stop them from sucking the group dry.

Lastly, you are not trained to meet all problems. As a
Caring & Sharing
Session #9

Dealing with the Most Common Problem

_______ person vs. ________ person

In discipling, all are _____ in the process.

Areas of cause:
  a. Lack of __________
  b. __________: to hard or easy
  c. Someone ______ in

Leaders action:
  a. Have quiet _____ Scripture
  b. ______ questions
  c. ______ to verbal outside of group
  d. ______ questions go ______ the table

Make group over six _____ into _____ groups.

The Crisis

Eph. 4:29-5:2

If there is a ______ you can not ______ get _____.

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Covenant

Many problems can be taken care of by using a covenant. A covenant is an agreement between the members of the group giving the guidance and directions as to what the group can do. When your group gets started, the first meeting must have a covenant voted by the members.

There are required parts to a covenant. First is the purpose as to what the group hopes to accomplish. You can say that the purpose of your group is to study the word of God and join in fellowship. The purpose will be your guide to the direction of the group.

Second, is duration, time, and place. The duration normally is from six to twelve weeks. It is best to plan that the group stop for a while and can choose to start again. The day and time are basically what you all choose to have, but the meeting place should remain the same for the whole time the group meets.

There are other matters that may be helpful to the covenant. These can be stated by some key words, such as priority, participation, confidentiality, support, and empty chair.

Priority means that you are going to put the group meetings first. If this is always changing members may not show up. If there must be changes, they should be taken care of before the covenant is agreed to.

Participation means that everyone is encouraged to share. There are no "dumb questions" and every opinion is heard. We can accept that there will be differing opinions among us, but we will not allow these differences to keep us from drawing close to one another. We want to encourage respect of one another because Jesus died for each of us.

Confidentiality means that anything that is shared does not go beyond the group. This will allow people to share without fear of being exposed. This will be important as our groups go beyond the initial meetings. We must allow things to be shared and yet there will be times that too much information must be discouraged.

Support means that we will give permission to be called upon by others. This helps, because there are so many that have no one to turn to. We are encouraging people to help one another, but you will want to watch out for the person who over does on the support.

Empty Chair means that there is room for one more as long as they accept the covenant rules. Your group may want to set a time when others will not be allowed. Yet the important thing is that we want others to join us. If the group does not want to invite others, expect to hear from the pastor.
APPENDIX II

The following are the questionnaires used by the leaders and the small group to evaluate the training and the program.

CARING & SHARING

Evaluation

Please, take a few minutes to answer a few questions for me. It will help to improve the seminar the next time it is taught. Thank You!

1. Has the seminar helped you to be prepared for leading a small group? Y or N

2. What helped you the most? _____________________________

3. Is there a part that could be improved? _______________

4. Did the division into small groups of four help you? Y or N

5. Were the Bible studies helpful? Y or N

6. Did you get enough input into the group process? Y or N

7. Was the leader helpful in answering you questions? Y or N

8. Other Comments: ____________________________________

_____________________________________________________

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CARING & SHARING
Questionnaire

Take a few minutes to give some though to Caring & Sharing. Answer these questions, then fold the paper and hand it to your group leader. They will give it to Pastor Peterson.

1. Have you found the lessons:
   a. helpful.
   b. insightful.
   c. average.
   d. bad.
   e. __________.

2. I would like to study __________ in the future.

3. How would you rate your group leader(s)? (1-bad to 4-great). 1 2 3 4

4. Was your leader prepared to lead the group? Yes No

5. How would you rate how your group worked together? (1-not at all, 4-worked well). 1 2 3 4

6. Would you join another Caring & Sharing group? Yes No

7. Other suggestion:


Thank You for being a part of Caring & Sharing.
APPENDIX III

SOURCE MATERIALS

Here are a list of sources for small group materials. Many will be a help to start small-group ministry.

Serendipity/P.O. Box 1012/Littleton, CO 80160
Telephone:1-800-525-9563 (In CO (303) 798-1313.
This is one of the most complete sources of material. There are Bibles, Bible studies, and training for small groups. They have a good youth section.

Zondervan Publishing House/1415 Lake Drive, S.E./Grand Rapids, MI 49506.
They have printed the small group materials used by the Willow Creek Church.

SDA Sources
North American Division Soul Winning Institute/SDA Theological Seminary/Andrews University/Berrien Springs, MI 49104.
They have the material from the Oregon Conference and the James' material.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


________. "Followers of Christ Will Be Missionaries." *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 8, 1895, par. 5-7.


