Revitalization of the Christian Leader: A Model for Building Learning Environments Conducive to Personal Change [Dissertation Notice]

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Christian leadership training for pastors, missionaries, and lay leaders is mostly patterned after academic, business, military, and government models. This leads to a pragmatic, secular, and American approach to building churches and advancing the Kingdom of God. Secular models of leadership training can inform and supplement but never usurp scriptural principles and values. The best Christian leadership training pattern is the one Jesus created to train the twelve Apostles. This model is found predominately in the Gospels. The template this writer will follow is based on A. B. Bruce’s 19th-century seminal work, *The Training of the Twelve*. This training model is built on Christ’s instruction to the Twelve in four stages: the calling of the spiritual leader, the character of a spiritual leader, the competence of a spiritual leader, and the commission of a spiritual leader.


The busyness of a vibrant church gives little time for Christian leaders to focus on self-improvement. While thriving in their pastoral duties, ministry leaders can easily ignore the deficient areas of their lives. These Christian leaders need an opportunity to reflect on life and ministry, clarifying hopes and dreams, as well as personal issues that hold them back. This project sought to create an environment where the lead pastor and pastoral staff at Evangel Temple Christian Center in Springfield, Missouri, could reflect on life and ministry, establish a holistic approach to personal change, and create a specific plan for change. The goal was to put into the hands of these leaders a value-based system for organizing the details they will use to establish a personal plan for change. Using the personage and the writings of Moses, as well as current personal change literature, the participants were shown the flaws of a single-focused system (a central focus on the welfare of the church), and encouraged to consider the value of a multi-focused system based on eight life values (spirituality, health and wellness, relationships, personal growth, activities and interests, service to others, work, and possessions). The writings of Moses on the Sabbath and the Shema encouraged the participant to practice self-care as a biblical precedent. Through a seminar format, the participants entered a reflective environment, began self-discovery, and learned the skills that make personal change possible (gaining perspective holistically, taking ownership of the personal change process, increasing commitment, and finding inspiration). This project successfully achieved its purpose in providing a learning environment for Christian leaders seeking personal change.