

RESTORING THE CENTRALITY OF THE SPIRIT'S EMPOWERMENT FOR CARRYING OUT THE GREAT COMMISSION: A COURSE TO EQUIP CHRISTIANS AT JOURNEY CHURCH IN THE PROCESS OF EVANGELISM

Scott Bottoms

The Church in America has declined for many years in size and effectiveness. The Pentecostal Church was the bright spot in the Church landscape until the last decade, but it has followed the way of its predecessors with a similar decline in the rate of church growth.¹ Though several factors have contributed to this decline, the decreasing priority of an effective communication of the gospel is the specific problem this project addresses.

Though, according to Acts 1:8, empowerment to tell others about Jesus is the primary purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, with all other purposes becoming secondary, a brief historical study of the Pentecostal church's popular theology reveals a shift away from its early twentieth-century pneumatology of personal empowerment for witness to an emphasis on personal enrichment and church vitality. A New Testament assessment of disciple making and the term *preach* shows the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues as the *incarnational gift* to the believer.

This project presents an eight-week Bible study, entitled "Simple Witnessing," that seeks to motivate and disciple Christians to obediently and effectively communicate the gospel with a dependence on Spirit empowerment. An evaluation process to help track the involvement of participants in the study, along with their daily participation in effective evangelism, accompanies the Bible study.

¹"Index to 2006 AG Statistical Reports," General Council of the Assemblies of God, http://ag.org/top/About/Statistics/Statistical_Report_2006.pdf (accessed November 10, 2009).

REVITALIZATION OF THE CHRISTIAN LEADER: A MODEL FOR BUILDING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS CONDUCTIVE TO PERSONAL CHANGE

Randyl David Brown

The busyness of a vibrant church gives little time for Christian leaders to focus on self-improvement. While thriving in their pastoral duties, ministry leaders can easily ignore the deficient areas of their lives. These Christian leaders need an opportunity to reflect on life and ministry, clarifying hopes and dreams, as well as personal issues holding them back.

This project sought to create an environment where the Lead Pastor and pastoral staff at Evangel Temple Christian Center in Springfield, Missouri, could reflect on life and ministry, establish a holistic approach to personal change, and create a specific plan for change. The goal was to put into the hands of these leaders a value-based system for organizing the details they will use to establish a personal plan for change.

Using the personage and the writings of Moses, as well as current personal change literature, the participants were shown the flaws of a single-focused system (a central focus on the welfare of the church), and encouraged to consider the value of a multi-focused system based on eight life values (spirituality, health and wellness, relationships, personal growth, activities and interests, service to others, work, and possessions). The writings of Moses on the Sabbath and the *Shema* encouraged the participant to practice self-care as a biblical precedent.

Through a seminar format, the participants entered a reflective environment. They began self-discovery (gathering information for gaining self-awareness, establishing personal priorities and goal setting, and following a transformational process). And they learned the skills that make personal change possible (gaining perspective holistically, taking ownership of the personal change process, increasing commitment, and finding inspiration).

This project successfully achieved its purpose in providing a learning environment for Christian leaders seeking personal change.

ENERGIZING ADULT DISCIPLES TOWARD SPIRITUAL GROWTH AT NEW LIFE CHURCH IN SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI”

Dan A. Call

New Life Church of Springfield, Missouri is a General Council affiliated church in the Assemblies of God. Starting in the 1990s and continuing into the twenty-first century, the church began moving from its traditional church moorings to a seeker-sensitive model, placing a strong emphasis on attracting the unchurched and dechurched to its Sunday services. Every Sunday, New Life leaders present the gospel in a culturally relevant manner; however, they established no formal efforts to encourage believers toward spiritual growth and maturity.

In response to this challenge, I designed a project that focused on the research and development of a spiritual transformation model to yield quantifiable spiritual growth. After a careful biblical study on discipleship, I did a thorough review of contemporary literature dealing with Christian spirituality. Assessment tools were evaluated and selected to measure participants' pre-session and post-session spiritual health. Once a spiritual health baseline was established, individualized spiritual growth pathways were developed for all participants. The pathways were created to utilize a variety of soul training exercises and techniques (spiritual disciplines). From the outset, participants were encouraged to continue to create spiritual growth pathways to ensure ongoing transformation after the pilot project ended.

Measureable results indicate significant spiritual growth occurred in every adult who participated in the twelve-week project. Since coming to the church in April 2010, the church has grown in average weekly attendance from 300 people to 550 people.

**STRATEGIES FOR ADVANCING A NEW MINISTRY PHILOSOPHY:
EQUIPPING LEADERS FOR ONGOING REVITALIZATION OF
MARANATHA WORSHIP CENTER, WICHITA, KANSAS**

Michael Clarensau

Rapid church growth and multiple service formats can easily threaten the strength of a congregation built on close relationships and a strong sense of belonging. Maranatha Worship Center in Wichita, Kansas, faced such a crossroads. Maranatha's chosen philosophy centers on establishing an atmosphere of belonging and acceptance as its primary means of outreach. As the church approached 700 in weekly attendance, maintaining such an atmosphere demanded new intentionality. This project followed the congregation's pursuit of aspirational values and then measured the impact of those efforts on the church's environment.

The field project focused action on the leadership council—a group of forty individuals serving both pastoral staff and lay ministry roles. Over a six-month period, each individual was asked to meet someone, pray with or promise to pray for someone, and help someone each week. This “MPH” initiative was coupled with four training sessions in Maranatha's values.

A pretest and posttest survey demonstrated significant shifts among leader attitudes toward to desired values. The most remarkable of the project's findings, however, saw visitor return and retention rates skyrocket to levels well beyond the church's previous experience and that commonly reported by other growing congregations.

Through a dual approach of intentional action and training, the project demonstrated the potential for achieving aspirational values. It also demonstrated the capacity of Maranatha's values to lead the congregation toward church growth and effectiveness. The challenge of extending belonging to the outsider, the project's theological focus, continues to be excellent and relevant fodder for extended consideration.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DIFFERENCE MAKER: SHAPES MENTORING PROGRAM TRAINING

Jeffrey B. Dorn

There are approximately 2.7 million minor children with a parent in prison living in the United States today—over 1,000 living in Southwest Missouri. A majority of these children grow up in situations where they lack quality relationships. This fact, coupled with myriad additional risk factors they face, raises their own incarceration expectancy rates significantly. Mentoring provides an effective intervention by helping the children of prisoners navigate the complexities of life to better prepare them for the future.

This project established the training necessary to effectively prepare volunteer mentors to be a positive influence in the lives of children who have lost a parent to prison. Through a review of the biblical principles that provide the basis of the Church's involvement in social justice ministry and examining the biblical mentoring relationships of Eli and Samuel and Paul and Timothy, this project provides the biblical mandate for the mentoring of at-risk children. The project's review of mentoring theory and background information regarding the children of inmates provides the key components necessary to create an effective training curriculum.

The culmination of this project was the production and presentation of pre-mentor training that not only provided mentors with the key information needed for a successful match, but also instilled in them a greater passion for the program's mission. The evaluation tools utilized indicated trainees were prepared to enter their mentoring relationships with a proper understanding of the program and a sense of confidence that they received the training necessary for an effective and positive match experience. The project also produced two continuing education trainings that will be utilized to fulfill the mentors' requirement for in-match training.

**AN INTEGRATED APPROACH FOR RECRUITING, TRAINING,
AND DEVELOPING SMALL GROUP LEADERS AT
CALVARY ASSEMBLY OF GOD,
DOVER, DELAWARE**

Jeffrey A. Dyer

Previous efforts to encourage small groups at Calvary Assembly of God in Dover, Delaware did not incorporate a framework for training. To address this deficiency, this project provided a biblical foundation for small group leadership developed through the concepts of leadership of the laity, mentoring in biblical times, and the role of community in spiritual formation. The project also surveyed contemporary literature regarding small group and cell group structures and training with the intent of creating a leadership training seminar for small group leaders.

The field project consisted of a one-day seminar focused on beginner and intermediate group leadership skills. After the seminar, the participants' perception of the overall benefit of the seminar and their increase in knowledge about small group leadership skills were measured. The training seminar received favorable reactions and indicated that knowledge increased for certain skills. Interestingly, the project showed a marked increase in the confidence of leaders after the training session, indicating the usefulness of training even when initial knowledge of a subject exists.

The research and field project resulted in several recommendations for Calvary Assembly of God, including: (1) alignment of groups and classes, (2) alteration of some aspects of the current model of small groups, and (3) development of a leadership pipeline in conjunction with the implementation of turbo groups for leadership development.

ASSISTING MINISTERS IN MANAGING CONFLICT IN THE CHURCH

Larry Gunther

New ministers need to be prepared to manage conflict situations in their personal lives and within their congregations. Bible colleges and seminaries seek to prepare future pastors to function within numerous pastoral duties. At times conflict resolution is omitted, or inadequately covered, leaving the novice ministers without sufficient resources to handle the tensions that are a normal part of any congregation.

This project provided a review of biblical-theological literature to find passages that would supply universal principles to guide pastors through the conflicts they will face. The prescriptive words of Jesus in Matthew 5 and 18 gave insights to deal with conflict between individuals and with a group of believers. Descriptive portions of the Old and New Testament revealed a wealth of information for both the first-time minister and the seasoned veteran of pastoral ministry. Comparison of passages dealing with the temptations of Eve and Jesus in garden settings and the sexual temptations of Joseph and David were used to focus on intrapersonal conflicts. Two stories that involved Phinehas showed the impact of well-managed and mismanaged interpersonal conflicts.

The biblical material was augmented by a survey of the general literature on conflict to produce a series of lesson plans presented to three groups of ministerial students at Trinity Bible College. This material included conflict management styles, conflict development and management cycles, and general information to encourage the students to see that conflict situations can be healthy, beneficial, and resolvable rather than something to be avoided.

**ENCOURAGING HOLISTIC MISSION: EMPOWERING THE
FULL GOSPEL MISSION OF CAMEROON
FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Jimmie Wayne Lemons

Full Gospel Mission of Cameroon (FGM), the denomination that Assemblies of God World Missions (AGWM) works with in Cameroon, has over one thousand churches and preaching points throughout the nation, mainly providing ministry based on the primacy of evangelism. A few holistic endeavors exist on a national level, while individual assemblies seem content with continuing traditional ministries and leaving social outreach to a few established church institutions. This project encourages the local assemblies of one section of FGM, in the capital city of Yaoundé, to engage in holistic ministry outreach in their respective communities.

Implementation of this project resulted in the planning, funding, and initiating of holistic community outreaches by individual churches. A seminar focusing on holistic mission principles, biblical stories, and examples of holistic mission produced striking ministry perception changes among participating pastors and leaders.

After the intervention, appreciation for compassionate ministry significantly rose (from a mean of 27.92 to 33.67), while admiration for conventional ministry dramatically declined (from a mean of 32.33 to 27.58). Sectional leaders grew in their knowledge and practical experience of holistic mission and ministry and began to grasp the transforming nature and benefits of holistic mission. After field testing on a sectional level, the next step is to present the material to the Full Gospel Mission as a whole during a national pastors' retreat. The project information could potentially impact the entire FGM denomination, as well as any other churches or denominations desiring to make an impact on their communities, their countries, and the world.

A STRATEGY FOR LEADING SUMMER MISSION EXPERIENCES FOR ASSEMBLIES OF GOD (AG) UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

David J. Moore

Short-term mission (STM) represents the largest and fastest growing—yet the least studied and most misunderstood segment—of worldwide mission activity. About three of every four graduates of Assemblies of God colleges will have completed at least one overseas STM trip by the time they graduate. Many will have done so as a requirement for graduation. The extent to which their experience translates into value for themselves and for those impacted by their experience is the subject of this project.

Though scholarly research is scant, the preponderance of empirical evidence suggests that while STM experiences do enhance the spiritual vitality of participants they often create more harm than good for their hosts in the receiving field. The problems with STM are numerous and varied, but they all relate in some way to ineffective preparation. Most STM preparation revolves around trip planning and travel issues to the neglect of the personal development of participants.

The findings of this project revealed that STM orientation that includes personality assessment, cross-cultural awareness, and missiological assumptions not only can reduce negative impressions but also generate benefit to participants as well as to the receiving field. To further enhance student preparation this project suggests that AG colleges offer a course that covers the appropriate structure and design, as well as the missiological implications of STM. This suggestion is particularly critical for students enrolled in programs that require an STM experience. This project affirms that investing in STM experiences for AG college students is a worthy allocation of resources, but only if the investment is managed properly.

**BRIDGING THE GAP:
A SEMINAR TO ATTRACT FEMALE MINISTERS TO BECOME
CREDENTIALLED WITH THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD**

Ava Kathryn Oleson

The fact that women do not receive adequate instruction regarding the necessity of pursuing credentials essentially removes them from the mainstream of the equipping and empowering community of their peers. Women pursuing vocational ministry are one vast, untapped resource within the Assemblies of God (AG). This project was designed to identify growth barriers and implement strategies to engage a greater number of credentialed women.

In order to help dispel objections and misperceptions relative to embracing the idea of holding a credential, this project provides a resource to preclude any perceived obstacles from becoming “deal breakers” to women pursuing AG ministerial credentials. To accomplish this purpose, a seminar entitled, “The 21st Century Woman as Vocational Minister and Leader” was presented at the Women in Ministry Network conference, “Conversations ’10” in Dallas on October 1, 2010 and at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary on October 30, 2010.

The first strategy was to educate, inspire, and increase awareness of the overlooked value of being credentialed with the AG and how that provides long-term sustained impact. The second strategy was to spotlight specific traits women called to vocational ministry must acquire in order to ensure success.

A total of over 100 women responded to the invitation to the seminar. As a result of the seminar, it was clear that women increased their understanding and knowledge of the benefits of being credentialed. Armed with knowledge of the necessary skills, behaviors, options, and theology, women gained boldness in articulating and embracing their call at a new level. They acquired practical, tangible steps which could help move them forward with greater confidence.

ALIGNMENT OF MISSION AND METHOD IN LATIN AMERICA CHILDCARE IN PERU

William M. Shrader

In Peru, systemic poverty and illiteracy have combined to create glaring needs which may be viewed as transformational frontiers. Latin America ChildCare (LACC) in Peru addresses these frontiers through the practice of transformational development, bringing hope to needy children through the gospel of Jesus Christ, quality education and ministries of compassion. Yet, the ministry of LACC in Peru has been hindered by an ill-defined identity. Families and staff at LACC schools knew little of LACC's mission or the methodology used to accomplish its goals. Consequently, prior to this project, they were unable to function as a team, being misaligned in their purpose, goals, approach, and accountability.

This project clarifies the identity of LACC in Peru by comparing its history, philosophy of ministry and its methodology to those of LACC in Costa Rica—an older and much larger branch of LACC. Biblical-theological research addresses God's heart for the poor, while the general literature review addresses the practice of transformational development and the importance of alignment of mission and methodology for a development organization. Throughout the project, emphasis is placed on listening to the needs, concerns, and solutions provided by the target population, seeking a culturally contextualized solution that avoids the false assumptions projected by ethnocentric monoculturalism. The project enhances the capacity of those working within the LACC context to operate as an aligned team, serving the needs of children and families more effectively.

EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN WITNESS TO HIGH CASTE HINDUS: A COURSE TO EQUIP THE STUDENTS OF SOUTHERN ASIA BIBLE COLLEGE

Basant P. Shrestha

Evangelizing high caste Hindus remains a crucial challenge for the church in Southern Asia. The traditional church planting methods often used among these people have failed to yield significant results. This project has developed a course entitled, —Effective Christian Witness to High Caste Hindus for the students of Southern Asia Bible College in Bangalore, India.

The biblical and theological review focuses on contextualization as the key to cross-cultural mission. Paul's example of cultural adaptability in different Gentile contexts challenges the traditional approach of evangelism and provides reproducible principles for evangelism among high caste Hindus. Jesus demonstrated incarnation as the model for translating the gospel into a different context. The household evangelism, as practiced in the Early Church, finds cultural relevance in the Hindu context.

The general literature review emphasizes the importance of building bridges of communication by employing Hindu scriptures and culture for effective evangelism. The execution of the project impressed upon the students the importance of cultivating positive attitudes toward Hindus, developing sensitivity and respect for Hindu religion and culture, and being relevant to eastern spirituality.

According to the students' survey results, the practical experience of sharing the gospel using the new approach helps build confidence to witness to high caste Hindus. This course has the potential of influencing the church and training competent and effective witnesses for Christ in Southern Asia where the vast majority of Hindus live.