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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING LAY MINISTRY THROUGH SMALL GROUPS
IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
CHURCHES IN KOREA

by

Gil Ho Choi

Adviser: Ricardo Norton

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: DEVELOPING LAY MINISTRY THROUGH SMALL GROUPS IN
THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCHES IN KOREA

Name of researcher: Gil Ho Choi

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Ricardo Norton, D.Min.

Date completed: June 2000

Problem

As churches continue to grow from small to large communities, they struggle to meet the need of a growing community. There is a need to involve more church members in the ministries of the congregation. The churches also need to assimilate the new church members. Increasing demands are placed upon the pastors of churches to meet the challenge.

Method

This study deals with a program designed for lay ministry through small groups. It consists of two main parts. The first considers the concepts of small-group lay

ministry in the theological, sociological framework of the local church. It includes an examination of related literature about small groups and reports that analyzes and gleans strategies from the churches, both in Korea and U.S.A., that have successfully run lay ministries through small groups.

The second part focuses on the practical application of the ministry in the local-church setting. A systematic small-group ministry program is designed on the basis of this research. It gives viable procedures and models for the effective integration and implementation of this ministry into local churches. It includes practical suggestions for planning, launching, and evaluating the program.

Conclusions

Small groups can be used to meet many key needs in the church: shepherding and caring for church members, assimilating newcomers and connecting them to the church, and developing lay leadership and empowering leaders for ministry.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
CHURCHES IN KOREA

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

by
Gil Ho Choi
June 2000

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Date approved

DEDICATION

Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him
who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Background

The motivation for this dissertation is my personal interest in small-group ministry that involves lay people more largely in church activities. Before coming to Andrews, I noticed the surging growth of other denominations in recent years. I also have found that their church growth has been largely the result of developing lay ministry and equipping them for church growth.

Despite this well-known key to success among other denominations in Korea, SDA churches in Korea have lagged behind in adopting and developing the concept of lay ministry. The observation that many SDA churches in Korea lack both understanding of lay ministry and any systematic training programs for lay leaders has led me to study the subject and to consider developing such a program myself.

As I have studied the subject of lay ministry, I am drawn to the realization that one of the most effective ways to develop lay ministry is through small groups within the

church. I believe that small groups provide opportunities for intimate fellowship and enable the church to effectively assimilate new members for church renewal. It is my conviction that small-group ministry creates strong community within the church by developing the members' spiritual gifts, equipping lay leaders, and helping new members find their place in the congregation.

This belief has motivated me to concentrate on this topic. Therefore, my hope is that this dissertation will encourage more church members to work together, thus enabling churches to be renewed. It is also my hope that this dissertation will provide a means by which churches may explore possibilities for the most profitable implementation of small-group ministries.

Statement of the Problem

The setting for this dissertation is the Korean Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. As the churches continue to grow from small to large communities, they struggle to meet the needs of growing communities. There is a need to involve more church members in the ministries of congregation. The church also needs to assimilate new church members into the church community. Increasing demands are placed upon the pastors of the churches to meet the

challenge. They face lack of cohesion in the church and are short of lay leaders.

Statement of the Task

The task of this dissertation is to design a program for introducing lay ministry through small groups to the local SDA. churches in Korea.

Justification for the Dissertation

1. Preliminary observation of Korean SDA churches and study of growing Korean churches show that the small group is one of the most effective ways to solve those problems.¹

2. A survey of local lay leaders shows that there is a high correlation between church growth and the presence of

¹Yonggi Cho, *Successful Home Cell Group* (South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge, 1981), 82. Cho describes his church as both the smallest and the largest in the world. The plan of small groups he developed there has brought about not only phenomenal growth, but also intimate fellowship and involvement of lay people. His congregation numbers over 500,000 members involved in more than 50,000 cell groups.

small groups in the church.¹ The majority of pastors long for ways to increase church growth.

3. A widespread interest in small-group ministry has taken place all over the SDA churches in Korea during the last two decades.

4. Despite this widespread interest in small-group ministry, the SDA churches in Korea seem to have exhibited a lack of understanding of small-group ministry and of any systematic training program in which to prepare pastors and lay persons to lead this ministry.

5. Small-group ministry, in order to maintain its direction and purpose, requires a firm foundation in biblical theology.

Description of the Dissertation Process

1. Most of the sources in this dissertation come from the James White Library at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

2. Research in current literature, such as books, periodicals, and dissertations, was done in order to glean

¹Monte Sahlin et al., "The Survey of Local Lay Leaders: Activities and Programs in 1989," *North American Division Church Information System Report 2*, January 1990. The survey was instructed by the North American Division on local Adventist churches across North America in 1989. See also Monte Sahlin, *Sharing Our Faith with Friends Without Losing Either* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1990), 153.

strategies and principles in the area of small-group ministry.

3. The study was made of churches, both in Korea and the U.S.A., that have successfully run lay ministries programs through small groups.

4. A systematic small-group program is offered on the basis of this research.

5. Source materials are included in the Appendix.

Expectations from This Dissertation

1. This dissertation will show pastors how to develop small groups in order to create a strong community within churches by developing church members' spiritual gifts, equipping lay leaders, and helping new members find their place in the congregation.

2. The small-group program will encourage church members to work together, thus enabling churches to be renewed.

3. This dissertation will help pastors to grasp the fundamental principles of discipleship building.

4. It can benefit pastors by showing how a larger number of church members can share the leadership workload.

5. It also provides a means by which churches may explore possibilities for the most profitable implementation of small-group ministries.

6. This dissertation can be used as a source book and guide for local congregations in Korea which consider the implementation of small-group ministries.

CHAPTER II

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR LAY MINISTRY

THROUGH SMALL GROUPS

Lay ministry through small groups requires a firm theological foundation in biblical theology in order to maintain direction and purpose. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the biblical understanding of this ministry as it involves both minister and lay people to establish the foundation for building small-group ministry in the local church.

The concepts of the "Priesthood of All Believers," "Body of Christ," "Spiritual Gifts," "Triune God as a Small Community," "Jethro's Principle," and "Jesus's Model" are the theological skeleton for lay ministry through small groups. These six rationales will be developed from Scripture and the writings of Ellen G. White and further supported from other theological literature.

The Concept of Laity in the Bible

Since small-group ministry is led by lay people, one must understand the concept of laity in the Bible. The Bible clearly shows that Christians, both clergy and laity, are called by God to a mutual ministry. However, the work of laity has not been clearly understood by the majority of believers. In many minds the laity is distinguished from those who by training and office are set apart as clergy.¹ This distinction creates two levels of believers—one higher and the other lower.

The purpose of this section is to discover the correct understanding of laity in the Bible.

The Priesthood of All Believers

The first discussion on the laity and its ministry is based on Exod 19:4-6.²

You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the world is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.

¹Ralph D. Bucy, *The New Laity between Church and World* (Waco, TX: Word, 1978), 14.

²All references to Scripture are from the Revised Standard Version (RSV), unless otherwise noted.

In the above passage, vs, 5 reads in other versions as follows: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people" (KJV). "Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples" (NRSV). The key words in vs, 5 are "my own possession," "a peculiar treasure," and as it is explained below, "the people of God."

The term employed for the people of God in other passages like Num 11:29; 16:4; Judg 5:11, 13; 1 Sam 2:24; 2 Sam 6:21, is *am* in Hebrew.¹ This word is parallel to the Latin adjective *laicus*, which means "belonging to the people" or "that which belongs to the people." Its Greek equivalent is *laikos*. In the Septuagint, *am* is translated *laos*, or people.²

The LXX translators rendered the Hebrew *am* by the Greek *laos* in order to specify the special relationship Israel had with God. But whenever non-Israelites are referred to, the Hebrew text uses the term *goyim*, which is

¹T. A. Wharton, "People of God," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 3:727.

²Francis Brown, ed., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (1907), s.v. "am."

translated into Greek as *ethne*, gentiles.¹ The Hebrew terms, *am* and *goyim*, differentiate Israelites from Gentiles, and lay a foundation for understanding the role of the laity according to the Scriptures.

Am tends to designate a specific people with a unique call from God. It further underlines a special relationship that exists between God and His people. It also shows that the Israelites, as a community, were God's people graciously chosen for a purpose. As a nation, Israel was chosen not to benefit itself, but to be in God's hand as an instrument. It was to be a kingdom of priests, standing between God and other nations, to represent God before the people and to speak to God on their behalf.

One thing worth mentioning about the laity and its function in the Old Testament is that the call to holiness and the ministry of serving as a kingdom of priests were not assigned to certain individuals. Rather the whole nation was to act as a mediator of God's grace to the nations of the earth. This mission was committed to every member of the kingdom of priests and not exclusively to any class.² All

¹H. Strathmann, "Laos in the New Testament," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), 4:50.

²Cyril Eastwood, *The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg 1963), 4.

persons, male and female, old and young, were expected to participate in the ministry of mediation.

The designation of Israel as God's people, *laos*, is transferred to the Christian church in the New Testament. To a large extent, the same description of the Old Testament believers describes the Christian church. The church as a whole, comprising both Jews and Gentiles, is the *laos* of God (2 Cor 6:14-16). The believers of the New Testament now function as the spiritual Israel of God (Gal 6:16). These believers see themselves not only as being in continuity with the OT people of God, but as in being the true succession of that people.¹ What had applied to the community of believers in the OT is now applied to the community of believers in the NT.

The idea of the New Testament priesthood is vividly presented in the first letter of Peter:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. . . . Once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy. (1 Pet 2:9-10)

In the above passage, the titles of honor that were given to God's people in the OT are now ascribed to Christians in the NT. These titles do not exclude gentile

¹Donald M. Lewis, *With Heart, Mind and Strength* (Langley, BC: Credo, 1990), 177.

believers. In Acts 15:14, it is recorded that God took from the gentiles a people, *ethnon laon*, for His name.

The task of priestly service is given to the *laos* in general and to its members. As in ancient Israel, in the new Israel the laity are those who belong to the people of God. For example, 1 Pet 2:5 says that all believers are a holy priesthood; in Rev 5:10, all Christians are called kings and priests, and in Rev 20:6, all will be priests of God and Christ.

The New Testament writers designated members of God's family as saints and holy ones. In this family, everybody is equal before God. There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, because they are all one in Christ (Gal 3:28). Therefore each member of the *laos* stands under God's call, and each is accountable for his or her response to that call.

All Christians are to present their bodies a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1) to be instruments for the salvation of others. The emphasis is placed on their calling and mission. In 2 Tim 1:9 and 2 Cor 5:18-19, Paul reminded believers of their holy calling and ministry. This includes loving each other, bearing one another's burdens (Gal 6:2), and being devoted to one another in love (Rom 12:10). On this basis church members are impelled to fulfill their priestly

responsibilities. This new priesthood allows the church to become a total force that is equipped to take the gospel to the whole world.

The Body of Christ

Another important concept of laity in the Scripture is associated with the body of Christ.¹ Paul repeatedly refers to local community as the body of Christ. Of the 142 times that the New Testament uses the word *soma*, 31 times it is used in connection with the church.² There is no doubt that the New Testament teaches that Christ's church is His spiritual body.

The church which is under consideration is not the physical building; rather it is a group of believers, not a denomination, sect, or association, but a spiritual body. "It is not an organization, but *koinonia*—a communion, a fellowship of one body and it includes all believers."³

¹Cor 10:16; 12:12-27; 6:5-17; Rom 12:4, 5.

²Sakae Kubo, *A Reader's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1973), 277.

³John MacArthur, Jr., *The Church the Body of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974), 15.

The Universal Church as the Body of Christ

Hans Kung points to the three fundamental structures of the church: "The Church As the People of God," "The Church As the Creation of the Spirit," and "The Church As the Body of Christ."¹

Paul leads the way in understanding the church as community through the use of the terms "in Christ" and "body of Christ."² 1 Cor 12 and Rom 12 that deal with the body of Christ are written in the context of the local church as a community. In Eph 4 the body of Christ refers to the universal church.³

The relationship between Christ the head and the church the body is central:

We get grown up in every respect as our relation to Him requires of us, and that relation is at once stated; He is the head, and we the body of this Head. The relation indicated is that the body of any head should correspond to its head.⁴

¹Hans Kung, *The Church* (Garden City, NY: Image, 1976), 147-340.

²Janus Robinson and Helmut Koester, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1976), 229.

³Norman C. Kraus, *The Authentic Witness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 72. See also Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 188, and Gorman, 54.

⁴R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Ephesians and Philippians*

A vital relationship must exist between the head and the body; the same is true between Christ and His people. "The head puts Christ in connection with the entire body as a unit, which includes 'all of us,' (vs. 13)."¹ It is very significant to understand that the church's growth has its origin and goal in Christ as the "Head."²

The Characteristics of the Body

A study of Eph 4:1-16 reveals that the body of Christ should be equipped and characterized by a special kind of unity. 1 Cor 12:12 points out that in order for the body to exist as such there must be a unity, a functioning together. So the essence of the body that functions in harmony is without doubt unity.

Too often the team motif in the church is missing. Many members live in isolation from the rest of the body of Christ. "As parts of a body animated by the breath of the same Spirit, they cannot perform their functions without being in living interrelationship."³ None of the members of

(Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1961), 544.

¹Ibid.

²Hans Jung, *The Church* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), 231.

³George Peck and John S. Hoffman, eds., *The Laity in Ministry: The Whole People of God for the Whole World* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1984), 113.

the body can ignore the truth that God can only dwell in us in the measure that we love each other.¹

Paul, in Eph 4:16, is emphatic when describing the interdependence between the members of the body. "We can no more disconnect ourselves from other members and remain healthy than we can disconnect ligaments from the bones or try to live without veins and arteries."² The word that Paul uses which is translated joints or ligaments is derived from a root meaning contact or touching, e.g., "contact with the supply."³ Through mutual contact, each member helps supply whatever is needed.

In order to be a church that fulfills its purpose in equipping its people, the interrelationship is mandatory among body parts. Whatever the activity, the member should play an interactive role and thus be part of a network of relationships. The concept of the church as the body of Christ can help church members to complement the body's task, strengthen the church's fellowship, and extend the church's ministry and outreach.

¹R. Paul Stevens, *Liberating the Laity: Equipping All Saints for Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985), 31.

²Ibid.

³Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980), 2:186.

Spiritual Gifts

In order to develop lay ministry, equipping for gift ministry is necessary. Equipping is the special function for helping members of the body of Christ to find and use their spiritual gifts for specific ministries.

There is renewed emphasis upon the study of spiritual gifts in recent years. Systematic theology throughout the centuries has included sections on "pneumatology," thus affirming the Holy Spirit's place in Christian thought. But rarely has such a widespread interest in a personal experience of the Holy Spirit in everyday life swept over the people of God to the degree we have been seeing over the last two decades.¹

"I do not want you to be ignorant" (of spiritual gifts) are the inspired words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor 12:1. The church in Corinth, to which Paul was writing, desperately needed instruction on spiritual gifts. But today, other churches also need to know about spiritual gifts. Despite a widespread renewal of interest in the Holy Spirit and His ministry in our day, many churches still remain ignorant about this tremendous God-given dynamic for

¹Peter C. Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Ontario, CA: Regal, 1994), 13.

church vitality and growth.¹ Ignorance of spiritual gifts may be the chief cause of retarded church growth today. It necessitates formulating a comprehensive theology for "spiritual gifts."

Views on Spiritual Gifts

Thomson and Elwell described spiritual gifts as "gifts of God enabling the Christian to perform service."² McRae defined spiritual gifts as a "divine endowment of a special ability for service upon a member of the body of Christ."³ According to Thayer, spiritual gifts are "extraordinary powers, distinguishing certain Christians and enabling them to serve the church of Christ, the reception of which is due to the power of divine grace operating in their souls by the Holy Spirit."⁴ Blanchard defines a spiritual gift as a "supernatural gift of grace which is measured and given out by God to each true Christian as a

¹Ibid., 24.

²J. G. Thomson & Elwell, "Spiritual Gifts," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. W. A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984), 1042.

³W. J. McRae, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 18.

⁴J. H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: American Books, 1889), 667.

stewardship for serving the church of Jesus Christ."¹

According to Naden, "spiritual gifts are specific abilities given to Christians by the Holy Spirit so we can serve others in nurture and/or outreach."²

Another commonality found among concepts of spiritual gifts is that spiritual gifts are not natural talents or personality traits. Gangel writes, "Theologically we can say that spiritual gifts work on the spiritual realm and natural talents in the natural realm."³ However some scholars argue that spiritual gifts coincide with natural talents, but this is a minority view among contemporary mainline Christians.

Stott writes, "Would it not be more in harmony with the God of the Bible, whose plans are eternal, to suppose that his spiritual gifts dovetail with his natural endowment?"⁴ Likewise Griffiths believes that "God has been sovereignly at work in our lives from the earliest

¹T. Blanchard, *A Practical Guide to Finding and Using Your Spiritual Gifts* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1983), 16.

²Roy C. Naden, *Your Spiritual Gifts: Making the Great Discovery* (Berrien Springs, MI: Instructional Product Development, 1989), 43.

³K. O. Gangel, *Unwrap Your Spiritual Gifts* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1983), 11.

⁴J. R. W. Stott, *Baptism and Fullness* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1976), 93.

beginnings. We see, therefore, both our initial genetic constitution and our subsequent spiritual endowments as sovereignly given and perfectly fitted together."¹

Blanchard believes the main difference between natural talents and spiritual gifts is that spiritual gifts come from a more pure motivation and that spiritual gifts are more effective than natural talent. He states that spiritual gifts ". . . may, in certain cases, seem similar to our natural talents. . . . However, the Scriptures clearly label a spiritual gift as a distinct, special present from the Holy Spirit upon which effective service in the church depends."²

Contemporary authors addressing the study of spiritual gifts have been unable to agree over a relation between natural talents and spiritual gifts. However, it seems to be reasonable to conclude that the gifts can be categorized into two groups, the miraculous gifts that are distinguished from natural talents and the natural gifts that are coincided with natural talents.³ The miraculous emphasize outward demonstrations which are clearly

¹M. Griffiths, *Grace-Gifts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 71.

²Blanchard, 16.

³This conclusion is by no means a majority view. It arises from the author's own individual position.

miraculous in nature while the natural are not so clearly miraculous.

Meaning of Spiritual Gifts

The Old Testament reveals no specific term for spiritual gifts. Paul is the one who develops the doctrine of spiritual gifts in the New Testament. The Greek terms used for spiritual gifts are *dorea*, *pneumatikos*, and *charisma*. The first word *dorea* denotes formal endowment. It carries some legal weight behind it, and if so, it could imply "state awards" or "bequests." *Dorea* derives from the verb *didomi* which means "to give." This word is always used for the gift of God, Christ to men/women, and implies God's grace.¹ *Pneumatikos* refers to the men/women who know God's saving work by virtue of the Spirit of God.²

Charisma comes from the verb *charizomai* which means to show favor or kindness to give freely, bestow graciously; in this sense it refers to that which is given by God.³ Two other words complement *charismata* in 1 Cor 12:4-6 to describe spiritual gifts. One is *diakoniai*, which means

¹Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapid, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 2:167.

²Ibid., 5:436.

³W. E. Vine, *The Expanded Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1984), 479.

service or ministries, and the other word is *energemata* which means workings. The term *charismata* implies the source of the gifts.

It is divine grace that becomes concrete. The term *diakoniai* denotes the way in which the gifts are to be used in the community. Blittlinger suggests that *diakonia* is not derived from *dia* + *konia* meaning "through the dust," but from *dia* and *enkoneo* which has the meaning of "to be in haste." Thus *diakonia* would have a connotation of "eager readiness to serve."¹ The other term *energemata* has the connotation of gifts bringing definite effects. Something has to actually happen; this is the goal of all gifts. So *energemata* expresses purpose.²

Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

The purpose of spiritual gifts is an aspect on which most theologians come to consensus. Eph 4:12 establishes that they were given to equip the church for ministry. This encompasses nurture inside the church as well as outreach.³ Kinghorn says, "God blesses us not so that we may become

¹Arnold Blittlinger, *Gifts and Graces: A Commentary on 1 Corinthians 12:14* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 20-21.

²Ibid.

³Naden, 42.

static or self-serving, but in order that we may become dynamically active in ministry to others."¹ Viewed in these perspectives the spiritual gifts never promote self-glorification.

Spiritual gifts, as seen in relation to the body of Christ, have various purposes. They are given so that the recipients can: (1) care for one another (1 Cor 12:25); (2) be equipped for nurturing the church and for outreach (Eph 4:12, 13); (3) promote "unity" or "oneness" among its members through "faith and knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph 4:13), involving love, acceptance, and forgiveness; (4) help the members to discern true and false doctrine (Eph 4:14); and (5) interrelate in a loving and truthful manner in order to produce spiritual growth (Eph 4:15).

In summary, the purpose of spiritual gifts is to facilitate ministry both in the church and in the community, to edify others and to help them be constructed into a spiritual house. This in turn brings unity and harmony as church members mature into the loving likeness of Jesus Christ. Thus the key to lay involvement for the pastor is the spiritual gift's theology.² Litter emphasizes:

¹Kinghorn, 29.

²Wagner, 116-226.

Where the pastor sees himself or herself in the role of recognizing the gifts of lay people, lay ministry will become a powerful force in the overall ministry of the church. Where these gifts are considered no longer valid for the church, lay ministry will suffer.¹

The Concept of Small Groups in the Bible

Small groups are reflective of the very nature of God and humanity. They are both a demand of creation and a need of human culture. Icenogle mentions that small-groups are the vehicle for humanity to carry out God's will in everyday life.² Humanity accomplishes much of its life in small-group gatherings. The people of God have affected human history through small-group gatherings and networks of many small groups together. Jesus changed human history through the process of forming an intentional small group of twelve persons.

Small groups have had a major influence on the growth of the church in recent years. They are an important place for lay ministry, community, and discipleship. Yet all too often small-group programming has taken place apart from consideration of its biblical underpinnings.

¹Thomas A. Litter, *Pastor's Role in Church Renewal and The Development of Lay Ministry Through Home Fellowship Groups*, D.Min. Dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1990 (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International), 54.

²Gareth W. Icenogle, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 13.

The purpose of this section is to develop biblical foundations for small group ministry.

The Triune God as a Small Community

At creation, God said, "Let us make man 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). These words pack the essential fact that humans are created "in God's image."

One attribute of His image that God instilled in human beings is "community." God is one, and yet God is a community of three Persons working in continual concert with one another. Cornelius says:

Christian believers can see some of the striking implications of social Trinity theory. First, the confession that we are created in the image of God begins to resonate with new overtones. In our fellowship and *koinonia*, in such homely endeavors as telling one another the truth or in doing such honest work as will help those in need—above all in that love which binds everything together in perfect harmony—we show not only that we have become members one of another, but also that we as restored community, we-in-the-plural, have become a remarkable image of God.¹

God's image portrays community. Humans, as His reflection, inherited the same characteristic. This community inherent in the Godhead has far-reaching implications when persons consider the character of God and

¹Plantinga Cornelius, "The Perfect Family," *Christianity Today*, March 4, 1988, 27.

thus the image of God passed on to persons. The unity of God is found to be in the singular character of that shared community. There is no unity without community. Such sharing within the Triune God reveals the solidarity, wholeness, and mutuality present in the Godhead. While each of the Persons in the Godhead is unique, they represent interrelationship par excellence. Moltmann says it this way:

The three divine persons are not there simply for themselves. They are there in that they are there for one another. They are persons in social relationship. The Father can be called Father only in relationship with the Son; the Son can be called Son in relationship with the Father. The Spirit is the breath of the one who speaks. The breath goes out from the Father in the eternal moment in which the Father speaks the Word, which in another relationship is called the Son. . . . Being-a-person means being in relationship.¹

The creation of humans was an act to move beyond individuality as the Three-in-One God formed us a communal fellowship. "From creation, humanity is seen not in singular form, but as the unity of two forms of human beings: man and woman."² The record of Adam from the beginning reflects God's design that we enjoy Him in relationship and that we know one another in relationship. It is humanity's destiny, built into every human creation reflective of the image of

¹Elizabeth Moltmann Wendel and Jurgen Moltmann, *Humanity in God* (New York: Pilgrim, 1983), 97.

²Julie A. Gorman, *Community That Is Christian: A Handbook on Small Groups* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993), 34.

God. Humans' relational need to know and be loved by others was etched into the very image of God within us. "The experience of unity comes from relating while differently separate. Community is never optional—it is a necessity for being what God designed us to be."¹

Jethro's Principle

Another model for small groups in the Bible is seen clearly in the story of Moses leading the children of Israel. With the Lord's help, Moses led more than 600,000 men out of Egypt. 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. Finally, capable leaders, God-fearing and honest, were selected to take care of the people as they were put in charge of 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 (Exod 18:17-23).

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

¹Gorman, 30.

the small-group level. Overburdened leaders will eventually burn out and lose their usefulness.¹

As the early church exploded into existence on the day of Pentecost, the church faced numerous problems. People were not being sufficiently serviced by the church leadership. In one case, this caused a certain group of women to become upset. The issue was brought to the apostles' attention. The problem of the Greek women was solved by choosing under-shepherds or deacons to take care of this subgroup's needs (Acts 6:1-7). This delegation freed the apostles from duties that would interfere with preaching and teaching of the word of God.

As a church grows today, the church must be divided into workable units, and leaders who fear God must lead reasonable-sized groups as designated to them.² 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.

¹Carl F. George, *Prepare Your Church for the Future* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, Baker, 1992), 41.

²Arnold, 23.

Jesus's Model

In Rom 8, Paul writes of the great actions of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to restore community among humans and between God and His creatures. The Father sent His Son to make connection with us and recreate the eternal bond of community on both vertical and horizontal levels.¹ When Jesus was about to be arrested, He prayed for His mission, His present followers, and those to come (John 17:6). Throughout this prayer, Jesus made references to the fact that He wanted us to be one as Jesus and the Father are one (John 17:17, 18, 18, 23). Unity with one another is how we show that we are like our Master (John 13:34, 35). Christ's character can be developed and demonstrated in the harmonious dependency, intimacy, and the open trust of a small group.²

Jesus also made it clear that He could do nothing without the Father, including every word and deed. Jesus further expressed that He was sending a Comforter. The Comforter was going to communicate Jesus' words (John 16:13, 14). This shows that each Person of the Godhead interacts with each other; thus a pattern of communal involvement was

¹Gorman, 24.

²Gorman, 42.

established for mankind to follow as they try to reflect the Trinity's image.

One reason for developing small groups is to better exhibit this image of God. This was not lost on the Early Church. As members were added they worshiped together in the temple and then got together in their homes (Acts 1:46, 5:12). The leading example of small-group community is found in Jesus' joining "the Twelve" together. According to Richard Peace, Jesus selected a "motley" group to be His disciples and apostles.¹ They comprised a combination of "clashing," "heterogeneous" and "diverse" cultural elements. John Mallison has argued that the diversity of the Twelve who found their union in Jesus was a "microcosm of the diversity of character of the church that was in the making. . . . The message of the first small group was that Christ does not overlook ordinary people."² In fact, Christ redeemed ordinary people in small-group communities. Jesus did not simply select the Twelve and develop them so that they could individually perform ministry. Most of His time

¹Gareth W. Icenogle, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry: An Integrational Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 207.

²Mallison John, *Growing Christians in Small Groups* (Sydney, Australia: Scripture Union, 1989), 3.

was spent in attempting to develop community among them.¹ Jesus sent them out in pairs, two by two, for only community can create other communities.²

Jesus's concern for community stems from His relationship to the Godhead and His concern for the restoration of the image of God in humanity.³ This communal unity, reflected 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.

**The Concept of Small Groups in the Writings
of Ellen G. White**

Ellen G. White strongly emphasizes that the forming of small groups should be carried out in the Seventh-day Adventist church. The counsel to form small groups in the church was repeated in many of her books and articles. She affirms that this was not a passing thought, but a major concern. Each of these references repeats that this idea was

¹Icenogle, 131.

²Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here?* (Houston, TX: Touch, 1977), 61.

³Icenogle, 258.

given to her by "One who could not err."⁴ Her most emphatic statement on small groups is:

The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to me by One who cannot err. If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers. If in one place there are only two or three who know the truth, let them form themselves into a band of workers. Let them keep their bond of union unbroken, pressing together in love and unity, encouraging one another to advance, and gaining courage and strength from the assistance of the others. . . . As they work and pray in Christ's name, their numbers will increase; for the Saviour says: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. Matt 18:19."²

She stresses that it would be good to divide the membership into smaller units and get the people involved, not only witnessing, but in all aspects of church life.³ When a church is built on small-group ministry, the congregation no longer needs to depend on a clergy person. As members care for themselves, the clergy is free to reach new people and raise up new churches. The small groups

¹Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1942), 72; idem, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 115; idem, *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*, August 12, 1902; idem, *Welfare Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1943), 107.

²Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1951), 7:21-22.

³Ibid.

provide a basis for ongoing nurture and care which is far superior to clergy care:

God's work is to be done in his way and his spirit. In various places small companies are to consecrate themselves to God, body, soul, and spirit; and laying hold of the throne of God by faith they are to work zealously, keeping their souls in the love of God. The vital current of his love will make itself felt, and will be recognized as from heaven in the good works of his people. Those little companies who know the truth, with one voice should bid their minister go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Each one should seek to do individual work for another. Not one who has tasted the goodness, the mercy, and the love of God, can be excused from working for the souls of others.¹

She also said, "The church should put away elaborate plans, in favor of emphasizing these groups, which would lead to the enhancement of the talents and abilities of church members."²

White foresaw the day when, because of persecution, the large church would no longer exist, and the only way that the church would be able to survive would be in small groups.³ During times of discouragement the members of such groups will help each other out. They will present one another in prayer so that they will be strengthened to

¹Ellen G. White, "Followers of Christ Will be Missionaries," *Review and Herald*, January 8, 1895, Paragraphs 5-7.

²Ibid.

³Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), 17:350.

follow Jesus more closely.¹ 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 heart of all with that of Jesus.²

Ellen G. White had a very balanced and comprehensive view of small groups. It included not only evangelism, but also meetings for Bible study and prayer. Like the New Testament church, Ellen White saw that real church exists in community, with Bible study and prayer being conducted in small groups.

Let small companies assemble in the evening, at noon, or in the early morning to study the Bible. Let them have a season of prayer, that they may be strengthened, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This work Christ wants to have done in the heart of every worker. If you yourselves will open the door to receive it, a great blessing will come to you. Angels of God will be in your assembly. You will feed upon the leaves of the tree of life.³

Small groups for Ellen White were not for the sake of having small groups. They were an instrumentality that

¹Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 115.

²Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), 12:240-241.

³White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 7:195.

brought Christians together for the reception of the Holy Spirit, which unleashed the power of heaven to win souls to Christ. Small groups were not restricted to the church.

According to her writings, small groups are a comprehensive plan that should be found in every branch of the work of the church. It is the basis upon which ministry is to be conducted. Small groups are not just a program of the church. They are the major organizing principle of the work of the church. To have a church operating without small groups was anathema to Ellen White, for the church was to be built on small groups.

Summary

This chapter has dealt with theological foundations for lay ministry through small groups by investigating the concepts of laity and small groups in the Bible and writings of Ellen G. White. Six models from the Bible and Writings of Ellen G. White were presented.

First, the concept of "Priesthood of All Believers" has shown that one distinctive characteristic about the laity and its function in the Old Testament is that the call to holiness and ministry of the priesthood was not given

¹Russel C. Burrill, *A Biblical and Adventist Historical Study of Small Groups as a Biblical Mission* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1996), 215.

merely to a few individuals or certain skilled persons among the Israelites.

The New Testament writers designated members of God's family as saints and holy people. In this family everybody is equal before God. All Christians are to present their bodies as a living sacrifice to be instruments for the salvation of others. The emphasis is put on their calling and mission. This new priesthood allows the church to become a total force that is equipped to take the gospel to the whole world.

Second, the concept of "The Body of Christ" has presented that the New Testament teaches that Christ's church is His spiritual body. A vital relationship exists between the head and the body; the same is true between Christ and His people. It is very significant to understand that the church's growth has its origin and goal in Christ as the "Head." It has also suggested that as parts of a body animated by the same Spirit, Christians cannot perform their functions without interrelationship. This concept strengthens the church's fellowship, and extends the church's ministry and witness.

Third, the concept of "Spiritual Gift" has affirmed that spiritual gifts are given freely, bestowed graciously by God. The purpose of spiritual gifts is to facilitate

ministry both in the church and in the community. This, in turn, brings unity and harmony as the members mature into the loving likeness of Jesus Christ.

Fourth, the concept of "Triune God as a Small Community" has shown that one attribute of the image that God instilled in humans is "community." God is one, and yet God is a community of three persons working in continual harmony with one another. The creation of humans was an act of moving beyond individuality. The Father sent His Son to make connection with us to recreate the eternal bond of community on both vertical and horizontal levels. It has also been shown that each Person of the Godhead interacted with each other; thus a pattern of communal involvement was established for mankind to follow as they reflected the Trinity's image. One of most basic reasons for having small groups is to better exhibit the image of God.

Fifth, "Jethro's Principle" has provided a leadership model for the larger community. As the church grows, leadership must be shared and authority delegated even to the small-group level. Then the pastor can keep doing what he or she was primarily called to do: pray and teach the people, and more effectively nurture them for Christ.

Sixth, "Jesus's Discipleship Model" has shown that the leading example of small-group community is found in Jesus's joining "the Twelve" together. Jesus selected the Twelve and developed them so that they could perform their ministry together. Most of His time was spent attempting to develop community among them. Jesus's concern for community stems out of His relationship within the Godhead and His desire for the restoration of the image of God in humanity.

The writings of Ellen G. White have strongly emphasized that the forming of small groups should be carried out in the SDA church. According to her writings, small groups are a comprehensive plan that should be found in every branch of the work of the church. She saw small groups doing among other things: building up the members and evangelizing the world.

Both the Scriptures and Ellen G. White highlight the advantages of lay ministry through 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 makes 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 trained, and their numbers increase, in the same manner that

Jesus trained the Twelve. Through intimate contact, the message and life of Jesus are passed from one person to another.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF SMALL GROUPS

The term "group" is difficult to define. Social psychologist Newcomb observed that "the term 'group' has achieved no standard meaning."¹ Today the most common working definition of a group involves two elements: it is a small number of individuals in interdependent role relations, and it has a set of values that regulate the behavior of members in matters of concern to the group.

A large number of experimental studies employ the definition developed by Bales:

A group is any number of persons engaged in a single face-to-face meeting or series of meetings in which each member receives some impression of each other member . . . as an individual person, even though it be only to recall that the other person was present.²

Various definitions are used by Christian researchers. Lawson says that "a cell is a small group with

¹T. N. Newcomb, "Social Psychological Theory: Integrating Individual and Social Approaches," in *Social Psychology at the Crossroads*, ed. J. H. Rohrer and M. Sherif (New York: Harper & Row, 1951), 37.

²R. F. Bales, *Interaction Process Analysis: A Method for the Study of Small Groups* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1950), 33.

an ideal size of 8 to 15 people who meet together on a regular basis for worship, Bible study, outreach, discipleship, and prayer."¹ According to McBride, "a small group in the church is a voluntary, intentional gathering of three to twelve people regularly meeting together with the shared goal of mutual Christian edification and fellowship."²

Hestenes describes a small group as "an intentional, face-to-face gathering of 3 to 12 people, in a regular time schedule with the common purpose of discovering and growing in the abundant life of Christ."³ According to Johnson, a small group is "an intentional, face-to-face gathering of 3 to 12 people, meeting on a regular schedule, with the common purpose of developing relationships, meeting felt needs of group members, growing spiritually, and laying plans to lead others to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour of their lives."⁴

These definitions show that the core values and elements of a small-group meeting is to develop and build

¹Gregory Lawson, "Small Groups in the Church," *Christian Educational Journal* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1993): 67.

²Neal F. McBride, *How to Lead Small Group Ministry* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1982), 24.

³Roberta Hestenes, *Using the Bible in Groups* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 9.

⁴Kurt W. Johnson, *Small Groups for the End Time* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1997), 75.

Christian community. Small groups in the local church produce multiple benefits. They can release the ministry of the laity, offer superior pastoral care, and better challenge people to be like Jesus Christ.

The purpose of this chapter is to emphasize three major benefits provided by small groups in the context of the local church: small groups (1) attract people, (2) supply people's basic needs, and (3) enhance the local church.

Small Groups Attract People

All people, at times, wish they were alone, off in a private world where no one can bother them. Yet most want to join with others in a group more often than they long for times of privacy. To provide a partial answer to the question, "Why do small groups attract people?" this section reviews four theoretical perspectives on this question by investigating relevant researches.

Psychodynamic Attraction

Freud was the first person to discuss psychodynamic theory. His theory and those of others with the same perspective argued that people join groups because membership satisfies basic biological and psychological

needs that would otherwise remain unfulfilled.¹ Two of Freud's interrelated notions are of most interest: identification and transference.² Freud suggested that an individual's emotional energy can be directed either toward themselves or toward other people. Although self-love tends to dominate the earliest stages of a person's life, children eventually learn to direct their expressions of love toward their parents through the process of identification.

In Freud's terms, "identification endeavors to model a person's own ego after the fashion of the one that has been taken a 'model.'"³ The need to be part of, to identify with, a group is thought to be born of parental bonding that leads to a sense of belonging and dependency upon others.

Another of Freud's concepts, transference, explains how the formation of the child's first group influences his or her later group behavior. During therapy, Freud often recognized that patients would sometimes accept the

¹Donelson R. Forsyth, *An Introduction to Group Dynamics* (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1983), 49.

²Concerning Freud's and Maslow's theories, I do not accept all the concepts that they present contrary to Christian principles and teachings. However I adopt some of their ideas applicable to small groups.

³S. Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (London: Hogarth, 1922), 63.

therapist as their ego ideals, allowing the latter to represent what their parents stood for when they were children. Freud believed that a similar type of transference is the key determinant of group formation, since individuals in groups tend to accept leaders as authority figures just as they previously perceived their parents.

This transference leads to identification with the leader who becomes the ego ideal for all the group members. The group members, recognizing their common ego idea, develop strong solidarity and cohesiveness through the process of identification. The group becomes a "number of individuals who have substituted one and the same objective for their ego ideal and have as a consequence identified themselves with one another in their ego."¹

In Freud's theory of group formation, groups are viewed as the means by which people can replace the original family group; group membership is an unconscious means of regaining the security of the family.² Thus, group leaders are subconsciously perceived as parent and group members as family. Reid mentions that the role of the group leader is

¹Ibid., 80.

²I. L. Janis, "Group Identification under Conditions of External Danger," *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 36 (1963): 227.

parallel in many ways to that of a good parent.¹ Icenogle emphasizes:

The faithful small group can become the new family of God's people wherever it meets together. Each group member needs to be valued as if a member of God's family. God needs to be valued as creator, parent and progenitor of each new family group. Each group member is a group treasure. The group should treat each of its members with honor and dignity. The group should encourage each member to become full, complete and functional members of its faith family.²

Sensitivity to the vulnerability, intricacy, and connectivity of each member is its spiritual and human agenda.³ Cho explains how small groups in his church work as a family system:

Each home cell group is like a family circle. Through these family circles people feel a sense of belonging, and they are kept in the church. On top of that, each cell leader watches over his or her little flock, just as a hen watches over her chicks. He is constantly caring for the needs of his flock. But at the same time, if one member of his cell group "plays hooky" from church, the following day the leader calls to find out if anything is wrong. If anything is, he can go and attend to it right away. Perhaps the person is ill or having some other problem that can be handled through prayer and ministry. Therefore, once a person comes into our church through home cell system, we are not likely

¹Clyde Reid, *Groups Alive-Church Alive* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 85.

²Gareth W. Icenogle, *Biblical Foundation for Small Group Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 53.

³Paul Hanson, *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 61.

to lose him. Someone is always watching out for him, caring for him, and helping him.¹

Others have attempted corrections, extensions, and improvement on Freud's original perspective. One well-known drive-motive theory is that of Maslow.² His categories of basic needs are physiological: safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. The love or belonging need most pertains to group life. The assumption underlying the recognition of this need is that people must be loved and, in turn, must express their love. Sharing one's life with others is important to most people.

People may react quickly to even the possibility that this need will be denied. People desire the approval and acceptance of their friends, their fellow workers, and many groups of people with whom they associate and with whom they tend to identify. People are thought to alter their behavior and even their standards in order to belong to and be accepted by their chosen groups.

Krech, Crutchfield, Livson, Willson, and Parducci postulated four principal motives that bridge our biological and social needs: survival, security, satisfaction, and

¹Cho., 67.

²Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50 (1943): 370-396.

stimulation.¹ Krech et al. inventory four areas pertinent to the human experience: those relating to the body, to the self, to the environment, and to others.

In this last area, the most important components are identifications with other people and groups; enjoying people's company; helping and understanding others; maintaining group membership, prestige, and status; being taken care of by others; conforming to group standards and values; and gaining power over others. These are the reasons why small groups attract people and what makes the implementation of small groups in the local church so beneficial.

Another popular extension of Freud's initial explanation is supplied by Schutz's Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO). He also traces the behavior of adults back to their earliest experiences as children in family groups. Schutz has postulated that inclusion, control, and affection are people's primary social needs, and the needs satisfied through group formation.²

¹David Krech, Richard C. Crutchfield, Norman Livson, Wm. A. Wilson, Jr., and Alan Parducci, *Elements of Psychology* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 435.

²William Schutz, *FIRO: A Three-Dimensional Theory of Interpersonal Behavior* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1958), 13.

First, the need for inclusion is a desire to find a sense of belonging and togetherness through interaction. Inclusion needs to involve one's own acceptance of others as friends and comrades as well as being accepted by other people. To describe this motivation, Schutz uses such terms as associate, mingle, communicate, belong, and join.¹

Second, an individual may join a group in order to satisfy the need for control over other people—that is, to establish and maintain a sense of leadership in the group through the organization and maintenance of the group's processes.

Third, Schutz suggests a need for emotional bonds that link group members. He labels this desire to establish and maintain emotional relations with others as the need for affection and describes it with words such as love, like, cohesiveness, friendship, and personal satisfaction. As with inclusion and control, affective needs include a desire to like others as well as a desire to be liked by other people.

Sociobiological Attraction

The sociobiological perspective is based on the supposition that people join groups to satisfy a

¹Ibid.

biologically rooted urge to affiliate. Like psychodynamic theorists, advocates of this perspective believe that joining together with others is basic to human nature; but unlike the psychodynamic theorists, these advocates emphasize the adaptive functions of this affiliative urge. The sociobiologist extends the Darwinian work on evolutionary, biological fitness to the behavior of animals in social situations.

The adaptive advantages of groups for some animals subject to predators are clear: better detection of danger, better defense, safety in numbers.

In addition, hunting, feeding, nurturing, and reproduction are facilitated by group effort.¹ Crook showed that joining together with other members of one's species is an expression of the evolutionary or culturally stabilized strategies of individual animals in order to enhance their reproductive success.²

In one study, students were paid to remain alone in a locked room. Of the five students individually tested, one lasted two hours. Three made it for two days, one of whom said, "Never again." Only one student made it for the course

¹Forsyth, 54.

²J. H. Crook, "The Evolutionary Ethology of Social Processes in Man," in *Group Cohesion*, ed. H. Kellerman (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1981), 88.

of the eight-day experiment.¹ In general, group living appears to offer significant survival advantages over individual living in a wide variety of species; thus joining together with others can be considered a highly adaptive social behavior. Leslie points out:

It is hard to remain Christian in an un-Christian society. The scattered church, in the sense of individual Christians bearing witness to their faith by their way of life in every day activity, needs the gathered church, the community of like-minded persons who gather together periodically for mutual support and encouragement. When the gathered church consists of groups small enough to provide quite personalized relationships, the basis for encouragement is very real.²

The Gospels have few facts about the disciples and the kind of life they lived; but they do show that they were in direct and intimate contact with Jesus. Jesus obviously spent many periods of sustained, intimate contact with His disciples. The scattered accounts in the Gospels of life shared give indications of the kind of intimacy that develops only out of close and sustained relationships. Trueblood reminds us of Jesus' method:

His chosen method was the formation of a redemptive society. He did not form an army, establish a headquarters or even write a book. All he did was to collect a few unpromising men, inspire them with sense

¹Stanley Schachter, *The Psychology of Affiliation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 1959), 9-10.

²Robert C. Leslie, *Sharing Groups in the Church* (New York: Abingdon, 1971), 188.

of his vocation and build their lives into an intensive fellowship of affection, worship and work.¹

The encouragement of one another not only gives support to group members; it supports the leaders of the group as well. Raines, who has written effectively of the transformation created in churches he has served by small study groups, testifies to the significance of small groups for himself personally: "If I were to go to another church, the first thing I would do is try to create such a group, for my own selfish need."²

It is clear that life is not good alone. Humans need each other. One needs people for love, reassurance, approval, a sense of reality, and, most critically, communication, even if it is simply a nonverbal presence.

Social Comparison Attraction

In the view of social comparison, people seek out others with whom they can appropriately compare themselves. It is a social reality test, a validating of their behaviors, attitudes, and belief systems.³ One affiliates to

¹Elton Trueblood, *Alternative to Futility* (New York: Harper, 1948), 29.

²Robert A. Raines, *New Life in the Church* (New York: Harper, 1961), 102.

³G. S. Sanders, "Social Comparison as a Basis for Evaluating Others," *Journal of Research in Personality* 16 (1982): 21-31.

gain and compare information. From the social-comparison perspective, people seek others, even in fearful situations, to trade information rather than because of basic instinct.

Festinger suggests that in many cases people seek out others because they require information about themselves and the environment, and this needed information is only available from other people.¹ Although in some instances physical reality provides an objective standard for the validation of personal opinions, beliefs, or attitudes, in other cases individuals must turn to social reality to test their validity.

Individuals compare themselves with others and will conclude that their beliefs, opinions, or attitudes are correct, valid, or proper if they correspond with the interpretations of others. Therefore, according to Festinger's viewpoint, people affiliate with others in order to gain information via the social-comparison process.²

Social scientists have long referred to humans as social animals. Social tendencies have been called gregariousness and companionship—that is, seeking others for help, encouragement, and sympathy. This urge toward

¹L. Festinger, "A Theory of Social Comparison Process," *Human Relations* 7 (1954): 117.

²L. Festinger. "Informal Social Communication," *Psychological Review* 57 (1950): 271-282.

sociability appears to be stronger in some people than in others. However, it does appear to affect all people, particularly in times of trouble or threat.

When one's beliefs are seriously threatened, one tends to seek out people of like mind as if to soften the hurt. It has also been theorized that some people socialize just for the sheer joy of it. Schachter said of affiliation: "Most of us have experienced occasional cravings to be with people, sometimes with good reason, frequently for no apparent reason: We seem simply to want to be in the physical presence of others."¹

Schachter also found that anxiety heightened this need for companionship.² Anxious people seek out other anxious people. Misery not only loves company, it loves miserable company. Affiliation apparently provides much of its own communication. Just being with other people who have similar problems seems to reduce tension, even when no verbal communication takes place.

Many times people themselves, apart from the issues, become important to one because they provide approval, support, and a way of reducing anxiety.

¹Schachter, 1.

²Ibid., 12.

Social Exchange Attraction

In the view of social exchange, people join groups because the rewards are higher and the costs lower than if they were to do things alone. Some rewards and goals can be realized only in groups. Brinberg asserted that the motivation for joining a given group is thought to be based on how valuable such a membership appears.¹

The value is determined by assessing rewards versus costs. It is a kind of economic model where one looks at cost, then estimates and compares it to projected profits. Some investment profits are realized only over considerable time; some personal investments in groups are equally complex. That one belongs to many groups at the same time and with varying commitments also complicates specific applications of social-exchange theory.

Because of the critical importance of the reward-to-cost balance, Kelly and Thibaut introduced two concepts—comparison level (CL) and comparison level for alternatives—to describe how this balance determines group formation. Comparison level is the standard by which the individual evaluates the desirability of group membership.

¹D. Brinberg and P. Castell, "A Resource Exchange Theory Approach to Interpersonal Interactions: A Test of Foa's Theory," *Journal of Social Psychology* 31 (1975): 245-53.

According to Thibaut and Kelly, groups that "fall above CL would be relatively satisfying and attractive to the member; those entailing outcomes that fall below CL would be relatively unsatisfying and unattractive."¹

Two special, member characteristics or rewards are competence and social attractiveness.² Competent people attract other people because they can help one become successful; other people can identify with them. Sociable, attractive people make one's joining more pleasant. One enjoys being with people who provide one with real or reflected status, position, and recognition.

Small groups in the church can fulfill people's social-exchange urge effectively. When a small-group meeting is full of life, and when people are happy and sharing their faith and witnessing to what the Lord has done in their lives, other people are drawn to them. Unbelievers become curious. They want to know why this little group of Christians is so joyful when all around them are so many troubles. Such groups become magnets in their neighborhoods. Small groups in the church give dysfunctional society a

¹H. H. Kelly and J. W. Thibaut, *Interpersonal Relations: A Theory of Interdependence* (New York: Wiley, 1978), 21.

²Raymond S. Ross, *Small Groups in Organizational Settings* (Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984), 29.

positive model for building healthy relationships, helping to strengthen the family and other interactions.¹

Small Groups Supply People's Basic Needs

The church, because of its nature and the Gospel it proclaims, stands in a unique position to minister to the individual needs of people. Unless church ministry has a direct relationship with the needs of people, it simply becomes busy work. Johnson provides a clear summary of what he sees as a basic need of people living in today's society. He says:

In our time we have been uprooted from our former homeland, adrift in a mobile and changing society. We are lonely in crowds who seem not to care, pushed to and fro by machines to serve and be served, until we too become mechanical and act like machines. We meet the other persons as strangers, but mostly by external contracts passing by or bouncing away as if we were rubber balls. We are hollow men and women who do not know the inner life of the other persons. And so we are estranged from them or used by them, we are empty within ourselves, lost souls for whom no one seems to care. The need has never been so urgent for someone to care. Humanity longs for a place of personal fellowship and belonging in an impersonal world. Humanity thirsts for a caring community in a world that can't take time to care.²

In defining ministry as responding to the need of people, this section deals with the human needs upon which

¹Jeffery Arnold, *The Big Book on Small Groups* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 18.

²Paul E. Johnson, "Where We Are Now in Pastoral Care," *Christian Advocate*, 23 September 1965, 7.

the church should center its ministry. There are basic needs which are shared in common by a vast majority of people. These basic needs can be most effectively dealt with through small groups in the local church.

The Need to "Be"

The need to "be" has to do with a person's sense of being in touch with the reality of himself or herself. Whole persons, or those who have a good sense of their "being," are those who are aware of their uniqueness and come to feel good about their uniqueness. Olsen emphasized the need to "be" and the importance of feeling a sense of value. He said: "Feelings of 'I am nobody; I am not O.K.; I am worthless' are expressions of bad news and unfulfilled human needs. But the gospel is good news, capable of touching man's deepest needs."¹

Jackson points out that the unstable society that we live in breeds instability in persons, homes, businesses, and communities.² This insecurity is affected by a society which is constantly on the move, continually adjusting to change, and breaking up old ties and dependable

¹Charles Olsen, *The Base Church* (Atlanta: Forum House, 1973), 36.

²Edgar Jackson, *How to Preach to People's Needs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1974), 57.

relationships. Uncertainty breeds confusion, confusion breeds insecurity, and insecurity breeds a dysfunctional sense of "being."

Swindoll mentions:

The neighborhood bar is possibly the best counterfeit there is to the fellowship Christ wants to give His church. It's an imitation, dispensing liquor instead of grace, escape rather than reality, but it is a permissive, accepting, and inclusive fellowship. It is unshockable. It is democratic. You can tell people secret and they usually don't tell others or even want to. The bar flourishes not because most people are alcoholics, but because God has put into the human heart the desire to know and be known, to love and be loved.¹

Pattison states that even though the secular social system has taken over many "doing functions" of the church, it cannot significantly provide "being functions."² He further states that the church can and should create the social system that produces a whole, holy person.³ Small groups in the local church can be one of the redemptive laboratories for the restoration of such a whole person.

Personality is built in relationships. This proposition has wide support both within the church and in

¹Charles R. Swindoll, *Dropping Your Guard* (Waco: Word, 1983), 128.

²Mansell E. Pattison, *Pastor and Parish: A System Approach* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 16.

³Ibid., 12.

the fields of psychology and education.¹ The small-group setting provides a place where people have close relationships that help them to develop a mature personality. Small groups create the sense of intimacy, openness in communication, and deep feelings of affection.² People gain stability and positive sense of themselves from the small-groups experience.

1 Cor 12 and 14 remind us that all parts of the body are needed. The same is true for spiritual gifts. No one person has all of the gifts. Each person's gifts are needed for the good of the Body. People need to respect the gifts of others and learn how their own gifts fit together for the good of the Body. Small groups can help members learn that not everyone in the group will have the same spiritual gifts. Part of the group's life together is affirming the different gifts that each one has. Through that process, people learn about gifts they do not have and see how these

¹Lewis J. Sherrill, *The Gift of Power* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 8; Reuel Howe, *Man's Need and God's Action* (Greenwich, CT: Seabury, 1953), 23; and Charles M. Shelton, *Adolescent Spirituality* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 152, 211.

²Leslie, 20.

gifts can help them to be stronger as a group when they work in unity.¹

The small-group setting sensitizes each person as to how important everyone is for the well-being of the group. When someone is missing, the group is not the same and not complete. The process of covenanting with the group helps each member see the importance of commitment and follow-up to the larger congregation. This concept can be lost when people join the larger group. Some might think they are just a "number." Arnold comments that "the small group reinforces the truth that no one is just a 'number'. . . . In the small group people can see how they are needed."²

Leslie, in his attempt to emphasize the importance of small groups, introduces a woman's experience which shows how a group experience helped her feel affirmed as a person. She describes it thus:

I believe that my group was my most successful class because it is education that is right for right now. In our group . . . I was able to affirm myself as a person with integrity and I became aware for the first time that I was loved. This awareness begins to free me from my defenses and leaves me energy to become aware of others. The awareness that I am loved frees me from the

¹C. Gratton Kemp, *Small Groups and Self Renewal* (New York: Seabury, 1971), 88.

²Dennis A. Aubey, *Developing Spiritual Gifts Through Small Group Ministry* (D.Min. diss., Fuller University, 1989; Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1991), 72.

continuous proving that I am lovable and leaves me with energy to love others.¹

The personal nature of the small group is especially appropriate in today's culture. Leslie affirms that small groups supply a person's need to be seen as an individual, to be recognized as a unique person, to be appreciated as a human being.² Reid also mentions that:

People everywhere are hungry for deep relationships. They need such relationships to give them a point of security and belonging in a world of rapid change and mass society. Small groups also can supply the deep needs of human beings for love and acceptance that are so impossible to find in a crowd of a hundred or a thousand. . . . Real fellowship is so rare and so precious that it is like dynamite in any human situation. Any group that find a way to the actual sharing of human lives will make a difference either for good or ill in the modern world.³

The Need to "Belong"

A critical part of the well-being of an individual is dependent on our social interchange. People long for a place of personal fellowship and belonging in a changing world. Joseph Pratt, an American pioneer of group therapy, noted the effect of social systems on physical health while he was treating tuberculosis patients. He found that their

¹Ibid., 26.

²Ibid.

³Clyde Reid, *Group Alive—Church Alive* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 16.

isolation, alienation, shame, and discouragement led to a poor response to treatment. He began to hold classes for the patients, their families, and friends. As soon as their social systems were reactivated, they began to show dramatic recovery responses.¹

Jubay commented on the need to belong by saying:

We live on persons. We all have the basic need to exist in and on the company of persons, and without such fellowship, we die a death more painful than physical death. It is the death of the person. . . . In a community of persons, one can feed his person. One may discover and fulfill his person in the dynamic meeting and creative dialogue which occurs in the genuine encounter with other persons.²

Pattison has found that various natural groups within communities rate high in serving belonging needs. He calls these "the intimate psychosocial kinship system."³ He has found that mental and physical well-being depends upon the integrity of this system. In his research, he has found that the normal person has about twenty or thirty people in his or her psychosocial systems. Psychotics have only about

¹E. Mansell Pattison, "Group Treatment Methods Suitable for Family Practice," *International Public Health Review* 2, No. 3 (1973): 247-265.

²Earl Jubay, *Search for Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1967), 30.

³Pattison, 16.

four to five people in their system. Here the interpersonal relationships are ambivalent and unreciprocal.¹

In a time when relationships in our modern culture are very tenuous and we find so many persons uprooted and transplanted into new areas, it is important that the church see its opportunity to assist people to establish healthy kinship systems. In this way, the church can provide an important ingredient in meeting the belonging needs of individuals within church communities.

According to Schaller, fellowship is the strongest of the inclusive factors that assimilate people into the church. He notes that "it is easier to become a member of congregation than it is to be accepted into the fellowship of that community of believers." Very often people feel that "they have been received into membership, but have never felt they have been accepted into the fellowship circle." They feel a sense of belonging when they find their way to the inner circle of church fellowship; in other words, when they overcome the syndrome of "us-them" or "we-they"—the excluding factors typical of local congregations.²

¹Ibid., 19.

²Lyle E. Schaller, *Assimilating New Members* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), 16, 19, 81-84.

Small-group fellowship helps to eliminate the feeling of being lost in the crowd experienced by some converts during the first months of their Christian life. Assimilation into the church may be easier when people move from the small-group fellowship than when they start alone.¹ "The warmth of real Christian relationship is better experienced in small groups. Here new converts immediately acquire a nucleus of friends which becomes a supportive anchor to hold them in the church."² Group fellowship also helps to bridge the gap "between the time they unite with the church and the time they gain a sense of safety and mutual contentment that they cannot find as isolated individuals."³

According to Schaller, "the larger the congregation, the more important these small groups are in the assimilation of new members."⁴ Therefore, it is evident that small groups in the local church are one of the best mediums for fulfilling people's need of belonging.

¹Ed T. Barlow, *Small Group Ministry* (Independence, MO: Herald, 1972), 24.

²Donald L. Bubna and Sara Ricketts, *Building People Through Caring Sharing Fellowship* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1983), 77.

³John L. Casteel, *Spiritual Renewal Through Personal Groups* (New York: American Management, 1957), 24.

⁴Schaller., 77.

The Need for "Self- Actualization"

It is important to satisfy one's individuals needs to become a person, to be one's real self. Belonging is also a crucial need within individuals. Through belonging persons feel accepted and can operate as an approved member of a social system. But a persons' needs do not stop there. Human beings desire to grow, improve, and become more capable.¹ This striving to fulfill oneself as a human being is the desire to actualize one's potential.

Maslow has developed a system that points out a hierarchy of motives which show how a person moves toward self-actualization.² Maslow's system outlines five levels of needs. Level one is the basic bodily need for food, sleep, stimulation, and activity. The second level has to do with safety needs. Once these basic needs have been met, people are ready to deal with the third level-love and the need of belonging.

The fourth level is the need for self esteem. At this level, people work on their needs for adequacy, worth, status, and self-respect. The final level, which can be only

¹Donald L. Weaver, "A Strategy for Sustaining Support and Concern Between Members in a Large Suburban Congregation" (D. Min. dissertation, Drew University, 1979), 64.

²Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review*, 50 (1943): 370-96.

dealt with after the other four levels have been satisfied, is self-actualization needs. This has to do with personal growth and the realization of potential.¹

Seifer and Clinbell point to the small group in the local church as carrying particular responsibility for helping persons to aim at a full release of their potential. They claim that the church can bring about a sense of direction and be the source of both poise and power available from no other human institution.²

They further comment that change in persons toward self-actualization must be studied and diagnosed for both personal actualization and social progress.³ Small-group ministry is one of the best ways the church can respond to the request. George mentions:

If there is future for a person's wholeness, it will be found in communities of support. . . . As you look around there is one institution on earth that has been charged with making God real to people. It is a Christian community, a church based on cells. Intimate

¹Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," in *Psychology and Effective Behavior*, ed. James Coleman, (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foreman, 1969), 167.

²Harvey Seifer and Howard Clinebell, Jr., *Personal Growth and Social Change* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 11.

³Ibid.

ministry in such small groups is able to help people be whole.¹

Otto states that a person's most exciting lifelong adventure is actualizing his or her potential; and the group environment is one of the best settings in which to achieve growth.² Here are several ways that small group members can be helped to meet their self-actualization need.

Perhaps some members in the small-group are gifted with musical or vocal talent. These members can be used in the congregation's choir or as soloists. Musical talent can be used in orchestras or for special concerts. Those who are especially gifted in prayer could serve in the worship service, and those who are blessed with spiritual testimony can use it for the encouragement of others.

As the group shares teaching and leadership functions, certain members will be recognized as good organizers, administrators, or teachers. Such members can be used in the larger congregation for committees, in the office of management, and as Sabbath school teachers. With an effective small group-ministry these gifts will be

¹Carl F. George, *Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership* (Mansfield, PA: Kingdom, 1997), 180.

²Herbert A. Otto, "New Light on the Human Potential," *Saturday Review*, 20 December 1969, 17.

discovered, nurtured, and shared with the larger congregation.

Those in the small group who have the gift of hospitality could be encouraged to help in the larger congregation's social ministries. They could also be used in the assimilation of new members, serving as sponsors.

Small Groups Enhance the Local Church

Many churches now recognize that in order to effectively carry out the various ministries of the church, one primary task of church pastors and church leaders is to equip lay people in the use of their gifts.

One of most effective ways to develop lay ministry is through small groups within the church. Once a healthy, thoroughly planned small-group ministry is implemented, the church can begin to enjoy many benefits. Among these are the discovery of spiritual gifts, the development of lay leadership, effective congregational care, worship, evangelism, and spiritual and numerical growth.¹

A small group which provides ministry to its members contributes to the overall care that churches should offer to their members. Small groups also can help in outreach; they can visit the sick, care for those in need, comfort the

¹Jeffery Arnold, *The Big Book on Small Groups* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 27-38.

bereaved, greet and usher at services, and do whatever else needs to be done in the church family. Churches that care for their members are healthy. The small groups, with their close relationships, can contribute to the health of the church by helping those in need.

This section shows how small groups enhance the local church by providing four main group qualities: (1) as a healing agent, (2) as a community of transformation, (3) as a maturational community, and (4) as a family system.

As a Healing Agent

Small groups provide an environment where mutual prayer and confession can unfold into forgiveness and healing. As group members are allowed space for the consideration and healing of their own inner pain and hurt, they become more open and aware of the inner pain and the hurt among group members. Wuellner says:

We are small communities within: our bodily and emotional selves, our gifts, our wounds, our memories, our power, our conscious selves, and our deep subconscious. We relate to the people around us the way we relate to inner selves. As we deepen our consent to the healing of our hurts and powers, recognizing, embracing, reconciling with our inner problems and powers, we become more real and whole to ourselves. Then we begin to be aware of other people as real, as real as ourselves.¹

¹Flora Slosson Wuellner, *Prayer, Fear and Our Powers: Finding Our Healing, Release and Growth in Christ* (Nashville: Upper Room, 1989), 110.

Receptivity to the healing presence of Christ in their own lives releases group members to be empowered healers within the group as well as outside the group. The wounded person who has received healing from Christ can become the wounded healer in the group. Nouwen comments:

It seems that no one can help anyone without becoming involved, without entering with his whole person into the painful situation, without taking the risk of becoming hurt, wounded, or even destroyed in the process. The beginning and the end of all Christian leadership is to give your life for others.¹

As group members are fed by Christ's love to love themselves, they are more free to demonstrate love to other members of the group, to treat each member with dignity and honor for their unique personhood and gifts. Wuellner also says:

Along with this growing awareness of the reality and beauty of our own identity comes a growing awareness of this identity of others. We begin to see other people not as just means to our ends, not just as annoying blocks or helping hands, not just as types, cases or categories, but as unique creations. We begin to see the hurts and wounds within them as wounded children. We begin to see their giftedness, their beauty, their loneliness and their longing to reach out to others. We sense within ourselves, as our own healing grows within us, a desire to reach out in compassion and communication.²

¹Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (New York: Image, 1972), 72.

²Flora S. Wuellner, *Prayer, Stress and Our Inner Wounds* (Nashville: Upper Room, 1985), 76.

The personal healing in God becomes the avenue for healing and reconciliation between persons of the group. If the members of the small group are able to confess their hurt and anger to one another, they will have more desire and courage to share pain with others outside of the group. The reconciling and healing movement of the small group can become the fountain from which group members can take wider risks to enter other forgiving and healing processes.

Peck asserts, "Healthy small groups can contribute to the healing of marriage and families. As people experience reconciliation and peacemaking behavior in a small group context, they will practice such patterns in the macrosystems of world corporations and governments."¹

The experience of the ministry of forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation within the small group leads to practices of compassion and relieves the pain of the world. Hanson mentions, "The true community of faith, by experiencing in its own life the creative redemptive presence of God, holds before the world an alternative vision, the vision of the whole humanity reconciled and

¹M. Scott Peck, *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), quoted in Gareth W. Icenogle, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 302.

living together in peace."¹ As the individual group member receives personal healing and is able to lead the group into healing, the group is then empowered to lead the wider society into healing.

The confession, forgiveness, and healing provided by small groups become the model and stimulus for confession, forgiveness, and healing in the wider world. Organization and institution can be opened to healing through the healing experience of individuals in small groups.² Mutual small-group prayer, confession, and healing can heal the world.

As a Community of Transformation

Spiritual transformation is a process of human community formed and reformed through divine presence. Group members are empowered to help one another to embrace God's transforming power. The spirit's power to effect human change is mediated through the ability of group members to see themselves through God's eyes and mind and to act on behalf of the Holy Spirit who is the community spirit.³

¹Paul Hanson, *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 503.

²Anne Wilson Schaef and Diane Fassel, *The Addictive Organization* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 47-48.

³Icenogle, 275-285.

Members help one another to see the truth of their being and relationships in light of Jesus' intimate relation with the Father.

As Jesus has ongoing intimacy with the Father, so the Spirit enables the disciples of Jesus in the church to share in His divine relationship and community. This participation with Jesus, in the communal life with the Father, enables Christian small groups to be a transforming family system for the forgiveness, healing, and maturity of group members.

Palmer notes that "small groups are both the nurturing and growth-promoting agent in the church and powerful means of change."¹ Many frustrated pastors have tried program after program to resurrect lethargic churches, often focusing on one particular aspect of the Christian life at a time, as if one area can be dealt with apart from others. Small groups provide a format where every area of the Christian life can be experienced in a loving community.²

¹John Palmer, "A Training Program for Leadership in Group Process Designed to Help Establish New Members in West Indies S.D.A. Churches" (D.Min. Project Report, Andrews University, 1978), 36-42.

²Arnold, 37.

Arnold lists the benefits of small groups in the church life:¹ (1) Small groups can attract and keep new church members; (2) Seekers find a caring group of people to support them as they begin the process of growth in Christ; (3) Unchurched people find a non-threatening community in which to test the claims of the Gospel; (4) Mature disciples find a place to belong and can exercise leadership because of the small groups. In these ways, the small groups can take members and visitors who are on the edge of the congregation and provide a place for them to develop deeper roots and grow while allowing more mature believers to grow to even deeper levels.

The church members' participation in small groups may yield several results: (1) Church members are cared for; (2) Many will have a better understanding of their gifts; (3) People will be able to exercise leadership; (4) Corporate worship will become more meaningful.

Karl Barth argued that "Jesus Christ is the community," but "the community is not Christ."² Every small-group meeting in the local church is enabled by the Spirit to participate in the existing relationship of Jesus with Abba

¹Ibid.

²Karl Barth, "The Growth of the Community," in *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, ed. Ray Anderson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 275.

God. The center and beckoning presence of the group is Jesus as He has an intimate relationship with the Father. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to enable the small-group community to be transformed, to become like Jesus, and to share more fully by being drawn into a divine arena to share the love of the Father.

As a Maturational Community

Human spiritual maturity is the fruit of healthy relationships with God and with the people of God. Such maturity is attained only through the process and experience of real people who care for one another in gatherings of two or more persons.¹ Spiritual growth is the process and product of being in community. Isolated individuals cannot grow spiritually. Persons grow when they are in relationship with God and with one another. Persons remain in spiritual infancy when they refuse to participate in the community.

Karl Barth pointed out that "the upbuilding of the community is the community of saints."² To be together with other Christians in small groups is to open oneself to being formed and transformed in Christ. The very act of

¹Icenogle, 280.

²Karl Barth, 258.

intentional gathering around Jesus is an act of courage and mutual growth.

A small group stimulates the development of spiritual maturity in several ways. Dibbert and Wichern recount six ways in which a small group stimulates the development of spiritual maturity.¹

First, it provides an environment conducive to the study, discussion, and application of Scripture. Most gatherings include a brief Bible study or devotional time during which group members are encouraged to discuss how biblical principles apply to the challenges of everyday living. Studies of learning reveal that "while people remember approximately 20 percent of what they hear, they remember up to 90 percent of what they say. . . . A group discussion provides more opportunity to discuss the biblical material, which increases the likelihood of remembering what is being examined."²

¹ Michael T. Dibbert and Frank B. Wichern, *Growth Groups: A Key to Christian Fellowship and Spiritual Maturity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985), 16-33. See also Clyde H. Reid, *Group Alive, Church Alive* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 17-18; Joseph A. Olmstead, *Small Groups Instructions: Theory and Practice* (Alexandria, VI: Human Resources Organization, 1974), 121; and Howard A. Synder, *The Problem of Wine Skins: Church Structures in a Technical Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 140-142.

² Roberta Hestenes, *Using the Bible in Groups* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 17.

"When we get a chance to talk about the Word, it becomes more part of us just by saying it. Application often happens automatically when members discuss whether the passage is relevant today and how they can apply it to their own lives."¹ The Bible helps people to grow in their faith and understanding, because they are able to apply it to their own lives through their sharing and the sharing of others.

Second, it encourages members to pray for one another, both during the meeting and throughout the week. The prayers that are prayed during the meetings become a catalyst for prayers offered during the week. Prayer both glorifies God and unifies the group.

Third, it provides a context for modeling and learning from the experiences of others. This enables people to incorporate attitudes and behaviors of others into their own lives.

Fourth, it provides a context in which believers can discover and utilize their spiritual gifts. God has given all believers spiritual gifts. Getting closely involved in the lives of other people provides many opportunities for using one's gifts.

¹Ibid.

Fifth, it provides meaningful opportunities for worship and praise. Many groups in the local church sing and praise God in prayer during meetings held in their homes.

Sixth, it helps group members to deal with spiritual issues on a regular basis. It is relatively easy to go unnoticed in a large church if a person's involvement is limited to attending worship services, but it is difficult to do so when one meets with the same group of people twice a month.

As a Family System

Families form the character, ethics, beliefs, and relational patterns of each human being.¹ Every human being grows up as a participant in several different family systems that affect one's personal and relational values in different ways. Friedman points out that every human being is rooted in families of origin, for better or for worse.²

Every new, small-group gathering is a new family system, a gathering of persons, each of whom brings his or her own family systems, values, attitudes, and patterns of group behavior into the new group. Group behavior tends to

¹Ross, 18-19.

²Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (New York: Guildford, 1985), 14-15.

be driven by the family behaviors of each group member, most strongly by primary group leaders. Leadership forms the primary values of each new family system.¹ As the leader lives and acts, so the group tends to imitate and react.

Each group takes on the patterns of its effective leaders over extended periods of time, both in areas of healing and of continuing hurt. According to Icenogle, every Christian group is caught between the beckoning of God as Abba Father, the new family parent, and the human leaders as temporal family parents.² Biblically, the human family system looks back to Adam and Eve as the originators of the human family. In the beginning, the human family system entered into relational chaos because of their self-determination to find their way without God. As a result, all have grown up in some form of abusive family system. All have been nurtured by the pervasive presence of God as parent and family. Humanity is in desperate need of a new family system to intervene. The new family system comes through Jesus.

In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught the twelve disciples to address God as "Our Father in heaven" (Matt

¹S. Freud, *Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego* (London: Hogarth, 1922), 80.

²Icenogle, 275.

6:9). This intentional turning of the Twelve and other disciples to God as Abba was an act of intervention to stop the negative patterns of their previous fathers and families of origin.¹

He formed a new family and a new model of life together. God initiated in Christ the transformation of the whole human family system in which God was seen as the transforming parent of the small-group family and Jesus as the transforming Brother. Cho describes his church's cell groups as follows:

There is much security for the members in the cell groups. Each one becomes a family member with the others of the group. Members of small groups have gone to clean the houses of women in their group who have fallen ill. They have visited others for healing and have brought tremendous encouragement. And when there is a death in the family of one of the members of the group, it is like a death in the cell group family; all of the members go to the aid of the family that experienced the loss, to mourn with them and to provide for their immediate needs.²

Cho's description on his cell groups shows emphatically how small groups work as new family systems. It is a wonderful communal life. Each one helps the other as a family. When a member belongs to a small group, one knows he or she is loved and cared for, and that is the kind of love many people never find in churches that do not have small groups.

¹Ibid., 277.

²Paul Yonggi Cho, *Successful Home Cell Group* (South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge, 1981), 53.

Summary

This chapter deals with the nature of small groups, emphasizing that small groups attract people, supply people's basic needs, and enhance the local church by investigating relevant research.

The first section notes the four attractions of small groups. First is psychodynamic attraction. This theory shows that people join groups because membership satisfies basic biological and psychological needs that would otherwise remain unfulfilled. According to Freud, identification and transference are people's basic biological psychological needs. Maslow lists safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization as people's basic needs.

Krech et al. have postulated that survival, security, satisfaction, and stimulation are people's basic biological and sociological needs. Schutz has suggested that inclusion, control, and affection are people's primary social needs. These scholars have shown that primary social and biological needs are satisfied through group formation.

The second section deals with sociobiological attraction. This perspective was based on the presupposition that people join groups to satisfy a biologically rooted urge to affiliate. Crook has shown that joining together with other members of one's species usually enhances their

reproductive success. It also has been shown that, in general, group living offers significant survival advantages over individual living in a wide variety of species. Joining together with others can thus be considered a highly adaptive social behavior.

The next section concerns social comparison attraction. It has been shown that in this view people seek out others to appropriately compare themselves with. Festinger has suggested that individuals compare themselves with others and will conclude that their own beliefs, opinions, or attitudes are correct, valid, or proper if they correspond with the interpretations of appropriate others.

Another aspect noted is social exchange attraction. This view has shown that people join groups because the rewards are higher and the costs lower than if they were to do things alone. Brinberg has asserted that the motivation for joining a given group is based on how valuable such a membership appears. It also has suggested that the value is determined by assessing rewards versus costs.

Two special member characteristics or rewards are competence and social attractiveness. Competent people attract people because they can help one become successful, and people can identify with them. Sociable, attractive people make one's joining more pleasant. Humans enjoy being

with people who provide them with real or reflected status, position, and recognition.

The second section deals with the concept that small groups supply people's basic needs. The church stands in a unique position to minister to the individual needs of people. In defining ministry as responding to the needs of people, this section shows that three human needs are basic. These are those upon which the church should center its ministry.

The first need is the need to "be." The need to "be" has to do with a person's sense of being in touch with the reality of himself or herself. Those who have a good sense of their "being" are those who are aware of their uniqueness. The personal nature of the small groups supplies people's need to be seen as an individual, to be recognized as a unique person, to be appreciated as a human being. Small groups also can supply the deep needs of human beings for love and acceptance that are so impossible to find in a crowd of a hundred or a thousand.

The second need is the need to "belong." A critical portion of the well-being of an individual is dependent on social interchange. People long for a place of personal fellowship and belonging in a changing world. Pattison has found that various natural groups within communities rate

high in serving belonging needs. He calls these "the intimate psycho-social kinship system." Mental and physical well-being depends upon the integrity of this system.

In a time when relationships in our modern culture are very tenuous and we find so many persons uprooted and transplanted into new areas, it is important that the church sees its opportunity to assist people to establish healthy kinship systems. In this way the church can provide an important ingredient in meeting the belonging needs of individuals within our communities. Small groups in the local church are one of the best mediums for fulfilling people's need of belonging.

The next need is the need for "self-actualization." It is important to satisfy an individual's need to become a person, to be one's real self. Belonging is also a crucial need within individuals. But a person's needs do not stop here. Human beings desire to grow, improve, and become more capable. This striving to fulfill oneself as a human being is the desire to actualize one's potential.

A person's most exciting lifelong adventure is actualizing his or her potential and the group environment is one of the best settings in which to achieve growth. Change in persons toward self-actualization must be studied and diagnosed for both personal actualization and social

progress. Small-groups ministry is one of the best ways the church can respond to the request.

The next section deals with the concept that small groups enhance the local church. Many churches now recognize that, in order to effectively carry out the various ministries of the church, a primary task of church pastors and church leaders is to equip lay people to use their gifts.

One of the most effective ways to develop lay ministry is through small groups within the church. Once a healthy, thoroughly planned, small-group ministry is implemented, the church can begin to enjoy many benefits. This section shows how small groups enhance the local church by focusing on four main characteristics.

First, the small group functions as a healing agent. Small groups provide an atmosphere where mutual prayer and confession can unfold into forgiveness and healing. As group members are allowed space for the consideration and healing of their own inner pain and hurt, they become more open and aware of the inner pain and the hurt between group members.

Receptivity to the healing presence of Christ in their own life releases group members to be empowered healers within the group as well as outside the group. As the individual group member receives personal healing and is

able to lead the group into healing, the group is empowered to lead the wider society into healing.

The confession, forgiveness, and healing of a small group become the model and stimulus for confession, forgiveness, and healing in the wider world. Mutual small-group prayer, confession, and healing can heal the world.

Second, the small group acts as a community of transformation. Spiritual transformation is a process of human community formed and reformed through the presence of the divine. Group members are empowered to help one another to embrace God's transforming power. Small groups are both the nurturing and growth-promoting agents in the church, providing a powerful means of change.

Third, the small group is a maturational community. Human spiritual maturity is the fruit of healthy relationships with God and with the people of God. Such maturity is attained through the process and experience of real people who care for one another in a gathering of two or more persons. Spiritual growth is the process and product of being in community. The small-group setting provides a context for modeling and learning from the experience of others. This enables people to incorporate attitudes and behaviors of others into their own lives.

Fourth, the small group functions as a family system. Families form the character, ethics, beliefs, and relational patterns of each human being. Every new, small-group gathering is a new family system, a gathering of persons each of whom brings his or her own family systems, values, and attitudes. Jesus formed a new family and new model of life together.

God initiated in Christ the transformation of the whole human family system in which God is seen as the transforming parent of the small-group family and Jesus as the transforming brother. There is much security for the members in the small groups. Each one becomes a family member with others of the group. When a member belongs to a small group, one knows he or she is loved and cared for, and that is the kind of love many people never find in churches that do not have small groups.

CHAPTER IV

LEADING SMALL GROUPS

The term most frequently found in both academic and general literature exploring reasons for success or failure in an organization is the term "leadership." Effective leadership is seen as the key ingredient for the success of any undertaking.

The leadership problem is common to both religious and non-religious organizations. Where the leaders are perceived to perform unsatisfactorily, the result has been to throw the organization into moments of anguish and turmoil.

The success or failure, the rise or fall of religious or secular groups is determined by the quality of leadership.¹ In studies by Lall and Lall,² the need for strong spiritual leadership in the church is seen as the

¹William O. Ondari, "The Practice of Leadership among Seventh-day Adventist Associations," *Journal of Adventist Thought in Africa* 1 (1997): 54.

²Bernard M. Lall, and Geeta Rani Lall, *New Dynamic Leadership* (Berrien Springs, MI: Geetanjali, 1994), 22-27.

highest priority. Good leadership is fundamental for small-group success.

This chapter has three purposes: (1) to analyze general aspects of leadership, (2) to identify critical components of the Christian leadership applicable to small groups, and (3) to present ways of achieving leadership development.

General Insights on Leadership

Over 5,000 studies have been done in the area of leadership, and the number continues to rise by several hundred each year.¹ But despite the best efforts of social scientists, biographers, and historians, an acceptable definition has been hard to pin down for a concept as complex as leadership. In many respects it is what people believe it to be.² Leadership is multidimensional and interacts with many factors.

According to Parker, values, goals, beliefs, and decision-making interact to influence leadership practices and behaviors.³ The essence of leadership, according to

¹I. S. Schantz, "Leadership and Servanthood," *Christ in the Classroom* 7 (1992): 3.

²L. L. Cunningham, "Leaders and Leadership: 1985 and Beyond," *Phi Delta Kappan* 67 (1985): 17.

³S. A. Parker, "So Now You're a School Leader—What Should You Do," *Phi Delta Kappan* 75 (1993): 230.

Obviously a person cannot be a leader without followers. Unless a leader has a group of people who adopt his or her ideology and support him or her in the planned activities, the leader becomes nothing more than a committee of one. Rather than being loyal, supportive team members, the followers then become critical spectators. This section presents various leadership styles and a democratic style which is the best for small-group leadership.

Styles of Leadership

A leadership style is what a leader does and says, and how he or she transacts the process of leadership. It is actually a leader's approach to the use of authority and participation in decision making, the way a leader carries out his or her functions and how he or she is perceived by those who are being led. Traditionally, there are four basic leadership styles: These are laissez-faire, bureaucratic, authoritarian, and democratic.

Laissez-Faire Leadership

Complete permissiveness is allowed in the laissez-faire style of leadership. The leader gives minimum direction and provides maximum freedom for group decisions. The group lacks direction because the leader does not help

in making decisions.¹ The leader establishes rapport by supplying various materials, or he or she contributes when asked to do so.

If this style functions for a long time, it easily may lead to anarchy. Actually, this style provides practically no leadership at all because everyone is allowed to run his or her own course.

Bureaucratic Leadership

The bureaucratic style of leadership is based on a system of rules to solve all problems. It is well organized. Many present-day complex organizations are bureaucratic. The leader is confined to looking for routine activities with guidelines established by the system itself. This tends to depersonalize the organization. Goldhammer proposes that bureaucratic leadership satisfies administrative priorities but does not speak to the critical questions which concern individuals at their own level.²

¹Rodney W. Napier and Matti K. Gershenfeld, *Groups: Theory and Experience* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), 160. See also Johnson, 118.

²Robert Goldhammer, *Clinical Supervision* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969), 75.

Authoritarian Leadership

The authoritarian leader derives authority more from his or her office than from personal attributes. The leader seeks little group participation in decision making. Followers become dependent on the leader, finding consolation in the thought that the leader will take adequate responsibility.

This style of leadership often uses fear and threat of punishment to motivate followers. The leader uses the authority of the position to force followers into action. Historians believe that this concentration of power in the leader originated from military campaigns. When victory was obtained, people were overwhelmed by the splendor of the accomplishment. This led to despotism and totalitarianism.¹ The leader who uses this style whether in government, industry, or in a Christian group seldom hesitates to ignore human feelings. He or she often gets consent from followers for decisions, but consent is gained by manipulation, concealment of the actual facts, or by the means of control and threat.

¹Ondari, 57.

Democratic Leadership

Democracy describes a form of leadership where decisions are made for the people through representation. It follows that the leader carries out the needs of the group and helps to define more sharply their aspirations. The emphasis is upon the group through participation of the collective.¹ The leader is assertive, but he or she values the abilities and opinions of others.

Policies become the group's decision. The leader in this kind of structure is there to assist, suggest, and allow adequate communication to flow so the group can come to a solution. This style of leadership creates a sense of security and belonging in the group. All policies, goals, and guidelines are a matter of group discussion, and the goal of the leader is to obtain group ownership and participation.²

It must be recognized that every style of leadership has its own problems or limitations. The democratic approach cannot handle every situation. The process can be slow, and the group can lack adequate communication or education that may lead to an impasse or a lingering stalemate.

¹Glan A. Bassett, *Management Style in Transition* (New York: American Management Association, 1966), 65.

²Johnson, 118.

This style can be effective when a balance is maintained between allowing group participation on the one hand and being able to make solo decisions when necessary to save time on the other hand. Perhaps the greatest weakness of the democratic style is that in times of crisis there may be delay in action.

Uniqueness of Christian Leadership

Certain concepts and traits characterize all leadership, but certain aspects set Christian leadership apart and make it unique. The chief characteristic of the Christian leader is submission to Christ—for submission is the key to power. Christ gave both authority and power to His disciples (Luke 9:1) and to the church; hence, it is essential to use leadership as Christ intended.

Servant Leadership

The most distinctive contribution from Christian literature has been the concept of servant leadership. In recent years, a number of Adventist authors have written in various journals and papers about servant leadership. The concept of servant leadership comes, first, from the examples of Christ who demonstrated the meaning of service in His dealing with all classes of society.

Second, servant leadership comes from the teachings of Jesus to His disciples regarding their treatment of others by showing them leadership had to do with serving the needs of others.

Bresse¹ maintains that servanthood is not servitude but voluntary action; it chooses to be of service to others. According to Musvosvi,² Jesus exemplified a new leadership style in the way He organized and trained His disciples for service. He shared His whole time and work with them and fully identified with them and their needs. The test of being a servant leader is whether he or she gives highest priority to meeting his own needs or the needs of other people.³

The mother of James and John came to Jesus with the request that her two sons be granted the top two positions in His kingdom. Jesus promised them instead the cup of personal sacrifice that accompanies all true leadership. Then He added: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise

¹F. Bresse, "Leadership vs. Lordship," *Ministry*, May 1992, 10-11.

²J. N. Musvosvi, "Servant Leader: The Model and the Method," *Ministry*, March 1991, 8-9.

³David J. Newman, "Servant Leadership and Robert K. Greenleaf," *Ministry*, March 1991, 14-15.

authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many" (Matt 20:25-28). While the world's model of leadership espouses love of power, Christ's model operates on the power of selfless love.

Robert K. Greenleaf once said that ruthless, self-serving, manipulative leadership never resulted in long-term success. He pointed out that "to be a lone chief atop a pyramid is abnormal and corrupting." With perception developed through experiments, he concluded that "when someone is moved atop a pyramid, that person no longer has colleagues, only subordinates." He urged leaders to adopt the attitude of servant.¹

The ideal leader is one who is first regarded by his or her followers as the greatest servant. Followers gladly give such leaders the authority to lead them because they see them as unselfish and other-oriented. Such leaders never feel threatened. They know that the power and authority of their position do not reside in outward tokens of greatness but in the ability to inspire their team.

¹Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (Ramsey, NY: Paulist, 1977), 63.

Christian leadership should be rooted in the servant-leader model Jesus set forth, a model in which the leader asks, "How can I help my people?" not, "What can my people do for me?" After a while this model yields the fruit of loving commitment and self-generating motivation.

Steward Leadership

In biblical times, the Greek word *Oikonomos* referred to a steward who was seen as the manager or foreman of a household or an estate. The few references to stewards in Scripture emphasize character traits like watchfulness (Luke 12:42), truthfulness (1 Cor 4:2), and accountability (1 Cor 4:1, 1 Cor 9:17, 1 Pet 4:10).

In the ancient world the steward/stewardess was regarded as an important person: he/she might be a slave, but he/she had full control over his/her master's tenants. In a stewardship, he/she knew that none of the things over which he/she had full control were his/hers; they all belonged to the master. The steward/stewardess was always answerable to the master and always served the interest of the master.

Another salient fact about *Oikonomos* was that he/she had to be reliable. The fact that he/she enjoyed so much independence and responsibility of necessity put him/her under obligation to use that freedom to promote the best

interests of the master. Whatever power the steward/stewardess may wield or prestige enjoyed, he/she still remains a steward, a servant of Christ.

Ellen G. White on Leadership Styles

Ellen G. White's views appear to warn against authoritarian leadership and to a strong support of democratic leadership. She writes: "In our several callings, there is to be mutual dependence on one another for assistance."¹ She admonished that no single person should have control over other people's minds.

The man who because he is president of a conference dares to take the responsibility of telling his fellow-workers what their duty is, is working out a wrong experience. The influence will be to destroy the God-given personality of men, and place them under human jurisdiction. Such management is laying a foundation for unbelief. . . . The men who instruct their fellow men to look to men for guidance, are really teaching them that when they go to the Lord for counsel and the direction of His Spirit regarding their duty, they must not follow that counsel without first going to certain men to know if this is what they must do. Thus a species of slavery is developed that will bring only weakness and inefficiency to the church of God.²

Despite this counsel, some leaders hesitate to share in decision making. They believe that since most groups are comprised of subordinates, their leaders have an overriding

¹Ellen G. White, Letter 10, 1903, Ellen G. White Research Center, Berrien Springs, MI.

²Ellen G. White, Letter 344, 1907, Ellen G. White Research Center, Berrien Springs, MI.

vote or veto power over the decision of many. Democratic control governs by majority rule while protecting minority rights. Ellen G. White emphatically states:

Let no one man feel that his gift alone is sufficient for the work of God. In order for the work to be built up strong and symmetrical, there is need for varied gifts and difference agencies, all under the Lord's direction. One worker left to labor alone is in danger of thinking that his talent is sufficient to make a complete whole.¹

Ellen G. White directs Adventism to follow democratic principles of decision making. Problems can be resolved by the majority rather than by the individual. The group can use a much wider range of resources and experience than an individual could provide. Such democracy could inspire increasing freedom, and authoritarian methods could disappear.

Chief Elements of Christian Leadership

Group leaders are key people for the success of small-group ministry. They need to understand what it takes to be leaders in order to be able to work with small groups and be willing to cultivate the qualities of good leadership. This section deals with some of those qualities of Christian leadership.

¹Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1946), 104.

Vision

Writers on leadership are unanimous in maintaining that vision must be present if leadership is to be good. Maxwell calls this the indispensable quality of leadership.¹ The personal ownership of a vision is the essence of leadership. Behind every great achievement is a dreamer of great dreams.² It is the act of seeing and grasping what can be done. Christian leaders need a vision of the purposes and power of God and of how, through faith, these can become realities today.

Vision is not something mystical. Rather it is the process of gathering and analyzing information and then combining ideas into a new framework. Without vision, even short-term planning becomes a risk. To envision the future there must be a consensus building about the present. Greenleaf speaks of the central ethic of leadership as foresight. He says the leader is at the same time historian, contemporary analyst, and prophet; the failure of the leader to foresee is seen as an ethical failure.³

¹Maxwell, 31.

²J. A. Stoot, *A Call to Christian Leadership* (London: Marshall's Paperbacks, 1984), 8.

³Greenleaf, 24. See also Calvin Miller, *The Empowered Leader* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 63.

Leaders without vision and the ability to clearly communicate it in the organization in which they serve are not prepared to lead. Goals and direction both are extended from vision. Without a clear direction or goal, the small groups will deteriorate and flounder. At best they will be prone to the direction of others within the groups. They may become nomadic, wandering in circles, emphasizing one thing today, focusing on another tomorrow, changing with the wind, being directionless.

Vision, as Barna says, is "a reflection of what God wants to accomplish through you to build His Kingdom. . . . Vision is never about maintaining the status quo. Vision is about stretching reality to extend beyond the existing state."¹ It comes not from the leader, but through the leader. God already has a vision for His church. Though He may be looking for a fresh understanding, commitment to, and expression of His vision, He is looking for leaders who will embrace His vision and implement it.

The leader who is in contact with God will be given a vision that is personal, powerful, and practical. It will be a vision that the majority of group members will accept. The vision itself must be clearly communicated, even while

¹George Barna, *The Power of Vision* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1972), 29.

the detailed parts of it may be negotiable. Between a vision and its implementation lies a task. Reaves, former president of Oakwood College, says, "With a vision there is always a task. A vision must be done to bring it to realization. .

. . With every vision and task, there is an assurance that our efforts, totally submitted to divine providence and direction, can and will become a reality.¹

Vision also produces sustaining power. It can help leaders endure through times. It can propel them forward to complete the task if they review the God-given vision frequently. Worthwhile vision is received in prayer and nurtured in the devotional life. It is communicated in an inspiring, personal manner. The person who receives and can clearly communicate God's vision is a leader people will follow. If people feel a sense of purpose and meaning arising from what they are called upon to do, they are likely to exert more energy doing it. Most people like to identify with success and to contribute toward success.²

Integrity

Integrity is one of the cardinal elements of leadership. Where there is integrity, the words and deeds

¹Benjamin Reaves, "With the Vision Comes the Task," *Oakwood*, Winter 1996, 8-9.

²Musvosvi, 9.

match up and the lips do not violate the heart. It involves being true to the core issues of the faith, a deep inner commitment to living life in the atmosphere of heaven while rubbing shoulders with the earthbound.

The integrity is "To your own self be true."

Nouwen writes:

The minister is called to recognize the sufferings of his time in his own heart and makes that recognition the standing point of his service. Whether he tries to enter into a dislocated world, relate to a convulsive generation, or speak to dying man, his service will not be perceived as authentic unless it comes from a heart wounded by the suffering about which he speak.¹

The members within a small group are hungering for authentic leadership: leadership that will be open and honest about the struggle in their own faith journey.² Christian integrity involves being true to God, His commands, and His calling. Christian integrity cannot be bought or sold. It is the result of the Holy Spirit residing in our lives. It comes as leaders submit to God's presence.

Out of personal integrity follows credibility. Without credibility the leader simply cannot lead small groups. Credibility accrues slowly, but spends fast.

¹Henry Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (New York: Doubleday, 1979), 16.

²James R. Newby, "Dynamic of Spiritual Leadership," *Ministry*, July 1994, 28.

A charismatic leader will draw people, but a leader of integrity will keep them.

Love

An effective leader will be a loving leader, one who loves God and the people in his or her group. The qualities of this love will not express themselves only in the vertical dimension of a personal relationship with God but will overflow to touch other humans. This love will be visible. It will be felt. It will disclose itself consistently as an undergirding quality of leadership behavior. Ellen G. White wrote:

When the heavenly principle of eternal love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, not merely because favors are received of them, but because love is the principle of action and modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and elevate, and ennobles the affections.¹

All leaders may not show love in the same way, but it will be seen. The love that the leaders have for God must not only burn within them, but consume the leader. It will create a warmth that draws people rather than a coldness that compels them to flee.

The trouble with coercive and manipulative leadership is that it breeds and strengthens resistance.

¹Ellen G. White, *The Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1940), 4:223.

Knox says, "You cannot antagonize and influence at the same time."¹ Ideally leaders first win the love and confidence of their group members, and then proceed to lead them in a new direction.

When Jesus detected self-centered tendencies among the disciples—"Who will be the greatest among us?"—He was concerned. But He did not scold and shame them. Rather, He loved them. Love includes acceptance. Acceptance is the art of communicating to people our recognition and appreciation of their value as persons quite apart from their performance. Those so accepted find invigorating release and freedom to grow as a person in the group.

Jesus's team members knew that they did not have to be successful to be accepted. When they made mistakes or failed, Jesus did not distance Himself from them or publicly castigate them. He freely and fully forgave them and preserved their self-respect. He continued to treat them as if they deserved His total love. In this way, Jesus communicated acceptance to them. Because of this, the disciples were willing to serve Him with love and loyalty at any cost.

¹Knox, quoted in B.C. Forbes, *The Forbes Scrapbook of Thoughts on the Business of Life* (New York: B. C. Forbes and Sons, 1950), 246.

Creating Positive Change

The leader is responsible for bringing about and managing change. The ultimate test of leadership is creating positive change. To continue to lead, the leader must be willing to change and be receptive to new ideas. Change is frightening, and most people resist change because of the fear of the unknown, of the changing of routines, and fear of failure. Managing change takes additional commitment and readiness to create a climate of change in the group. Max Depree says, "In the end it is important to remember that we cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are."¹

Leaders embrace change; they transform their organization with bold actions based on their abiding vision of the shape of how things need to be.² In handling sensitive issues or in proposing change, Christian leaders often have to accomplish their tasks one at a time. Woolman, an eighteenth-century Quaker, was concerned that some Quakers held slaves. To change this state of affairs, Woolman did not criticize the slaveholders. Rather, he traveled on horseback, visiting each slaveholder individually and sharing with each one his concern. It took

¹Max Depree, quoted in Maxwell, 64.

²Andrew S. Grove, "Taking the Hype out of Leadership," *Fortune*, February 1988, 107.

him thirty years to persuade all of them, but in the end not one Quaker owned a slave.¹ One can argue that passing laws would have brought about faster results. Maybe so, but not without pain and lingering bitterness.

Christian leaders are not overly concerned with quick results; rather, they want to generate self-perpetuating change. As Christian leaders, their task is to change people, not just to formulate and enforce rules. Creating change needs the ability to set priorities. The two most difficult things to do are to think and to think in order of importance. The major difference between the leader and the group members is the ability to think ahead and to prioritize responsibilities.

Christian leaders are people who make change. Leaders need to bear in mind the words of Ellen G. White: "There must be no fixed rules; our work is a progressive work, and there must be room left for methods to be improved upon."²

¹Joel N. Musvosvi, "Servant Leader: The Model and The Method," *Ministry*, March 1991, 10.

²Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 23 July 1985, 105.

Leadership Development

The preceding section discussed several significant elements of effective small-group leadership. Leaders need to keep those elements alive in their lives and ministries. This section presents (1) spiritual growth, (2) personality growth, and (3) leadership-skill growth as the primary ways to cultivate them.

Spiritual Growth

Those who are selected as small-group leaders should be taught and trained on how to improve their relationship with God. If leaders have a habit of communicating with God, they not only can have victory in their own lives, they also become His channel to distribute His power through their ministry.

Eims emphasizes that the leaders' source of power is God Himself, and only through fellowship with Him is the power operative and effective in their lives.

When God finds a person who will place as his first priority a life of intimate, personal, dynamic fellowship with Him, He directs His power, guidance, and wisdom into and through that person. God has found a man through whom He can change the world.¹

The Bible and church history give many examples of men of God who were used by God because of their intimate

¹Leroy Eims, *Be the Leader You Were Meant to Be* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1982), 19.

fellowship with Him. If the leader wants to be used and becomes an effective Christian, he/she should follow in the footsteps of such giants as Moses, David, Daniel, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Moody, Spurgeon, and so on. Clinton quotes an unknown author to describe the credentials of a Christian leader:

The primary credential of a spiritual leader is the revelation of God. His life is in such close communion with God that he can discern God's will. A leader with spiritual authority therefore is a man who spends much time in the presence of God.¹

Fellowship with God is most important for a leader's spiritual growth. In developing leadership in small groups, the pastor should set a program to guide those leaders to grow in their spiritual lives. Sanders says that although there are points of similarity between the characteristics of natural leadership and those of spiritual leadership, there are some dominant characteristics of spiritual leadership one should have. Sanders notes that the spiritual leader is "confident in God, knows men and God, seeks to find God's will, self-effacing, finds and follows God's method, delights to obey God, motivated by love for God and man, and God-dependent."²

¹Robert Clinton, *Leadership Emergence Patterns* (Altadena, CA: Barnabas Resources, 1984), 172.

²J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), 21.

The only way to get all these characteristics is through fellowship with Him, because all of them are the manifestation of a growing spiritual life.

Scripture

The leaders who wish to tap their power and know which way to go should read Scripture. If leaders are diligent in reading the Bible, they will gain power in their ministry and spiritual life will grow. They will grow in their ambition, vision, creativity, and faith, all of which they need for effective leadership. Anderson emphasizes that

the vision that belongs to leadership is. . . a gift one can develop through meditation on God's revealed Word and serious attention to the human situation and historical present. . . . The Bible is much more than a devotional handbook for managers of Christian organizations. It is a case book of promises that are meant to inform anyone who takes seriously the present event as creating the new agenda for mission of God's redemptive work in this world. . . . It must also be said, however, that managers of Christian organizations who wish to develop leadership gifts in the area of discerning the signs of God's promise can hardly afford to neglect serious meditation and study of the Bible as a casebook of God's promise.¹

Ironside points out that "those who go on with the Lord and grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ become increasingly like their Master."² If meditation on God's

¹Ray S. Anderson, *Minding God's Business* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 67

²H. A. Ironside, *Addresses on the Gospel of Luke* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1968), 89.

word is part of the leaders' fellowship with God, then through that fellowship leaders not only grow in their spiritual lives, but can become more effective.

Prayer

Jesus gives us the example of His prayer life (Luke 22:39). The Gospels are full of examples on how Jesus had fellowship with His father and this intimacy was the source of His powerful life and ministry. Postema speculates that "those times must have given Him 'awareness of what holds the world together, of His own identity, of His mission, and of His relationship with God.'"¹ Wesley says, "God does nothing but in answer to prayer,"² and he backed up his conviction by devoting two hours daily to that sacred exercise.

Paul Yonggi Cho, the senior pastor of the largest church in the world, realizes the urgency of personal fellowship with God, whereby he can gain spiritual strength and insight in ministering to the needs of his congregation. Therefore he spends three to five hours daily in fellowship

¹Don Postema, *Space for God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Bible Way, 1985), 15.

²E. M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer* (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.), 38, 77.

with God, and sometimes even longer.¹ Warren quotes Luther who once said: "I have so much to do today, that I must spend at least three hours in prayer."²

Dennis and Linn, in their book, *Healing of Memories*,³ tell how artists from the world over gathered to repair Michelangelo's Pieta when it was severely damaged by a hammer-wielding religious fanatic. When the sculptors arrived they did not begin immediately to repair the damaged masterpiece. Rather, they spent weeks looking at it, studying it, reading about Michelangelo and the work. Some spent months studying a single part, such as the hand, until the sculptors began to see the Pieta through the eyes of Michelangelo. When the artists finally began their tedious work of repair, they had studied so much about Michelangelo and his work that the strokes of repair belonged almost as much as to Michelangelo as to themselves.

The same experience in regard to God is the experience of those who saturate themselves in the Bible and prayer. They develop the mind of Christ. By deep fellowship

¹Paul Yonggi Cho, "The Pastor's Devotional Life," *Church Growth* 4; no. 1, (March 1985): 4.

²Richard Warren and William A. Shell, *12 Dynamic Bible Study Methods* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1985), 212.

³Dennis Linn and Matthew Linn, *Healing of Memories* (Paramus, NJ: Paulist, 1974), 11.

with Christ, Christian leaders are able to be in the mind of Christ, to think as He thinks, to act as He acts.

Spiritual Disciplines

Phillips mentions that "the spiritual discipline isolates us in the presence of God and produces the peace, trust and calm that can only be found in Him."¹ Disciplines of the spiritual life are the means by which we place ourselves where He can bless us. Foster makes it clear that "the grace of God is unearned and unearnable, but if we ever expect to grow in grace, we must pay the price of a consciously chosen course of action which involves both individual and group life."²

Spiritual growth is the purpose of the disciplines. One can practice the disciplines in several ways. The practical hints and suggestions on the following pages are given in the hope that they may be helpful in the actual practice of spiritual disciplines in the lives of small-group leaders.

1. Meditation. Christian meditation is the ability to hear God's voice and obey His word. Taylor declares,

¹Keith Phillips, *The Making of a Disciple* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1981), 121.

²Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1998), 8.

"Meditation is the duty of all."¹ Bonhoeffer, when asked why he mediated, replied, "Because I am a Christian."² In meditation, we are growing into what Thomas à Kempis calls "a familiar friendship with Jesus."³ We are sinking down into the light and life of Christ and becoming comfortable in that posture.

What happens in meditation is that we create the emotional and spiritual space which allows Christ to construct an inner sanctuary in the heart. It is possible to practice meditation at any time and under almost every circumstance. This work involves all of life. It is a twenty-four-hour-a-day job. However, leaders need to set aside specific times for contemplation; spending one to two hours alone in a lonely place is desirable.

2. Fasting. Fasting helps us keep our balance in life. Human cravings and desires are like rivers that tend to overflow their banks; fasting helps keep them in their proper channels. Asterius said that fasting ensured that the stomach would not make the body boil like a kettle to the

¹Jeremy Taylor, *The House of Understanding: Selections from the Writings of Jeremy Taylor*, ed. Margaret Gest (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1954), 106.

²Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Way to Freedom* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 57.

³Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1955), 85.

hindering of the soul.¹ Fasting can bring breakthroughs in the spiritual realm that never would happen in any other way.

Fasting is a means of God's grace and blessing that should not be neglected any longer. Wesley declares:

It was not merely by the light of reason . . . that the people of God have been, in all ages, directed to use fasting as a means: . . . but they have been... taught it of God Himself, by clear and open revelations of His will. . . Now, whatever reasons there were to quicken those of old, in the zealous and constant discharge of this duty, they are of equal force still to quicken us.²

3. Journaling. Journaling is a reflection on what we feel and think about God, others, self, or nature which we write down in our spiritual diary. Journaling is a very profitable exercise. It helps to remind us of our state in spiritual life. If we spend several days praying on the run, taking no focused time alone with God in prayer and Scripture reading, the journal would record the tale. Not in words, but in blank space.

The journal brings people face-to-face with their spiritual state. Like a mirror, journaling exposes people's poverty. But journaling also gives peoples the opportunity

¹David R. Smith, *Fasting: A Neglected Discipline* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1969), 39.

²John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions* (London: Epworth, 1971), 301.

to slow down and reflect upon God's marvelous workings in their day. Morris points out:

Many times, my journaling has taken the form of prayers. By providing a permanent record of my intimate communion with God, my journal has become a hollowed "place" to which I can return when I need assurance of God's activity in my life.¹

Loveless also comments that "journaling, or keeping a brief written account of experience and insights, is most helpful. I have learned that for me progress comes only when I make faithful journal entries."²

Personality Growth

Spiritual maturity should not be separated from the mature personality. Anyone who is in Christ must be changed not only in his or her position—from being a slave of sin to being a child of God—but he or she must also be renewed in personality. Small-group leaders should be aware of the growth of their personality, because it is one of the decisive factors for the success of small-group ministries, one of determining factors in leadership style.

¹Derek Morris, "Slowing Down to Pray," *Ministry*, November 1997, 13.

²William Loveless, "Christian Meditation," *Ministry*, January 1986, 10.

Simplicity

Simplicity is freedom. Simplicity brings joy and balance. Duplicity brings anxiety and fear. The preacher of Ecclesiastes observes that "God made man simple; man's complex problems are of his own devising" (Eccl 7:30, JB). Because we lack a divine Center, our need for security has led us into an insane attachment to things. We crave things we neither need nor enjoy. In speaking of simplicity, Francois Fenelon says:

When we are truly in this interior simplicity our whole appearance is franker, more natural. This true simplicity . . . makes us conscious of a certain openness, gentleness, innocence, gaiety, and serenity, which is charming when we see it near to and continually with pure eyes. O, how amiable this simplicity is! Who will give it to me? I leave all for this. It is the pearl of the Gospel.¹

Simplicity sets us free to receive the provision of God as a gift that is not ours to keep and can be freely shared with others. The inward reality of simplicity involves a life of joyful unconcern for possessions or their lack. It is an inward spirit of trust. Foster suggests ten controlling principles for the outward expression of simplicity.²

¹Francois Fenelon, quoted in Foster, 79.

²Ibid., 90-95.

First, buy things for their usefulness rather than for status. Cars should be bought for their utility, not their prestige. Wesley writes, "As . . . for apparel, I buy the most lasting and, in general, the plainest I can. I buy no furniture but what is necessary and cheap."¹

Second, reject anything that is producing an addiction in you. Addiction, by its very nature, is something that is beyond your control. Eliminate or cut down on the use of addictive, non-nutritional drinks and anything that can set over you.

Third, develop a habit of giving things away. If you find that you are becoming attached to some possession, consider giving it to someone who needs it.

Fourth, refuse to be propagandized by the custodians of modern gadgetry. Timesaving devices almost never save time.

Fifth, learn to enjoy things without owning them. Many things in life can be enjoyed without possessing.

Sixth, develop a deeper appreciation for creation. Get close to the earth. Walk whenever you can. Listen to the birds. Smell the flowers.

¹John Wesley, quoted in Foster, 90.

Seventh, look with a healthy skepticism at all "buy now, pay later" schemes. They are traps that only deepen your bondage.

Eight, obey Jesus' instruction about plain, honest speech. If you consent to do a task, do it. Avoid flattery and half-truths.

Ninth, reject anything that breeds the oppression of others.

Tenth, shun anything that distracts you from seeking first the kingdom of God. It is so easy to lose focus in the pursuit of legitimate, even good things. Job, position, status, family, friends, security—these and many more can all too quickly become the center of attention.

Service

True service comes from a deep relationship with God inside. It is indiscriminate in its ministry. It hears the command of Jesus to be the "servant of all" (Mark 9:35). Francis of Assisi notes in a letter, "Being the servant of all, I am bound to serve all and to administer the balm-bearing words of my Lord."¹

¹St. Francis of Assisi, *Selections from the Writings of St. Francis of Assisi* (Nashville: Upper Room, 1952), 25.

The Service of Charity. This service of charity guards the reputation of others. The apostle Paul taught us to "speak evil of no one" (Titus 3:2). Bernard warns that the spiteful tongue "strikes a deadly blow at charity in all who hear him speak and, so far as it can, destroy root and branch, not only in the immediate hearers but also in all others to whom the slander, flying from lip to lip, is afterward repeated."¹ Guarding the reputation of others is a deep and lasting service.

The Service of Listening. Bonhoeffer mentions that "the first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them. Just as love to God begins with listening to His Word, so the beginning of love for the brethren is learning to listen to them."² People do not need to be trained psychoanalysts to be trained listeners. The most important requirements are compassion and patience.

People do not need to have the correct answer. All they need is someone to listen. "Anyone who thinks that his time is too valuable to spend keeping quiet will eventually

¹Bernard of Clairvaux, *St. Bernard on the Song of Songs* (London: Mowbray, 1952), 70.

²Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper & Row, 1952), 97.

have no time for God and his brother, but only for himself and for his own follies."¹

The Service of Small Things. The great virtues and the small fidelities are like sugar and salt. Sugar may have a more exquisite taste, but its use is less frequent. Salt is found everywhere. The great virtues are a rare occurrence; the ministry of small things is a daily service. Large tasks require great sacrifice for a moment; small things require great sacrifice. Fenelon points out:

The small occasions . . . return every moment If we want to be faithful to these small things, nature never has time to breathe, and we must die to all our inclinations. We should a hundred times rather make some great sacrifices to God, however violent and painful, on condition that we be freed with liberty to follow our tastes and habits in every little detail.²

In the realm of the spirit we discover that the real issues are found in the tiny, insignificant corner of life. Bonhoeffer stresses:

The second service that one should perform for another in a Christian community is that of active helpfulness. This means, initially, simple assistance in trifling, external matters. There is a multitude of these things wherever people live together. Nobody is too good for the meanest service. One who worries about the loss of time that such petty, outward acts of helpfulness entail

¹Ibid., 98.

²Francois Fenelon, *Christian Perfection* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), 34.

is usually taking the importance of his own career too solemnly.¹

Leadership-Skills Growth

It is not enough to grow in spirituality and personality to be small-group leaders. Small-group leaders need to grow in leadership skills as well. They need to develop their skill in accomplishing their task. The essential skills of leadership, such as planning and achieving goals, communicating clearly and effectively, motivating and facilitating others, solving problems, delegating, and using methods can be renewed through training and experience. This section deals with three of those leadership skills.

Delegation of Authority

Leaders must learn the act of delegation if they are to be effective in their leadership.² The wise leader does not do things that can readily be assigned to others. Not only does this assignment help people to develop, but it

¹Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 99.

²Charles L. Hughes, *Key to Individual and Organizational Effectiveness* (New York: American Management, 1965), 101.

allows the leader to remain the creative person undominated by unnecessary detail.¹

A leader achieves results mainly through his/her people. However, before expecting the members to produce results, the leader must qualify them to produce results. No leader just grows. He/she delegates himself/herself into growth.² Carnegie once explained his formula for success as follows: "It is very simple. I am merely a man who knows how to enlist in his service better men than himself."³

Engstrom states that delegation offers substantial benefits to the entire organization because it helps to develop talents and latent abilities and those benefits, among others, are:

1. Improved understanding between levels.
It seldom fails that when persons on one level undertake the work on a higher level, understanding is increased because a deeper appreciation of the problems and demands is developed.
2. Improved leader-follower relationships.
The increased understanding develops rapport, which tends to strengthen the relationships. Leaders will learn to rely more on their subordinates, and these in turn will learn how they can be more helpful to their supervisors.

¹Arthur Merrihew Adams, *Effective Leadership for Today's Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 113.

²Ted Engstrom, *The Making of a Christian Leader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 162.

³Ibid.

3. Increased job satisfaction and morale.

Delegation is a powerful means for job satisfaction. It has been pretty well established that morale depends less on pay and benefits than on how people feel about their leaders and their work. When relationships are rewarding, people are more productive. This helps to develop a strong team spirit between departments that is vital for organizational efficiency.¹

Delegation relieves work pressure because holding a leadership position involves many frustrations and tensions. By delegating, the leader frees himself or herself for more important managerial and leadership functions.² This is possible because delegation grants the leader more time to develop other skills that increase his or her worth to the organization. Moreover, when he/she is ready to assume a more responsible position, replacement for the person will be available in his or her place.

For the subordinates, the process of delegation helps to produce challenge and interest since delegated authority gives them the chance to show what they can do, to test themselves in new situations, and to make mistakes and learn from them. It also stimulates subordinates to more effective work. If they find they are successful at tasks

¹Ibid.

²Alvin J. Lindgren, *Foundations for Purposeful Church Administration* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1965), 69-84.

outside their routine, their confidence and efforts to perform and to achieve increase.

Delegation further provides them with an opportunity to practice managerial skills, to understand the problems, to learn the point of view of the leader, and to get broader perspective of the whole picture. In short, it prepares them both to act more responsibly in their work and to accept a more responsible position in the future.¹

Effective delegation aids progress, builds morale, and inspires initiative. Effective delegation reinforces the pattern of shared leadership. The delegational process is not limited to a "pre-planned" or packaged program from the top; it includes freedom to exercise options, plans, and objectives by the members. In these delegational processes, the private thinking of all members is gathered, recognized, examined, clarified, pooled, and reinstated as the thinking of the corporate congregation.²

Along with delegation of responsibility, it is imperative that this responsibility be clarified, because it is almost impossible for a person to be responsible in an assigned responsibility when he or she does not fully

¹Ibid.

²Richard A. Morris, "It's Time to Do Less for Your Church Member," *Ministry*, January 1982, 4-5.

understand the nature and scope of the responsibility. Questions are often asked: "What should I do?" or "What is my role?"¹

Clarification of responsibility should include (1) explicit and simple definitions of the nature of the job and what is expected, (2) a designation of the nature of the scope of the responsibility which includes limitations of role function or territorial sovereignty necessary to avoid overlapping of function with other components within the same organization,² and (3) a description of relationships with other components.

Goal Setting

In the exercise of leadership, it is essential for leaders to set goals. High productivity cannot be achieved without setting goals. Goals are vital to the life of a church and small groups. Typical small-group activities include study, sharing, prayer, and mission. Other possibilities include personal growth and celebration.

"Our goal is to provide opportunities for nurture and growth of all members, so that as a sense of community

¹James J. Cribbin, *Effective Managerial Leadership* (New York: American Management, 1972), 32.

²Louis A. Allen, *The Management of Profession* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 36.

is developed and expressed, we may live out Christ in our lives." Specific, attainable goals include:

1. To provide opportunities for members to discover and learn to express their gifts
2. To provide opportunities for members to share the joys and frustrations of daily life in an atmosphere of mutual support and care.
3. To provide opportunities for study to increase knowledge of Christian life and service.
4. To experience nurture and support in order to express our faith in Christ in mission to those beyond the church
5. To provide opportunities to experience the power of God in our lives by praying for one another.

According to Dudley, goals for the church are important mainly for the clarity that they provide.¹ Goals provide clarity of purpose, a sense of progress, and measurable standard for evaluation. They offer guidelines for the allocation of resources and a standard of accountability for the organizational groups that make up the life of the church.²

¹Carl S. Dudley, *Making the Small Church Effective* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), 131.

²Jim E. Mamanua, "The Development and Implementation of a Training Program for Local Church Officers Designed to Clarify Leadership Roles and Teach the Concept of a Servant Leader" (D.Min. dissertation, Andrews University, 1984), 61.

In the process of formulating accomplishable and measurable goals, the following basic steps suggested by Engstrom and Dayton are helpful.

1. Bring together key people who can lead others. Ask them to start dreaming and thinking with you about what your organization should have accomplished in five years.
2. Bring in other people early in the process. Remember the principle of goal ownership: "Good goals are my goals, and bad goals are your goals."
3. Prioritize the many good ideas you'll get and decide on a few over-arching purposes and some specific major goals for each year.
4. Analyze what steps would be needed to accomplish these goals.
5. Estimate the cost in people, dollars, and facilities.
6. Assign specific people to the task.
7. Communicate your goals in every way possible. Preach them, measure them, talk about them.
8. Remember you are in a process. Each year the situation will change. New goals will have to be set.¹

In the process of setting goals, it is essential that goals should be specific or operational, and not dwell on "generalities." According to Schaller, an operational goal is a specific goal or objective that defines a particular target in precise terms, that is feasible in terms of available resources and can be related to a

¹Ted W. Engstrom and Edward R. Dayton, *The Art of Management for Christian Living* (Waco, TX: Word, 1976), 18.

timeline or schedule. Operational goals are believable, conceivable, achievable, and measurable.¹

In the process of setting goals, one should recognize the value of reporting to the members the progress in achieving the goals. Wherever possible, an effort should be made to print regularly, in the bulletin or newsletter, the goals that have been reached. The congregation must have a sense of accomplishment as well as a correct basis for periodic evaluation.²

Facilitation of Group Members

In order to accomplish the purpose of a small group, a good leader needs to facilitate the exchange of information and gifts. For that reason, small-group leaders need to be facilitators. Their styles of leadership are not so important as their skills in bringing the group interaction to the point of mutual growth and maturity. A facilitator needs several sets of complex skills in order to lead a small group. The following are some of the characteristics and basic skills of facilitating leaders.

¹Lyle E. Schaller, *Parish Planning* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), 119.

²Lyle E. Shaller, "Use Operational Goals," *Church Administration Magazine*, June 1972, 18.

First, facilitators are supportive. They develop a growth climate in the group that is psychologically safe and promotes openness, trust, and experimentation with alternative behaviors.¹ A climate of psychological safety is built by communicating an authentic warmth and support for, an empathy with, and an accurate understanding and acceptance of the group members as individuals. A member is psychologically safe when he or she feels supported, accepted, understood, and liked.

Being supportive is, basically, communicating to other individuals a recognition of their strength and capabilities and the belief that they have the capacity to handle productively the situation they face. Being accepting is basically communicating a high regard for other people and a disposition to react to their behavior in a non-evaluative way.² The most effective small-group leaders cared a great deal (demonstrated such behaviors as protection, friendship, love, affection, support, praise, encouragement) for group members.³

¹Howard J. Clinbell, Jr., *The People Dynamics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 37.

²David W. Johnson and F. P. Johnson, "Leading Growth Groups," in *Small Group Communication*, ed. Robert S. Cathcart and Larry A. Samovar (Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown, 1979), 443.

³Ibid.

Second, facilitative leaders establish a model of behavior by their participation, acceptance of criticism, non-evaluative comments, willingness to deviate from pre-planned procedures, ability to listen with understanding, ability to capture and reflect feelings, by making clarifying comments, and by being able to express their own feelings.¹

Third, facilitators are process-oriented. They realize that growth often involves a series of complex and subtle changes that occur over time. They are more interested in creating a climate for learning and helping others learn how to learn than in directly teaching right answers and distributing information.²

To summarize, facilitators believe that (1) the group exists for the purposes and goals of its members, (2) there is no inherent value in any particular structure or technique, and (3) individuals are unique, of great worth, and responsible for their own behavior.

The development of an intentional, small-group leader is crucial for the nurture of successful groups. Small-group leadership generally is only as strong as its

¹Neely D. Gardner, *Group Leadership* (Washington, DC: National Training and Development Services, 1974), 72.

²Diebert and Wichern, 54.

primary models and coaches. Therefore, the church must be willing to seek out, train, empower, and appoint to leadership key men and women who are gifted by God to lead the church into strong small-group ministry. Small groups will never grow into their full, God-gifted potential unless there are key church leaders who intentionally empower other good, small-group leaders.

Those who were selected as leaders for small groups in the church should know how to become more effective and keep their effectiveness growing. Holistic growth of leaders in the areas of spirituality , personality, and leadership skills can help them to keep their effectiveness. Their effectiveness as group leaders will be in direct proportion to their willingness to grow and mature in Christ. The more Christ radiates through them, the more fully committed disciples will be formed through the group they lead.

Summary

This chapter deals with small-group leadership by focusing on three main areas: (1) the general aspects of leadership, (2) the critical components of Christian leadership, and (3) leadership development.

The first section presents various leadership styles and the democratic style which appears to be best for small group leadership. Traditionally, the four basic leadership

styles are laissez-faire, bureaucratic, authoritarian, and democratic. Each style has its place and usefulness, but most people prefer the democratic style. Ellen White also apparently supported the democratic style as most fitting to the Christian community.

There are certain concepts and traits that characterize all leadership, but specific aspects set Christian leadership apart and make it unique. The most distinctive concepts of Christian leadership are servant leadership and steward leadership. The concept of servant leadership came first from the examples of Christ who demonstrated the meaning of service in His dealing with all classes of society. Second, it came from the teaching of Jesus to His disciples regarding their treatment of others and showing that leadership had to do with serving the needs of others.

This chapter presents the concept that while the world's model of leadership espouses love of power, Christ's model operates on the power of selfless love. The ideal leader is one who is first regarded by his or her followers as the greatest servant. Followers gladly give such leaders the authority to lead them because they see them as unselfish and other-oriented.

The concept of steward leadership came from the Greek word *oikonomos* which means a steward/stewardess. In this view, the steward/stewardess was seen as the manager or foreman of a household or an estate. The few references to stewards/stewardess in Scripture emphasize character traits like watchfulness (Luke 12: 42), truthfulness (1 Cor 4:2), and accountability (1 Cor 4:1; 1 Cor 9:17; 1 Pet 4:10). He/she was under obligation to use his/her freedom to promote the best interest of the master. Whatever power he/she may wield or prestige he/she may enjoy, the steward still remains a steward, a servant of Christ.

The second section of this chapter deals with chief elements of Christian leadership. It presents four of those elements: vision, integrity, love, and creating positive change.

Vision is the act of seeing and grasping what can be done. Christian leaders need a vision of the purposes and power of God and of how, through faith, these can become realities today. Vision also produces sustaining power. It can help leaders endure through tough times. It can propel them forward to complete the task if they review the God-given vision frequently.

Integrity is one of the cardinal elements of leadership. Where there is integrity, the words and deeds

match up and the lips do not violate the heart. It involves being true to the core issues of the faith, having a deep inner commitment to living life in the atmosphere of heaven while rubbing shoulders with the earthbound.

Love includes acceptance and acceptance is the art of communicating to people one's recognition and appreciation of their value as persons quite apart from their performance. Those so accepted find invigorating release and freedom to grow as persons in the group.

The fourth element of leadership is creating positive change. The leader is responsible for bringing about and managing change. The ultimate test of leadership is creating positive change. To continue to lead, the leader must be willing to change and be receptive to new ideas. In handling sensitive issues or in proposing change, Christian leaders often have to accomplish their tasks one at a time. As Christian leaders, their task is to change people, not just formulate and enforce rules.

Next, we consider leadership development. There are three primary ways to cultivate leadership qualities: spiritual growth, personality growth, and leadership-skill growth.

The leaders' source of power is God himself, and only through fellowship with Him is the power operative and

effective in their lives. Scripture, prayer, and spiritual discipline such as meditation, fasting, and journaling are effective ways to achieve spiritual growth.

The leader should be renewed in personality. The leader's personality growth can be attained by practicing simplicity and service in his or her life.

The third area in leadership development, leadership skills, notes important skills the leader needs to develop: delegation of authority, goal setting, and facilitation of group members.

Delegation offers substantial benefits to the entire organization because it helps to develop talents and latent abilities. By delegating, the leader frees himself or herself for more important managerial and leadership functions. For the subordinates, the process of delegation helps to produce challenge and interest since delegated authority gives them the chance to show what they can do, to test themselves in new situations, and to make mistakes and learn from them.

Effective delegation aids progress, builds morale, and inspires initiative. Effective delegation reinforces the pattern of shared leadership. It also shows that along with delegation of responsibility, it is imperative that this responsibility be clarified.

In the exercise of leadership, leaders must set goals. High productivity cannot be achieved without setting goals. Goals provide clarity of purpose, a sense of progress, and a measurable standard for evaluation. They offer guidelines for the allocation of resources and a standard of accountability for the organizational groups that make up the life of the church.

In order to accomplish the purpose of a small group, a good leader needs to facilitate the exchange of information and gifts. A facilitator needs several sets of complex skills in order to lead a small group.

First, facilitators are supportive. They develop a growth climate in which psychological safety, openness, trust, and experimentation with alternative behaviors happen.

Second, they establish a model of behavior by their participation, acceptance of criticism, non-evaluative comment, willingness to deviate from pre-planned procedures, ability to listen with understanding, ability to capture and reflect feelings, by making clarifying comments, and by expressing their own feelings.

Third, they are process-oriented, and they are more interested in creating a climate for learning and helping

others learn than in directly teaching right answers and distributing information.

Finally the chapter notes that the development of an intentional small-group leader is crucial for the nurture of successful groups. Small groups will never grow into their full God-gifted potential unless key church leaders intentionally empower other good, small-group leaders. The church must seek out, train, and empower key men and women to lead the church into strong small-group ministry.

Those selected as leaders for small groups in the church should know how to become more effective and keep their effectiveness growing. Holistic growth of leaders in the areas of spirituality, personality, and leadership skill is the key to the task. Their effectiveness as group leaders will be in direct proportion to their willingness to grow and mature in Christ.

CHAPTER V

SMALL-GROUP LAY MINISTRY PROGRAM

The development of lay ministry through small groups in the church does not happen by chance. It requires two vital steps: planning and training. Like two wings on an airplane, planning and training are essential components of an effective small-group ministry.¹

Well-planned, small-group programs that are not accompanied by proper training for potential small-group leaders are likely to fail because many lay leaders do not know how to lead effective small groups. Conversely, programs with well-trained group leaders may very well fail because the process of implementing a new small group is complex, requiring careful organization.

Theologically, the gifts of administration and equipping are as essential for an effective small-group ministry as for other ministries in the church.

¹Thomas G. Kirkpatrick, *Small Groups in the Church: A Handbook for Creating Community* (Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1995), 33.

The purpose of this chapter is fourfold: (1) to specify procedures for selecting the coordinating committee, (2) to propose the method of choosing and equipping the lay leaders, (3) to design approaches for launching the program, and (4) to present methods for the evaluation on the program.

Selecting the Coordinating Small Group Committee

The first task in creating an effective small-group ministry is to form the coordinating committee.¹ This is especially important in a large or medium-sized church. Small churches, where leaders work as a committee-of-the-whole, find it best for current leaders to assume the coordinating committee functions.

Likewise, small churches with few committees and few available committee members can satisfactorily assign small-group oversight to an existing committee. Right at the beginning, the pastor needs to clearly determine the

¹Several steps should be taken before this task. It includes initial discussion with associate pastors, key church members, and discussion at the official board. By indicating the needs in the church and sharing the purpose of the small group ministry, they will be able to buy the program and support it. By doing this, all of them will have at least part ownership of the program. It can avoid petty jealousy and hard feelings that are always potentially present.

coordinating committee's responsibilities, duration, membership, size, and steps for setting up the committee.

Steps for Setting Up Coordinating Committee

The following procedures are gleaned from

Kirkpatrick:

1. The initiating or parent body find two or three qualified lay people, a staff person, and a small group ministry resource person to begin the planning process.
2. Let this ad hoc group of interested people draft (1) a statement of small-group ministry purpose, goals, strategy, and (2) a coordinating-committee job description.
3. Submit these drafts to the initiating body for review and approval and then to the church's primary decision-making body for adoption.
4. Next, it's time to appoint the small-group ministry coordinating committee which will begin its work of expanding the pastor's small-group program.¹

The ad hoc group appointed to draft the original expansion proposals can continue as the coordinating committee.

This is a very important step, because unless church leaders understand and wholeheartedly affirm the role small groups will play in the congregation, and unless they process the draft statements in such a way that they "own" them, the pastor is set up for possible failure. If small-

¹Ibid., 35.

group ministry is to be central to the church's life and ministry, church leaders must decide that its small-group ministry purpose, goals, and strategy are sound and worth supporting.

Responsibility of the Committee

The committee must have a clear understanding of its responsibilities to the task, which includes:

(1) contributing their input in each of the phases of the proceeding small-group ministry, (2) providing positive leadership for the congregation with regard to the task, and (3) developing and facilitating a process to expand the church's small-group ministry.¹

Committee Duration

The duration of the committee and its role in the developing and facilitating task must be specifically delineated. After its initial planning (establishing purpose, goals, and strategy) is complete, the committee's task turns to recruiting potential small-group leaders. Next they will turn to planning and conducting a group leader's

¹Bruce A. Storms, "A Program for the Discovery of Spiritual Gifts and Their Development in Lay Ministry" (D.Min. diss., Drew University, 1990; Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1991), 46.

training course and then to planning and implementing the presentation of the small group.

After the pastor adds new groups to existing groups, he/she needs to provide ongoing program coordination and leader support. The committee's functions are numerous and continuous throughout the life of the church's small-group ministry.

Committee Membership and Size

The selection of the committee of lay persons is an essential element in the potential success of small-group ministry. The following should be considered for the task:

1. One of the key factors in the selection of this committee is the necessity of providing a broad representation on the committee.
2. The second factor is the size of the committee. It is best to keep the size of the committee limited to no more than six persons in order to make sure that it will be effective and manageable.
3. The third factor is the intent, if possible, to utilize an existing committee of the church. Usually more than enough committees already exist in the church.
4. The fourth factor is selection of the persons who most likely will contribute positively to the planning and carrying out of the task.

Recruiting and Training the Lay Leaders

Small-group ministry thrives on the gift of leadership. Group leaders have tremendous roles to play. Cho mentions that "selecting right lay leaders is essential. Success or failure can depend on them. The first thing the pastor should do is look for men and women who are Spirit filled."¹

Effective group leadership requires particular abilities and developed skills. When it comes to discovering and motivating lay leaders in the ministry, recruiting and training are essential twins in the process.

Lindgren and Schawchuck mention that "training is the key to releasing the potential for ministry that is resident in the congregation. Good recruitment identifies workers. Training empowers them to be effective in the job they have accepted responsibility to do."²

The Recruitment of Lay Leaders

Selection of potential small-group leaders should receive the same kind of attention as does the selection of other church offices. Because the task of selecting small-

¹Cho, 111.

²Alvin J. Lindgren and Norman L. Schawchuck, *Let My People Go: Empower Laity for Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), 113.

group leaders is similar to recruiting church officers, the coordinating committee's selecting process is like that of a church nominating committee.

It is necessary to follow several steps in that selection: (1) List qualities for prospective nominees, (2) select prospective small-group leaders, and (3) contact prospective leaders.

Listing Qualities

The pastor needs to ask the coordinating committee to generate a list of desirable qualities for effective small-group leaders. Clinebell, suggests the following criterions:¹

1. Had they displayed an inner genuineness, openness and shown themselves to be a well-integrated person?
2. Were they persons who displayed an unconditional positive regard for others? This was seen as having demonstrated a mixture of warmth, liking, caring, acceptance, interest and respect for other persons.
3. Did they show their own ability for empathetic understanding of another person's situation? This means they must be people who are not overly invested in themselves because if they were, they would not be able to enter into another's world.
4. Did they demonstrate a firm sense of their own identity and worth?
5. Did they have a strong commitment to Christ and the

¹Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., "Experiments in Training Laity for Ministry," *Pastoral Psychology* 22, No. 215 (June 1971): 35.

Christian faith?

6. Were they persons that had a strong concern for the church as a body of persons in Christ; not simply as an institution?

Cho suggests another lists of qualities.¹

1. Enthusiasm. New Christians often make very good cell leaders, because they have just come into a personal relationship with Jesus. Their enthusiasm is infectious. Older Christians often need to be reprogrammed before they will accept the cell system.
2. Testimony. Christians who have a clear, powerful testimony of what God has done for them are living proofs that the gospel does work today. Such Christians demonstrate the reality of the life of Christ, and others are drawn to them.
3. Dedication. You can usually tell whether a person is dedicated to the Lord and to your church by (1) his/her attendance record at church and at other meetings including cell groups, (2) his/her tithing record, which is an essential part of the person's life of faith, and (3) his/her demonstrated commitment to unity in the life of the church. Those who are overcritical or out of step with the majority will not easily follow the pastor's direction for leading small-groups.
4. Spirit-filled. Dependence upon the Holy Spirit is essential if a person is to lead the members of his/her cell groups.
5. Capacity. Leadership is serving others and doing whatever it takes to accomplish the ministry. This means having time, energy, and resources at your disposal. Leaders must free themselves from unnecessary commitments and distractions so that they have the capacity (spiritual, emotional and physical resources) to do what God has called to do.

¹Cho, 111-112.

A list of qualities such as shown above can serve as a guideline to discover people who have or who are likely to develop such characteristics. Once the coordinating committee reaches a consensus on the qualities, it is ready to assemble and prioritize a list of prospects.

Selecting the Leaders

To discover candidates for leading small groups,¹ the committee should survey the church membership directory. This helps the committee to consider everyone in the congregation—not just those who come to mind or who are already serving in other leadership positions.

During this phase of survey, committee members work individually to generate a list of leader candidates. Then the committee members can compare notes and decide whom to ask to consider this ministry. One good way to achieve consensus is to list all the candidates on a blackboard. Then the committee members discuss each candidate's qualifications for leading a small group.

The process should not neglect on any ground anyone whose name is suggested other than that the person does not fit the adopted qualities as an effective group leader. The

¹I gleaned most of concepts in this part from Kirkpatrick. His book *Small Groups in the Church: A Handbook for Creating Community* presents the step-by-step process that shows a viable way to plan for small groups.

pastor needs to take great care to ensure that the selection represents the church's diversity.

Contacting Leaders

Contacting the candidates is the next step. Who should contact the potential small-group leaders? That depends on who is most likely to persuade a candidate to give serious consideration to the call. In most case, the pastor is most desirable one to make the contact in the hope that people will take this call more seriously than if a lay person or other staff member make the contact.

In the larger church, two lay committee members and one clergy committee member can share equally in making the contacts. The contacting can be done either face to face or by telephone.

Training the Lay Leaders

The church must prioritize leadership training over other activities. The church needs to pay any price to hold periodic leadership training if the church wants to reap more fruit for the kingdom of God.¹ Wychoff emphasizes:

Leadership is a function of the church. Leadership training is basically a matter of making the nature and

¹Joshua B. Jokiman, "Developing Leadership in the Local Church," (D.Min. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1987; Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1988), 154.

mission of the church clear, establishing the function of leadership in light of the nature and mission of the church, and selecting and educating persons to know those functions well and to perform them skillfully.¹

Any church that wants to have effective, functional leaders should plan satisfactory training programs to prepare them for their tasks.

The pastor can select several methods for leadership training. Three of them are most available for local churches: retreats, seminar, and workshops.²

The Retreat

The most common periodical, leadership-training method in the local church is the retreat. The church can have a retreat during school holidays or over long weekends. The retreat has its roots in the Gospel when Jesus told His disciples, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest" (Mark 6:31). The Nelsons confirm that "retreating was common to Jesus and his disciples. . . . They could be alone for prayer, teaching, reflection, and instruction."³

¹D. Campbell Wychoff, *The Gospel and Christian Education* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), 165.

²Jokiman, 139-150.

³Virgil Nelson and Lynn Nelson, *Retreat Handbook: A-Way to Meaning* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1976), 8.

Retreats offer the power of concentrated time and resources, and a special setting for: (1) stimulating personal spiritual growth, (2) Deepening bonds between persons, and (3) Extending the body of Christ in action.¹

Some principles should be kept in mind to assure the success of the retreats. Corteel in *Renewal in Retreats* suggests the following:²

1. A retreat is a unity; every part makes its contribution. In a retreat, every event that we plan as a secondary event, such as recreation or meals, should have its function as an integral part of the whole and be planned with as much care as is given to the parts appearing be more important.
2. The activities of a retreat should follow a rhythm of alternation. In planning the program, a balance should be made between active participation and restfulness, between corporate and individual actions, between communal life and solitude. All of these will give the participants freshness and a readiness for each phase of the retreat as it comes.
3. A retreat should combine disciplined order with creative flexibility. A retreat should create a situation and atmosphere where each participant can feel that the program is intended to serve his/her need rather than that he/she is being asked to conform to procedures for their own sake. Participants must have the opportunity to trust themselves to whatever has been planned as it is carried forward.
4. Each retreat should move toward a climax. Although the climax cannot be planned, since the true climax depends on each participant, participants can pray

¹Ibid., 9.

²John L. Corteel, *Renewal in Retreats* (New York: Association, 1959), 168-171.

that the Spirit of God will move freely among them and send an event. Usually the last evening is a time of sharing, perhaps around a campfire. At this point the Holy Spirit works greatly and often the climax comes about.

Retreat schedule

Following is a suggested retreat schedule.

First Day

- 4:00 Registration and accommodations assignment
- 5:00 Clean up
- 6:00 Supper
- 7:00 Sing-along
- 7:30 Introduction and opening service¹
- 9:00 Group prayers
- 9:30 Silence begins

Second Day

- 7:00 Rising and clean-up
- 8:00 Morning prayers
- 8:15 Breakfast
- 9:00 Sing-along
- 9:30 First sermon²

¹Topic: Small Groups Ministry in the Local Church.
Objective: To acquaint with the value, nature, function, and leadership of small groups in the church, so that participants have an overall picture of small group ministry.

²Sermon title: "Small Group Leadership."
Objective: To examine what makes small-group leaders

11:00 Meditation and prayer

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Quiet time: resting, reading, walking, or personal sharing

2:00 Group discussion¹

3:00 Prayer partners

4:00 Tea time

4:30 Personal reflection

5:30 Clean up

6:00 Supper

7:00 Sing-along

7:30 Second sermon²

9:00 Campfire

10:00 Sharing time

12:00 Silence begins

effective and ineffective including the assessment of leadership style and behavior, so that participants can identify the strengths and potential their leadership skills.

¹Divide participants into groups of three to five. Have them get acquainted by telling one another one or two of their own significant observations about small groups in the church.

²Sermon title: "Leading Small Groups."
Objective: To present suggestions for facilitating member participation so that participants improve their ability to facilitate member participation.

Third Day

7:00 Rising and clean-up

8:00 Morning prayers

8:15 Breakfast

9:00 Sing along

9:30 Closing service¹

11:00 Group discussion²

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Return home

The Workshop

A workshop may offer a day of training or longer in specialized fields where, during the sessions, participants can learn skills, group functions, and take part in creative activities.³ In the workshop, the experts usually give the information and lead the participants to work together in practicing what they have learned. Malcolm and Knowles have

¹Sermon title: "Developing a Supportive Climate."
Objective: To present the theory of developing a supportive group climate and demonstrate resources participants can use to begin building a supportive atmosphere in a group.

²Divide participants into groups of three or four. Have them experience the building of a supportive climate in their groups by asking them to select more "sharing questions" to discuss among themselves. Have participants take turns leading the small group using questions of their own.

³Evelyn M. Huber, *Enlist, Train, Support Church Leaders* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1976), 20

a very useful set of suggestions for preparing workshops for leadership training.

1. Introduce the people present and include their roles Explain the purpose, plans, and design of the workshop.
2. Plan separate meetings for each type of leadership personnel when they can be briefed on their particular responsibilities and plan how they will work.
3. Present reports to all the leadership personnel of the plans made in the separate meetings.
4. Hold meetings of the leadership teams of each work group and then hold each general session to plan together and, if necessary, to rehearse.¹

Workshop schedule

A one-day workshop schedule could be as follows.

8:00 Registration

8:30 Opening service

Include an explanation of the purpose of the workshop and identification of the topic or focus of the workshop

9:00 Session I²

¹Malcolm M. Knowles and Hulda Knowles, *Develop Better Leaders* (New York: American Management, 1955), 37.

²Topic: Forming New Small Groups.

Objective: To clarify the necessary steps to start a new small group so that participants who will soon be leading a group know the mechanics of getting a group underway.

10:00 Session II¹

11:00 Session III²

12:00 Lunch

2:00 Session IV³

4:00 Session VI

Small-group discussion⁴

5:00 Report what the groups have attained in
the group discussions

6:00 Dinner

7:00 Closing service

-Give a brief evaluation of the workshop

-Express an appreciation of the workshop.

¹Topic: Handling Small-Group Problems.

Objective: To identify difficulties group leaders may encounter so that participants are better prepared to handle them.

²Topic: Small Group Communication.

Objective: To have participants gain insights on how small-group members interact and how this can affect the small-group process and purpose.

³Topic: Leading Group Study

Objective: To acquaint participants with principles of how to form discussion questions so that they are able to recognize and generate questions that stimulate good discussion of study material.

⁴Divide participants into groups of three or four.

Have them form five or six inductive study questions for a passage selected by the small group. Ask them to work together to shape discussion question arriving at a consensus for questions. Have each group use these questions to study their passage. Have leadership rotate among group members.

The Seminar

A seminar is a meeting of a group with special interests, led by an expert or experts who share their papers which present the results of their own special interest topics or on specific issues pertaining to the group. It gives the participants an opportunity to respond to or discuss the issues.¹

Huber says that "a seminar is best used when a small group of people wish to study an issue and clarify their thinking by sharing."² Wiwcharuck notes that "the pastor, the church board, all church leaders and teachers as well as the general membership can share in these studies."³

When arranging the seminar, the pastor needs to clarify dates and details of the seminar to the leaders. An announcement in the church bulletin is not enough. The pastor also should make personal contact to remind the congregation about the seminar.

A two-day leadership seminar could follow the schedule suggested below.

¹Jokiman, 139.

²Huber, 21.

³Peter G. Wiwcharuck, *Christian Leadership Development and Church Growth* (Manila: CLC, 1973), 320.

First Day

5:00 Registration

6:00 Dinner

7:00 Guest speaker introduced

7:30 First session presented¹

8:30 Participants' responses (questions and answers)

9:30 Group prayer

10:00 Return home

Second Day

9:00 Sing-along

9:30 Second session on specific topic²

11:30 Small-group discussion (response to the session)

12:00 Lunch

2:00 Break

3:00 Pastoral sharing³

¹Topic: Small Group Covenant.

Objective: To help participants form the purpose, needs, and expectation of their groups.

²Topic: Small Group Preparation.

Objective: To help participants discover the necessary arrangement and preparation for a small-group meeting.

³Title: "Each One Reach One."

Objective: To examine the commitment required of lay ministry through small-group programs.

4:00 Small-group discussions (response to pastoral sharing)¹
 4:30 Tea time
 5:00 Reports by small-group leaders
 6:00 Dinner
 7:00 Sing-along
 7:30 Final session on specific topic²
 8:30 Participants' response³
 9:30 Closing session⁴
 10:00 Return home

¹Divide participants into groups of three or four. Have them list at least 10 of what their group feel are major commitments required for lay ministry through small-group programs.

²Topic: Group Life and Mission.
 Objectives: (1) To expose participants to the concept of group prayer so that they understand its value in group life. (2) To examine how to form and develop mission groups so participants learn what it takes to lead such groups.

³Have participants share their experiences with prayer in the church or prayer in church groups. Have them write a paragraph description for the type of small group they would like to lead (group description might include group name and activities, group purpose, and practical matters such as meeting time, frequency, and duration). Ask them to share it with others.

⁴Topic: Sharing dreams.
 Objective: To give participants an opportunity to share their dreams and commitments for small-group ministry.

Launching the Program

After the coordinating committee devotes ample attention to the twin components of planning and training, it should be ready to launch the program. At the end of the small-group leadership-training course, the committee knows the number and type of new groups the church offers.

The committee should launch steps to promote the program to the church. This section deals with two elements of those steps: (1) promoting and (2) enlisting.

Promoting

Small groups can be promoted to the church in several ways. Appropriate methods to meet this goal include:

1. Developing a brochure that includes a statement of how small groups fit into your congregation's overall life and ministry, a statement of small group ministry's purpose and goals, a list of trained leaders, the date, time, locations of the groups and description of new, diverse small-group opportunities.
2. Placing descriptive brochure in the hands of every member of the church.
3. Providing sign-up procedures and a description of the group-formation process.¹

An article or articles in the church's newsletter and/or by special mailing can help augment this task. It is

¹Kirkpatrick, 90.

wise to write a series of such articles to keep the congregation abreast of the plans and progress.

Committees can make regular reports of progress and insert these in a newsletter and/or a special mailing. The committee needs to provide weekly highlights during the month in which sign-ups occur.

Another way to promote small groups is by the pastor's sermon and pulpit announcements. During worship services, the pastor can give out information similar to what he/she presented in the church newsletter. The pastor's sermons also lend support and provide good base for the church's small group-ministry.

In addition, the small groups will maintain a high profile through sermons, bulletins, and newsletters.

Enlisting

Once the congregation knows which groups are available, members will be ready to decide whether or not to participate. The committee should provide a way for people to sign up for small-group opportunities.

One useful procedure is to have people sign up for particular groups following a worship service. During the fellowship (1) display sign-up sheets for each group; including the group description and lines on where people can write their names; (2) allow enough room for members of

the congregation to circulate and find the small group of their choice; and (3) display sign-up sheets on two successive Sabbaths to ensure that everyone has adequate opportunity to indicate an interest.

After the original groups have been meeting for six to eight months, it is time to expand to the whole congregation. Now is the time to introduce the groups to an all-church meeting. At the church meeting, the group leaders and members of their groups should give testimony to the whole congregation, telling what God is doing through the small-group meetings.

This will be an exciting time. The enthusiasm of the leaders and small-group members will be infectious. People will be convinced that the small-group system has something for them. The pastor should have statistics to back up the testimonies, showing how many people have been helped and in what ways, how many unbelievers have been led to Christ, and so on. In this way, the enlistment will be easily achieved throughout the following years.

Another way to achieve further enlisting is to encourage new members to sign up for a small group. This helps remaining older members to sign up too.

Arnold lists good ways to the enlist new members:

1. Member recruitment. Whether doing evangelistic outreach or simply inviting an individual join, the members of a group help their groups to grow.
2. Offering testimonies. A pastor can encourage small group members to offer testimonies in newsletter or in worship. Testimonies offer evidence of God's power at work in our lives. They also provide a concrete demonstration of God working through small groups.
3. Targeting certain groups. The pastor can train leaders to reach certain groups of individuals.
4. Trained leaders' promotion. Leaders have a direct investment in small groups. They want the ministry to succeed. They are in a unique position to promote the ministry.
5. Follow-up program. In follow-up visits and calls, the idea of small groups can be communicated so that newcomers consider groups a viable options.
6. New member course. Small, group style, new-member courses communicate membership responsibilities in a nonthreatening and relational manner.¹

Formulating a Group

During a group's first several meetings, the leader should help the group establish its mission, its purpose, its agreements about group life, and a supportive group climate. Two crucial components in formulating the groups are (1) formulating mission statement and (2) developing the group covenant.

A description of the group may express the group's purpose, but members need to discuss their expectations for

¹Arnold, 113-115.

the group and arrive at a consensus about the group's reason for existence. The group also needs to decide which activities will be primary and which secondary in its life.

Without agreement about group purpose and activities, members will soon pull against one another and experience stress and frustration that prevents the group from being effective.

Mission Statement

A mission statement is key to the success of small-group ministry because it functions as a navigational tool necessary to chart an accurate course toward a worthy destination.¹ The mission and purpose of a small group must be clearly defined, communicated, and understood before meaningful action can take place. Without purpose and objectives, an organization drifts.

Drucker sees the lack of a clear understanding of the organization's mission as the most important single cause for business failure.² A well-defined mission

¹Bill Donahue, *The Willow Creek Guide to Leading Life-Changing Small Groups* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 21.

²Peter F. Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 78.

statement constitutes a source of legitimacy which justifies the activities of the organization and its very existence.¹

It is the blueprint for getting the organization where it wants to go. It is the plan for action.² It gives guidance to and establishes a common bond between members.³ Also, it serves as a standard by which the success of the group can be assessed.

When defining the mission, it is helpful to establish the organizational scope along the three dimensions:⁴ (1) the customer groups: Who is to be served and satisfied? and (2) the customer needs: What is to be satisfied? (3) technologies: How are these needs to be satisfied?

The following characteristics should be embodied in every statement of purpose:

¹Amitai Etzioni, *Modern Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1964), 5.

²Drucker, 75.

³Wolfgang M. Witzig, "The Process of Developing and Implementing a Statement of Mission in a Church-Owned Institution Using the De-Vau-Ge Gesundheitswerk as an Example" (D.Min. diss., Andrews University, 1991), 111.

⁴*Ibid.*, 121.

Feasibility

In forming the definition of the organization, management should steer between being too narrow and being too broad.¹ A definition that is too narrow may lead to the destruction of the group by rapid changes in its environment. With a definition that is too broad, the small group may not be able to accurately assess potential dangers and potential opportunities. Also, mission impossible should be avoided.² In other words, the definition should be reasonably feasible.

Specificity

There is a temptation to write the mission statement mainly for public-relations purposes. Such statements are often elaborate, covering broad issues. The statements should be specific or operational and not dwell on generalities.

The mission statement of Willow Creek Church can serve as an exemplary model. The overriding mission at Willow Creek is to "turn irreligious people into fully devoted followers of Christ." In order to accomplish that

¹Philip Kotler, *Marketing for Non-Profit Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1982), 36.

²Ibid.

mission, a variety of ministries exists at Willow Creek. From the weekend service to the midweek New Community believers' service to the various subministries throughout Willow Creek, all are committed to moving people toward Christlikeness.

Since small groups have become their way of doing ministry, it is essential that they understand the role they play in carrying out their overall mission. The mission statement they formulated for the purpose of small groups at Willow Creek and how small groups are used to accomplish their overriding mission is the following:

To connect people relationally in groups (four to ten individuals) for the purpose of growing in Christlikeness, loving one another, and contributing to the work of the church, in order to glorify God and make disciples of all nations.¹

The questions "Why do small group exist?" and "For what purpose do small groups exist?" are answered in the mission statement. The pastor can develop a vision statement similar to the following:

We are committed to a strong, dynamic, small-group ministry that has a significant impact on (1) newcomers entering our church; (2) those who need healing and support; (3) the overall church as it grows from the "bottom up";

¹Donahue, 21.

(4) the areas of disciple-making-worship, prayer, mission, and evangelism; (5) the community as the church moves beyond the church walls; and (6) the church and world as we train and mobilize leaders to make a difference.¹

Motivation

Individual members of an organization identify themselves with the goals of the organization to the extent that they appear to have a social purpose.² Employees have the need to feel that their work is significant and that they are making a contribution to people's lives.³

This enables workers to develop an identity larger than themselves, to participate in greater challenges, and to influence or seek rewards they could not achieve alone.⁴ If employees can identify in such a way with their organization they will be more effective and loyal.⁵

These principles can be applied to the small-group setting. If small-group members participate in the process

¹Arnold, 68.

²J. Galbraith, "The Goals of an Industrial System," in *Business Strategy*, ed. H. Igor Ansoff (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1972), 213.

³Philip Kotler, *Principles of Marketing* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1980), 75.

⁴Witzig, 126.

⁵Ibid.

of making the statement, they will be more actively involved in group activities.

Engstrom and Dayton point out that

one of the best ways of finding motivated people is to let them find themselves. As individuals participate in goal setting and planning of an organization or the projects, they will feel a sense of ownership for the goals and plans. If a large group is used to do the planning, many times potential goal owners will identify themselves by their enthusiasm for what is planned. Look to these people for leadership. They are already motivated.¹

Distinctiveness

The mission statement must clearly indicate what distinguishes this organization from any other organization.² People take pride in belonging to an institution that "does it differently" or "does it better." By developing a distinctive mission, an organization stands out and attracts a more loyal group of members and customers.³

Group Contracts

Once a group clarifies and adopts its statement, its purpose and activities, the group should decide in general

¹Engstrom and Dayton, 189.

²Arthur A. Thompson and A. J. Strickland, *Strategy and Policy* (Plano, TX: Business, 1981), 7.

³Kotler, *Marketing for Non-Profit Organization*, 36.

terms how it will operate. It is essential that the group come to an understanding concerning their expectations for the meeting and their relationships with one another. An agreement solves many difficulties and prevents many problems before they start.

Covenants are an expression of group values, expectations, or behaviors for which members hold themselves mutually accountable. Thus covenants are binding agreements that can create trust and build community.¹

Johnson asserts that "a covenant or agreement defines group members' expectations, provides accountability to one another, enhances commitment to the group, and provides a basis by which to evaluate the group's success."²

At the first meetings, the leader should share basic information with the group members and get acquainted, telling the group that the next week they will discuss in detail the issues and agenda of their small-group time together. The following lists suggest areas to cover at this second meeting:

- (1) what you hope to achieve
- (2) what you will do as a group
- (3) what the leader can be expected to do

¹Donahue, 85.

²Johnson, 92.

- (4) time commitment
- (5) place and size
- (6) refreshment
- (7) baby sitting
- (8) the day to meet
- (9) the time to begin and end
- (10) the length of time (weeks, months)
- (11) the importance of calling the leader if a member will miss the meeting so the group won't wait for them
- (12) other concerns of the leader and members
- (13) the process of inviting new people to the group once the group has been meeting for an extended period.
- (14) what group studies and resources will be made available
- (15) what happens during vacation.

Griffin suggests these commitments:

1. Attendance: I need everyone in the group in order to grow. One person's absence will affect the whole group. . . . For the time I am here I will concentrate on what I am feeling at the moment and on my response to others in the group. . . . I will stay in the here and now.
2. Affirmation: There is nothing you have done or will do that will make me stop loving you. I may not agree with your actions, but I will love you unconditionally. It is more blessed to care than to cure. This is not a therapy group. I will avoid the tendency to fix people.
3. Confidentiality: What's said here stays here! A permissive atmosphere flourishes when others are trustworthy. I will never repeat what another has said unless given specific permission.

4. Openness: I will strive to reveal who I am—my hopes, hurts, backgrounds, joys, and struggles—as well as I am able.
5. Honesty: I will try to mirror back what I see others saying and doing. This way I will help you understand something you may want to change but were unaware of. You can help me in the same way. This may strain our relationship, but I will have confidence in your ability to hear the truth in love.
6. Sensitivity: I will try to put myself in your shoes and understand what it is like to be you. I will try to hear you, see you, and feel where you are, to draw you out of the pit of discouragement or withdrawal. But I recognize that you have the individual right to remain silent.
7. Accountability: I am responsible for my own growth. I won't blame others for my feelings. None of us are trapped into behaviors that are unchangeable. I am accountable to myself, others, and God to become what God has designed me to be in His loving creation. I will help you become what you can be.
8. Prayer: During the course of this course, I will pray for the other members and bask in the confidence that they are praying for me.¹

A group covenant helps to develop a member-owned group with leader and members aware of their mutual responsibilities.²

The Leader's Meeting

Another absolute essential to a successful small-group ministry is a regular leader's meeting. Experience

¹Em. Griffin, *Together: A Guide for Good Groups* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1982), 35-37.

²Gorman, 138.

indicates that when a group ministry is first beginning, a weekly leader's meeting is essential.¹ Once the group is first established, a meeting once or twice a month is usually sufficient.

The purpose of the meeting is for: (1) casting and building the vision, (2) learning skills, and (3) sharing of ideas and problems, praying together, and reporting. The pastor and an assigned coordinator should be present. The reporting can be done by a lay leader and the training can be done by the pastor, lay leader, guest, videotape, book assignments, and discussion. Johnson emphasizes the importance of the leader's meeting:

The leaders' meeting gives the leaders support, an opportunity to share joys and frustrations, a chance to share solutions to group problems, and a time to pray together. If a leader's meeting is not held on a regular basis, it is almost guaranteed that the leaders will become discouraged and the group ministry will not flourish in the local church.²

If necessary, other meetings and programs in the local church may be eliminated to provide time for the key elements of a successful group program.

The pastor should make small-group ministry the central part of church life and reduce the number of board meetings and other programs to provide time for the members

¹Johnson, 95.

²Ibid.

to be involved. This is critical to the success of the ministry. People have a limited amount of time, and churches cannot do everything.

Evaluation of the Program

Because lay ministry through small groups is a lifelong process, an evaluation is needed from time to time to measure how far the ministry has developed in the church.

The purpose of all evaluation is improvement and increased effectiveness for the ministry. Gaining feedback for others about the leadership and about the group is designed to help them build on their strengths and buttress their weakness.¹ (See Appendix E.)

Evaluation allows the pastor to monitor progress as the ministry grows.

Arnold points out that:

1. We evaluate to ensure quality. Misguided leaders and negative group behavior will damage the entire small group ministry. Evaluation allows you to correct mistakes and strengthen every facet of ministry.
2. We evaluate to promote an atmosphere of accountability. Small-group leaders are volunteers. Some churches may be tempted to pamper leaders and to make their choice easy. Accountability demands high standards and encourages effective leadership support.
3. Evaluation does not occur naturally. We dislike

¹Donahue, 137.

constantly checking ourselves, our motives, and our results.

4. An intentional leadership structure creates the environment in which evaluation will occur.¹

Effective evaluation follows the rhythm and life of small groups. Instead of feeling that somebody is looking over their shoulders, leaders involved in a healthy evaluation process sense that their support system for the ministry provides a foundation and a measure of necessary control. Gangel stresses that

educational leaders must engage in effective evaluation if the cyclical approach to the development of learning experience is to be valid. Such evaluation is, of course, inseparably related to the clarity and specificity of objectives which are stated at the outset of the educational process. The evaluation step is a measurement of the success or failure and the degree of success or failure in the achievement of educational objectives. Information gained as a result of evaluation lays the basis for changes in the program which may result in reidentification of needs, reclarification of objectives, and restructuring of forms and methodology.²

Developing a yearly cycle makes evaluation natural. Effective evaluation should be done constantly. It should be done every three months, or quarterly.

Basis for Evaluation

Several elements provide the basis for evaluation.

¹Arnold, 119.

²Kenneth O. Gangel, *Leadership for Church Education* (Chicago: Moody, 1970), 25.

Time Table

The pastor should determine a time table for gathering information and evaluating. The pastor needs to supply a worksheet or report to leaders. Leaders may fill a worksheet out after each of their small-group meetings. Or they can submit a report to their supervisor once a month.

These forms can help the leader or supervisor perceive a group's strengths and weaknesses. Some churches may choose more infrequent times, like once a quarter or once a year, to offer questionnaires and more formal evaluation tools for groups and leaders.

Criteria

A first source of the criteria for evaluation includes the church's leadership, growth, group life, new members, recruitment, and evangelism and mission. The pastor needs to evaluate to determine what progress is being made in each of the important areas of ministry.¹

A second evaluation source can be the short, long, and intermediate goals that the church sets.² The pastor can evaluate the progress every six months and adapt the goals to his/her current realities.

¹Arnold, 120.

²Ibid.

A third source is that of small-group leaders themselves.¹ Good questions allow leaders to evaluate themselves, their groups, and the overall ministry for effectiveness and potential weaknesses. If a leader has a job description, the pastor can use the categories included in the job description to evaluate him or her.

Method

Evaluation can be done through surveys, one-on-one meetings, small-group and leadership meetings, and weekly/monthly forms that leaders complete. The pastor can ask leaders and members to evaluate (1) each other's performance, (2) their group's performance, (3) their spiritual life, and (4) their reflections in group dynamics.² Anonymous evaluation sheets are more desirable for this.

Information processed through evaluation should bring into focus changes that may be necessary. Soliciting feedback from staff, leaders, and group members determines whether a systematic change is necessary.³ If the pastor makes a structural change, then the ministry strategy needs

¹Ibid.

²Jokiman, 156-157. See also Donahue, 137-142.

³Arnold, 121.

to be adjusted and new goals created. These changes should be communicated with the group leaders.

Regular evaluations of the ministry plan give opportunity for reflecting on what is taking place within the small-group ministry, for adjusting in areas where it does not work well, and for adding new dimensions. Gorman asserts that "small groups grow because the pastor is investing community insights in them and giving them responsibility for the ministry."¹

After stabilizing small-group ministry, the church should find itself making primary contributions to the life of small groups. Patrick suggests:

First, the church needs to provide ongoing planning and training to continue offering attractive, diverse, well-led, and well-interpreted small groups for the congregation.

Second, some groups and their leaders may exhaust their resource for group life. The church can help ongoing groups find fresh resources and ideas for continuing their life together.

Third, the church must work at discovering new, varied approaches, and not become complacent in what should

¹Gorman, 315.

be an exciting, dynamic adventure in the church's life and mission.¹

A small-group ministry can be the primary means by which church members express life and mission. No matter what activities are prominent in a group, it is the quality of Christian "life together."

Small groups in the church can make the church alive. As church members develop their small group-ministry, the Christian community produces the quality of life that most people desperately seek.

Summary

This chapter deals with four important elements of the small-group, lay ministry program: (1) selecting the coordinating small-group committee, (2) recruiting and training the lay leaders, (3) launching the program, and (4) evaluating the program.

The first section presents procedures for selecting a coordinating committee. Right at the beginning, the pastor needs to clearly determine a coordinating committee's responsibilities, duration, membership and size, and steps for setting up the committee. The committee's functions are

¹Kirkpatrick, 96.

numerous and continue throughout the life of the church's small-group ministry.

The committee takes responsibilities for (1) contributing their input in each phase of the small-group ministry, (2) providing positive leadership for the congregation with regard to the task, and (3) developing and facilitating a process to expand the church's small-group ministry.

The second section deals with methods of recruiting and training the lay leaders. Small-group ministry thrives on the gift of leadership. Recruiting and training are essential twins in motivating lay leaders in the ministry. Good recruitment identifies workers. Training empowers them to be effective in their task.

Three steps guide in the selection of good leaders. They are (1) listing qualities for prospective nominees, (2) selecting prospective small-group leaders, and (3) contacting the nominees.

The church must prioritize leadership training over other activities. It needs to pay any price to hold periodic leadership training. The pastor should plan satisfactory training programs to prepare lay leaders for their tasks.

The pastor can select from three leadership training methods: (1) retreat, (2) seminar, and (3) workshop.

Retreat is the most common periodical leadership training method in the local church. It offers the power of concentrated time and resources, and provides a special setting for stimulating personal spiritual growth, deepening bonds between persons, and extending the body of Christ in action.

A workshop uses a day or longer to train in specialized fields where participants can learn skills, group functions, and use of creative activities. Experts usually give the information and lead the participants to work together in practicing what they have learned.

Seminars are meetings of a group with special interests, led by an expert or experts who shares their knowledge on specific issues pertaining to the group, giving the participants an opportunity to respond to or discuss the issues.

The chapter's third section deals with approaches for launching the program. After the coordinating committee devotes ample attention to the twin components of planning and training, the church should be ready to launch the program.

Four launching steps are needed: (1) promotion, (2) enlistment, (3) formulation of a group, and (4) having leaders's meeting.

Small groups can be promoted in the church by developing brochures that include a statements of small groups' overall life, articles in the church's newsletter or by special mailing, regular reports on progress, weekly highlights on the bulletin board, and the pastor's sermon and pulpit announcements. Small groups should maintain a high profile through these methods.

Participants can be enlisted through promotion by member recruitment, personal testimony, trained leaders, and follow-up programs.

During a group's first several meetings, the leader should help the group establish its mission, its purpose, agreements about group life, and support for group life. Formulating a mission statement and the group covenant is especially important for this stage of small-group life.

The group contract is an expression of group values, expectations, or behaviors for which members hold themselves mutually accountable. It provides member accountability to one another, enhances commitment to the group, and provides a basis by which to evaluate the group's success. A group covenant helps to develop a member-owned group with leader and members aware of their mutual responsibilities.

When group ministry is first beginning, a weekly leader's meeting is essential. The purpose of the meeting is

to cast and build the vision, teach skills, and share ideas and problems, to pray together, and to report.

The leader's meetings give the leaders support and a chance to share solutions to group problems, and time to pray together. If a leader's meeting is not held on a regular basis, the leaders will become discouraged and the group ministry will not flourish.

The fourth section deals with the evaluation of the program. Because lay ministry through small groups is a lifelong process, an evaluation is needed from time to time to measure how far the ministry has developed in the church. The purpose of all evaluation is to improve and increase the effectiveness of the ministry.

Regular evaluations of the ministry provide an opportunity for reflecting on what has taken place within the small group and for adjusting in areas where it does not work well, and for adding new dimensions.

Small groups in the church can make it alive. As church members develop its small-group ministry, the Christian community produces the quality of life most people desperately seek.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

This dissertation considers the development of lay ministry through small groups by focusing on four main areas: (1) theological foundation, (2) the nature of small group, (3) leading small groups, and (4) the small-group, lay-ministry program.

Chapter 2 presents theological foundation. The concepts of the "Priesthood of All Believers," "Body of Christ," "Triune God as a Small Community," "Jethro's Principle," and "Jesus's Model" are the theological skeleton for this ministry.

First, the concept of "priesthood of all believers" shows that the call to holiness and ministry of the priesthood were given all the members of God's family. All Christians are to present their bodies as a living sacrifice to be instruments for the salvation of others. This priesthood allows the church to become a total force for the gospel.

Second, the concept of "the body of Christ" presents the church as Christ's spiritual body. A vital relationship exists between the head and the body; the same is true between Christ and His people. The church's growth has its origin and goal in Christ as the "Head." As a part of the body, Christians cannot perform their functions without interrelationship. This concept strengthens the church's fellowship and extends the church's ministry and witness.

Third, the concept of "spiritual gift" affirms that the purpose of spiritual gifts is to facilitate ministry both in the church and in the community. This brings unity and harmony as the members mature into the loving likeness of Jesus Christ.

Fourth, the concept of "the triune God as a small community" shows that one attribute of the image that God instilled in human is "community." God is a community of three persons working in continual harmony with one another. God sent His Son to recreate the eternal bond of community on both vertical and horizontal levels; thus a pattern of communal involvement was established for mankind to follow.

Fifth, "Jethro's principle" provides a leadership model for the larger community. As the church grows, leadership must be shared and authority delegated even to the small-group level.

Sixth, "Jesus's model" shows that Jesus selected the Twelve and developed them so that they could carry out their ministry together. Most of His time was spent attempting to develop community among them. His activities provide the church with a model for developing lay ministry through small groups.

The writings of Ellen G. White strongly emphasize the importance of the formation of small groups in the SDA church. Among other things she saw small groups building up the members and evangelizing the world.

Both the Scriptures and Ellen G. White highlight the advantages of lay ministry through small groups. Small groups hinge upon the nature of God to bring people back to the relationships God created in humans: God-to-human, human-to-human.

Chapter 3 explains the nature of small groups, emphasizing that small groups attract people, supply people's basic needs, and enhance the local church by investigating relevant research.

The first section noted the four attractions of small groups: psychodynamic attraction, sociobiological attraction, social comparison attraction, and social exchange attraction.

The second section presents the concept that small groups supply people's basic needs. The church stands in a unique position to minister to the individual needs of people.

The first need is the need to "be." The personal nature of the small groups supplies people's need as seen by the individual. Each one desires to be recognized as a unique person, to be appreciated as a human being.

The second need is the need to "belong." A critical portion of the well-being of an individual is dependent on social interchange. People long for a place of personal fellowship and belonging in a changing world. The church must see its opportunity to assist people to establish healthy kinship systems. Small groups in the local church are one of the best mediums for fulfilling people's need of belonging.

The next need is the need for "self-actualization." Human beings desire to grow, improve, and become more capable. A person's most exciting lifelong adventure is actualizing his or her potential.

The next section showed the concept that small groups enhance the local church. This section showed how small groups enhance the local church by focusing on four main characteristics: as a healing agent, as a community of

transformation, as a maturational community, and as family system.

Chapter 4 focused on small-group leadership. Three areas are considered: the general aspect of leadership, the critical components of Christian leadership, and leadership development.

The first section presented various leadership styles and the democratic style which appears to be best for small-group leadership. Each style has its place and usefulness, but most people prefer the democratic style. Ellen G. White also apparently supported the democratic style as most fitting to the Christian community.

The most distinctive concepts of Christian leadership are servant leadership and steward leadership. The concept of servant leadership comes from the examples and the teaching of Jesus who demonstrated the meaning of service in His dealing with all classes of society.

The concept of steward leadership emphasizes such character traits as watchfulness (Luke 12: 42), truthfulness (1 Cor 4:2), and accountability (1 Cor 4:1; 1 Cor 9:17; 1 Pet 4:10).

The second section of chapter 4 dealt with the chief elements of Christian leadership: vision, integrity, love, and the creation of positive change.

The next section considered leadership development. Three primary ways cultivate leadership qualities: spiritual growth, personality growth, and leadership skills growth. The leader's source of power is God Himself, and only through fellowship with Him is the power effective in their lives. Studying Scripture, prayer, and spiritual discipline—such as meditation, fasting, and journaling—are effective ways to achieve spiritual growth.

The leader should be renewed in personality. The leader's personality growth can be attained by practicing simplicity and service in his or her life.

The third area in leadership development, leadership skill, notes important skills the leader needs to develop: delegation of authority, and goal setting.

Those selected as leaders for small groups in the church should know how to become more effective and keep their effectiveness growing. Holistic growth of leaders in the areas of spirituality, personality, and leadership skills is the key to the task. Their effectiveness as group leaders will be in direct proportion to their willingness to grow and mature in Christ.

Chapter 5 points out four important elements of the small-group, lay-ministry program: (1) selecting the coordinating small-group committee, (2) recruiting and

training the lay leaders, (3) launching the program, and (4) evaluation of the program.

The coordinating committee takes responsibility for contributing its input to each of the phases of small-group ministry, providing positive leadership for the congregation with regard to the task, and developing and facilitating a process to expand the church's small-group ministry.

The second section considers the method of recruiting and training the lay leaders. Recruiting and training are essential twins in proceeding with small-group ministry. Good recruitment identifies workers and training empowers them. The church can train the lay leaders by providing training programs such as: a retreat, seminars, and workshops.

The third section deals with approaches for launching the program. Four launching steps are promotion, enlistment, formulation of groups, and leader's meetings.

The fourth section notes the need to evaluate the program. Because lay ministry is a lifelong process, it should be evaluated from time to time to measure how far the ministry has developed in the church. The purpose of all evaluation is to improve and increase effectiveness for ministry.

When church members develop the ministry through proper attention to planning, training, and implementing, the Christian community produces the quality of life most people long for.

Conclusion

Small groups are a place for mutual ministry among members. Each member uses spiritual gifts to serve other members in the body. Mutual ministry is the trademark of a small group.

Small groups provide fellowship and mutual support so that the church can have an impact in society. They encourage and build up one another so that the body of Christ can be cared for and the world can be influenced through their good deeds.

Small groups exist to teach the truth and develop lay leaders who can shepherd others and disciple them in the faith.

They can be used to meet many key needs in the church: to shepherd and care for church members, to disciple people, to assimilate newcomers and connect them to the church, and to develop lay leadership and empower leaders for ministry.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SMALL GROUP POLICIES

A. THE GROUP LEADER:

The qualified small group leader shall be:

1. Committed to and have a strong love for Jesus Christ and His Word.
2. Committed to and have a strong love for God's people.
3. Mature emotionally:
 - a. not naive or easily manipulated
 - b. not defensive; aware of strengths and weaknesses
 - c. not fearful of sharing themselves; open; honest
 - d. not prideful or arrogant; showing humility
 - e. not oversensitive to criticism; Gospel oriented
4. Intellectually able to be a private student of the Scripture - eager to understand, research question, etc. (Gift of Knowledge)
5. Not a lecturer or preacher - sole purpose is to stimulate discussion of others.
6. Responsible to try and conduct at least two courses per year.
7. Prepared through the leadership training class of the congregation.

B. THE GROUP HOST:

The group host shall:

1. Pray as you prepare for the meeting (preferably ½ hour prior to the meeting) and be in prayer as the meeting progresses.
2. Arrange everything to produce a friendly, informal atmosphere.
3. Aim at making everyone feel at home, especially guests.
4. Plan seating arrangements ahead of time so that everyone is in a circle, either on chairs or on the floor.
5. Ample ventilation and good lighting are necessary.
6. Remember people's names and introduce them around. Use name tags the first three meetings so as to be sure everyone knows each other.
7. Have extra Bibles on hand for those who don't have one with them.
8. See that refreshments are made (or members take turns) simply and not to become the focus for meeting.
9. Have the Gift of Hospitality (to enjoy and love these duties!).

C. SMALL GROUP OVERSIGHT:

1. The pastor shall oversee all small group ministry programs.
2. The leader must be approved by the Congregation and Pastor.
3. The materials must be approved by the Congregation and Pastor.
4. Small Groups are ALWAYS to be seen as a ministry arm of the Congregation, never separate from it.
5. The Congregation holds the authority to sponsor or refuse to sponsor a particular class as one of its ministries.
6. The Pastor and Elders are free to observe a class session at any time with prior notification of the leader.

D. EVALUATION:

The small group leader shall provide:

1. An initial report to the Pastor after the first meeting.
2. Periodic reports of difficulties.
3. 4-week evaluation report at a meeting with the Pastor.
4. Final evaluation and suggestions for each course of study led.
5. Weekly Monday phone time with the Pastor for reports and support.

E. MATERIALS:

Materials suitable for use in small group shall:

1. Glorify Jesus Christ
2. Be Gospel oriented
3. Not violate pure doctrine
4. Not foster sectarian bias through criticism
5. Assume the Bible is the final authority
6. Be 4 - 12 weeks in length; more than 12 weeks is too long
7. Be submitted to the Pastor and elders for approval at least one month prior to start of sessions
8. Be purchased by members of the group, not the congregation

F. SMALL GROUP MEMBERSHIP:

1. Invitations to join classes shall be advertised and open to ALL members of the congregation.
2. Normally class members will not remain together longer than 2 years or 4 topic sessions.
3. Small group sessions are open to non-members.

4. Membership of 4 - 5 people is enough to start a small group, split if there are more than 10.
5. Small group members should be encouraged to complete homework prior to sessions.

G. MEETINGS:

Small group sessions shall:

1. Follow a set order
2. Be no longer than 2 hours for study
3. Keep refreshments simple, allowing for members to take turns
4. Meet in homes
5. Have no offerings without approval
6. Have no outside speakers without approval
7. Have no COMMUNION!

H. ADMONITION AND CENSURE:

A small group and/or its leader will open itself to censure by the congregation by practicing any of the following:

1. Use of materials, speakers, offerings, etc. without prior approval of the congregation and Pastor.
2. Persistence in following doctrinal aberrations.
3. Harboring criticism of the Congregation, its staff or members.
4. Breakdown of the confidentiality principle (gossip).
5. Failure to supply follow-up reports and evaluations as requested.

Source: Adapted from Aubey, 133-135.

APPENDIX B

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

A. EFFECTIVE SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Shows and Fosters Friendliness

1) Relational Qualities

- Is open, not judgmental
- Is egalitarian
- Is sensitive to all group members
- Shows warmth
- Is confident
- Is outgoing
- Is Positive
- Displays love

2) Group Atmosphere

- Makes members feel comfortable and at ease
- Creates a sharing environment
- Builds a trust level
- Helps members feel free to contribute
- Encourages open, friendly discussion
- Fosters a pleasant atmosphere

3) Responsive Listening

- Honors and accepts all contributions
- Treats all members with respect
- Makes all members feel valued
- Listens actively to all members
- Respects all opinions
- Shows appreciation and support of members

4) Encourages Sharing

- Allows God to bring group together
- Encourages shy members to participate
- Helps members get acquainted
- Fosters cooperation
- Allows objections to surface

2. Provides Orientation: Gives Task Direction

1) As the Meeting Starts

- Enables group to get started
- Provides an agenda
- Knows material to be discussed
- Prepares and asks questions to facilitate interaction
- Clearly introduces and explains topic
- Describes group goal

2) As the Meeting Continues

- Coordinates task
 - Keeps group moving
 - Keeps situation under control
 - Guides discussion without forcing it
 - Keeps group on topic
 - Keeps group focused on questions
 - Holds group to agenda
 - Redirects group as needed
 - Attempts to deal with all agenda items
 - Gauges time
 - Helps eliminate tangents
- 3) As the Meeting Finishes
- Ends topics when contributions cease
 - Accomplishes goal of discussion
3. Provides Orientation: Gives Procedural Direction
- 1) Clarifies Expectations
- Briefs group on task and on time available
 - Lets members know what is expected of them
 - Has an outline
- 2) Comments about Group Process
- Points out important things members say
 - Provides clarification of comments and process
 - Summarizes any consensus
 - Sums up discussion to everyone's satisfaction
4. Asks for Information and Opinions
- 1) Facilitates Participation
- Makes sure everyone has opportunity to participate
 - Meaningfully involves everyone in discussion
 - Develops responses from the group
- 2) Facilitates Interaction
- Helps members respond to one another's contributions
 - Helps quiet members express thoughts
 - Keeps members from domination the discussion

B. INEFFECTIVE SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Shows Antagonism
- 1) In Position
- Sets self as authority
 - Claims status differential
 - Uses leader position to monopolize discussion
 - Controls the discussion
 - Is opinionated; biased

- Gives own opinions as fact
- Is too rigid in protocol and agenda
- 2) In Attitude
 - Makes people feel uncomfortable
 - Expresses threatening attitude
 - Does not listen
 - Does not value member's opinions
 - Is defensive toward what is said
 - Is insensitive to what members say or want to say
 - Disregards members' contributions
 - Judges members' comments; condemns
- 3) In Interaction
 - Puts people down
 - Dominates discussion
 - Puts people off
 - Interrupts or stifles creativity of thought
- 2. Shows Tension
 - Needs resolution of all disagreements
 - Puts people on the spot
 - Is apologetic
 - Fears silence
 - Is insecure; not confident
- 3. Shows Disagreeableness
 - Contradicts
 - Takes sides on issues
 - Is mute on some points while agreeing on others
 - Ignores members with different opinions
- 4. Gives Little Orientation
 - 1) As the Meeting Starts
 - Is not clear on purpose
 - Is uncertain about what is required
 - Fails to provide group direction
 - Does not define issues
 - Has poorly thought out discussion questions
 - Provides too narrow focus
 - 2) As the Meeting Continues
 - Does not keep discussion moving
 - Does not keep group on issue; loses focus
 - Lets discussion wander or digress
 - Lets group flounder
 - Lets members dominate discussion
 - Does not keep track of time limits
 - Tries to go too fast
 - Stays on one topic too long
 - Loses track of topic

- Lets discussion become too personal
- 3) As the Meeting Finishes
 - Does not summarize discussion
 - Does not bring discussion to a conclusion
- 5. Asks for Little Information and Opinions
 - Does not invite members responses
 - Fails to allow members to express themselves fully
 - Encourages talkative members
 - Overlooks quiet members
- 6. Gives Too Much Information and Too Many Opinions
 - Talks too much
 - Expresses too much personal opinion
 - Makes irrelevant comments
 - Does not stay on subject; wanders or rambles
 - Answers own questions

Source: Adapted from Kirkpatrick, 104-109.

APPENDIX C

GETTING ACQUAINTED EXERCISES

SHARING QUESTION

A. DEFINITION:

Sharing questions are simple, one or two sentence question, usually open-ended, which give people permission to talk about themselves. The purpose for sharing questions is to help the group move from superficial conversation to more intimate conversation in a non-threatening manner.

B. GUIDELINES:

1. Ask questions that are not subject to a right or wrong judgment.
2. Determine where the group is at in its life cycle and ask questions appropriate to that setting.
3. Make sure your question can be answered by everyone in the group.
4. The leader in the beginning times should model by starting the sharing; after the group has learned the technique the leader should be the last so as to share briefly if time is short.
5. Give a time limit at the beginning for each person.
6. Everyone should be encouraged to respond.
7. Combine in your questions a fact or event plus the feeling that accompanied that fact or event.
8. Anyone can pass if they do not wish to talk.
9. Do not ask follow-up questions - one turn to talk for each person.
10. Do not ask questions that require people to share only negative things about themselves - "confession" questions.
11. The question should allow for unique and different answers from each person, not the same answer from everyone.
12. The question should reveal yourself not opinions on issues, especially controversial ones.

13. A good sharing question needs no further explanation.

C. EXERCISES 1 (DAILY LIFE SHARING QUESTIONS):

1. What is your favorite room in the house and why?
2. What comic book character do you identify with and why?
3. What do you like to do when you have free time?
4. Name someone who has been a good friend to you and what have they added to your life?
5. What is one thing that concerned you this week? Gave you joy?
6. What is a pet peeve of yours and why?
7. What spiritual goal do you see for yourself in this group?
8. What is one relationship you would like to grow? Why? How?
9. Can you remember a funny thing that happened to you?
10. What job do you enjoy (dislike) around the home?
11. How did you come to desire a personal relationship with Jesus?
12. What is one place in the United States you think you would like to visit that you haven't been to yet?
13. What are one or two of the most important things that have happened in your life during the last week?
14. What are three or four words that best describe you?
15. What is something you feel a little unsure of about yourself?
16. What are one or two major changes you have made in your life?
17. What are two or three things you like about yourself?
18. Who are two people in the world you would most like to meet?
19. In what do you most trust?
20. Who is the most authentic person you have ever met?
21. What or where is a happy place for you?
22. What is a present you would most like to receive?
23. What is your favorite animal, music?
24. What are two or three of the most significant influences (persons, events, places) that have helped shape your life?
25. If you won 100,000, how would you spend it?

D. EXERCISE 2 (SPIRITUAL LIFE SHARING QUESTION)

1. When did you first begin to realize that God loves you, if ever?
2. When, if ever, did God become more than a word for you? When, if ever, did God become a living Being for you?
3. What are your strongest convictions about God?
4. If you could hear God say one thing to you, what do you think God would say? If you could say one thing to God, what would you say?
5. What single question do you most want God to answer for you?
6. Describe the person you have known who you felt knew God most intimately?
7. How would you describe your "life-story" or "faith journey"?

Note regarding question 7: It is possible to build a great deal of the getting-acquainted period around this question. In fact, it is possible to spend two or three meetings early in the group's life on this question. Frequently it takes group members twenty to forty minutes each to respond fully. If a group uses this question in this manner, it is likely to "become a group" following completion of the question. Here is a way to use this question to build such a supportive climate in a group:

1. Have group members reflect on the major stages of their lives (childhood, teenage years, young adulthood) and identify the main events, people, and places that have deeply influenced them both positively and negatively in each period.
2. Have each person draw a time-line of the main influences for each period and/or divide a paper into sections, one per stage, and draw something that represents the main influences for each period. (Use a representative color, if possible.) Also include a summary phrase that best describes each period.
3. Take time for each member adequately to share her of his life story/faith journey, usually twenty to forty minutes per person. An alternate way to conduct the session is for each member to relate only one life-stage at a time.

Sources: Kirkpatrick, 115; Aubey, 31.

APPENDIX D

THE FIRST MEETING

A. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY:

1. Welcome personally, help everyone feel comfortable
2. Short "get acquainted" exercise
3. Prayer by group leader
4. Explain the use of the Bible in the small group setting:
 - a. not a lecture
 - b. leader is a facilitator, not a teacher
 - c. inductive study
 - d. group sharing on the basis of the Word
5. Explain the purposes of small groups
6. Develop group Policies (need group members' input)
 - a. time and place of meeting (weekly is best)
 - b. size of the small group (4 - 12)
 - c. homework assignments (strongly recommend this)
 - d. basis of leadership (rotation?)
 - e. transportation/parking
 - f. visitors' names to invite
 - g. child care (recommend no children at the study)
 - h. Bible translation(s)
 - i. refreshments (WHAT and WHEN in meeting)
 - j. dress/smoking/etc.
7. Explain the Four Commitments of Members
 - a. attendance
 - b. participation in discussion
 - c. confidentiality
 - d. accountability for growth goalsGet personal okay from every member of the groups on these.
8. Explain length of the meetings:
 - a. number of hours per week
 - b. number of weeks in study
9. Distribute Study Materials:
 - a. explain the topic and approach to study
 - b. collect payment for the books
10. Record name and phone number of group members
11. Miscellaneous Information:
 - a. bathroom location
 - b. limitations of household on time, food, meeting locations, etc.
 - c. personal special needs

B. CONCLUSION:

1. Explain assignment for next week
2. Review Time, Place and Length of the study
3. Closing prayer by leader of the group
4. Light refreshments!

Sources:

1. Marilyn Kunz and Catherine Schell, *How to Start a Neighborhood bible Study* (New York: Dobbs Ferry, 1969)
2. Lawrence O. Richards, *Sixty-Nine Ways to Start a Study Group and Keep It Growing* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1973)
3. Ron Nicholas, *Small Group Leaders' Handbook*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1982)
4. Ford Madison, *Small Group: Together We Can Grow*, (Wheaton, IL: SP Publications, 1980)

APPENDIX E

REPORT AND EVALUATION FORMS

A. LEADER'S SMALL GROUP PLANNING SHEET:

(submit at LEAST two weeks prior to first small group meeting)

INTENDED STARTING DATE _____

INTENDED MEETING PLACE & TIME _____

INTENDED PURPOSE FOR GROUP MEETINGS _____

INTENDED MATERIALS TO BE USED _____

APPROVAL BY PASTOR RECEIVED? ___ COST PER MEMBER _____

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION FOR BULLETIN/NEWSLETTER _____

GROUP LEADER/CONTACT PERSON _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

B. LEADER'S SMALL GROUP DATA SHEET:

(Complete and return to Pastor after first small group meeting)

SMALL GROUP LEADER _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

PURPOSE FOR SMALL GROUP _____

DATE OF FIRST MEETING _____

SMALL GROUP MEETING PLACE _____

NUMBER OF SESSIONS PLANNED _____

DAY OF WEEK _____ TIME OF DAY _____

DISCUSSION TOPIC _____

TITLE & AUTHOR OF STUDY GUIDE BEING USED _____

NAMES OF GROUP MEMBERS _____ PHONE _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

LEADER'S COMMENTS:

C. LEADER'S AND MEMBERS' SMALL GROUP EVALUATION FORM:
(reviewed with the Pastor after fourth small group meeting)

THIS CHECKLIST IS INTENDED TO HELP YOU THINK THROUGH THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF YOUR SMALL GROUP. USE THE RATING SCALE BELOW AND CHECK YOUR RESPONSE.

1 = Excellent 2 = Good 3 = Average 4 = Fair 5 = Poor

ITEMS	RATINGS
1. Size of Group	1 2 3 4 5
2. Use of Time at Meetings	1 2 3 4 5
3. Materials Being Used	1 2 3 4 5
4. Meeting Place Adequacy	1 2 3 4 5
5. Leadership	1 2 3 4 5
<hr/>	
6. Members' Relationships with Each Other	1 2 3 4 5
7. Climate of Trust in the Group	1 2 3 4 5
8. Participation by All Members of the Group	1 2 3 4 5
9. Acceptance of each Other's Strengths/Faults	1 2 3 4 5
10. Concern for Other Members' Struggles	1 2 3 4 5
<hr/>	
11. Acquaintance/Affirmation Exercises	1 2 3 4 5
12. Examination/Identification Exercises	1 2 3 4 5
13. Worship/Application Exercises	1 2 3 4 5
14. Understanding of Bible Passages	1 2 3 4 5
15. Prayers Within the Group	1 2 3 4 5
<hr/>	
16. Concentration on Christ & the Gospel	1 2 3 4 5
17. Personal Spiritual Growth Within the Group	1 2 3 4 5
18. Accountability Among Members of the Group	1 2 3 4 5
19. Needs of Group Members Being Met	1 2 3 4 5
20. Application of Scripture to Life Today	1 2 3 4 5
<hr/>	
21. Try to identify what stage your small group is in presently:	
EXPLORATION	TRANSITION ACTION TERMINATION
22. The strong points of our group are:	
23. The problems we need to work through in our group are:	
24. Leading/Membership in this small group has helped me:	

D. EVALUATION OF THE PASTOR
BY THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

<u>PLANNING</u>	WEAK			STRONG	
1. The Program was well thought-out	1	2	3	4	5
2. The steps of the program were clear and understandable.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The need for the program was stated clearly and understood by all	1	2	3	4	5
4. Adequate time was given for the planning process:	1	2	3	4	5
5. The members of the committee were involved actively in the planning:	1	2	3	4	5
COMMENTS:					

LEADERSHIP

1. The leadership provided was positive.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The leadership provided was strong.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The leadership provided allowed for Change and flexibility.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The leadership showed understanding toward the committee members.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The leadership was focused on the goals of the project.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The leadership was consistent.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The leadership showed patience.	1	2	3	4	5
COMMENTS:					

SPIRITUALITY

1. There was strong spiritual content in all phases of the project.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The participants were given opportunity to be involved spiritually.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The spiritual emphasis was positive.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The level of spiritual emphasis was high	1	2	3	4	5
5. The leader was prepared spiritually for each meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
COMMENTS:					

TEACHING

1. The content of the workshops was good.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The material was presented well.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The material could be understood easily.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The material covered the subject discussed in an adequate manner.	1	2	3	4	5

5. The presentations showed adequate preparation.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The presentations showed variety.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The presentations showed creativity.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The presentations showed flexibility.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The teaching style was relaxed and comfortable.	1	2	3	4	5

COMMENTS:

APPEARANCE

1. His appearance was always good.	1	2	3	4	5
2. He appeared relaxed and confident.	1	2	3	4	5
3. His appearance gave the impression of pride and confidence.	1	2	3	4	5
4. He did not appear too self-confident about his appearance.	1	2	3	4	5

COMMENTS:

Sources: Storms, 118-119; Aubey, 138-141.

E. SMALL GROUP LEADER'S MONTHLY REPORT AND EVALUATION

1. Leader's Name _____ Date _____
2. Number of Meetings This Month _____
3. Day and Time of Group _____ Location _____
4. Type of Group _____
5. How (from 1-5, with 1 being "bad" and 5 being "terrific") 6. Do you feel about the group? _____
7. What percentage of group time do you use for:
 - _____ Group building
 - _____ Growth in Relationship with God (Study, Worship, Prayer)
 - _____ Outreach (Evangelism and Mission)
 - _____ Other _____
8. What kind of issues is your group working through? _____
8. What worries you about the group? _____
10. What brings you joy about the group? _____
11. In what ways is your group growing
 - ☐ in love for each other?
 - ☐ in love for God?
 - ☐ in desire for and implementation of outreach?

LEADER'S SELF-EVALUATION

React as honestly as you can to the following self-evaluation. For each character quality you will circle a number, from 1-5, based on your perception of yourself-choosing 1 indicates something that you do poorly, 5 indicates something that you do extremely well.

1. Relationship with God					
Desire for God's will	1	2	3	4	5
Willingness to let God have control	1	2	3	4	5
Humility	1	2	3	4	5
2. Relationship with Self					
Self-confident	1	2	3	4	5
Aware of strengths and weaknesses	1	2	3	4	5
Risk-taking	1	2	3	4	5
Ethical	1	2	3	4	5
3. Relationship with Others					
Nurturing	1	2	3	4	5
Sensitive in listening	1	2	3	4	5
Vulnerable	1	2	3	4	5
Serving	1	2	3	4	5
Willing to give leadership away	1	2	3	4	5
Time and energy	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX F

GROUP'S COMMITMENT AND POLICIES FORM

The greatest advantage to small group Bible study is found in the mutual sharing and growth through the close Christian fellowship there. But such sharing and growth assume a certain degree of accountability among the small group members. To get started on the right foot, take a few minutes to fill in the blanks below with your group's decisions on the following details. Your signature indicates your willingness to be accountable to your group in the four areas indicated.

MEETING TIME, PLACE & DURATION _____
TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENT _____
FACILITIES (parking, restrooms, etc.) _____
GROUP LEADERSHIP _____
MATERIALS & BIBLE VERSION(S) _____
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT _____
REFRESHMENTS (Who, What & When) _____
CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENT _____
VISITORS' NAMES TO INVITE _____
GROUP MEMBERS' NAMES & PHONE NUMBERS _____

PARTICIPANT'S COMMITMENT

1. ATTENDANCE:

To give priority to group meetings. Be present and on time. In case of emergency, inform the host of your absence.

2. PARTICIPATION:

To help build a sense of oneness in the group by sharing "your story" and offering your opinions and insights.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY:

To keep things shared within the group in strict confidence. Personal information shared during sessions should not be repeated without permission.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY:

To allow fellow group members to hold you accountable for goals that you set for yourself in connection with this study.

5. OPEN CHAIR:

The group stays open to new people as long as they understand the ground rules. The guidelines for filling the open chair in our group will be.

6. APPRENTICE LEADER(S):

We will strive to identify and develop the apprentices in our group.

7. OTHER:

For the agreed time, we will seek to serve one another by sharing some or all of the following roles and responsibilities: leader, apprentice(s), subgroup leaders, host/hostess, prayer coordinator, event planner, administrator, service project coordinator, et cetera.

_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____
Leader		Apprentice

APPRENTICE/CO-READER'S DUTY

ASSIGNMENT: To assist the group leader in leading, facilitating, and equipping the members of a group so that together they will fulfill their group mission.

QUALIFICATION

1. Member of our church, or active non-member.
2. Person with desire to exercise his/her spiritual gifts.
3. One who shares and believes in the vision of the church to disciple others through small group ministry.
4. One who is teachable.
5. One who has an ability to communicate well with others.
6. One who possesses spiritual maturity as assessed by the pastoral staff.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Recruit a host/hostess to see that child care, refreshments, and appropriate seating for the group is available.

2. Follow up with all prospects and members through personal visits, phone calls, and correspondence.
3. Set out an open chair for each meeting as a constant reminder to the group of the need for new participants and new conversion growth.
4. Maintain unity, agreeing not to teach or practice those things which are contrary to the teachings of the church.
5. Accept responsibility for developing relationships with (and extending invitations to) the group, and to unchurched, and unbelieving people.
6. Submit a monthly report to the coordinator for your group.
7. Birth a new group when sufficient growth occurs.
8. Pray for each member and prepare for each meeting.
9. Notify pastoral staff of acute crisis conditions requiring response.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

1. The apprentice reports to the group leader.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Orientation 4-6 sessions.
2. Monthly ongoing training with the other leaders.
3. Take advantage of the training opportunities as they become available.

SIGNATURE _____

APPENDIX G

MISSION STATEMENT FORM

Damascus Grace Fellowship
A Contemporary Seventh-day Adventist Congregation

Our mission: We love people

We will
Love people and
Organize ourselves to
Value and
Encourage
others, especially youth and the unchurched,
to become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Source: J. David Newman, *Syllabus for CHMN 623*,
"Innovative Evangelism," Andrew University,
Summer 1998, 27.

A statement of mission for the _____ church.

It is the purpose and mission of this church to witness to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, as a Christian church in our community the special message entrusted to us as Seventh-day Adventists, and to win as many as to Christ and His message as God shall enable us to do.

It is our purpose that this church shall be a transforming fellowship in which the members can go on to maturity in Christ and to equip them for Christian service according to their gifts and abilities.

Source: Arnold Kurtz, *Syllabus for CHMN 727*, "Leadership for Church Organizations," in Lassew Dennis Raelly, "The Development of Theologically Undergirded Strategy for Mission Employing Small Group Structure in the SDA Church in Zambia" (D.Min dissertation, Andrews University, 1981), 131.

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