

PART THREE: THE TRAINING MANUAL

SEMINAR ONE: An Invitation to Diagnosis Focus: What's working? What's not working?

Welcome to the adventure! We're glad you accepted the invitation, as many have before us. The first invitation was extended by Jesus himself in Matthew 4:17-22: *From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.*¹

There is a point in our journey toward spiritual maturity that we become concerned about what Jesus wants, and it becomes our desire to please him with our behavior. This flows out of a basic concept of the church: *Jesus is Lord*. We have a desire to *repent*, to turn toward Jesus Christ and away from all other directions, and then move toward him. As we focus on him in our desire to do what pleases him, we hear his calling: *Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men*. We who once spread nets for fish will now be taught to spread nets for human beings. That is the call. The same call is extended to James and John, who are *mending the nets*; that, too, is a part of fishing.

The outcome of all this fishing is well expressed in the vision of our Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference: *"All the physically and spiritually hungry people of our world feasting on God's abundant grace at God's table so that they experience God's unconditional love for them, are formed in that love, and are sent to live and share that love with the individuals and institutions of our world."*² That's the end result of all this fishing - all are present at the table. God desires not only that no one be excluded, but that no one be absent. All people are valuable to God, and Jesus lived, died and rose for all of them.

These three seminars on making disciples for Jesus Christ are in service of this

¹All quotations of the Bible are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright 1952 [2nd edition, 1971] by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

²Illinois Great Rivers Conference, *Vision, Mission, and Strategies*, <http://www.igrc.org/conference/vision.html> (accessed June 15, 2007).

vision. There are a variety of methods of fishing for people, and some are more effective than others. The church growth movement began when Donald MacGavran, a missionary supervisor in India, “lamented that so much activity was taking place in the name of evangelism but that very few disciples were being made.”³ He began to study what was working. At that time there were few examples of success to study as the vast majority of his missionaries were ineffective at fishing for souls. Most of our efforts today are similarly ineffective. As missionaries repented of methods which did not work and humbled themselves to adopt methods that did work, the lost began coming to the table in greater numbers. The church of today needs to similarly and humbly repent.

The priority of making disciples in the United Methodist Church is clearly stated in ¶120 of the Book of Discipline: *The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.*⁴ The purpose of these three seminars is to help this statement to become true for as many of our churches as will hear the call of Jesus. It is our goal for our local churches to again become vibrant centers of fishing for people, so that all might be present at the table of the Lord. Where we are not the best, we will humble ourselves and learn from the best. It’s time to return to the most basic principles to learn how to fish for people.

In the Diagnosis seminar we will encounter principles from the world’s largest and fastest growing churches and explore the fit between them and our own local church settings. We will look at what’s working and what’s not working in creation using templates which will reveal patterns within the data.⁵ This will give us new concepts and terms to describe what happens in churches in order to clearly communicate and diagnose problems. The Dialogue seminar will review overcoming resistance to change. The final Decision seminar will describe simple tools for effective disciple making.

The three seminars in this project utilize a process of learning based on sociological research into cultural change known as the *Diffusion of Innovations*.⁶ It is organized by an educational methodology well suited for innovative people known as *Understanding by Design* and described in Module Eight of Seminar One.⁷

What is the one essential quality found by United Methodist researchers in the later sixties, always found without exception in every growing church, and never found in any declining or plateaued church? The first exercise answers this question!

Let’s begin!

³Thom Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches: Successful Churches Reveal What Works and What Doesn’t* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1996), 169.

⁴Harriet Jane Olson, ed., *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2004* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2004), 87.

⁵An example of a template would be the lines representing states, counties or highways that overlay weather satellite photos or Doppler radar on television; the template is not a part of the data, nor does it change or interact with the data, but reveals important aspects of the data.

⁶Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 1995).

⁷Grant P. Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 1998).

The Center for Parish Development Principle for Church Growth

In 1984 I participated in training by Paul Dietterich of the Center for Parish Development, a United Methodist think tank in Naperville, Illinois. During a break, he shared with me the results of some of their research in evangelism. They built a sample of growing churches of all types to compare with a matching sample of plateaued or declining churches. Whenever a characteristic found in growing churches was also found in a declining church, they took it off their list. The goal of that particular study was to determine the essential characteristics of a growing church. At this point I began to lose interest because I knew dozens of effective, proven methods to organize a church for growth.

He told me that this particular study found that *there was only one* essential characteristic, found *always* in every growing church *without exception* and *never* found in any declining or plateaued church. At this point he had my full attention.

The one characteristic:

This is about:

The _____	1. _____
are _____	2. _____
about what is _____	3. _____
in _____ church.	4. _____

In 1994 I was a little burned out. I had been practicing what I had considered to be the state of the art in church growth for nine years and, while that church loved me, there was little numerical growth. When I was informed that I was moving to a new church I decided to ignore everything else I knew and focus on developing this one essential characteristic.

I became a steward of _____.

The results in the new church:

Attendance average in 1993:	_____
Average attendance growth, first six months:	_____ %
Average attendance growth thereafter:	_____ %
Community growth 1994-1998 (new water meters)	_____ %
Average attendance in 2005:	_____

IN YOUR OPINION, WHY DID THIS WORK?

Take some time now to discuss your theories.

(Answers for the blanks are on the next page of the Training Manual.)

MODULE ONE: THE REINFORCING LOOP

Section 1. The Center for Parish Development Church Growth Principle:

The *laity* are *excited* about what is *happening* in *their* church.

This is about *leverage, emotions, actions* and *ownership*.

I became a steward of *lay excitement*.

The results in the new church: *135, 18%, 6%, 5%, 267*.

WHY WOULD THIS WORK? One answer is that excitement creates positive “word of mouth” recommendations of the church in hundreds of conversations members have with others from week to week.⁸ Positive conversations multiply through a relational network. This is a very powerful form of marketing. Diffusion of innovations research indicates that 84% of a given population group are influenced toward change only by conversations with trusted peers. *Conversations change lives*.

HOMework Discussion Questions:

1.01 *What do your people in your church get excited about?*

*(Remember: what excites **them** might not excite **us**!)*

1.02 *How does your church disrespect other people’s excitement?*

1.03 *How do you disrespect other people’s excitement?*

1.04 *Is there a person in your church that deflates excitement?*

1.05 *Are there slogans or sayings used in your church to deflate excitement?*

1.06 *How is your church doing as a steward of lay excitement?*

1.07 *What do you believe your church members are saying about the church? What percent of these conversations would you guess are positive or negative?*

Section 2. The Reinforcing Loop in Peter Senge’s *Limits to Growth* Archetype:

Life organizes itself into systems.⁹ Peter Senge describes basic patterns or archetypes which become building blocks of complex systems. One archetype, *Limits to Growth*, describes how systems limit growth, including church growth.¹⁰

Some helpful definitions for Peter Senge’s *Limits to Growth* Systems Archetype:

Reinforcing Loop Process: *an increasingly stressful trend, positive or negative.*

It cycles but with a direction, like a hurricane rotates but moves forward. Attempts to

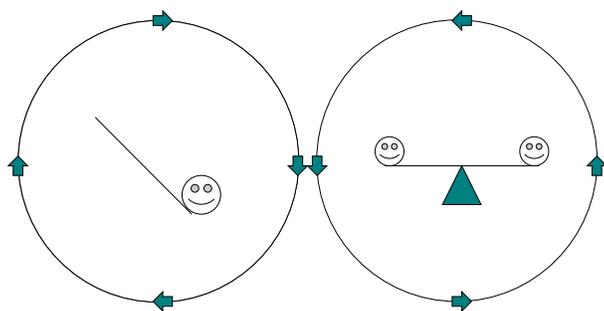
⁸Recent research on large church growth supports the role of lay excitement as a cause of growth in the Center for Parish Development Church Growth Principle. Scott Thumma, Dave Travis, and Warren Bird, *Megachurches Today 2005: Summary of Research Findings*, http://www.hartfordinstitute.org/megachurch/megastoday2005_summaryreport.html (accessed June 15, 2007), 11, 17. Cf. Bill Easum and Bil Cornelius, *Go Big: Lead Your Church to Explosive Growth* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 45-46.

⁹For an excellent introduction to how networks self-organize in nature and human culture, see Albert-László Barabási, *Linked: How Everything Is Connected to Everything Else and What It Means for Business, Science and Everyday Life* (New York: Penguin Group, 2003). Cf. Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996), 10-11.

¹⁰Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art And Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 79-88, 95-104, 124-126, 227-232, 379-380, 389-390.

help a church grow are changes brought by the reinforcing loop.

Balancing Loop Process: keeps things stable, functional, comfortable, predictable and running smoothly; this state of normal functioning is called **Homeostasis**. The balancing loop is very capable of preventing any change that might overwhelm homeostasis and destabilize the system. Resistance to change takes place in the balancing loop. Resistance increases sufficiently to prevent change.



The image for a reinforcing loop is a snowball rolling downhill increasing in momentum and intensity.

The image for a Balancing Loop is a teeter-totter; happiness is keeping everything in balance.

Balancing Loop

Emerging Trend
Brings Change
Exciting
Conductors
Leadership
Big Picture
Vision
Proactive
Responds to Potential
Entrepreneurial
Ready to gamble
Visionary Minority (16%)

Reinforcing Loop

Smooth Cycles
Preserves Stability
Comforting
Resisters¹¹
Management
Micro-managers
Details
Reactive
Responds to Anxiety
Institutional
Risk averse
Pragmatic Majority (84%)¹²

Ignores Limits

Out of control

Pushes the trend

Prevents Competency Limits

Under control

Thermostat Correction

Competency Limit: When the system has grown so large that it can no longer function, it becomes incompetent, unstable, dysfunctional and painful; survival is truly threatened by disaster. A system, therefore, that fully utilizes capacity is very inefficient and even in danger, as it has no reserve capacity to deal with crisis. The existence of a realistic threat to survival is an indicator that the limit of system competence has been

¹¹John Ortberg, *God Is Closer Than You Think* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 139-141.

¹²Diffusion of innovations research segments a social system in a standard bell curve distribution based on signature differences in openness to change. This project combines innovators and early adopters into a **visionary minority** and middle adopters, late adopters and laggards into a **pragmatic majority**.

reached. The balancing process is overwhelmed and cannot cope with a trend of change originating in the reinforcing process.

Thermostat Correction: *The balancing loop reacts long before necessary to retain control and prevent the pain of reaching a Competency Limit. Anxiety, not reality, triggers this response to keep the system in the “comfort zone” of homeostasis.*

Pushing the Trend: *The reinforcing loop pushes the trend, attempting to overwhelm the balancing response with urgency; by artificially stimulating anxiety, a Thermostat Correction is triggered earlier than necessary.*

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions

1.08 *What are some examples of reinforcing loops and balancing loops in your experience?*

1.09 *List as many people as you can (up to twelve) who are the strongest examples of the reinforcing process at your church. Number them in order of intensity and reorder your list.*

Section 3. Heylighen’s Generalized Peter Principle:

The largest church in a given human community demonstrates Heylighen’s Generalized Peter Principle, which states that “*in evolution systems tend to develop up to the limit of their adaptive competence.*”¹³ The size of a population in nature is determined by the limits of the environment and the competency of the system to manage and thrive within those limits. Ultimately, any system can grow only to the limit of its competence. Beyond that point the ability of the balancing process system to maintain viability begins to break down; it is no longer able to cope with reality. Church size is limited by church competence.

Changes that become challenges to survival arise in the reinforcing process; life always involves challenges. The balancing process in creation exists to prevent these challenges from destroying system stability.

Yoido church has attained a functional size of 700,000 members while continuing to maintain a functional homeostasis. Problems and challenges have occurred, but the balancing process has been able to cope without the necessity of shrinking to a smaller size church. Yoido church demonstrates the upper level of adaptive competence and homeostasis with regard to church size. The largest church indicates what is possible in a given human community; it is a good place to learn methods for growth.

Largest Church Learning Principle: *Wherever we are the best, we will share freely with the rest. Wherever we are not the best, we are eager to learn from the best.*

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

1.10 *What is the largest church in your community? How large is the worship attendance? How is that church different than yours? How is that church similar? What do you believe are the reasons this church has such a high level of adaptive competence?*

¹³Francis Heylighen, “The Generalized ‘Peter Principle,’” *Principia Cybernetica Web*, ed. F. Heylighen, C. Joslyn, and V. Turchin, <http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/PETERPR.html> (accessed June 12, 2007).

1.11 *What do you believe that you could learn from the largest church in your community? If you are the largest church, how could you benefit other churches in your community?*

1.12 *What questions would you want to ask at the largest church in your community? In the state? In the United States? In the world?*

1.13 *Consider the ministries of your church; make a list. What do you believe your church to be known for in the community? What ministries of your church would you consider among the best in your community? How could you prove that high evaluation to others?*

1.14 *What do you consider the boundaries of your church's community? In order to grow, should you widen your territory and become more regional in your thinking? Or should you decrease your territory and become more locally focused?*

1.15 *What would it be like if the emerging trend did overwhelm the competency limit? How serious a problem would this be? Can you think of examples where this has happened?*

1.16 *What challenges would you anticipate for your church should it suddenly and inexplicably grow in size? How would your church likely respond to each challenge? What would you expect would happen, based on your observation of other churches?*

1.17 *Does it bother you to link the concept of "best church" with "largest church?" Why or why not?*

Section 4. The Discipleship System: *The primary evangelistic strategy of the 21st century is the establishment of new faith communities . . . A faith community is created when a worship experience is tied to a discipleship system. A worshiping group without a discipleship system is not a faith community; it is simply a place to worship God. A faith community intentionally creates settings that link worship to discipleship and spiritual formation.*¹⁴

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?

A. A Discipleship System delineates the path for a disciple from the world, into the church and onward to maturity. One aspect of the adaptive competence of a church is the quality of the Discipleship System. Discipleship Systems cooperate with God's work of making disciples in prevenient grace, justifying grace and sanctifying grace. A quality Discipleship System vastly increases system competence which overcomes systemic *Limits to Growth*, and the reinforcing process fills in the extra capacity with new members.

B. A quality Discipleship System smoothly moves new disciples through the stages of spiritual maturation.¹⁵ The Book of Discipline suggests four stages of maturity:

¹⁴Craig Kennet Miller, *NextChurch.Now: Creating New Faith Communities* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2000), 6. Cf. Craig Kennet Miller, "Creating New Faith Communities" in *Congregational Development Manual*, under <http://www.umcncd.org/manual/creatingnewfaithcom.html> (accessed June 15, 2007).

¹⁵One author who has written on this topic is Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples A Few At A Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 75-118.

Christians experience growth and transition in their spiritual life just as in their physical and emotional lives. While this growth is always a work of grace, it does not occur uniformly. Spiritual growth in Christ is a dynamic process marked by awakening, birth, growth, and maturation. This process requires careful and intentional nurture for the disciple to reach perfection in the Christian life. There are stages of spiritual growth and transition: Christian beginnings; Christian birth; Christian growth; and Christian maturity. These require careful and intentional nurture for the disciple to come to maturity in the Christian life and to engage fully in the ministry of all Christians.¹⁶

The world's largest churches have very competent Discipleship Systems.

C. Fully utilizing a Discipleship System is a major change for most churches. These churches utilize a more traditional approach which could be called a **proclamation paradigm**, sometimes known as an “attraction paradigm” or “come structure.” In this paradigm of church, believers invite the world to come to the church to hear the gospel. The focus of the proclamation oriented church is on the event of worship in the temple rather than on the process of discipleship within a network of people. In churches based on Discipleship Systems, followers of Jesus go into the world and bring the gospel to the people, and then bring new believers into the church for teaching and maturation.

D. Structural Principle: *The problem is not to change or replace structure but to utilize existing structures for disciple making. Systems usually prevent changes to structures.*

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

1.18 The Book of Discipline quote above lists four stages of Christian maturity. Would you use more or fewer stages? What would you name each stage?

1.19 What would you say are the steps toward maturity in the Discipleship System currently in use in your church? What is the highest level of maturity sought and taught?

1.20 What is a realistic description of a person at the highest level of spiritual maturity possible? What would a camera see them doing? What would you imagine a typical day or week be like for such a person? Where could you find written descriptions of such a person?

1.21 Consider the structural principle above; what components of your church would you identify as directly involved in making and/or maturing disciples for Jesus Christ?

1.22 What parts of your church are not directly involved in making or maturing disciples for Jesus Christ?

1.23 How could disciple making be added to these activities?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:

1.01 BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Read the *Project Introduction* for an overview of this project, statistics on church membership and on cell church growth.¹⁷

¹⁶Paragraph 134, *Book of Discipline 2004*, 91-92.

¹⁷David O. Kueker, “Project Introduction,” <http://www.disciplewalk.com/Resources.html> (accessed June 18, 2007).

1.02 JOURNAL: Record your reflections and document your answers to the *Questions for a Better Understanding* found on page 139 with regard to the information in this module.

1.03 SANCTIFIED BATTING ORDER EXERCISE: If you are a baseball fan, you know that there are nine players on a team. Each has a position to play, special gifts and abilities and a specialized role to play on the team. The batting order is the order in which they come up to the plate, one by one, to face the pitcher. Baseball players hit as a team. Each one follows another in a designated order to achieve a common objective: get a player on base and then get that player home to score.

In the United Methodist Church, pastors assigned to your church function like a Sanctified Batting Order. They are appointed to your church by the bishop to do the Lord's business. It is not the individual effort of any one pastor, however, that wins a game. No pastor hits a home run each time up to bat. Some pastors strike out; the best players strike out twice as often as they get a hit. When a pastor is successful at getting on base, it's up to that pastor's successor to get a hit to bring that player home to score a run. Success is not found in the play of any one pastor, but in the sequence of pastors.

The Sanctified Batting Order Exercise helps you gather data on the experience of the last nine pastors appointed to your church. (Your current pastor is ninth in the batting order.) This information will help you to recognize trends developing through the last nine appointments.

Using statistics from the Annual Conference Journals for each year, build a spreadsheet table of the following statistics for each year of the Sanctified Batting Order period. Have columns for years and put the following in twenty-two horizontal rows: *Membership at the beginning of the year. Members lost by removal, church conference action, by death, by transfer; total members lost. New members by confession of faith, by transfer; total members gained. Average attendance. Membership at close of year. Number of baptisms. Church school attendance, leaders; total attendance. Membership of UMM and UMW. Apportionments, Indebtedness, total Benevolences, Grand total paid.*

QUESTIONS FOR EACH PASTORAL ERA:

Pastor: _____ Arrival date: _____ Departure date: _____
Position in the Batting Order: # _____

1. What were the circumstances that led to a new pastor arriving?
2. What major church events occurred during this pastor's tenure? (List at least three.) What words could describe the emotional state of the church during these events? *Positive, negative, anxious, excited, fearful, courageous, worried, energetic?*
3. What major historical events happened during that tenure, either nationally or in the community, which could have affected the church?
4. Describe the pastor and the pastor's family living in the parsonage, their ages, and major events in the pastor's family during this pastor's tenure.
5. Things started? Things ended?
6. Significant people arrive? Significant people depart?
7. What other questions would help identify patterns in your church history?
8. What can be learned from the statistics during this pastor's tenure?

MODULE TWO: THE FOUR PRIORITIES OF CELL CHURCHES

Section 1. Cell Parable: A Thousand People in a Field

Imagine two grassy fields; put a thousand people in each of them.

In the first field are a thousand church members. People being social, they will begin to gather into groups of like-minded friends. When the size of a group is about a dozen, hand them some excellent curriculum. If they do something with the curriculum, they are a small group.

The thousand people in the second field are an army. Each person present knows the following intimately:

- Who commands the army, who commands them, and who they command.*
- Their unit - who is in it, their position in it, and their unit's in the whole.*
- They have clear orders (little picture) and a clear mission (big picture).*
- They have the training and equipment necessary to fulfill their orders and the mission.*
- They have had lots of supervised practice to develop all necessary skills.*
- There are clearly understood customs of etiquette, clear rules, routine and structure.*
- There are clear consequences for disobedience.*
- There are identifying insignia: unit, rank, skill, campaign ribbons, medals and other means to reward and recognize merit and experience.*

The army has a commitment to win, moral courage, and is prepared to engage in a life and death struggle. They are ready to risk their lives, follow orders, fight, and, if need be, to die. Now give the people in each field an important task, such as the evangelization of a lost world. What will happen next?

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

2.01 Which field most represents small groups in your home church? Who in your church would enjoy or prefer the field where work is highly organized and structured? Who in your church would prefer the field without structure? Why, in your opinion?

*2.02 Consider the list of characteristics of the army - what "each person knows intimately." How difficult would it be to achieve this level of clarity and commitment within **some** of the members of your church? Would it be possible?*

2.03 Have you ever experienced this level of organization in your personal life? Was it a positive or negative experience?

2.04 Is there an organization in your community that has this kind of discipline? Does this level of organization help or hinder their purpose? (Hint: look for uniforms.)

2.05 What could a church with that kind of discipline and organization accomplish? What problems in your local church would a higher level of discipline and organization solve? What problems would a higher level of discipline and organization cause?

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?

A. The world's largest churches are built around networks of small groups called cells. Joel Comiskey defines a cell church as "a church that has placed evangelistic small groups

at the core of its ministry.’ The word ‘evangelistic’ is crucial to this definition.”¹⁸

Organizing in this manner seems to be necessary for growth over 20,000 members to occur. Cell churches are highly organized to accomplish their evangelistic task and work in both prevenient and sanctifying grace. While each cell will differ, the common purpose is always to directly help people find Christ, grow in spiritual maturity and make their own disciples.

B. Cell Churches are highly organized and disciplined. This raises the level of quality and competence, and the church grows to fill that capacity. Cells are far more than small groups. Cells are linked by a highly effective supervisory structure that carefully manages growth and overcomes resistance to change. If this supervisory structure is not built, growth will plateau due to a competency limit. The larger size of a gigantic cell church requires that it be organized in a different way in order to function at a high level of quality.

C. The world’s largest church is Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea, a cell church with over 700,000 members. Yoido worship service average attendance is 153,000 in the main facility.¹⁹ Their sanctuary will seat twelve thousand, while another twelve thousand worship in twelve chapels on campus with the service broadcast on large video screens. (Another hundred thousand worship in nineteen regional chapels off site where the worship service is projected on a large screen; worship is also broadcast on television and the internet throughout Korea.) There are seven services on Sundays. The worship is so crowded as to be uncomfortable by American cultural standards and there have been years where “the average member has to wait at least one hour in a long line just to get a place to sit down in one of our seven services” on Sunday.²⁰

D. Not all churches in Korea are large; cell churches are surrounded and vastly outnumbered by the same sort of small churches that surround us in the United States. Cell churches have somehow been able to overcome barriers that cause resistance to growth in numbers. These gigantic churches are happy, effective, loving churches that perfectly meet the needs of their people, or they would have stopped growing and their people would have gone elsewhere.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

2.06 *What is your reaction to the statistics on the size of the world’s largest church?*

2.07 *What is your reaction to the idea of having to wait in line for an hour in order to get*

¹⁸Steve Cordle, *Church In Many Houses: Reaching Your Community Through Cell-Based Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 22. Steve Cordle is pastor of Crossroads United Methodist Church, <http://www.crossroadsumc.org/> (accessed June 14, 2007).

¹⁹Joel Comiskey, *Yoido Full Gospel Church*, <http://www.joelcomiskeygroup.com/articles/worldwide/yoido.htm> (accessed June 15, 2007).

²⁰Paul Yongji Cho with R. Whitney Manzano, *More Than Numbers* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984), 50. The facilities have since been expanded.

into the main sanctuary at your church?

2.08 What is your reaction to the concept that a Discipleship System could be so effective as to totally overwhelm the ability of a church to provide adequate worship space to worship together?

2.09 Would your church be comfortable worshipping in multiple services?

2.10 Would you be comfortable worshipping in an auditorium where the sermon was televised live on a large screen from another site?

E. I would never feel at home in such a large church . . .

Cell Parable: Major League Baseball

Rarely do people consider the advantages of a good Little League baseball game over Major League Baseball.

The Little League game is free. I attend with people I know and trust and we all can sit within 20 feet of the game. We all know each others' names, jobs, families and situation. No strangers are present, except for the other team. We can bring coolers of food and drinks from home, and often share them with each other. The bleachers are comfortable or you can bring your own lawn chairs. Everyone can sit within a few feet of the players.

The Major League game is expensive. All the other people in the stadium are strangers who I don't know or trust. You can't bring food and drinks from home; you have to stand in line and pay a high price for food. You have to pay to park and there's a huge traffic jam when the game's over.

Last week I explained to the officials at a Major League baseball stadium that the game shouldn't start until everyone in the stands had shaken hands and introduced themselves to each other so we wouldn't be strangers. They thought I was a kook.

Obviously, there is no future to professional baseball when you have such great fellowship at the little league level. It's cheap and it's easy, and my kid is the star. Who could ask for anything more?

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

2.11 Have you ever been to a major league baseball game? What was the attendance?²¹ Did it bother you to not know everyone else in the stadium? Was it enough to know the small group of people you attended the game with?

2.12 How would it make the experience different if you knew you would be separated from those you came with? If they were scattered throughout the stadium? What if your children were seated with strangers? What problems could you foresee? Would you have attended the game if you had been separated from your friends and family?

F. We attend major league sports in a small group, often our family. That meets our needs or we would not attend. The other people in the stadium are not our primary concern. Our concern is the small group community we are with and what happens down on the field.

²¹Average attendance at Busch Stadium for the St. Louis Cardinals in 2007 is 43,714. Average attendance at Wrigley Field for the Chicago Cubs in 2007 is 39,135. From *MLB Attendance Report: 2007*, <http://sports.espn.go.com/mlb/attendance> (accessed June 15, 2007).

The same concerns fuel large cell church growth.

THERE ARE MAJOR LEAGUE CHURCHES. MANY PEOPLE ATTEND THEM.

Some people are bothered by a large church of thousands of people; they don't like a big crowd. Well, there are going to be a lot of people in heaven and a lot of people in hell. Wherever you're going, you might as well get used to it. - Bishop Eddie L. Long

G. *Our focus here is to discover what's working.* If we adopt cell church priorities we might find that we also are developing home grown methods that overcome our own limitations to growth. It's easy to get stuck imitating someone else's methods and not understand the purpose that underlies those methods. It's likely that the priorities by themselves are sufficient to raise the level of adaptive competence in United Methodist churches and make room for growth. The rest of this module answers two questions: *What are the priorities of these major league churches? How do they differ from ours?*²²

H. What are some examples of cell churches in the United States?

Dale Galloway used the Yoido 5x5 system to build New Hope Community Church of Portland, Oregon, to more than five thousand persons in cells from 1972 to 1990.²³

Bethany World Prayer Center, near Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was inspired by the Elim Church 5x5 system and had a net growth of six hundred families in 1993, their first year of cell ministry. In four years they had gained a net growth of two thousand families. Their average worship attendance in 2005 is eight thousand persons.²⁴

Ginghamsburg United Methodist Church of rural Dayton, Ohio, grew from an attendance of ninety in 1979 to a congregation in 2006 of more than four thousand in weekly attendance.²⁵ It is still located on a rural county road miles from any large population center and has utilized a cell driven approach since the early days under Pastor

²²For an excellent chart identifying differences between traditional and cell churches, see Ralph W. Neighbor, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here? A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church*, 10th Anniversary ed. (Houston: Touch Publications, 1990), 76.

²³Elmer Towns, *An Inside Look at 10 of Today's Most Innovative Churches: What They're Doing, How They're Doing It & How You Can Apply Their Ideas in Your Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990), 35-41. Cf. Dale E. Galloway, *20/20 Vision: How to Create a Successful Church* (Portland, OR: Scott Publishing Co., 1986). Cf. William Easum, *Dancing With Dinosaurs: Ministry in a Hostile and Hurting World* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 62-66.

²⁴Larry Stockstill, *The Cell Church: Preparing Your Church For The Coming Harvest* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1998), 22. Hartford Institute for Religion Research, *Database of Megachurches in the U.S.*, <http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/database.html> (accessed October 29, 2007). Bethany is now the primary proponent of the G12 system in the United States. Cf. Bethany Cell Church Network, *BCCN: The Bethany Cell Church Network*, <http://www.bccn.com/> (accessed June 12, 2007).

²⁵Michael Slaughter, *Spiritual Entrepreneurs: Six Principles for Risking Renewal* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 14-15, 72-75, 122-123, 131-134. Weekly participation in 2006 averages over four thousand with seven weekend worship services. Cf. *Ginghamsburg Key Staff Directory: Mike Slaughter*, http://ginghamsburg.org/staff/?tx_wecstaffdirectory_pi1%5Bcurstaff%5D=83 (accessed June 18, 2007).

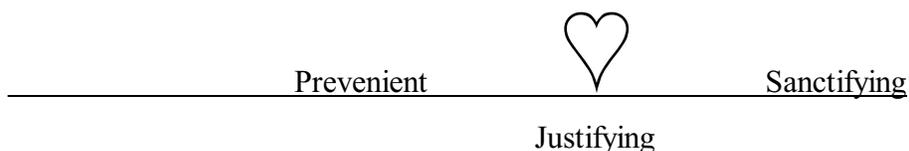
Michael Slaughter.²⁶ Willow Creek Community Church, with an average worship attendance of 23,500, and Saddleback Valley Community Church., with an attendance of 22,000, also meet the definition of a cell church as being built around networks of evangelistic small groups.²⁷

Joel Comiskey lists forty-four thriving cell churches in North America personally known to him, ranging in average worship attendance from 50 to 8,670.²⁸

Section Two: Grace and Evangelism

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: *Agree or disagree?*

A. There are three kinds of Grace.²⁹ Cell churches raise their level of adaptive competence by working diligently in all three kinds of grace.



Preventive Grace is God working to bring people to Christ; it's about *going and making disciples* (Matthew 28:19).

Justifying Grace is God making a person a Christian (Romans 3:24, 5:1, 10:9-10).

Sanctifying Grace is God working to mature people in Christ; it's about *teaching disciples to observe all that Christ has commanded* (Matthew 28:20).

B. Disciple making small groups cooperate with God in God's work for **both** Preventive and Sanctifying Grace. When churches utilize small groups, their purpose often focuses only on work in sanctifying grace; this limits the making of new disciples. The Great Commission commands cooperation with God in both preventive and sanctifying grace.

C. JUSTIFYING GRACE: How Does One Become a Christian?

In Justifying Grace we speak of a "before" and "after" experience. For some this experience is dramatic and a sudden shift of everything; they speak in terms of polar opposites, such as "once I was blind, now I see." For others, the sense of "before" and "after" is very clear, but a period of growth lies between during which Justifying Grace unfolds at the pace that God desires. Few people remember their own birth. Justifying

²⁶Ginghamsburg does their own version of cell; see Cell Group Community, <http://ginghamsburg.org/cell/> (accessed October 29, 2007). Cf. Easum, *Dancing With Dinosaurs*, 66-69.

²⁷Hartford Institute for Religion Research, *Database of Megachurches in the U.S.*, <http://hrr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/database.html> (accessed October 29, 2007).

²⁸Joel Comiskey, "Evidence You Can't Deny," <http://www.joelcomiskeygroup.com/articles/worldwide/NorthAmerica.htm> (accessed October 29, 2007).

²⁹Harriet Jane Olson, ed., *Distinctive Wesleyan Emphases*, <http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?mid=1812> (accessed June 15, 2007).

Grace is something that only God can do, but we can pray that God would do just that with a prayer like the one below.

D. The Centering Prayer: *Lord Jesus, today I am far less than the person I want to be or can be with your help. I ask today that you would be more and more the center of my life. Guide me to all that is good, cleanse me from all that is not. Teach me Your ways and form in me Your nature. Work through me to redeem my neighborhood. I am a sinner; please be my Shepherd, my Savior and my Lord. Amen.*

E. This Centering Prayer works whether we are asking for the first time to become a Christian or renewing our commitment to become a better Christian. It's meant to summarize all that it means to be a committed Christian, and ask God's help to be one.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

2.13 *What groups in your church are working with non-Christians? List them. Which of these groups have a specific focus on non-Christians becoming Christians?*

2.14 *What groups in your church are working with a focus on Christians? List them. Which of these groups have a specific focus on Christians becoming better Christians?*

2.15 *What other groups are in your church? List them. What is their focus?*

2.16 *How would you edit or improve the Centering Prayer to better express your understanding of grace, how one becomes a Christian and lives as a Christian?*

2.17 *How did you experience God in prevenient grace? Were other people a part of that experience? How do you experience God in sanctifying grace? Are other people involved?*

Section 3. Cell Church Priority #1: Jesus is Lord. Matthew 28:18: *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me . . ."*

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?

A. *Jesus is Lord* means that Jesus is the boss; Jesus is to be obeyed.

Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers' (Matthew 7:21-23).

B. The innovation most needed in our churches is very simple: **Jesus is Lord**. What does it mean for Jesus to be Lord?

Lordship leads to prayer which leads to goals which lead to action.

Goals are clear, specific, measurable and written.

Goals are behavioral and therefore visual; actions can be seen.

(Behavioral goals show behavior that a camera would see.)

C. Ginghamsburg Church motto: *If Jesus would vote "yes" then you cannot vote "no."*

D. Christian Schwarz: *The shortest list of quality characteristics I know of was given to*

me by the Korean pastor, David Yonggi Cho, in a telephone conversation: "Pray and obey." That is certainly one way to summarize the issue.³⁰

E. Corinne Ware: *The task of transformation is to find a way to keep the Sower's holy seed alive and continuously growing in us, to see that it takes deep root in the good soil of our open spirits.*³¹ Reading scripture is necessary to know the Lord's will.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

- 2.18 What are your church's goals? Are they in writing? Are they the result of prayer?
 2.19 Are these goals the primary focus of energy in your church? Of budget allocations?
 2.20 What percentage of your congregation would you estimate is aware of these goals? What percentage of your congregation is working to achieve these goals?
 2.21 What are your personal goals? Are they in writing? Are they the result of prayer? Are they the primary focus of your life? Your time? Your money?
 2.22 Do these goals reflect the teachings of Jesus? Of other scriptures?
 2.23 Do these goals indicate that Jesus is Lord of your church? Of your life?
 2.24 Are you comfortable or uncomfortable with the idea of Jesus as Lord?
 2.25 If Jesus was truly Lord of your life, what would be different? The same?
 2.26 If Jesus was truly Lord in the lives of all the active members of your church, what would be different? The same? What would a camera see?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:

2.01 BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Read *Chapter Two: Discipleship Systems* for more on discipleship systems, the history of the world's largest church and its principles for disciple making.³²

2.02 JOURNAL: Record your reflections and document your answers to the *Questions for a Better Understanding* found on page 139 with regard to the information on Priority #1.

2.03 CURRENT GOALS: If your church has no written goals, generate a list of goals based on what the church is doing now - on its current practice and habits. (If there are no written goals, then the goal is to perpetuate what is happening routinely.)

2.04 NEW TESTAMENT CHALLENGE: *Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31-32).*

³⁰Christian A. Schwarz, *Paradigm Shift in the Church: How Natural Church Development Can Transform Theological Thinking* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1999), 243.

³¹Corinne Ware, *Saint Benedict on the Freeway: A Rule of Life for the 21st Century* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 20.

³²David O. Kueker, "Chapter Two: Discipleship Systems," <http://www.disciplewalk.com/Resources.html> (accessed May 15, 2007).

The New Testament Challenge is to begin and finish reading the New Testament in the next three months. (The book of Revelation can be omitted due to the difficulty of its interpretation.) Reading an average of 18 chapters a week, less than three per day, will fulfill this goal. For most readers this will be less than 30 minutes per day. It's important to know the teachings of Jesus, especially what is commanded by Jesus for disciples in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. *As you read through the gospels, look for the commands of Jesus for his disciples. Mark, highlight or make a list of these commands.* Read as if reading a newspaper or a novel. You could study each verse in detail, but the goal is twofold: have an overview of the entire New Testament and focus on the verses which seem to have a particular interest to you as highlighted by the Holy Spirit. You might buy a new New Testament so that you can mark it specifically for the purposes of this study.

John Wesley: *I am distressed. I know not what to do. I see what I might have done once. I might have said peremptorily and expressly, "Here I am: I and my Bible. I will not, I dare not, vary from this book, either in great things or small. I have no power to dispense with one jot or tittle what is contained therein. I am determined to be a Bible Christian, not almost, but altogether. Who will meet me on this ground? Join me on this, or not at all."*³³

Section 4. Cell Church Priority #2: Evangelism or Working in Preventive Grace.

Matthew 28:19: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations . . .*

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?

A. Cell churches do not believe in limits to growth, but rather believe as Jesus said: *The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest* (Luke 10:2). The harvest is ready; what is lacking are the laborers.

B. In South America, the Elim Church in El Salvador used the Yoido system, known as the 5x5 model, to build a church of 130,000 members in 1999.³⁴ Note the fivefold purpose of the Elim Church memorized by every member:

1. *I have a purpose.*
2. *My purpose is winning souls.*
3. *I fulfill my purpose best in a group.*
4. *I will never be satisfied until I fulfill my purpose.*
5. *I have no promise of tomorrow.*³⁵

C. Every member in a cell church, without exception, is expected to be directly involved in

³³John Wesley, *Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity* (Sermon 116) in John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 7:287.

³⁴Billy Hornsby, *The Cell Driven Church: Bringing in The Harvest* (Mansfield, PA: Kingdom Publishing, 2000), 12-16.

³⁵Stockstill, *Cell Church*, 53. Cf. Hornsby, *Cell Driven Church*, 15, 35.

the making of new disciples and is fully supported in that task by the church's organizational structure. Every program of the cell church is subordinated to the goal of making disciples. The goal is generations of disciples making disciples making disciples (2 Timothy 2:2).

D. Ralph Neighbor: *"The typical church-goer relates to only five to eight people for at least one full hour per week per person, and half of those Christians cannot name a single unbeliever among their close friends. Many of them have not even made a new acquaintance in the past twelve months. They live in little personal bubbles, having no interest in people who live and work close to them."*³⁶ Noticing the lost is a key factor in evangelism. Who do you know that does not attend church?

E. Charles Spurgeon: *Even if I were utterly selfish, and had no care for anything but my own happiness, I would choose if I might under God to be a soul winner, for never did I know perfect overflowing, unalterable happiness of the purest and most enabling order till I first heard of one who had sought and found the Savior through my means.*³⁷

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

2.27 Do you agree or disagree with the Elim Church Purpose? How would your life change if this was your purpose?

2.28 How well is your church doing with each part of the Elim Church Purpose?

2.29 How is your church waiting for the world to come to it?

2.30 How is your church going out into the world? How will that lead to making disciples? Directly or indirectly?

2.31 When you go out into the world, what is your goal? How will that lead to making disciples? Directly or indirectly?

2.32 What part of going into the world is done with groups, and what by other means?

2.32 Identify activities of your church that do not make disciples. How could each activity be adapted to directly or indirectly make disciples? If it doesn't make disciples, why is your church doing it?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:

2.05 JOURNAL: Record your reflections and document your answers to the *Questions for a Better Understanding* found on page 139 with regard to the information on Priority #2.

2.06 LAST TWELVE MEMBER FAMILIES EXERCISE: List the last twelve new member families that joined your church as adult members. (Do not include youth joining after a confirmation class as their families are long term members.) Our goal is to learn the details of their journey into our church and onward to spiritual growth within our church.

³⁶Neighbor, *Where Do We Go*, 101. Emphasis in original. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, 35, indicates the average Christian has 8.5 weekly contacts with unbelievers.

³⁷Charles Spurgeon, *Soul-Winning Explained*, <http://www.spurgeon.org/misc/sw12.htm> (accessed June 15, 2007).

Create a list of family members, contact information and the date they joined the church. Contact them with the following questions:

How did you first learn of our church?

Think about the path into the church for you; what happened first? Next?

Who played an important role prior to your first attendance at worship?

What did they do that was important for you?

Who played an important role after your first attendance at worship?

What did they do that was important for you?

Who played an important role after you joined the church?

What did they do that was important for you?

What could have improved the experience of entering our church?

What sort of churches have been a part of your background prior to coming to our church? Size? Denomination? Location?

2.07 MAP THE PATH INTO THE CHURCH EXERCISE: With the information from the Last Twelve Members Exercise, identify the steps of the various “paths” into the church for the twelve families. Organize these steps into a flow chart that shows the typical path into your church, describing each step and the various options at each step. (Many churches will have multiple paths into the church; map them all.)

2.08 EVANGELISTICALLY GIFTED EXERCISE: Certain names will repeatedly be mentioned in the Last Twelve Member Families Assignment in response to the question about who played important roles in the lives of new members.

These persons likely have the spiritual gift of evangelism; they naturally reach out to others, invite them, include them and help them grow in faith. Peter Wagner estimates that 5-10% of church attenders have this gift.³⁸ Thriving churches fully utilize the gifts of persons gifted in the area of evangelism.

Who are the persons in our church with the gift of evangelism?

What are we doing to organize the use of their gifts?

Who seems to serve on certain places on the path into the church?

2.09 WHO DO YOU KNOW? In the coming week, list every person you talk with during the week. The goal is to identify the persons in your personal network. Be sure to include people who you see regularly but don’t know well, such as a person behind a cash register; if you greet them, put them on your list. This information will be useful later.

Section 5. Cell Church Priority #3: Leadership or Working in Sanctifying Grace.

Matthew 28:20: . . . *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.*"

An equipping track is a deliberate process of teaching in order to spiritually mature people. **Leadership Development through equipping tracks is a signature**

³⁸Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, 34-35.

characteristic of cell churches.³⁹ There are two basic approaches to organized learning in our culture:

	<i>Home school</i>	<i>(Coaching within cells)</i>
vs.	<i>Public school with gifted, professional teachers.</i>	<i>(Equipping tracks)</i>

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?

A. A clear equipping track is the signature indicator of a cell church because cells do not function without leaders or multiply without new leaders. The number of trained, disciple making leaders is the key limiting factor in making disciples.

B. “Going on to perfection” is measured by our becoming fully observant disciples of Jesus Christ. Disciples serve God in sanctifying grace, first for their own growth, and then to help grow others. True holiness is obedience; there can be no holiness without making disciples.

C. The leadership priority of the cell church insists that all members participate in leadership training experiences. Equipping tracks rapidly raise the quantity and quality of leaders in the church. And in the cell church *all* of these quality leaders are focused on evangelism and raising up leaders who are also focused on evangelism. Cell churches train workers for the harvest.

D. Members of the Elim Church who are experiencing dissatisfaction with their church are referred to line #4: *I will never be satisfied until I fulfill my purpose.* Neither will we in America. Dissatisfaction is often the result of disobedience to Christ’s commands.

E. Cell churches expect every mature Christian to directly help less mature Christians grow up in faith. Is this a realistic expectation in your church? Who is a better Christian because of your personal involvement in their life? What is their role in your life today?

F. Most common American secular equipping track⁴⁰

{ (besides public school): _____

{ Most famous American church equipping track:

{ Originated at: _____

{ Also known as: _____

{ Needs involvement in small groups, baseball diamond

{ retreats, gift identification, mission trips and ministry

{ fairs from: _____

³⁹Joel Comiskey, *Leadership Explosion* (Houston: Touch Publications, 2000) is the definitive work on cell church equipping tracks for leadership development.

⁴⁰Answers for blanks are found at the end of this section.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

- 2.33 *What, in your opinion, should a mature Christian know?* (Information)
What, in your opinion, should a mature Christian be able to do? (Skills)
Does a consensus form out of the discussion at your table?
- 2.34 *If Christianity were like Boy Scouting, what should be the merit badges Christians could learn and earn? List them, and then rank them in order of perceived difficulty.*
- 2.35 *What percentage of your church attenders have . . .*
- *habits of daily prayer - how many hours per week?*
 - *habits of daily scripture reading - how many chapters per week?*
 - *habits of daily Christian service - how many hours per week?*
 - *habits of daily evangelism - how many hours per week?*
 - *habits of nurturing young Christians - how many hours per week?*
- 2.36 *What percentage of your church attenders in your estimation would be able to . . .*
- *pray out loud with ease?*
 - *share the meaning of a Bible passage with confidence?*
 - *name their spiritual gift and how they are using it for the Lord?*
 - *name those to whom they are reaching out to find faith?*
 - *name those whom they are nurturing to grow in the faith?*
 - *name disciples their disciples have made?*
- 2.37 *How unusual do these concepts seem to you? To your church's normal practice and culture?*
- 2.38 *How many hours of equipping does your church offer for adults each week? How many hours of equipping does your pastor do each week? Is this sufficient to build a thriving church? What part of this activity focuses on making disciples and making disciple makers?*

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:

2.10 JOURNAL: Record your reflections and document your answers to the *Questions for a Better Understanding* found on page 139 and the information on Priority #3.

2.11 CURRENT EQUIPPING TRACK EXERCISE:

1. Reconsider the discussion of what a mature Christian should know and be able to do. Make a list of what, in your opinion, a mature Christian should know and be able to do. Discuss your list with others.
2. List all the learning groups and other opportunities for equipping that your church offers at this time.
3. Reorder your list into a flow chart which describes your church equipping track with levels which indicate how people graduate from one level of learning to a higher, more difficult level. (Don't be embarrassed if you only have one level; many churches offer opportunities only for the most elementary levels of faith.)
4. You can include in the list classes and activities which are offered irregularly. (Your church could easily repeat these learning opportunities more often.)
5. You can also include in your equipping track learning opportunities that have been offered in the past that you discovered as a part of the Sanctified Battling Order Exercise. (Your church could repeat these learning opportunities.)
6. Review your church equipping track and identify where more challenging

learning opportunities would be helpful to your members to learn the knowledge and develop the skills of more mature Christians.

7. Are there gaps in your equipping track where additional learning activities would be helpful? What important topics are not addressed?

8. Many churches have a pattern of “educating beyond obedience” or learning to satisfy curiosity but with no application or resulting change of behavior in life. Does your church follow a pattern of learning new information but never putting it into practice?

ANSWERS TO BLANKS IN PARAGRAPH F: *Boy Scouts, Saddleback Community Church, Purpose Driven Life, Purpose Driven Church.*

Section 6. Cell Church Priority #4: Cells

Matthew 18:20: *For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?

A. Cells are the preferred and primary means of making disciples in a cell church; they will not work unless the prior three priorities are in place. Institutions are not as effective; programs are not as effective. Joel Comiskey defines a cell church as “a church that has placed evangelistic small groups at the core of its ministry”. The word ‘evangelistic’ is crucial to this definition.”⁴¹ How far is this from being true in your church? What would close the gap?

B. Ralph Neighbor’s Crying Member Parable: *Sunday school class has started. About ten minutes into the lesson, class members begin to notice that a woman in the back row is crying very softly. When her weeping becomes obvious to everyone, the class leader gently asks what is wrong. She shares that her husband left her the night before and continues to cry inconsolably. What would happen next in your church?*⁴²

Cell groups are relational rather than task oriented. A cell is identified by its priority on people. There is no other task and no agenda more important than the needs of persons in the present moment; that is why cells are most like families.

C. Cells equip people for holy and healthy relationships with one another. In a cell just as in a family, the primary focus is the welfare of each person.⁴³

D. Cell groups are responsive rather than proactive. Honest conversations demand that we respond to others; if we truly listen, we can’t control the conversation.

⁴¹Cordle, *Church In Many Houses*, 22.

⁴²Ralph Neighbor, Jr., “New Wineskins for Future Churches,” *Audio and Video Training*, <http://www.touchusa.org/web/AVTraining/avtraining.html> (accessed June 15, 2007).

⁴³For a helpful definition of healthy nuclear and extended family relationships, cf. Mary Pipher, *The Shelter of Each Other: Rebuilding Our Families* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996). Pipher’s work offers insights to how some churches function as families.

E. Cell groups are spiritual nuclear families. They learn together, work together and love one another. Spiritual parents help spiritual children grow up to have their own children.

F. Laity who serve as spiritual parents vastly increase the competence of a local church to care for disciples. Often only pastors spiritually parent, which creates abandonment issues when there is a pastoral change.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

2.39 What groups in your church are working with a focus on non-Christians? How do these groups focus on helping non-Christians becoming Christians? What do they do instead?

2.40 What groups in your church are working with a focus on Christians? How do these groups focus on helping Christians become better Christians? What do they do instead?

2.41 Do your small groups produce people who are comfortable leading others spiritually?

2.42 Cell churches expect every Christians to be involved in a relational group that makes and matures disciples. Is this a realistic expectation for your church? Why or why not?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:

2.12 JOURNAL: Record your reflections and document your answers to the ***Questions for a Better Understanding*** found on page 139 with regard to the information on Priority #4.

2.13 GROUP EVALUATION: *The Great Commandment: Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39).*

The Great Commission: go, make disciples, baptize, teach them (Matthew 28:19-20).

1. List all the groups in your church on index cards or separate slips of paper. Don't forget decision making groups like committees, ministry groups like choirs and informal groups such as a group that routinely goes out to breakfast after church. Record the following on each:

2. Identify (tentatively) at least one leader for each group.

3. Give each group a score from 1 (low) to 10 (perfect) on each of the five categories based on the Great Commandment and the Great Commission:

#1. This group really helps its members love God.

#2. This group helps people love their neighbors.

#3. This group helps people love themselves.

#4. This group goes, makes disciples (Prevenient Grace).

#5. This group teaches disciples to obey Jesus (Sanctifying Grace).

4. Which new members can be traced to each group in the past two years?

5. What do the scores reveal about the group life in your church?

6. How are the group leaders linked and supported by the church organization?

MODULE THREE: FIVE TYPES OF AMERICAN CHURCHES

Section 1. The Discipleship System

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: *Agree or disagree?*

A. Churches can be identified and categorized by the relationship between the worship service and the Discipleship System and by the priority a church gives to each.

B. Traditional churches based on a proclamation model emphasize the worship aspect of a faith community and minimize the role of the Discipleship System. Biblical support for the proclamation model is found in Mark 16:15: *And he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation."* The proclamation model focuses on worship and preaching to meet the spiritual needs of people. Its greatest success was on the day of Pentecost when three thousand people got saved after Peter preached one sermon. Preachers have been trying to repeat these results for centuries.

C. Proclamation based churches emphasize these tasks: *Draw a crowd to an event, fill the building, preach the gospel, make disciples.* The Proclamation Model is a basic paradigm of evangelism since Wesley's day and the basis for the current homeostasis.

D. Contemporary worship is a modern version of the proclamation model. Most innovation in evangelism is focused on attempts to update the proclamation model to work in a new century. The world has changed, however, and the proclamation model all by itself is less and less effective for the typical church. It now needs an effective Discipleship System working in prevenient grace to bring in the people.

E. While it is possible to build a megachurch on a Proclamation model,⁴⁴ rapidly growing churches that feature contemporary worship often have robust Discipleship Systems in place that cooperate with their excellent worship. This is the heart of Willow Creek's seven step strategy, which defines a process where seeker friendly individual relationships (prevenient grace) lead to seeker sensitive worship and finally to seeker supportive small groups (sanctifying grace).⁴⁵

F. Discipleship Systems create community by linking people in relationships. The Great Commission Model draws people into conversations which build a web or network of caring relationships through which God's love, power and grace flow toward people to

⁴⁴Two examples of excellence in worship driven evangelistic megachurches are Lakewood Church of Houston (<http://www.lakewood.cc> (accessed June 18, 2007)) and Southeast Christian Church of Louisville, Kentucky (<http://www.southeastchristian.org/> (accessed June 18, 2007)). Cf. Bob Russell, *When God Builds a Church* (West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing Co., 2000). Average churches are unable to duplicate the methods which help this type of megachurch to grow. While these churches have excellent small groups, cell driven churches expect and involve every person in a cell group. Cell group attendance often outnumbers worship attendance, as Sunday School once did in the United States.

⁴⁵Cf. Bill Hybels, *The Seven Step Philosophy* (Tape e9002; Barrington, IL: Seeds Tape Ministry, 1999). For the approach to networking in prevenient grace, cf. Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg, *Becoming a Contagious Christian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 95-148.

forgive, help, heal and build faith. Communities, like families, are primarily relational rather than task oriented. Proclamation can take place in large groups; community requires conversations which can only take place in small groups and between individuals. Remember the **Conversation Principle**: *conversations change lives*.

G. Growth has overwhelmed the ability of Yoido church to provide a comfortable place for more than a third of the members to worship comfortably, but the church just keeps on growing. Pastor Cho wrote that “the average member has to wait at least one hour in a long line just to get a place to sit down in one of our seven services.”⁴⁶ Discipleship Systems continue to be effective at making disciples beyond the capability of a church organization to provide comfortable worship space that Westerners would expect.⁴⁷ ***When an effective discipleship system is in place, most western concerns about worship seem to be irrelevant to disciple making.***

H. Discipleship Systems have continued making disciples in Ethiopia and China where persecution has prevented public worship for decades. Believers of the Ethiopian *Meserete Kristos* movement grew tenfold, from 5000 to 50,000 during nine years of persecution without public worship.⁴⁸ The church multiplication movement strategy is rapidly planting indigenous churches under similar conditions in China without flashy public worship considered a requirement for growth in the United States.⁴⁹ Discipleship Systems can continue to effectively make disciples when no public worship is provided at all. ***This continuing growth when persecution prevents public preaching suggests that, with an effective discipleship system in place, the form worship takes is irrelevant to disciple making.***

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions/The Persecution Exercise:

An atheistic dictatorship has taken power in our country. All churches and religious groups are abolished and outlawed. Public worship is outlawed, all pastors are put in prison or executed, along with any lay leaders who protest this policy. All church committees are disbanded. All church funds and property is confiscated; church buildings are turned into museums, recreation halls or community centers where no religious activity is allowed. Any public gathering for religious purposes or public

⁴⁶Cho, *More Than Numbers*, 50.

⁴⁷Cf. Harpocrates [pseud.], 254: *Yoido Full Gospel Church, Yoido, Seoul, South Korea*, www.ship-of-fools.com/Mystery/2000/254Mystery.html (accessed June 15, 2007).

⁴⁸For growth in the Sudan Interior Mission in Ethiopia, 1938-1943, see Bethel University, *Ethiopian Protestantism: the "Pente" Churches in Ethiopia*, www.bethel.edu/~letnie/EthiopiaProtestantism.html (accessed 22 March 2007). Cf. Jeremy Wells, “Ethiopia: ‘The Country Blessed of God’,” *Christianity Today*, July 1, 2005.

⁴⁹David Garrison, *Chapter 2: CPMs Up Close; A Region in China*, <http://www.imb.org/CPM/Chapter2-ChinaRegion.htm> (accessed June 15, 2007). Cf. David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (Midlothian, VA: WIGTake Resources, 2004), 49-64. Cf. David Yongii Cho, *Successful Home Cell Groups* (Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos, 1981), 82-84.

demonstration of faith is considered a threat to the ruling government and a crime punished by execution or imprisonment.

3.01 *What will happen in your church in the following week?*

3.02 *What will you personally do? What will others in your church do?*

3.03 *How does persecution help and/or hinder a discipleship system? Why?*

Section 2. Smaller and Larger Churches

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: *Agree or disagree?*

A. Church size depends on the linking relationship between the “crowd” and a leadership core and upon the span of control in the leadership core.⁵⁰ Churches can be described by the way the Discipleship System links people together with their leaders. These linkages identify the network which controls all activities of the church outside of worship.

B. In a small church, each person in the crowd is directly linked by a relationship to someone in the leadership core. This limits the growth of the small church as only two layers are allowed: core and crowd. When the span of control is six, there can be one pastor, up to six leaders and thirty-six followers for a total of forty-three. When the span of control is twelve, as Jesus chose, there can be one pastor, up to twelve core leaders and 144 followers for a maximum total of 157. A competency limit is often reached beyond this total.⁵¹

C. Some form of organization in a larger church must link the crowd to the leadership core; the resulting form of organization can be used to identify five basic paradigms or “base designs” of churches.

Temple Base Design	TBD	(worship priority)
Chaplain Base Design	CBD	(nurture priority)
Academic Base Design	ABD	(learning priority)
Network Base Design	NBD	(connectional priority)
Program Base Design ⁵²	PBD	(activity/program priority)

Cell Churches represent a Network Base Design. Chaplain Base Design churches usually have less than 100 in worship; Program Base Design churches usually have more than 300 in worship. Mid-size churches blend CBD and PBD traits in tension.

D. Church Tiers in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference: Average attendance in all United Methodist Churches in the United States is ninety-seven; half have an average worship attendance of fifty-one or less.⁵³ Churches in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference can be grouped into three tiers based on size measured by average worship attendance:

⁵⁰For information on the role of the leadership core, cf. Miller, *NextChurch.Now*, 79-100.

⁵¹For information on competency limit of the *Rule of 150*, see Kevin Martin, *The Myth of the 200 Barrier: How to Lead through Transitional Growth* (Nashville: Cokesbury, 2005), 39-42.

⁵²Neighbor, *Where Do We Go*, 57-76. Neighbor’s paradigm label inspired the others.

⁵³*The United Methodist Newscope* 33, no. 7 (18 February 2005).

Illinois Great Rivers Conference Churches: 899 reporting attendance >0 in 2006.

Large churches >300 = 39 churches/4.3% w/20,161 in worship 611 baptisms (1/33).

Mid-size tier 100-200 = 171 churches/19% w/27,229 in worship 941 baptisms (1/29).

Small church tier <100 = 708 churches/77% w/27,041 in worship 810 baptisms (1/33).⁵⁴

E. Changes in compensation costs have increased the minimum size necessary to afford a full time and fully credentialed pastor from forty-five in 1930 to seventy-five in 1950 to 125 in 2003; less than 25% of United Methodist churches today are that size or larger.⁵⁵ The motivation for church growth is more often economic than spiritual.

F. It is a major cultural change to grow beyond the Two Hundred Barrier to become a Program Base Design (PBD) church. Many small churches are unwilling to do this.

G. Are small churches doomed? Institutions perceive smaller churches as near the end of their “life cycle” and too small to compete in the new reality of a changing marketplace. Small churches represent more than a third of church attenders in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference.

The results of the Natural Church Development (NCD) research, however, indicate that the third strongest negative factor to church growth is church size:⁵⁶

*The growth rate of churches decreased with increasing size. This fact in and of itself came as no great surprise, because in large churches the percentages represent many more people. But when we converted the percentages into raw numbers, we were dumbfounded. Churches in the smallest size category (under 100 in attendance) had won an average of 32 new people over the past five years; churches with 100-200 in worship also won 32; churches between 200-300 average 39 new individuals; churches between 300-400 won 25. So a ‘small’ church wins just as many people for Christ as a ‘large’ one, and what’s more, two churches with 200 in worship on Sunday will win twice as many new people as one church with 400 in attendance.*⁵⁷

H. Schwarz found that the average growth rate in smaller churches was 13% (over five years), whereas in larger churches it was a mere 3%. A small church in the NCD sample with an average attendance of fifty-one typically converted thirty-two persons in five years; megachurches in the NCD sample averaged 2,856 in attendance but converted only 112 new persons in five years. The same number of persons participating in fifty-six small churches averaging fifty-one in attendance would have produced 1,792 converts in five

⁵⁴Illinois Great Rivers Conference, *Official Journal-Yearbook 2007* (Springfield, IL: Illinois Great Rivers Conference, forthcoming).

⁵⁵Lyle Schaller, “What Should Be The Norm?” *Circuit Rider*, September/October 2003, 16.

⁵⁶Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996), 46. The higher negative factors are liberal theology and traditionalism. Cf. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, 28-29.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 46-47.

years.⁵⁸ A small improvement in small church disciple making capability will have a huge growth outcome due to the number of small churches.

I. How then do large churches grow?

Carl George: *In most cases, however, once a church passes four hundred, it tends to become a receptor church, with a high percentage of its newcomers being drawn from other smaller churches in the community. In other words, between 75 percent and 90 percent of the new members in the typical church of four hundred or more are transfers, not converts. There exists a widespread notion that North America's medium and large size churches are evangelistic centers. This view is in most cases, regrettably only a myth. Instead, these churches are by and large centers for reprocessing believers, new and old alike, that throng to them from smaller churches.*

This situation leads to one of the largest spiritual dilemmas of our time: The bigger a church becomes, the less evangelistically responsible it needs to be in order to grow. As a church grows, it inherits the other churches' evangelism efforts. Regrettably, very few churches larger than four hundred do their own soul winning or primary spiritual formation. Rather, they simply reap the benefits of other churches' perceived failures.⁵⁹

This is not church growth, but the accelerated decline of other churches to the benefit of the receptor church. The vast majority of the members of megachurches are converted elsewhere but come to the megachurch for its excitement, varied program activities and its perceived quality of discipleship teaching.⁶⁰

J. *Receptor churches* teach an attractive discipleship that does not make disciples, or there would be an explosion of new Christians originating *within* these churches rather than transferring *into* these churches. *Receptor growth* is growth by addition; *disciples making disciples that make disciples* is growth by multiplying generations (2 Timothy 2:1-2).

K. People shift from small, disciple making churches to large receptor churches in order to meet spiritual needs. These needs were once able to be met while remaining members of small, local churches through district equipping tracks and ministries. Restoring the capability for these needs to be met while remaining in the same type of small membership church is key to fulfilling the growth statistics Schwarz indicates are possible. The average small membership church within the Illinois Great Rivers Conference does not fulfill this potential.

L. The major difference between a megachurch of two thousand and a cell type church of twenty thousand or 700,000 is the role of the Discipleship System in making converts

⁵⁸Ibid., 47-48.

⁵⁹Carl F. George, *The Coming Church Revolution: Empowering Leaders for the Future* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1994), 37-38.

⁶⁰Cf. Carl F. George, "New Realities for the 21st Century Church," *The Pastor's Update* 94, tape 7033 (Pasadena, CA: Fuller Theological Seminary, 2001).

from non-Christians and then making disciple makers out of those new disciples. The highly organized, network based Discipleship Systems in large, third world cell churches allow rapid growth without disturbing the functional harmony of the church homeostasis, thereby overcoming a major cause of resistance to church growth.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

- 3.04 *What is your average attendance? Which tier includes your church?*
- 3.05 *How many baptisms occurred last year? How does your baptismal rate compare with the norm for that tier?*
- 3.06 *Are small churches doomed? What do you think?*
- 3.07 *How many members have joined your church in the past five years?*
- 3.08 *How many by transfer in the past five years?*
- 3.09 *How many by other means in the past five years?*
- 3.10 *Is this higher or lower than the thirty two in the NCD study five year average?*

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:

3.1 **JOURNAL:** Record your reflections and document your answers to the *Questions for a Better Understanding* found on page 139 with regard to this module.

MODULE FOUR: THE GREAT COMMISSION CYCLE

Section 1. Identifying the Problem: *Not making disciples.*

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: *Agree or disagree?*

A. What is the purpose of the church? The Book of Discipline indicates that the priority is making disciples: *“The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.”*⁶¹

B. In 1998, the Illinois Great Rivers Conference had an average weekly total attendance of 83,469 in 992 churches; in 2003, average weekly worship attendance was 76,692. This is a loss in five years of 8% of average attendance.

C. The mission of our church is to make disciples. The reality is that what we are doing does not make disciples sufficient for the church to survive. What we are doing is not working.

D. It is also possible that we do not know how to make disciples.

E. If we implemented the Great Commission properly, as Jesus demonstrated in the Gospels, we would see the results evident in the book of Acts. We would make multiple generations of disciples. What have we left out of our understanding of the Great Commission that prevents disciple making?

⁶¹Paragraph 120, *Book of Discipline 2004*, 87.

F. Confronting an uncomfortable reality:⁶²

MC:

MD:

MCC:

MDD:

G. PARABLE: Modern Variations on the Great Commission. Experts have considered updating the Great Commission of Jesus Christ to be more realistic, relevant and descriptive of how churches actually organize their work today. Please consider which of the adaptations below most fits the way your church actually implements the Great Commission.

1. *Huh?*
2. *Let us go to disciple making worship and hear the excellent teaching.*
3. *Great singing, great choir, great sermon; who could ask for anything more?*
4. *Go see the people you already know. Learn about church activities.*
5. *Go among your neighbors, showing love, demonstrating who Jesus is.*
6. *Go far away to strangers you will never see again; make a bold witness of your awesome personal faith to a standing ovation.*
7. *Go, feed the hungry and thirsty, baptize them. Repeat.*
8. *Go, baptize them.*
9. *Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.*
10. *Open the doors wide for the spiritually and physically hungry to join us at the table.*
11. *Don't go, sit. It will be over soon for another week.*
12. *Make church members. Teach them in Sunday school.*
13. *Give so that missionaries can go, evangelists can make disciples and Sunday school teachers can teach them.*
14. *Don't go. Don't make disciples. Don't baptize them. Don't observe all that Jesus commanded.*
15. *Come. Be highly committed; serve the Lord with gladness. Bring a covered dish.*
16. *Go, form committees. Involve the lost. Keep them busy until they resemble us.*
17. *Go, as you're gifted. Make disciples among your neighbors. Love them, help them worship, grow in faith and find their calling.*
18. *Go, make disciples. There's another typo in the bulletin.*
19. *What this place needs is a lot more activity.*
20. *Go, fix up the building. Refinish the baptismal font. Make it pretty, as Jesus commanded.*
21. *Love one another. Consider alternatives, but don't rock the boat.*
22. *Go. Learn about all Jesus taught. Study it again in greater depth.*
23. *We're short on help again this year for the chicken noodle dinner.*

⁶²Instructions to complete Paragraph F are found at the end of this section.

24. *Love the new carpet in the sanctuary. Won't be able to pay apportionments again this year.*
25. *Go. Go, go. Go, go, go. Go, go, go, go . . .*

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

- 4.01 *Which statement above offends you most (your sacred cow)?*
- 4.02 *Which statement above amuses you most (someone else's sacred cow)?*
- 4.03 *Which statements realistically portray what your church does to make disciples?*
- 4.04 *What sort of church results from practicing each variation? Recognize some?*
- 4.05 *What's left out of each and every one of these variations?*

Instructions for Paragraph F: MC and MCC are abbreviations for “My Children” and “My Children’s Children.” Write the names of your children and grandchildren there. Next to MD and MDD, write the names of persons who would correspond to “My Disciples” and “My Disciple’s Disciples.” Who can you name? Why or why not?

Section 2. Traditional Spiritual Disciplines Do Not Make Disciples.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure (Philippians 2:12-13).

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: *Agree or disagree?*

A. Traditional Spiritual disciplines include meditation, contemplative prayer, lectio divino, frequent communion, acts of piety and acts of mercy. Traditional spiritual disciplines operate primarily as a means of sanctifying grace for spiritual growth. They are a way to “work out your own salvation” (Philippians 2:12-13).⁶³

B. Traditional spiritual disciplines, when practiced as intended, are a means of making yourself a better disciple, not for making disciples of others. The Great Commission calls for a disciple to be made by another disciple, not for a self-made disciple. It requires hierarchical relationships of influence between students and teachers. All students make their own disciples (prevenient grace) and eventually become teachers of their own disciples (sanctifying grace).

C. John Wesley’s *General Rules* are advocated as a means of spiritual discipline for the United Methodist Church. The three general rules, summarized, are: (1) *Do no harm (sin)*, (2) *do all the good you can* and (3) *attend upon all the means of grace*.⁶⁴ The General

⁶³Cf. Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path To Spiritual Growth* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978). Covenant Discipleship is a movement within United Methodism to update and practice traditional spiritual disciplines; cf. Steven W. Manskar, “A Disciple-Making System,” *Covenant Discipleship Quarterly* (Spring 2006), under http://www.gbod.org/smallgroup/cd/articles.asp?item_id=16579 (accessed June 15, 2007).

⁶⁴Cf. *Book of Discipline 2004*, 71-74.

Rules define a path to a personal holiness that would not directly make disciples or disciple makers.

D. Traditional spiritual disciplines arise from Christendom, a historical era where almost all persons in the local parish were considered to be Christians. Spiritual disciplines from Christendom would not logically require one to convert or mature others spiritually; evangelism and spiritual direction of converts were considered the task of the clergy.

E. One cannot be like Jesus without making disciples, nor can one be obedient to Jesus without personally working to fulfill the Great Commission. True holiness is obedience to Christ. Spiritual disciplines that would fulfill the Great Commission will be demonstrated in the third Seminar on Decision.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

4.06 What is your experience with traditional spiritual disciplines?

4.07 What is your normal practice of prayer?

4.08 What is your normal practice of reading Scripture?

4.09 What is your normal practice of participating in Holy Communion? Worship?

4.10 What else in your life would you consider a means of grace?

4.11 Would you consider practicing the General rules? Why or why not? What would be a good way to practice the General Rules? How would you modify or modernize them?

4.12 What is your experience at converting others through the practice of these spiritual disciplines? What, to you, could be a means of prevenient grace?

Section 3. The Great Commission as a Generational Cycle.

2 Timothy 2:1-2: You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: *Agree or disagree?*

A. This passage, *2 Timothy 2:1-2*, reflects four generations of disciples, from Paul to Timothy, from Timothy to “faithful men” and from them to others. It reflects not only conversion but raising each new generation to the point where it is able to raise up the next generation. When the Great Commission is understood as a cycle, multiple generations occur as disciples make disciples who make disciples. The end result of the Great Commission is not a better disciple but a disciple maker who is able to make disciple makers.

B. The Great Commission is a cyclical process. Prevenient grace makes disciples; sanctifying grace develops mature Christians from baby disciples. Mature Christians are measured by obedience to Christ. Mature Christians partner with other mature Christians in order to make baby disciples. As each person makes disciples and matures them to the point of making their own disciples, generations of disciples who make disciples who make disciples result.

E. Generational disciple making is like making babies and raising them to full adulthood, which includes the learned ability to raise their own children to full adulthood. Children learn parenting from being parented. Four generations are described by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:1-2. *Were you abandoned by your spiritual parents?*

Section 4. Developmental Spirituality

And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love (Ephesians 4:11-16).

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?

A. Spiritual maturity is the ability to make and mature disciples to the point where they can make and mature their own disciples. Only mature fruit can reproduce. One explanation for church decline is that few Christians reach this level of spiritual maturity.

B. Developmental spirituality could be described as having five basic stages correlating to human development: *newborns, children, adolescents, parents* and *grandparents*.⁶⁵ The goal of developmental spirituality is to fulfill each stage properly and move the individual onward to full developmental spiritual maturity.

C. Problems occur when a person becomes stuck at one stage (arrested development) or is forced prematurely to the next stage (codependency). Churches can become imbalanced such that the majority of ministry is focused on meeting needs at one stage rather than ensuring a steady flow of persons through all of the stages. Cell churches believe this goal can be achieved in one year. The three year ministry of Jesus described in the Gospels produced several generations of disciples.

D. Well managed cells can move people rapidly through the stages of spiritual development toward spiritual maturity. Cells are misunderstood as bible studies, as ministry teams, and as care groups; they are better understood as spiritual nuclear families thriving in the context of an highly organized extended family. The extended family provides everything needed for the nuclear family to survive and thrive for generation after generation. It links the cells and facilitates their ability to thrive, make disciples and

⁶⁵This simple five level maturation process can be made more complex by adding psychological and biological data to the process. Cf. John P. Nunley, "The Developmental Psychology of Erik Erikson," 2005 *OnLine Study Guide for Introductory Psychology*, <http://www.rlc.dcccd.edu/mathsci/anth/p101/dv/mentl/erikson.htm> (accessed June 15, 2007).

produce more cells. The process is not accidental or haphazard, but carefully organized and managed.

E. Only the mature fruit can reproduce. Children are not biologically ready to have children; they can, however, introduce other children into the family for adoption. Teenagers are able to have children biologically but emotionally unable to raise them. Parental maturity is defined as the ability to both have children and raise them through the stages to become healthy parents themselves. Grandparents support their children as parents and nurture all levels of maturity.

F. Cell Parable: Hunger

Once upon a time the master gathered with his five disciples, each one at a different level of spiritual maturity. "Today," he announced, "we will talk about the problem of hunger."

"I'm not really hungry yet, Master. It's at least an hour before lunch," the spiritual newborn announced.

"What does the Bible say about it?" the spiritual child asked curiously.

There was silence for a moment. "Master," the new spiritual parent said tentatively, "I'm inviting two homeless men, Roger and Bill, to my house tonight for supper. Is this what you mean?"

The Master smiled and nodded. He looked at the most spiritually mature man present, the spiritual grandparent, and they exchanged nods. He knew the older man was coaching the younger in how to love his neighbor as himself.

"Master, I've done more," the spiritual teenager interrupted excitedly. "Yesterday I volunteered at the soup kitchen and served lunch to over a hundred hungry, homeless people!" The master was quick to notice the look of self reproach in the eyes of the man who would only be feeding two and decided a lesson was in order.

"How wonderful a thing you have done," the master said to the spiritual teenager, who beamed with pride. "Now please name each of them and we will pray for them all."

Section 5: First Stage - Newborn

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?

A. The Newborn stage is characterized by a need for love, nurture, relationships, fellowship, family, and by dependency. Newborns are unable to survive without help and can be very demanding.

B. 1 Corinthians 3:1-4: *But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it; and even yet you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving like ordinary men? For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely men?*

C. Newborn Diagnosis: *Pastor, I just want to be _____.*
(*And you're not doing a very good job at it.*)

Newborns are _____ of _____.⁶⁶

D. Shallow growth: *At the First International Consultation on Discipleship, held last month on England's scenic South Coast, John R. W. Stott called attention to the 'strange and disturbing paradox' of the contemporary Christian situation: 'We have experienced enormous statistical growth, he said, without corresponding growth in discipleship. 'God is not pleased,' warned Stott, 'with superficial discipleship.'* Theologian Tokunboh Adeyemo called attention to this same paradox on his continent, where the phenomenal numerical growth of Christianity is matched only by the mind-boggling butchery of Christians engaging in the horrors of ethnic cleansing. *'The church in Africa,' said Adeyemo, 'is one mile long, but only one inch deep.'*⁶⁷

E. Disciple Making Tools for Newborns: Groups that play and make friends are helpful. Groups need to be relational rather than task oriented, and encourage relational maturity and responsibility in their participants (UMM, UMW). Groups that cause people to take sides, judge others or discourage diversity or differentiation are particularly harmful.

F. Day by Day Theory: *And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved* (Acts 2:47b). People gradually enter a stage of readiness and interest in moving to a more mature level of spirituality. The actual number of persons in transition at any one time is just a few, day by day.⁶⁸ Therefore it is important to notice when someone is "ripe" for a higher level of discipleship. It is an institutional error to attempt to move large numbers of people through maturity stages in groups together; this overwhelms the nurturing system. One baby at a time is best.

G. Bridging: Newborns are primarily found at worship and fellowship activities. Receiving nurture is their goal. People move from newborn to child level by showing interest in becoming more involved. As safety, security and belonging needs are met, curiosity emerges. Research shows that only 17% of church attenders participate in Sunday School, bible study or any learning event outside of worship.⁶⁹

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

4.13 *Who do you know at this stage?*

4.14 *What is your church doing with people at this stage?*

4.15 *What church problems arise with people this stage?*

⁶⁶William A. Beckham, *The Second Reformation: Reshaping the Church for the 21st Century* (Houston: Touch Publications, 1995), 41-50. Answers to blanks are at the end of this section.

⁶⁷John Stott, "Make Disciples, Not Just Converts," *Christianity Today*, October 25, 1999, 28. Cf. David P. Gushee, "Church Failure: Remembering Rwanda," *Christian Century*, April 20, 2004.

⁶⁸Cf. Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples A Few At A Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 59-98.

⁶⁹George Barna, quoted in Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 26.

4.16 *How can you help these people move onward?*

4.17 *What would a church designed entirely for people at this stage be like? Know one?*

Answers to blanks: Pastor, I just want to be *fed*. Newborns are *consumers* of *pastoral care*.

Section 6: Second Stage - Child

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?

A. Child stage characteristics include being playful, curious, asking questions, wanting to be “big” and to explore but stay in touch. Basic lessons in the child stage include learning manners, obedience, rules and good behavior.

B. Matthew 18:1-4: *At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them, and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."* In the context of this seminar, this passage can be interpreted not as regressing but advancing to a childlike state from a self-centered spiritual infancy.

C. Scripture provides answers to child stage curiosity and promotes health and growth. John 8:31-32: *Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."* The primary learning tool for child level disciples will be to read and learn scripture, and particularly the teachings of Jesus is the Gospels.

D. Disciple Making Tools for Children:

- Groups that learn playfully: Sunday School, Bible Studies, Church Camp.

E. Bridging: Children are found in groups that offer learning opportunities. The indicator of readiness to move from Child to Teen level is less pleasant and typically restlessness, dissatisfaction, and the feeling that something more is needed. They have mastered this level and are now looking for something more challenging; provide them with that challenge.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

4.18 *Who do you know at this stage?*

4.19 *What is your church doing with people at this stage?*

4.20 *What church problems arise with people this stage?*

4.21 *How can you help these people move onward?*

4.22 *How many chapters of the Bible do you read weekly?*

4.23 *What is your attendance for adults at Sunday School? In other Bible study groups?*

4.24 *What would a church designed entirely for people at this stage be like? Know one?*

Section 7: Third Stage - Teen

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?

A. The teen stage is characterized by individuation, differentiation, rebellion, “doing my

own thing with my own crowd,” and finding a purpose in life distinct from parental values. Teens combine great ability with great inconsistency. Teens desire excitement, adventure, and take risks. Teens experience intense, roller coaster emotions. Teens are critical of self and others. And teens are able to bear children but not raise children.

B. Matthew 7:13-14: *Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.*

C. Are teenagers non-conformists and unconventional?

Barbara Sher: *The real culprit is thoughtless conformism. And it attaches itself to only one age group. The only age that is invariably conventional is adolescence. Yes, that's what I said. If you think of teenagers as being rebellious and wild, take another look. Their rebellion is only against adults. Teenagers don't rebel against other teenagers. In fact, no other group watches its peers with more intensity, scrutinizing the latest convention so they can conform precisely to it. At no other age do people suffer such agonies if they aren't allowed to copy their peers. At puberty the only thing in the world we want to know are the rules for being cool in our peer group. That intense self-consciousness, measuring worth in the eyes of others, has a powerful purpose: It's the first step in the mating process. But it makes adolescents the most conforming, conventional age-group in our species.*⁷⁰

D. Teenage rebellion is psychological differentiation, which is discovering one's identity while remaining in touch with family.⁷¹ Adolescent differentiation provides for an adaptation to current reality; parents blend lessons learned in childhood with lessons learned in adolescence in order to be more effective parents.

E. Disciple Making Tools for Spiritual Teenagers: Teens need challenging discipleship, peer community and subtle adult supervision. They need to develop maturity, consistency and emotional stability. Teens need to learn their gifts and strengths. Teens need to learn their purpose in life and spiritual calling; it's like discovering a spiritual career. Teens need to go on safe adventures that challenge them and utilize their spiritual gifts.⁷²

⁷⁰Barbara Sher, *It's Only Too Late If You Don't Start Now: How To Create Your Second Life After Forty* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1998), 86-87.

⁷¹Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation To Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (New York: Guilford Publications, Inc., 1985), 3, 23, 228-249.

⁷²Adventure is essentially a USA adolescent concern. The G12 movement uses two groups to seamlessly transition through spiritual adolescence and form disciples. Cells are for newborns and children, and a G12 group is for those who lead cells, i.e. grandparents, parents and spiritual teenagers. Cf. Joel Comiskey, *From Twelve to Three: How to Apply G-12 Principles in Your Church* (Houston: Touch Publications, 2002), 35-44. By encouraging rapid cell multiplication, many cells in the G-12 are likely started by spiritual teenagers who require high levels of spiritual parenting support from their G-12 group.

F. If differentiation needs are not met, spiritual teenagers will go to another church to meet these needs. The need for peer conformity is a basic motivation behind most receptor growth. Spiritual teens will sometimes switch to another mentor as a part of their individuation. Smaller churches can link together to organize spiritual adventures and rites of passage so that spiritual teenagers can bloom while remaining in their home church.

G. The Spiritual Generation Gap: in our culture, many are biologically adults while emotionally adolescent or younger. Few Christians grow up to become spiritual parents; they prefer an endless adventure without responsibility. Few churches teach spiritual parenting as a responsibility; this is the major obstacle to biblical disciple making. *The transition to spiritual parenthood involves moving from an exciting but shallow ministry with many people to calm, deeply nurturing relationships with just a few people who have names.*

H. Bridging: As in the culture, many spiritual teens remain stuck in adolescence, focused on self-fulfillment and self-satisfaction. Spiritual teens sometimes develop a spiritual “career” or ministry within the church which they find very satisfying and fulfilling. Some spiritual teens regress to earlier stages and desire to be spiritually nurtured and dependent.

As in real life, there can come a time when teens, who once rebelled against parents, find themselves desiring to become parents. Usually this comes after forming a highly committed relational partnership which begins as a means for personal growth and fulfillment but naturally leads to an interest in making one’s own children and raising them. This is a signature shift in focus from exciting ministry to the masses to the deeper investment in the life of a few, although parenting relationships can be comparatively boring and exhausting.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

4.25 *Who do you know at this stage?*

4.26 *What is your church doing with people at this stage?*

4.27 *What church problems arise with people this stage?*

4.28 *How can you help these people move onward?*

4.29 *What would a church designed entirely for people at this stage be like? Know one?*

Section 8: Fourth and Fifth Stages - Spiritual Parents and Grandparents

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?

A. Parents are able to bear children and also raise them to maturity where they also become good parents.⁷³ When children become parents, their parents become Grandparents. The role of spiritual Grandparents is to help the parents with their children. (Pastors should function primarily as spiritual grandparents or there will be abandonment issues when pastors move.)

B. The essence of spiritual parenting and grandparenting: *You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me before many*

⁷³Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 74-118.

witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2:1-2).

C. Cells function as spiritual families; the purpose of a family is to help its members mature - to grow up. Cells provide an excellent opportunity for emotional re-parenting and to heal past hurts. The cell management infrastructure provides the cell “parents” with the support they need and smooths the process of spiritual parenting.

D. Stumble points: What does it require to be a spiritual parent?

1. Spiritual parents continue to have the ministry they discovered as teens. This is their “career” in the church and the result of their discovery and learning to use their spiritual gifts.
2. Spiritual families result when mature Christians form committed partnerships. Finding and learning how to be a good partner are major goals of adolescence.
3. They learn to balance “career” and “family” and give the higher priority to family.
4. Their purpose in life gains focus in a few, specific people in which they deeply invest. Jesus helped the crowd but focused on the disciples.
5. Spiritual parents provide the appropriate nurture, guidance and freedom that their disciples need at each stage of growth.
6. Spiritual parents are actively involved with their disciples as needed on an ongoing basis. This involvement with spiritual children is life long.
7. Parenting is learned behavior; children learn to be good parents by experiencing good parenting.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

- 4.30 *Who do you know at this stage?*
- 4.31 *What is your church doing with people at this stage?*
- 4.32 *What church problems arise with people this stage?*
- 4.33 *How can you help these people fulfill their calling?*
- 4.34 *What would a church designed entirely for people at this stage be like? Know one?*
- 4.35 *Is the pastor a spiritual parent in your church? Is anyone else?*
- 4.36 *How does your church encourage people to form committed spiritual partnerships?*
- 4.37 *Who were your spiritual parents? Grandparents?*
- 4.38 *What groups and activities do you have in your church for each stage of spiritual maturity?*

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE FOUR:

4.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Read *Chapter One: Systemic Problems* for more information on systemic problems in disciple making.⁷⁴

4.2 JOURNAL: Record your reflections and document your answers to the *Questions for a Better Understanding* found on page 139 with regard to this module.

⁷⁴David O. Kueker, “Chapter One: Systemic Problems,” <http://www.disciplewalk.com/Resources.html> (accessed June 15, 2007).

MODULE FIVE: DIAGNOSIS SEMINAR VIDEO MODULE

Lunch: *The Rabbi's Gift* (218043)⁷⁵

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:

5.01 How does *The Rabbi's Gift* work as a system for church growth?

MODULE SIX: VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGY

A representative of the Conference will present the Conference Mission and Vision.

MODULE SEVEN: TOOLS FOR DIAGNOSIS

Representatives of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference Office of Congregational Development will introduce the two diagnostic tools, which are *ReVision* and *Natural Church Development*. At the close of this session you will finalize your choice as to which tool you will use in your home church and break up into groups to prepare to use the tools in your local church.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULES FIVE TO SEVEN:

7.1 JOURNAL: Record your reflections and document your answers to the *Questions for a Better Understanding* found on page 139 with regard to this modules five through seven.

7.2 Write Your Own Parable retelling how the Conference Vision might be fulfilled in your local church. Focus on behavior, or what a camera would see.

MODULE EIGHT: THE LEARNING PROCESS

Section 1: Communicating Spiritually

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?

A. It is important to evaluate our behavior, particularly with regard to how we communicate with each other, so that the least harm and the greatest good might occur. Communication reveals our emotions and the state of our spirituality. (James 1:26, James 3:5-10, and Matthew 12:33-37).

B. Use this eight point checklist to evaluate *what* you say: *But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity* (James 3:17).

C. Use this nine point checklist to evaluate *how* you say it: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;*

⁷⁵All video resources for Seminar Video Modules are available from the Illinois Great Rivers Conference United Media Center; call 217-529-2040 or visit online at <http://www.intraweb.igrc.org/umrc/> (accessed June 15, 2007). Use the number in parentheses to order.

against such there is no law (Galatians 5:22-23).

D. Be concerned about an adversarial spirit. Turning people against each other to form groups in opposition is a sign of gross spiritual immaturity, according to 1 Corinthians 1:1-12 and 1 Corinthians 3:1-4. When different sides appear and conflict develops, spiritual immaturity is the cause.

E. As the “anger of man does not work the righteousness of God” (James 1:20), be aware of the presence of anger in yourself and others during discussion. Insist on a cooling off period if anger persists. People who are angry cannot hear what others are saying, so stop until calmness returns. Anger vented upon another person to control what they do or what they say is abusive and a sin against the commandment to love one another (John 13:34-35, 1 John 4:7-8, and 1 Corinthians 13).

Section Two: Self Study Journaling Questions

This material is presented to enhance your personal understanding and spiritual growth. Each module ends with an assignment to journal using the following questions as a means to refine a better understanding of the material.

QUESTIONS FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING⁷⁶

Explanation and Interpretation lead to Perspective and Empathy, which in turn lead to Application and Self Knowledge.

EXPLORE and EQUIP: Explanation and Interpretation

How could you best explain these ideas in your local church?

How would you explain the current reality? What is happening in the church now?

How could you explain using parables, stories, art, poetry or other creative means?

How could you best help someone else to understand and utilize these ideas?

REVISE and RETHINK: Gain Perspective and Empathy

Widen your perspective; how would you describe the bigger picture?

What are the components and how are they linked into a system?

Who are the people in the whole picture, inside and outside your church?

What are the perceptions and feelings of each of them? How does that make you feel?

As you reflect on the learning experience of the seminar, revisit the *HOMEWORK Discussion Questions* in each section. Consider your answers and record them in an ongoing Discovery Journal; using the question numbers will help you keep track of your answers without having to rewrite the questions. Your answers will be important later as you formulate your own strategies for making disciples.

⁷⁶These questions are based on ideas from Grant P. Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 1998).

EXHIBIT and EVALUATE: Application and Self Knowledge

With a better understanding, how could you improve the system?

What would be the steps of your plan?

How would the results of your application benefit all concerned?

What is your place and role in the system now?

What are your perceptions and feelings now?

What have you learned about yourself through this inquiry?

Section 3: Assembling A Discovery Group

Diffusion of innovations research indicates that 16% of a given people group are interested in change. All changes flow from the efforts of this gifted minority for the benefit of all concerned. A Discovery Group gathers innovators and early adopters in a given church to engage in a formal process of study, prayer and work toward a better church. Anyone and any church can improve, and we are all called to go “onward to perfection” (Matthew 5:48).

Using this seminar process, a Discovery Group can develop a ministry plan of 10-15 pages plus a large Fact Book of edited results from the assignments.⁷⁷ Consultants from the Office of Congregational Development are available to help you with the process.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:

8.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Read *Chapter Three: Learning Strategy* for more information on the learning strategy and process for this project.⁷⁸

8.2 JOURNAL: Record your reflections and document your answers to the *Questions for a Better Understanding* found on page 139 with regard to this module.

8.3 What is your plan? Consider whether you will approach the material as an informal self-study for your own benefit, organize an informal discussion group in your local church, or begin the formal process of a organizing a Discovery Group with a consultant from the Office of Congregational Development.

⁷⁷The Discovery Report format is derived from William M. Luther, *How to Develop a Business Plan in Fifteen Days* (New York: Amacom, 1987).

⁷⁸David O. Kueker, “Part II: Learning Strategy,” <http://www.disciplewalk.com/Resources.html> (accessed June 15, 2007).