

### **SEMINAR THREE: An Invitation to Decision**

#### **Focus: How can we repair, rebuild or revive the discipleship system in our church?**

**Welcome to the adventure!** We're glad you accepted the invitation, as many have before us. At first the adventure is easy, but then the road becomes more difficult for the disciple, as Jesus said to all: *If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God (Luke 9:23-27).*

The gospel begins as information, which leads to choices, which lead to behavior. An airplane on a cross country trip is frequently off course; frequent course corrections keep it on track. Discipleship is not one decision once upon a time, but a daily decision, and perhaps more frequent than that. Small choices and small corrections are the best to keep a positive reinforcing trend of growth on track without invoking a balancing process correction.

Small, incremental changes are normal in nature. Jesus spoke of the organic, incremental nature of the kingdom: *To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened (Luke 13:20-21).* Organic reinforcing processes create a multiplying trend like water lilies in a pond; each day they double. At first a few lilies appear in a corner, the next day a few more. When they cover a fourth of the pond, people begin to wonder if they should do something. The next day they cover half the pond, and a meeting is set up to discuss the problem of lilies. On the day of the meeting, the lilies multiply to fill the entire pond.<sup>1</sup> Organic growth is incremental and gradual, but the increments multiply rather than increasing by addition. A change starts small and innocuous, so that resistance doesn't seem necessary and that there will be plenty of time for a correction. But the small changes multiply in the background to the point where change becomes unstoppable; Senge indicates that this S-shaped or sigmoidal growth pattern is everywhere in nature.<sup>2</sup> Whether the change is like leaven (Matthew 13:33), like lilies in pond, or the conversion of a people group, the organic approach brings total change through inexorable incrementalism without triggering a balancing process correction.

Occam's razor is a philosophical tool to reduce arguments to their essentials; to add more to an argument than is necessary to explain phenomena is the work of pride and vanity. Occam's Solution, therefore, would be the simplest effective solution to a problem with minimal negative

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<sup>1</sup>Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art And Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 83.

<sup>2</sup>Peter Senge et al., *The Dance of Change: The Challenges to Sustaining Momentum in Learning Organizations* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 7.

consequences; a more complex solution than the simplest effective means is vanity.<sup>3</sup> DNA is extraordinarily complex, but the details are extraordinarily simple, based on combinations of six basic amino acids. Complex computer software projects are built of simple modules of code designed by rules of structured programming; what is impossible to imagine as a giant program is more easily designed, assembled, debugged and maintained through the use of small, replicable components. Assembling large churches that make disciples, like cell churches, is a matter of taking precise care of multiple examples of a few critical but simple components. This seminar proposes simple tools that can be assembled into a powerful Discipleship System for any church.

Diffusion of Innovations research shows that communication that encourages adoption of an innovation, like becoming a Christian, spreads beyond the visionary minority only by multiple conversations through interpersonal networks. The signature S-curve of rapid adoption takes place when the interpersonal communications increase due to many people talking about the relative advantages of the innovation. The Center for Parish Development Church Growth Principle indicates that churches grow *when the laity are excited about what is happening in their church*. This principle works because it creates a buzz, a word of mouth endorsement from layperson to layperson which is backed up by the living endorsement of personal excitement. If the right conversations are all that is needed for church growth, then the real problem is resistance to change.

The innovation needed in the church today is “Jesus is Lord.” More specifically, committed and growing Christians will demonstrate the following measurable behaviors:

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|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. <i>Read the New Testament.</i>                               | <i>(JUMP group)</i>         |
| 2. <i>Ask questions to guide toward a greater maturity.</i>     | <i>(JUMP group)</i>         |
| 3. <i>Form partnerships for learning and mentoring.</i>         | <i>(JUMP group)</i>         |
| 4. <i>Pray for and have conversations with the lost.</i>        | <i>(Prayer Tool)</i>        |
| 5. <i>Deepen these relationships with fun and fellowship.</i>   | <i>(Prayer Tool)</i>        |
| 6. <i>Differentiate by using gifts to serve Jesus Christ.</i>   | <i>(Quest)</i>              |
| 7. <i>Grow toward full maturity through an equipping track.</i> | <i>(Quest)</i>              |
| 8. <i>Begin new groups to seek and nurture new believers.</i>   | <i>(Quest)</i>              |
| 9. <i>Participate in connectional equipping for ministry.</i>   | <i>(District Equipping)</i> |

These behaviors can work together as an effective Discipleship System for local churches of any size. When a critical mass practice these faithful behaviors, full adoption is not far off. And a critical mass for s-curve adoption is only 16-25% of a church or group.

What are the components of a simple, effective Discipleship System which can bring about these results? How will you build yours?

Let's begin!

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<sup>3</sup>Francis Heylighen, “Occam’s Razor,” *Principia Cybernetica Web*, ed. F. Heylighen, C. Joslyn, and V. Turchin, <http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/OCCAMRAZ.html> (accessed June 12, 2007).

## MODULE ONE: A QUICK REVIEW

### Section One: Heads and Tails - Tales of Paradox

#### Systemic Problem #1: Not making disciples

**HEADS.** USA Pastor Robert Hudnut: *It is a tough time for the American church. In many quarters membership is down. Attendance is down. But church growth is not the point. The point is whether the church is being true to the Gospel. And, in city after city and town after town, it is. Indeed, because it is being faithful it is often losing members.*

*. . . Loss of growth in statistics has often meant increase in growth in the Gospel. The “dead wood” is gone. The “faithful remnant” remains. The church is lean and stripped for action in the ‘70s. . . .*

*God is what keeps us hanging in there at the corner of State and Main. Waiting. Catching the fire. Being gripped by the most powerful force in the world. Committed to turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6). Turning it. That’s what doing church in the 1970s is all about. And that’s why millions of people every week, in decreasing numbers but increasing power, are saying, “Church growth is not the point. Faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ is.” Here’s a book on how to be faithful. Correction: on how God, incredibly, is being faithful through us - good old middle-class, statistically faltering, us.*

*This means, among other things, the recovery of the passive.<sup>4</sup>*

**TAILS.** Yoido Pastor Yongii Cho: *You know, we don’t do evangelism in Korea the way you do it in the West . . . We have 50,000 cell groups and each group will love two people to Christ within the next year. They select someone who’s not a Christian, whom they can pray for, love and serve. They bring meals, help sweep out the person’s store— whatever it takes to show they really care for them. When a person asks, “Why are you treating me so well?” our people answer, “Jesus told us that we’re supposed to do good to all men, and we want you to know that we love you, and so does Jesus.” After three or four months of such love, the hardest soul softens up and surrenders to Christ.<sup>5</sup>*

#### Systemic Problem #2: Institutional World View

**HEADS.** Bishop Kenneth Carder, who leads the church's Mississippi Area, shared with members of the Board of Discipleship the story of a once-prominent, 100-year-old United Methodist Church in his state. *The church had dwindled in size from 1,000 to 17 members, despite its location in a neighborhood full of people and in a town with a population of 50,000. Now it was closing.*

*Noting that the church used official United Methodist resources, rituals and curriculum, had won an award for evangelism and was Methodist to the core, the bishop wondered why it was closing and what it had missed. The answer, he said, was that the church was in a*

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<sup>4</sup>Robert K. Hudnut, preface to *Church Growth Is Not the Point*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), ix-x. The Illinois Great Rivers Conference experienced a net loss of 109,943 members since 1975 (41%).

<sup>5</sup>Carl F. George, *The Coming Church Revolution* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 1994), 93-94. Note the similarity to the Moravian humility that so influenced Wesley on January 25, 1736. John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 1:21-22.

*neighborhood in transition and had not reached out to the people around it.*<sup>6</sup>

**TAILS.** Willow Creek Community Church is likewise shifting their focus to create community in the neighborhoods of members.<sup>7</sup> Ministries take place in neighborhoods where Christians live and are personally known; their influence grows in relationships with the unchurched on their own turf grow. Willow Creek's sanctuary is now divided into zones where you can find seats with your neighbors and visit with an area pastor assigned to your geographical neighborhood.

### **Systemic Problem #3: Prairie DNA**

**HEADS.** Layman John Wicklund: *I began to have grave concerns about the changes brought into my church by my pastor after he attended a pastors conference sponsored by Rick Warren's Saddleback Church. Eventually, my wife and I were forced to leave that church (amicably) after private meetings with our pastor and a couple of deacons. In our church, Rick Warren started a slippery slope that included a softened and shortened sermon, dropping the name "baptist" from the church name, putting the hymnals in the church attic, selling the organ, needing earplugs to attend praise and worship time, watching an unicyclist parade through the sanctuary, participating in a live, interactive congregational marketing survey during church service time and starting a building program when neither attendance nor the budget supported doing so.*

*Sound familiar? If not, these seeker-sensitive things will soon be coming to your church if Rick Warren has his say. . . . This movement has hijacked evangelical Christianity over the past decade or so and has now displaced countless bible-believing Christians from their churches.*<sup>8</sup>

**TAILS.** 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. Southern Baptist Mission Executive, David Garrison: *In his initial survey, the strategy coordinator found three local house churches made up of about 85 Han Chinese Christians. The membership was primarily elderly and had been slowly declining for years with no vision or prospects for growth. Over the next four years, by God's grace, the strategy coordinator helped the gospel take fresh root among this people group and sweep rapidly across the Yanyin region.*

*Aware of the enormous cultural and linguistic barriers that separated him from the people of Yanyin, the missionary began by mobilizing Chinese Christian co-laborers from across*

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<sup>6</sup>United Methodist News Service, "Making disciples means changing hearts, bishop says," <http://www.wfn.org/2002/03/msg00205.html> (accessed June 15, 2007). Bishop Carder's speech is referenced in the *United Methodist Newscope* vol 30, no 13, March 29, 2002.

<sup>7</sup>Willow Creek Community Church, *Neighborhood Life Home*, <http://www7.willowcreek.org/neighborhoods/index.asp?pageID=3> (accessed June 15, 2007). Cf. Willow Creek Community Church, "Frequently Asked Questions," *Neighborhood Life*, <http://www7.willowcreek.org/neighborhoods/storypage.asp?pageID=7> (accessed June 15, 2007).

<sup>8</sup>John Wicklund, reviewing Bob DeWaay, *Redefining Christianity: Understanding the Purpose Driven Life Movement* (Springfield, MO: 21st Century Press, 2006), under [http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0977196437/qid=1149757409/sr=1-9/ref=sr\\_1\\_9/002-3430851-0046407?s=books&v=glance&n=283155](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0977196437/qid=1149757409/sr=1-9/ref=sr_1_9/002-3430851-0046407?s=books&v=glance&n=283155) (accessed May 16, 2007).

Asia. Then, partnering these ethnic Chinese church planters with a small team of local believers, the group planted six new churches in 1994. The following year, 17 more were begun. The next year, 50 more were started. By 1997, just three years after starting, the number of churches had risen to 195 and had spread throughout the region, taking root in each of the five people groups.

At this point the movement was spreading so rapidly that the strategy coordinator felt he could safely exit the work without diminishing its momentum. The next year, in his absence, the movement nearly tripled as the total number of churches grew to 550 with more than 55,000 believers.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Systemic Problem #4: Stranger Evangelism**

**HEADS:** Robert Putnam's research indicates that American networks of engagement are breaking down and that this loss of "social capital" is the primary cause of many serious social problems.<sup>10</sup> As the church is the primary builder of social networks, the decrease in social capital is both a cause and a result of the decline of church participation in America.<sup>11</sup> Relationships that build community bonds between neighbors are essential to disciple making.

What are the causes for decline in social capital according to Putnam's research? Factors which probably contribute little to the decline in social capital include divorce, people living together or alone, the decline of the traditional American family, racial issues, big government, the welfare state, two career families and working women.<sup>12</sup>

Factors which contribute significantly to the decline in social capital include slum clearance which destroys neighborhood relationships, the shift from local businesses replaced by regional giants where people shop as strangers, and the involvement of the power elite in corporate politics rather than community politics. Major factors in the decline include pressures of time and money, especially for two career families (10%), suburbanization, commuting and urban sprawl (10%), television and electronic entertainment (25%), and generational change, where lack of community involvement seems normal (over 50%).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>David Garrison, "Chapter 2: CPMs Up Close; A Region in China," in *Church Planting Movements*, <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.

<sup>10</sup>Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000). Putnam's work is online at The Saguaro Seminar, *Civic Engagement in America*, <http://www.bowlingalone.com/> (accessed June 15, 2007). For another description of the decline of social capital in neighborhoods, see Mary Pipher, *The Shelter of Each Other: Rebuilding Our Families* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996), 82-107.

<sup>11</sup>Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 65-79, 391-392, 408-410. Cf. Dale Miller, *2005 Report of the Dean of the Cabinet*, [http://www.umc-detconf.org/newsite/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=21&Itemid=1](http://www.umc-detconf.org/newsite/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=21&Itemid=1) (accessed May 16, 2007).

<sup>12</sup>Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 277-283, 201-203. By focusing on these factors, systems successfully avoid change which would result in real improvements in social capital.

<sup>13</sup>Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 283-284. Social capital is more than community voluntarism where strangers temporarily join together for a task. Bowling teams over time develop covenant bonds of mutual obligation that would allow one to borrow \$100 or a car for the weekend. Cf. Nancy T. Ammerman, "Organized Religion in a Voluntaristic Society," *Sociology of Religion* 58, no. 3, 1997, 203-215, under

**TAILS:** Southern Baptist Sunday School expert Josh Hunt: *We used to have our friends over on Friday nights to play cards. We would have dessert, tell jokes, and play games together. One day I suggested to Sharon that we invite a couple who had visited the church to join us on Friday night. We did, and we had a good time in the process. During the entire evening, we never said anything about church or Sunday school or the Bible or anything remotely religious. But, do you know what? They joined the church in a few weeks. Now, he is teaching a class himself. And they would both tell you that they were not living the disciple's life before they played cards and ate dessert with us that night*

*. . . That is why I say, if you want to double your class every two years or less, give Friday nights to Jesus. Have your friends over. Play cards. Eat dessert. Tell jokes. Laugh. Have a good time. But most of all, include an outsider couple. Ministry has never been so much fun. . . . This ministry is based on sound church growth thinking: people are not interested in a friendly church; they are looking for friends.*<sup>14</sup> Hunt found that 90% of the people he played cards with later joined the church.

### **Overview: What sort of evangelism actually results in disciples?**

**HEADS.** *People hate evangelism. Christians shy away from it. They're afraid of it, discouraged by it and feel guilty when they fail to drag a seeker across the line of faith. If Christians dread evangelism, non-Christians despise it. They feel pressured, preached at, cornered, judged, condemned and reduced to spiritual projects. "Somewhere along the line, we've forgotten what evangelism is really about and we've reduced the process to simply inviting people to a weekend service," says Willow Creek's Director of Neighborhood Evangelism, Garry Poole . . . When asked to define the activity they disliked so much — evangelism — most responded that it meant reaching out to friends and neighbors by inviting them to a church service. "So, here is a room of church-goers who are evangelizing by inviting neighbors — people they don't even know, by the way — to church," explains Poole. "No wonder it wasn't working." Naturally, the Christians were frustrated, but what more could they do? They were making attempts to follow the old paradigm of evangelism:*

- 1. Build a relationship*
- 2. Share a verbal witness*
- 3. Invite them to a church service*

*After skimming past points 1 and 2 to try point 3, only to find it didn't work, they were finished. Mission accomplished. Whew. They could check evangelism off their "to-do" list and say they'd tried.*<sup>15</sup>

**TAILS.** In the early 1960s sociologists Rodney Stark and John Lofland studied the first

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[http://hrr.hartsem.edu/bookshelf/ammerman\\_article2.html](http://hrr.hartsem.edu/bookshelf/ammerman_article2.html) (accessed May 16, 2007). Peter Drucker points out that people historically come to cities for the freedom of anonymity over the obligations of community; Peter F. Drucker, *Managing in the Next Society* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002), 225-232.

<sup>14</sup>Josh Hunt, *How to Get 90% of Your Visitors to Join Your Church*, <http://www.joshhunt.com/friday.html> (accessed 16 June 2006).

<sup>15</sup>Susan DeLay, "Evangelism in 3-D," *WCA News*, Issue 4, 2006, under <http://www.willowcreek.com/wcanews/story.asp?id=WN01142006> (accessed June 15, 2007).

conversions to the Unification Church or “Moonie” cult in the United States as a means of identifying why people convert, with the following scientific conclusions: *Proselytizing bore fruit only when it followed or coincided with the formation of strong social attachments, typically family ties or close personal friendships. Successful conversion was not so much about selling beliefs as it was about building ties, thereby lowering the social costs and raising the social benefits associated with changing one’s religious orientation. The converse was also true. Recruitment failure was all but assured if a person maintained strong attachments to a network of non-members. Many people spent time with the Moonies and expressed considerable interest in their doctrines but never joined. In nearly every case, these people had strong on-going attachments to non-members who disapproved of the group. By contrast, those who joined were often newcomers to San Francisco and thus separated from their family and friends. In short, social attachments lie at the heart of conversion, and conversion tends to proceed along social networks. This discovery has been replicated in scores of subsequent studies all over the world.*<sup>16</sup>

### **HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:**

- 1.01 Is church growth the point? What is the point? (Your answer is crucial.)
- 1.02 What do they do at Yoido Church that makes 20,000 new disciples each year?
- 1.03 What is wrong with Bishop Carder’s conclusion? (This is a trick question.)
- 1.04 What are your church members doing in their neighborhoods?
- 1.05 Why is it a mistake to change the worship service to make disciples?
- 1.06 What would happen in your town if a dictatorship closed down the church?
- 1.07 If the gospel spreads along networks of human relationships, what is the importance of Robert Putnam’s “bowling alone” observations for your church?
- 1.08 How did the church once build social networks? What happened? What could be done?
- 1.09 If being a friend to a neighbor is necessary to making a disciple, are you willing to make that sacrifice in order to be obedient to Jesus as Lord?
- 1.10 How has your church made Christianity more comfortable by removing disciple making from each activity that happens in the church?

### **Section Two: Discipleship Systems**

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

A. The priority is making disciples, according to 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.”<sup>17</sup>

B. Disciples are made by a healthy Discipleship System. Discipleship Systems cooperate with God’s work in prevenient grace, justifying grace and sanctifying grace. A quality Discipleship

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<sup>16</sup>Laurence R. Iannaccone, *The Market for Martyrs*, <http://www.religionomics.com/erel/S2-Archives/Iannaccone%20-%20Market%20for%20Martyrs.pdf> (accessed June 15, 2007). Cf. Rodney Stark, *Cities of God: The Real Story of How Christianity Became an Urban Movement and Conquered Rome* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 7-13.

<sup>17</sup>Harriet Jane Olson, ed., *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2004* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2004), 87.

System smoothly moves new disciples through the stages of spiritual growth to full maturation. A quality Discipleship System vastly increases system competence and thereby overcomes limits to growth. The ultimate size of a church is limited primarily by the quality of its Discipleship System.

C. Disciple making begins with prevenient grace as we each cooperate with God, go out into the world and make disciples through grace filled conversations. The task of disciple making belongs to each Christian and cannot be delegated to an institution, professionals or the gifted.

*Matthew 28:19: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . .*

D. Disciple making continues with sanctifying grace as all cooperate with God and teach their new disciples through grace filled conversations how to live by the rules Jesus gave for their new life. A disciple is more than a God believer or a Temple worship attender.

*Matthew 28:20: teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . .*

E. As new disciples mature, they will intentionally obey the commands of Jesus. This includes the command to love neighbors, make their own disciples and raise them to maturity. This obedience cannot be delegated from individuals to an institution, professional clergy or gifted laity. The true end result of the Great Commission is not a disciple but a disciple maker. The cycle repeats generation after generation (2 Timothy 2:2).

#### **HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:**

**1.1 JOURNAL:** Record your reflections and document your answers to the *Questions for a Better Understanding* found on the last page of the Seminar material with regard to this module.



## MODULE TWO: TOOLS FOR PREVENIENT GRACE

### Section One: The Prayer Tool

The Prayer Tool is found on the center back panel of the JUMP group brochure.

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

A. Disciple making begins with prevenient grace as we each cooperate with God, go out into the world and make disciples through grace filled conversations. Jesus commanded it: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations* (Matthew 28:19). How exactly should we “go” into the world?

**B. The challenge is noticing the lost:** *Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." So he told them this parable: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance* (Luke 15:1-7).

In this parable, who (literally) are the lost?

Anyone who is \_\_\_\_\_

Fivefold purpose of the Elim Church of El Salvador:

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.

#### C. The Prayer Tool Organizes Participation in Prevenient Grace.

*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest"* (Matthew 9:36).

It begins with \_\_\_\_\_.

Ripe fruit is picked \_\_\_\_\_ at a \_\_\_\_\_.

This requires \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ because not all fruit ripens simultaneously.

Fruit does not volunteer; you have to go get it.

The prayer tool provides a simple method to help committed Christians begin to work in the Lord's harvest. The prayer tool is a means of networking with the lost.

The harvest is ready; what is lacking are the laborers willing and prepared to labor.

#### D. Preliminary Steps in Using the Prayer Tool

Before using the prayer tool, be in a JUMP group. Only mature Christians can make disciples!

It's necessary to practice what we preach. Therefore:

*Step 1. Begin by renewing your commitment to Jesus as Lord and Savior.*

*Step 2. Begin reading the New Testament systematically.*

*Step 3. Choose a partner and begin asking your personal growth questions on a weekly basis.*

#### **E. Steps In Using the Prayer Tool:**

Step 4. Choose one person to pray for daily for one year (Month By Month Option). *The purpose of your prayer is that they would encounter Jesus Christ, find forgiveness and become followers of Jesus Christ. (You are praying that they become a disciple of Jesus Christ, not that they would join or support your institutional church.)*

Step 5. Choose someone whom you will *see weekly* to ask how they are. Choose someone with whom you have a kinship and common interests. (If you do not see them weekly they are probably not in your personal network. You will have little influence in their lives.)

Step 6. Choose someone you would be willing to *invite monthly* to something, spending time together and building a relationship. *What events (other than worship) inside the church would make a good choice to deepen a relationship? What events could your church begin to offer? What events outside the church would make a good choice to deepen a relationship?*

Step 7. **Do not invite them to worship!** Worship alone does not build relationships that make disciples; invite them to a small group or fellowship event *instead* of worship. If someone begins to participate in the small groups of a Discipleship System, it is inevitable that they will eventually attend worship. Worship does not make disciples.

Step 8. Choose someone with whom you would be willing to be *spiritual partners in a JUMP group*. It is pointless to populate your list with people you would not willingly eat with, have in your home or participate with in a weekly JUMP group.

Step 9. *When they are interested in being a partner in a JUMP group, then be their partner.* The Great Commission calls us not only to make disciples but to teach them toward spiritual maturity. This cannot be delegated; if they become disciples, they are your responsibility.

Step 10. Keep in touch with them on an ongoing basis. *Don't abandon the children on the doorsteps of the church! Baby Christians should never be orphans!*

Step 11. Evaluate annually each name on your prayer list after twelve months of prayer and conversation (Luke 13:9). *Have they borne fruit and become disciples? Is it the will of the Lord Jesus that you continue to pray and network with them? Or is it the will of the Lord Jesus that you release them and choose another name?*

#### **Section Two: More Tools for Prevenient Grace.**

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

A. The Prayer Tool is a method to help individuals work at the Great Commission. The Prayer Tool helps people examine their personal networks for ripening fruit and provide support for

these people in prayer. Prayer strengthens the relationship and subtly changes how the praying person relates to the potential convert. Daily prayer, weekly contact to assess needs for prayer and a monthly opportunity, as God provides, to build up the relationship (*oikodomeo*) are the components of the prayer tool.<sup>18</sup>

B. The most striking reality of the conversion process in the cell church is that the potential convert's early contact is entirely with the cell rather than attending a worship service as a stranger. Cells choose a neighbor, show love to that person by acts of mercy, stay in contact through personal calling, support emotionally and spiritually when there is a problem, invite them into the cell fellowship and allow God to work. New converts are assimilated by the cell before they have ever attended worship and frequently before they even experience conversion. Cells obey the command of Jesus to "love thy neighbor" in a literal, geographical sense. The new convert then helps choose the next family that the cell will love as Jesus commanded.

C. Groups provide a ready opportunity for monthly fellowship events to which you can invite the persons on your list. These do not need to be church activities or at the church building. If an activity builds relationships, God can use it. A group can consider a picnic, a trip to the zoo, a pool side barbeque, or a night playing games in someone's home. Each month a different person in your group could take leadership for planning an event.

D. Research shows that only 17% of church attenders participate in Sunday School, bible study or any learning event other than worship.<sup>19</sup> Thom Rainer believes that a properly organized, high quality Sunday School class can function as effectively as cells in maturing disciples.<sup>20</sup> Jesus said that those who continue in the word are truly His disciples (John 8:31). Use of the Prayer Tool can help a Sunday School class make disciples by organizing prayerful, relational networking to bring new people into the learning environment of the class.

## **HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:**

**2.1 JOURNAL:** Record your reflections and document your answers to the *Questions for a Better Understanding* found on the last page of the Seminar material with regard to this module.

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<sup>18</sup>The Prayer Tool process is based on the way Neil Cole's *Life Transformation Groups* pray for the lost. Neil Cole, *Cultivating a Life for God* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1999), 68-70.

<sup>19</sup>George Barna, quoted in Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples A Few At A Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 26.

<sup>20</sup>Thom Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 46-47. Sunday School groups need to balance their focus on learning in class with fellowship activities which build relationships. Each class should consider a monthly fellowship gathering to which prospective members could be invited. This can be organized as an activity of the class or persons gifted in hospitality could just begin to invite others to gather together for fellowship. Fellowship events build a bridge from outside the church into the class. Don't be surprised if it takes a while for class members to begin to invite outsiders to these events; old habits change slowly. Don't forget the 83% of worship attenders that are not a part of any class.

### **MODULE THREE: TOOLS FOR 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.*

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

A. Most strategies of evangelism are developed by experts to be used by professional staff or gifted amateurs. Gifted people sing in choirs, but in worship everyone sings. What is needed are disciple making tools simple enough to be used effectively by every Christian, everywhere, every week. The fact that tools are simple does not mean that they are easy; good tools are challenging.

#### **B. A Simple Discipleship System:**

The *Prayer Tool* organizes participation in Prevenient Grace. It helps people lead others through relational fellowship into a committed relationship with Jesus Christ.

The *Centering Prayer* is a tool for Justifying Grace; it helps begin and/or renew that relationship of commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior.

Life Transformation Groups or *JUMP groups* help new Christians learn obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord through habits of regular Bible reading, prayer, and accountability through mentoring. JUMP stands for *Jesus Understands My Problems*.

The *Quest* process is a rite of passage through spiritual adolescence into spiritual parenthood. JUMP groups move through the Quest process together.

C. Inspired by John Wesley's "Bands," California church planter Neil Cole developed "Life Transformation Groups."<sup>21</sup> LTGs are a tool for Sanctifying Grace; the Bands were designed for a higher level of commitment than the Methodist Class Meeting in which all participated. JUMP groups are an adaptation of LTGs for a United Methodist context.

D. You cannot spiritually mature people who are not committed Christians.

Continue to use the Prayer Tool for fellowship and sharing until a person indicates they want more; the spirit of God is in charge of this process of grace (1 Corinthians 12:3). Forming spiritually nurturing relationships where Christians love one another is a central task. Spiritual parenting at this stage involves unconditional love and consistent nurture; maturity develops after the human need for safety and security has been met.

The sign of a person moving from spiritual infancy into the child phase of maturity is curiosity about God and God's word (John 8:31). Learning obedience, good manners and proper behavior is a central developmental task for this stage of spiritual maturity. JUMP groups facilitate spiritual development through the child stage; they are particularly helpful to highly motivated persons with serious problems at any level of spirituality who desire Jesus as Lord to reorganize their lives. JUMP groups are a rite of passage from the child stage into spiritual adolescence.

E. The sign of a person moving into the teen phase of spiritual maturity is differentiation; this is

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<sup>21</sup>Neil Cole, *Cultivating a Life for God* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1999). Robert E. Logan and Neil Cole, *Raising Leaders for the Harvest* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1995).

usually expressed as discontent. The spiritual child has outgrown the nurturing womb of the family and is beginning to separate. This desire to discover oneself and act out of individuation needs to be guided from self-service into the Lord's service (Matthew 16:24). The discovery of one's spiritual giftedness and calling to minister is a central task of spiritual adolescence.

**F. To whom are you going?** Jesus chose his disciples; you will also need to choose yours. You cannot advertise for volunteers. Jesus helped all people but prayerfully selected persons for mentoring and invited them to join His cell group. The Prayer Tool will help you choose people, go to them in conversations and cooperate with God in making them disciples. Your *micro-mission field* consists of the people you are able to talk with week after week.

G. Neil Cole's *Life Transformation Groups* are the simplest form of cells known to me. Small groups of two or three<sup>22</sup> can flexibly schedule their meetings and adapt if a temporary change is needed. Busy schedules often restrict involvement in a larger group.

Larger groups often run at the speed of the slowest spiritually developing member, which holds back those ready to advance. In smaller groups, no dependency on a CEO leader develops; it's more peer oriented and allows the level of challenge adjust to meet the flexible needs of the new believer's situation.

JUMP Groups are an adaptation of Life Transformation Groups which allow for an "Life Transformation Group lite" experience; the original LTG questions can be intimidating.

H. JUMP Groups read a significant amount of scripture repetitively over several weeks. This form of *lectio divino* builds a familiarity with the scripture that allows patterns to emerge as the reader uncovers new insights with the help of the Holy Spirit.

I. JUMP Groups use questions inspired by John Wesley's bands to teach accountability and provide ambitious, prayerful goals for living. Like Wesley's bands, groups are best segregated by gender to allow for differences in sharing and ensure safe boundaries in relationships.

J. JUMP Groups are self-selecting; people who are not ready for this challenge of reading this much scripture or meeting weekly soon drop out. It's important to resist the tendency to make the JUMP group a play group for spiritual children. These groups are not peer groups but function to allow more mature persons to intentionally and flexibly mentor others. JUMP groups are for those who are ready for the "narrow gate" (Matthew 7:13-14). The requirements of scripture, questions, partnership and the prayer tool form a "speed bump" to slow growth to a speed that is appropriate, safe and healthy for new believers.

K. The components of this simple Discipleship System provide for the four priorities of the cell church. The Lordship priority is fulfilled by the JUMP group practice of reading scripture and

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<sup>22</sup>Greg Ogden recommends a group of three or four, finding that pairs with a single mentor/parent are far less productive than a group with two mentor/parents to provide care for a third and fourth person. Single parenting is hard. The power of a committed partnership is as important for those reaching out as well as those receiving care. Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples A Few At A Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 54, 145.

accountability questions. The Evangelism priority is fulfilled by the use of the Prayer Tool. The Equipping Track priority is fulfilled by the mentoring partnership and accountability questions of the JUMP group and later by the Quest process. The Cell priority is fulfilled by the JUMP partnership and the multiplication of JUMP groups through the Quest process.

**HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:**

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

## MODULE FOUR: LOCAL CHURCH EQUIPPING TRACKS

### Section One: Differentiating an Entire Church

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

**A. Differentiation through Gift Oriented Ministry:** The human body and the body of Christ are composed of discrete and highly specialized components (1 Corinthians 12). One great, often unrealized potential of gift oriented ministry<sup>23</sup> is the opportunity to differentiate an entire church.<sup>24</sup> In the family systems view of Edwin Friedman and Peter Steinke, a healthy member of a healthy family will be highly differentiated while remaining in touch. Healthy differentiation empowers individuals in the context of a community; differentiation heals conflict and stops triangling. When an infant learns that the environment is safe and good, the developmental need to explore will emerge. Maturity is measured by differentiation, which is the sign that an authentic, separate adult personality is emerging as needs for safety, security and belonging are satisfied.<sup>25</sup>

B. Adolescence is a time of differentiation, when teens remain in contact with family but explore and develop individual interests through a separate peer network. In our society differentiation has a lot to do with developing self-awareness that leads to a successful career; adolescence is about discovering what you want to do with your life. A healthy outcome of adolescence is that a teen returns to the family as an adult with a partner from that peer network and a wise understanding of career and calling.

C. If a church does not provide for differentiation, spiritual adolescents will seek it, often by joining another church offering programming of interest to spiritual adolescents. Larger churches frequently grow by fulfilling adolescent spiritual needs when smaller churches do not provide an equipping track for all levels of spiritual maturity. Spiritually adolescent Christians often leave their church family of origin for the exciting activities and spiritual adventures with an attractive peer group found in a larger church. Megachurches can provide an everlasting experience of the excitement, elitism, drama, and angst of teenage life.

D. The basic goals of adolescence are to (1) develop a second relational network of peers external to the family, leading to a fulfilling group of friends and a lifelong mate, (2) discover one's identity and purpose in life, leading to an interesting and fulfilling career choice, and (3) accomplish this while remaining in contact with one's family of origin. While our culture complicates adolescence and artificially extends it through college and even graduate school, this

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<sup>23</sup>Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches*, (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996), 24-25.

<sup>24</sup>Differentiation resolves conflict caused by underutilized people; cf. Bill Easum and Bil Cornelius, *Go Big: Lead Your Church to Explosive Growth* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 100-103.

<sup>25</sup>Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation To Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (New York: Guilford Publications, Inc., 1985), 3, 23, 228-249. Cf. Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in an Age of Quick Fix*, eds. Margaret M. Treadwell and Edward W. Beal, New ed. (New York: Seabury Books, 2007), 158-186, 239-247.

is basically a rite of passage. District Equipping Tracks can help provide this rite of passage for smaller churches through connectionalism.

E. Gifts identification programs are helpful in the self discovery of the ministry to which God calls a person. It is very exciting and satisfying for persons to find their missional place of service, using their spiritual gifts for the common good. This gift oriented, missional service is the highest level of spiritual maturity envisioned in many churches. A church is fully differentiated when all are serving as they are gifted, yet remaining in community with one another; this would create a very high level of satisfaction.<sup>26</sup>

**F. TOOLS FOR DIFFERENTIATION:** *Network* is a six-session dynamic program developed at Willow Creek to help Christians understand who God has uniquely made them to be and mobilize them to a place of meaningful service in the local church. Each participant in *Network* will work through a series of assessments which leads them to discover their unique blend of spiritual gifts, personal style, and ministry passion.<sup>27</sup>

The following is the publisher's description: *Network is a six-session dynamic program to help Christians understand who God has uniquely made them to be and mobilize them to a place of meaningful service in the local church. Each participant in Network will work through a series of assessments which leads them to discover their unique blend of spiritual gifts, personal style, and ministry passion. . . .*

*Network, the leading course for discovering spiritual gifts and empowering people for ministry, has been revised and updated. This material, developed in partnership with the Willow Creek Association, helps churches appropriately guide people to the place of ministry that best reflects who they are. Churches will see increased participation, greater effectiveness, more enthusiasm, and less burn-out in their congregation. Believers in their church will discover the spiritual gifts God has given them. They will have a better understanding of God's will for their lives because of gaining a better understanding of who God created them to be.*

*This complete seminar in a box includes a leader's guide; a participant's guide; a DVD with drama vignettes; and a CD-ROM with a coach's guide, a user's guide, and a PowerPoint.*

*Participants will be assessed on their personal style, spiritual passion, and gifts. Network works with any size group, from small groups of 4 to 12 to large groups of 15 to 150. The six Network sessions can be presented successfully in three flexible formats: three sessions of two hours each; six sessions of forty-five minutes each; or one- two- or three-day retreats.<sup>28</sup>*

G. In the human life cycle the drama and narcissism of adolescence are concluded by forming a

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<sup>26</sup>Cf. Brian K. Bauknight, "Team Building Through Spiritual Gifts" in *Equipping the Saints: Mobilizing Laity for Ministry*, ed. Michael J. Christensen with Carl E. Savage (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 101-120.

<sup>27</sup>Bruce L. Bugbee, Don Cousins, *Network Kit: The Right People, In the Right Places, For the Right Reasons, At the Right Time* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005).

<sup>28</sup>Bruce L. Bugbee and Don Cousins with Wendy Seidman, *Network Kit: The Right People, in the Right Places, for the Right Reasons, at the Right Time*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), <http://www.zondervan.com/Cultures/en-US/Product/ProductDetail.htm?ProdID=com.zondervan.9780310257936&QueryStringSite=Zondervan> (accessed June 15, 2007).



committed partnership followed by the humble reality of beginning a family. American society is chronically adolescent, focused on personal fulfillment and pleasure. Few Christians emerge from the self-enhancing drama of spiritual adolescence to enter the self-sacrificial, comparatively boring routine of a raising a spiritual family. Adolescents can bear children but do not have the maturity to raise them to observe all that Jesus has commanded. Spiritual children need spiritual parents; spiritual parents are rare. A rite of passage through spiritual adolescence is needed to fully develop mature spiritual parents. The Quest process can help provide this rite of passage.

H. Mission is an task oriented concept of spiritual adolescence; this is not an insult because missional service is a necessary stage as a disciple moves toward full maturity. The adventure of adolescent spiritual ministry is like the miraculous feeding of the five thousand; the focus is on God dramatically meeting the needs of the largest possible number of people. ***The sign of a parental ministry is an intimate focus and deeper involvement with fewer people, all of whom have names, just as Jesus focused upon the twelve disciples.***

### **Section Two: The Quest Equipping Track**

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

A. Quest is a tool that functions as a spiritual rite of passage, and offers the necessary relational bonding, adventure, challenge and self-discovery necessary to adolescent differentiation. The end result of healthy development is a spiritual adult ready to parent.

B. Quest is a small group process modeled on Eagle scouting, a familiar American rite of passage. Using a familiar model enhances the adoption of an innovation. A group that undertakes a Quest will perform four tasks involving pilgrimage, ministry and personal sacrifice. They will seek the Lord's will, take up their cross and carry it as a ministry to bless others. As a rite of passage, the Quest is an exciting and life changing spiritual adventure.

**C. Prerequisites to Quest:** Three necessary steps precede the beginning of a Quest; these "speed bumps" prevent an immature person from beginning a Quest until they are prepared. A pilgrim has first participated faithfully in a Jump Group, thereby developing habits of prayer, reading scripture, interacting with lost people and reviewing his or her behavior with questions and a mentor. Second, mature Christians tithe or have a written plan to become tithers (Matthew 6:21, Malachi 3:6-18). Third, potential Quest pilgrims have also participated in a gift identification process to help them discern God's calling on their lives and their area of ministry as laity.

*Example: A JUMP group has two apprentices who are diabetics. After the gifts/ministry identification process, the apprentices decide their people target ministry group will be other diabetics. They refine their JUMP group practice to reflect this interest. Their prayer tool lists consist of other diabetics; their accountability questions for the JUMP group include goal questions for the management of their illness.*

D. Pilgrims will go through a Quest as a JUMP group. This may be the original JUMP group or apprentices may choose to affiliate with another mentor who has a similar calling or expertise to offer. They will continue to practice the spiritual disciplines of the JUMP group throughout the Quest. The small size of a Quest JUMP group - two apprentices plus one or two mentors - makes logistics simple and lowers costs. They can travel in one car.

E. The Quest group is financially supported and sent by a sponsoring group within the church that will also help with labor, with prayer, and provides an arena for testimonies from Quest participants each step of the way. This supportive community significantly boosts excitement.

The traditional model for the Quest is an expanded version of the process to become an Eagle Scout. This will be a familiar model for many members of the congregation. Just as in the Eagle project, the other members of the larger group will be included in the Quest not only through hearing the testimony of the pilgrims but also as willing, helping hands whenever labor is needed. Ideally, a Quest should take one to two years of dedicated effort and involve an entire community.

F. The first task in the Quest will be a “hajj” or *pilgrimage* to a teaching church seminar that exemplifies either cell church principles or the ministry to which the Quest group is called. The goal of the pilgrimage is to learn from observing the very best church that is nationally known for the highest quality ministry with the chosen people group. Searching for such example or “city on a hill” churches should be a part of the gifts/ministry identification process.<sup>29</sup>

*Example: Our diabetic JUMP group on a pilgrimage might search for a church with expertise in parish nursing or some other nationally known health related ministry and attend a workshop at that church.*

G. The second task in the Quest is a *mission trip* to serve others in poverty, and the farther and more discontinuous from the apprentice’s home environment, the better. Third world experiences change lives, but experiences within the United States may also be utilized. This experience models Matthew 10 and Matthew 25 with the goal of being able to see Jesus present in the person who is hungry, thirsty, sick, or a stranger, in poverty or in prison.

*Example: Our diabetic JUMP group on a mission trip will also examine the needs of diabetics in the ministry context where they visit. All health problems are exacerbated by poverty. Perhaps they will be fortunate enough to work directly with diabetics.*

H. The third task in the Quest is for each apprentice to design a *service project* in the area of their gifting which benefits their local church and community. This project should be as challenging and ambitious as those used for Eagle Scout projects and provide an experience of lasting value to the JUMP group, the church and community. The best projects are ones that make a significant, permanent difference in the community. The service project is a discrete task; the next task involves creating a relational community. The best projects will involve others from the church as co-laborers to help the target ministry community.

*Example: Our diabetic JUMP group will study diabetes as a problem within their home community and the means by which the community attempts to help. They will visit other community groups and network with other social service providers. Then an informed decision*

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<sup>29</sup>Cell type churches for Quest pilgrimages would include Willow Creek Community Church in suburban Chicago ([www.willowcreek.com](http://www.willowcreek.com)), Ginghamburg United Methodist Church in rural Dayton, Ohio ([www.inghamburg.org](http://www.inghamburg.org)), Bethany World Prayer Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana ([www.bccn.com](http://www.bccn.com)), and Saddleback Church in suburban Los Angeles ([www.purposedriven.com](http://www.purposedriven.com)).

*will be made on a service project which significantly aids the community effort.*

I. The final Quest task is paramount, for it is intended to fulfill the Great Commission and teach disciple making by supervised example. The task is called *family planning*. This final task helps the differentiating apprentices move beyond merely serving a need to ministering directly to specific people in a relational small group. It moves them from missional service into disciple making as the founders of a spiritual family.

J. The JUMP group on the Quest Family Planning task will develop a strategy to form a spiritual family, a cell group, to minister relationally to individuals with specific needs in the target community. The JUMP group will function as the leadership of the cell with the mentoring leader and 1-3 apprentices. In the Quest terminology, these groups are called JOLT groups.<sup>30</sup>

Ralph Neighbour refers to this type of cell group as a *share group* designed to build *oikos* relationships with the unchurched.<sup>31</sup> A share group opens for a specific duration of time and helps individuals move into a higher level of relational and spiritual commitment. For Neighbour, share groups feed formal cell groups; in this setting, the apprentices interact with share group members with the goal of forming their own JUMP groups rather than cell groups. The JOLT group might continue to operate indefinitely or close down after a period of time as with Neighbour's *Share Groups*. The mentoring leader does not lead the JOLT group, but facilitates the leadership of the apprentices as an equipper. The apprentices perform all major leadership tasks while the mentoring leader provides relational support to all participants.

*Example: A JUMP group has two apprentices who are diabetics and who feel a calling to minister to other diabetics. After educating themselves through the Quest process, they form a JOLT group to provide spiritual support to persons with diabetes both inside and outside of the local church.*

*If the JOLT group is short term, it might take the form of a series of informational classes on diabetes with the inclusion of health professionals as guest instructors. If the JOLT group is ongoing, it may be a support group to help diabetics with lifestyle changes from a spiritual perspective, perhaps using the Twelve Steps.*

*Persons who are ready for a deeper spirituality join the apprentice of their choice in a JUMP group which significantly helps them with their illness. Eventually those new apprentices will begin their own differentiated ministries through their own Quest.*

K. After the JUMP group opens their community ministry group, they “graduate” from their Quest and are recognized for this achievement. The Quest is a rite of passage through spiritual adolescence and into spiritual parenting as apprentices form their own spiritual families. The Quest teaches disciple making in the context of the church of origin; if it is not taught in place, people who desire to grow in their spiritual maturity will leave for another church to find it.

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<sup>30</sup>JUMP is an acronym for *Jesus Understands My Problems*. A JUMP group reaches out by becoming the leadership core of a larger JOLT group to address a need in the community. JOLT stands for *Jesus Overcomes Life's Troubles*; members of JOLT groups help one another overcome real problems in a supportive community. Apprentices form new JUMP groups out of JOLT groups.

<sup>31</sup>Neighbour, *Where Do We Go*, 105, 220-223, 281-290, 293-300.

**HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:**

**4.1 JOURNAL:** Record your reflections and document your answers to the *Questions for a Better Understanding* found on the last page of the Seminar material with regard to this module.

## AFTERNOON MODULES

### MODULE FIVE: DIAGNOSIS SEMINAR VIDEO MODULE

**Lunch:** *The Rabbi's Gift* (218043)

*First Love: Christ Centered Church Renewal* - Session 6 - (206040)<sup>32</sup>

### MODULE SIX: DISTRICT EQUIPPING TRACKS

#### Section One: Centralization, Congregationalism and Connectionalism.

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

A. Denominations struggle today between the poles of centralized control and local control. This historical trend is repeated throughout church history. The homeostasis of conflict between centralized authority and local congregations can be an irresistible addiction.

B. Connectionalism, the historical form of Methodist organization, is a viable third alternative to the lose-lose, "either/or" power struggle between centralization and congregationalism. Connectionalism is based on linking individuals into relational networks; power is shared through multiple interpersonal links which allow conversations that create influence beyond a visionary minority. Connectionalism allows for strong central leadership by the professional staff and respect for the value and ministry of each individual at the local level. Cell churches are inherently connectional and are direct descendants of Wesley's form of organization. Cell churches provide a third alternative model for organization which is both very effective in contemporary culture and highly successful at making disciples.

C. Theologically, the Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference in 2006 is a church of 74,431 persons worshipping each week in 907 locations linked through ten districts. The bishop is the pastor over the whole conference and the district superintendent is the pastor over the members of the district. If this seems unusual it indicates the degree to which the congregationalistic world view has come to dominate our thinking. The church is not the local church, but all of us united. The world's largest church, Yoido Full Gospel Church with over 700,000 members, is also organized into geographic districts. It provides a model to be large without losing focus on making disciples. It is growing in numbers rather than declining.

D. The linking unit of connectionalism in an annual conference is the district. District events that linked people beyond their local church in ministry or for training were once common.<sup>33</sup> These ongoing experiences built up community through mutual involvement in covenantal ministry. Districts have become impoverished over the years by moving participation up to the conference level or downward toward congregationalism through clusters or clergy covenant groups. District

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<sup>32</sup>All 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 [www.intraweb.igrc.org/umrc](http://www.intraweb.igrc.org/umrc) (accessed June 15, 2007). Use the number in parentheses to order.

<sup>33</sup>Examples: mission saturation events, New Life Missions or Key Events.

linking functions once built Methodist social capital by linking people not for a task but in a covenant relationship of responsibility with expectations and accountability.

E. According to Natural Church Development, small churches have a much higher potential for disciple making than large churches. Large churches tend to grow by transfer rather than conversion. Receptor growth can be explained by the developmental need for spiritual adolescents to differentiate from their “small church family of origin.” Large, program base design churches often grow by meeting this need; this is a solution feeding the trend toward congregationalism and decimating participation in the small churches of the conference.

F. In years past differentiation needs for small church members were met by linking individuals through District programming for ministry or training. Youth in churches too small to have a youth group participated in the District youth group. District activities supplemented small church programming gaps, built connection across multiple congregations, revitalized smaller churches and raised up quality leaders for the annual conference. Connectionalism is essential for small churches to fulfill the potential for disciple making indicated by Natural Church Development. The congregational paradigm begins to flourish when the connection is irrelevant to the survival, spiritual health, and growth of individual church members. Connectionalism increases when laity build covenant relationships with other United Methodists beyond their own parish.

G. A structure is needed for the ongoing equipping and supervision of disciple making leaders. For small churches, this need is best met through district programming which rebuilds connectionalism.<sup>34</sup> District based equipping tracks for disciple making can fulfill this need. Remember the Structural Principle: *The problem is not to change or replace structure but to utilize existing structures for disciple making.*

H. Districts already have in place a clear structure for developing pastoral leaders; these structures, however, are not utilized to teach generational disciple making. A district superintendent can easily adapt existing training tracks to equip laity for discipling. District level training for lay speakers can become a powerful tool for disciple making.<sup>35</sup> District equipping of lay ministers<sup>36</sup> and lay missionaries<sup>37</sup> offer a significantly higher potential. District recruitment and supervision of part-time and full-time local pastors in disciple making offer a

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<sup>34</sup>Many church growth innovations arose in congregational churches; when adopted by local churches or clusters of local churches, they reinforce independence and encourage congregationalism. This is a major problem provoking systemic resistance to church growth at the 2008 General Conference. When church growth innovation is done connectionally at a district level, the resulting benefit and good will accrues to the district and these activities rebuild denominational social capital.

<sup>35</sup>Paragraph 267-272, *Book of Discipline 2004*, 189-193.

<sup>36</sup>Paragraph 272, *Book of Discipline 2004*, 192.

<sup>37</sup>Paragraph 271, *Book of Discipline 2004*, 192.

third significant opportunity.<sup>38</sup> These experiences can be utilized as a powerful equipping track. Leadership is influence; influence created by personal involvement of the superintendent in the spiritual development of these lay leaders will extend into every parish. Leadership development is a historic role for presiding elders.

I. Districts can be key resources to developing discipleship systems in congregations, and especially in smaller congregations. The primary need is a connectional district equipping track for disciple making leadership development which will allow lay leaders to fully mature and spiritually differentiate while remaining within their local church.

Small churches need the connection in order to provide an equipping track. Only the mature fruit can reproduce; individuals who do not progress through a missional adolescence are unable to make disciples, resulting in small churches filled with spiritual children and large churches filled with spiritual teenagers. Disciple making requires a rite of passage to spiritual parenting.

**J. Purpose Driven District.** The most widespread paradigm of an American disciple making equipping track is the *Forty Days of Purpose* from Saddleback Church. It utilizes Ministry Fairs for missional involvement and *The Purpose Driven Life* as a personal spiritual devotional. The program functions as a cell type, equipping track within a local church and is intended to take place in a context of small groups as an ongoing program of equipping and faith development. The five purposes of the *Purpose Driven Life* define a pattern for a fully mature, disciple making Christian; they fulfill the four priorities of the cell church.

A district could easily become a *Purpose Driven District* and provide an ongoing program of developing church members through the five purposes. A *Purpose Driven District* would provide quarterly opportunities for Class 101, 201, 301, 401 and SHAPE at district wide events. District organized *Ministry Fairs* would involve local church members in meeting community needs. More importantly, these events would build connectional relationships among lay leaders across parish boundaries, strengthen connectionalism and restore denominational social capital. The *Forty Days of Purpose* is evolving to work with groups of churches and could easily be adopted by a District.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Paragraph 315-319, *Book of Discipline 2004*, 205-209.

<sup>39</sup>Rick Warren commented in 2005 upon the influence of the Forty Days of Purpose as a trend: *Ten percent of the churches in America have now done 40 Days of Purpose and that's just now. We will take another 10 to 15 thousand through it this year, and on and on and on. And there's a little story of how that got started in churches and then it spread to corporations like Coca-Cola and Ford and Wal-Mart, and they started doing 40 Days of Purpose. And then it spread to all the sports teams. I spoke at the NBA All-Stars this year because all of the teams were doing 40 Days of Purpose. LPGA, NASCAR, most of the baseball teams – when the Red Sox were winning the World Series, they were going through 40 Days of Purpose during the Series. So the story of the 40 Days of Purpose is more than the story of the book. And maybe we can get back to why that touched such a nerve around the world, because The Purpose Driven Life is not just the best-selling book in American history; it's the best-selling book in about a dozen languages. It's in about 30 languages right now and that's why I was at this meeting last night with the Spanish.*

*The next phase that you're going to see is we're actually doing citywide 40 Days of Purposes. We've already done one in Chattanooga; we're going to do one in Philadelphia this fall with 250 African-American churches.* The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, “Event Transcript: Myths of the Modern Mega-Church,

**K. Differentiating an entire church through *Network*.** Willow Creek developed *Network* for gifts identification and ministry placement for persons entering spiritual adolescence. Differentiation among church members significantly decreases conflict; spiritual differentiation involves discovering one's own ministry while remaining relationally in touch with the church family of origin. Districts could offer *Network* or a similar program on a quarterly basis and provide ongoing supervision and encouragement as church members develop their ministries.

**L. Connectional Church Planting:**<sup>40</sup> Congregationalist models plant congregational rather than connectional churches. Connectional church planting by district teams of twelve disciple making lay missionaries and their families would ensure a connectional church as a result. After a two year term of missional service, many of these leaders would return to their local churches and bring a significant impact to their home churches due to skills developed while serving on the district mission field. This district based, connectional church planting approach would spread ownership of the new church plant among many churches. Members of the new church start would have many friends and mentors who attend other churches but whom they would continue to see at district equipping functions.

Church planting is a significant system change, and can be resisted by choosing methods that guarantee failure or by constantly changing to new methods. Church planting is an academic discipline and academic training can be avoided. The key limiting factor in church planting is the availability of a large body of effective, trained, disciple making leaders. There is no ongoing training in skills necessary for church planting available to clergy and laity within the Illinois Great Rivers Conference that would equip a large number of leaders in the discipline of church planting. A district equipping track could widely teach these skills and raise up local leaders highly skilled in disciple making. The highly successful third world church multiplication movement model is lay led, extremely low cost and inherently connectional.<sup>41</sup>

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Monday, May 23, 2005," *The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life*, <http://pewforum.org/events/index.php?EventID=80> (accessed June 15, 2007). Rick Warren conducted a Purpose Driven conference at Yoido Church in 2006. Lillian Kwon, "Rick Warren Kicks Off Purpose Driven Conference in Korea," *Christian Today*, July 14, 2006, <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/rick.warren.kicks.off.purpose.driven.conference.in.korea/6928.htm> (accessed June 15, 2007).

Many United Methodist churches have had a good experience with the Forty Days of Purpose as a one time event of renewal but do not implement it as an ongoing paradigm and process of disciple making. An event focus is one way systems embrace change while ensuring that change lasts only for the duration of the event. For more information on the program, see Rick Warren, *Forty Days of Purpose*, <http://www.purposedriven.com/en-US/40DayCampaigns/40DaysOfPurpose/40DOPHOME.htm> (accessed June 15, 2007). A Purpose Driven District approach would provide for ongoing, flexible participation.

<sup>40</sup>Church planting requirements are listed in Paragraph 260, *Book of Discipline 2004*, 179-182.

<sup>41</sup>Cf. David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (Midlothian, VA: WIGTake Resources, 2004). David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, [www.imb.org/CPM/default.htm](http://www.imb.org/CPM/default.htm) (accessed 16 May 2007). Cf. Robert E. Logan & Neil Cole, *Beyond Church Planting* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 2005).



I. District fellowship organizations also provide significant opportunities for district equipping for disciple making. Evangelism is a declared purpose of the United Methodist Men and JUMP groups could easily be incorporated with the EMS program.<sup>42</sup> Through the forming of new circles, a Discipleship System can revitalize United Methodist Women units in local churches. These and other district fellowships can be significant sponsors of district level training in making disciples for their members.

**J. The *Walk to Emmaus*** is a planned experience of Justifying grace and an organized rite of passage into spiritual adolescence; Reunion Groups are small groups where sponsors meet with pilgrims after a Walk to strengthen their discipleship in a mentoring relationship.<sup>43</sup> When Emmaus is utilized as a discipleship system, the vitality of the community is measured “by the number of ongoing Reunions among the pilgrims.”<sup>44</sup> The JUMP or Life Transformation Group would provide an excellent format for Reunion Groups that desire to work at a more challenging level of discipleship. The Prayer Tool would help pilgrims become sponsors and mentors of others and significantly enhance the recruitment of potential pilgrims. *Walk to Emmaus* Reunion groups can become a Discipleship System through use of these tools.

#### **HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:**

**5.1 JOURNAL:** Record your reflections and document your answers to the *Questions for a Better Understanding* found on the last page of the Seminar material with regard to this module.

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<sup>42</sup>General Commission on United Methodist Men, *Reaching the Hearts of Men for Christ Through Every Man Shares in Evangelism, Mission and Spiritual Life*, [http://www.umc.org/site/c.lwL4KnN1LtH/b.1847121/k.6B61/United\\_Methodist\\_Men/apps/s/link.asp](http://www.umc.org/site/c.lwL4KnN1LtH/b.1847121/k.6B61/United_Methodist_Men/apps/s/link.asp) (accessed August 20, 2007).

<sup>43</sup>The Upper Room, *What Is Emmaus?* [www.upperroom.org/emmaus/whatis/#](http://www.upperroom.org/emmaus/whatis/#) (accessed June 15, 2007).

<sup>44</sup>Stephen D. Bryant, *The Upper Room Handbook on Emmaus* (Nashville: The Upper Room, 1989), 115. A version of the JUMP group brochure adapted for Emmaus Reunion groups is available at [http://www.disciplewalk.com/More\\_Resources.html](http://www.disciplewalk.com/More_Resources.html) (accessed June 15, 2007).

## **MODULE SEVEN: STEWARDSHIP**

### **With the Illinois Great Rivers Conference Foundation.**

Foundation staff or representatives will present tools for adequately funding the developing vision for your church. You will be directed in how to break up into groups for this presentation.

Record your reflections and document your answers to the *Questions for a Better Understanding* found on the last page of the Seminar material with regard to this module.

## **MODULE EIGHT: NEXT STEPS**

### **With the Office of Congregational Development**

Office of Congregational Development staff and consultants will introduce you to means by which the Office of Congregational Development can assist your developing vision for your church. You will be directed in how to break up into groups to meet with a consultant or trained volunteer who will guide you through this part of the process.

Record your reflections and document your answers to the *Questions for a Better Understanding* found on the last page of the Seminar material with regard to this module.

### **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 UNDERSTANDING<sup>45</sup>**

*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.

#### **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?*

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<sup>45</sup>These questions are based on ideas from Grant P. Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 1998).