LIBERTY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

DEVELOPING A LAY MINISTRY TEAM LED STUDENT MINISTRY

A Thesis Project Submitted to
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By:

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THESIS PROJECT APPROVAL SHEET

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING A LAY MINISTRY TEAM

LED STUDENT MINISTRY

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The purpose of this project is to demonstrate the process of how one church

developed a lay ministry team in both principle and practice which now provides

effective leadership for its student ministry. The church is Nall Memorial Baptist Church

of Graham, North Carolina. The author of this project serves as the church's senior

pastor. The ministry team as developed in this project is designed to not only provide

quality ministry, but also to build effective ministers through the wedding of the task-

oriented characteristics of traditional church committees to the relational and

transformational qualities of contemporary cell groups.

Abstract length: 99 words.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my lovely, patient, wise and gracious wife Dannette, and to Daddy's precious little girls, Michaela and Courtney.

"Developing a Lay Ministry Team Led Student Ministry"

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project is to create and evaluate a leadership program which integrates the task oriented characteristics of a church committee with the strong fellowship, discipleship and leadership development traits of cell groups. The program's aim is to provide a more biblical, vibrant and realistic means of ministry leadership, particularly for the small membership church.

The author's rationale for approaching this project is based upon the following observations. First, small churches need an effective, viable, and biblical model for providing ministry leadership to its various ministries. Second, ministries led by individuals alone are not generally sustainable and are fraught with many pitfalls and shortcomings. Third, that the traditional church committee, while demonstrating an ability to get the job done, falls woefully short in providing committee members a purposeful environment which fosters personal growth and continuing leadership development. And fourth, that for many small churches, the introduction of a totally new type of ministry such as a contemporary cell group ministry is neither feasible nor necessary.

This project is of special value to the researcher's personal and professional life as a Christian and a pastor. The researcher of this project grew up in a small (under 200 membership) church, and for the last thirteen plus years has pastored such a church.

Drawing from such experience, the author knows first hand the enormous challenges that small churches face when trying to provide the most effective ministry leadership possible for their various ministries. As a pastor, the author also realizes that it lies upon him not to do the work of the ministry as a jack-of-all-trades, 'hired holy handyman', but rather that one of his chief responsibilities is to, "equip the saints for the work of the ministry" (Eph. 4:12a). This model is the work and fruit of such a realization.

The researcher has utilized this program in developing a vibrant, successful Ministry Team for the 20/20 Student Ministry of the Nall Memorial Baptist Church of Graham, North Carolina. The development of this particular ministry team has served as the laboratory for the thesis. While a portion of this project will then focus on lay youth ministry training and will be specific to youth ministry, the overriding principles and practices derived from the integration of committees and cell groups are readily transferable to all types of ministry teams.

The Statement of the Problem

The author vividly remembers studying various texts on small group ministries and hearing of glowing success stories of such ministries. He also has from time to time overheard members of small churches relating that they feel like they are missing out on some of the wonderful experiences enjoyed by their friends who are members of megachurch cell group ministries. The fact is that the modern cell group phenomenon does indeed have merit and biblical basis. Cell group ministries have become very successful for some good reasons. Generally speaking, they provide their members with legitimate biblical benefits such as mutual discipleship and genuine fellowship, while also serving

as an incubator for leadership development. The problem lies in the fact that the average small church simply cannot realistically add a totally new ministry to its already stretched resources, and yet it desperately needs to provide a viable, biblical vehicle for fostering the same beneficial characteristics found so characteristically in modern cell group ministries.

This project is being developed to bring to the wedding altar the task oriented church committee of old and the discipleship oriented cell group of new. These two shall become one and be called the *Ministry Team*. The Ministry Team, for purposes of this research is much more than a traditional committee with a new name and is defined as follows:

A <u>Ministry Team</u> is a group of lay ministers who are united in passion and diverse in their contribution to a particular ministry to which each is called. The Ministry Team has characteristics of the traditional church committee as well as contemporary cell groups. This is readily seen in the multiple focus of the Ministry Team, which is to provide:

- Genuine Fellowship,
- Mutual Discipleship to its members,
- Christian leadership development, and
- Effective service or ministry to the Body or community.

Our Ministry Team is therefore task oriented like committees of old, yet are much more relational and transformational like cell groups of new.

The hypothesis of this research then, is that the incorporation of this project with its biblical principles and ecclesiastical soundness will indeed foster deeper fellowship

among existing ministry groups, provide an excellent vehicle for ongoing leadership development and discipleship, and increase the effectiveness of existing and future ministry groups. All of these benefits shall be realized without the artificial introduction of a totally new and foreign ministry such as a cell group program.

This leadership development project/program shall train team members in the fundamental aspects of ministering as a team, youth ministry basics, leadership multiplication, and essentials of team life such as fostering fellowship and mutual discipleship. The biblical foundations of team ministry and the role of the local church pastor in developing effective Kingdom ministers and ministry teams shall also be explored.

While this project is limited in its scope by the restrictions of such a project's target group, its underlying philosophies and passions drive the author to seek to implement its principles and practices to as many ministries of his congregation as possible. The anticipated outcome of such an endeavor would thus hopefully be the transforming of the DNA of the local church body to a more dynamic, exuberant, multiplying entity.

Statement of Limitations

This project will be limited in the following ways. First, this author will not discuss all the possible ministry team models or leadership development approaches that are available. Second, while the principles and practices discussed in this project on leadership team development could very likely be transferred to other types of church ministry groups, this project addresses only application to the 20/20 Youth Ministry of

Nall Memorial Baptist Church of Graham, North Carolina. Third, the time frame of this project is limited as follows:

- Philosophy development four months.
- Opportunity for implementation and transition six months.
- Program implementation and training twelve months.

Fourth, this project focuses upon a small church model of leadership and ministry development in which there is only one paid staff person – the Senior Pastor. Again, while the principles could be transferred to a multi-staff congregation with some adjustments, this project will deal with a representative single staff, under 200 member church, which is the norm for most North American congregations. And fifth, the researcher will not suggest that this is the only way to provide ministry leadership in the small church setting. This project addresses only that this is the way of pursuing Kingdom ministry that the leadership of Nall Memorial has been led to do.

Biblical and Theological Basis

In examining the biblical and theological basis for this project, the researcher will integrate the two (scripture and doctrine). And, through a systematic and sound exegesis of critical scriptural passages will thus proceed to present the firm theological basis of the thesis.

The first passage to be examined in order to establish the biblical foundation for Ministry Teams is Matthew 16:18. Here we find the first mention of the church by Christ in the New Testament. Simon Peter has just made his God-revealed confession that Jesus the Son of Man is indeed, "the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matthew 16:16

NKJV). Jesus responds by stating that he (Simon) is Peter (a small stone), and on this rock (Petra, a massive rock) I will build My church, and that the gates of hell will not be able to withstand it. Two key concepts which are relevant for our discussion are drawn from this verse. 1) Jesus is the sole foundation for His church, and 2) Jesus is the builder of His church (ekklesia = called out ones).

In Matthew 28:18-20 we find one of the five New Testament occurrences of Christ's Great Commission to the church. In this passage we learn vital truths which relate to the 'how' Christ will build His church in this world. Christ came into this world and devoted Himself to the great work of disciple making and He is still making disciples through His church today. In this passage the main verb is "to make" disciples of all the nations. For a church to endeavor to accomplish anything less than making disciples is to be untrue to its reason for existence. The instruction to make disciples is then a command to be obeyed and not a suggestion to be considered. The verbal command to "make disciples" is further developed by the modal participles: (1) "as you go" or "in your going", which denotes a way of life both for the Church and the individual Christian; (2) "baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit", which connotes evangelism and the value of identification with Christ and His church; and (3) "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" which conveys the ideas of maturation (growing in Christ) and multiplication (making disciple makers).

In a serious effort to be an effective part of Christ's disciple making, church building enterprise, the author and his church has determined to utilize a multi-faceted approach to Great Commission disciple making which incorporates the following:

- Pulpit-Oriented Discipleship
- Process-Oriented Discipleship
- Program-Oriented Discipleship, and
- Person-Oriented Discipleship¹

The development of our lay team approach for ministry leadership is firmly grounded in this comprehensive church-oriented Great Commission strategy, as will be recognized in the description of this project.

The next passage context to be considered is Ephesians 4:7-16, with a particular focus on verses 11 and 12. This passage in Ephesians describes for us the inner workings of successful Great Commission church building activity on a purely local church scale. In Matthew 16:18 we learn that Christ will build His Church, in the Great Commission we saw that we are the ones through whom He will build it, and in this Ephesians passage we see Him doing it in and through us on an individual and corporate level.

The Word of God is our source for success in life – both individually and corporately as a church. It is only as we align ourselves and our churches through faith and obedience to it's principles that we can truly be blessed in all that we do. As a pastor, this researcher has come to this realization and this project represents a major transition towards a more biblical role for the pastor on a practical level. Ephesians 4:11-12 teaches that Christ has given the church leaders, through whom He works to build up the body by building up the members. This passage represents the clearest description of pastoral Great Commission work. The pastor-teacher is given to the church, "for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of

¹ Baptist State Convention of North Carolina Discipleship Team, "Discipleship Models for Today's World,"; available from http://www.discipleshipteam.org/: Internet: accessed 14 October 2005.

Christ." (Ephesians 4:12 NKJV). The Greek participle translated equipping in verse 12 is *katartismos* while not appearing elsewhere in the New Testament, does however appear in its verb form *katartizo*. The word carries the meaning of, "repairing something" (Matthew 4:21); of God's bringing the universe in the beginning into its intended shape and order (Heb. 11:3); and of restoring to spiritual health a person who has fallen (Gal. 6:1). It may be used, however, of 'perfecting' what is lacking in the faith of Christians (*cf.* I Thes. 3:10; Heb. 13:21; I Pet. 5:10)".²

The thought then of the pastoral role of equipper is that of a disciple making pastor who enables those entrusted to his care to be: active, effective ministers (v. 12), spiritually mature and devoted to Christ, the Head (v. 13), well grounded in the word and doctrine (v. 14-15), and to be contributing, interconnected members who have discovered their unique gifting (v. 7-8, 16), and who together as Christ works through all – build up the body of Christ. This picture is a far cry from the super-pastor model that is pervasive in many, especially small churches today. The team ministry, as developed in this project, presents a viable vehicle which assists in returning to a more biblical role for both the pastor and his fellow ministers (I Pet. 2:9). Returning to Christ's blueprint for church building, results in a more vibrant church, in which all are more fulfilled and successful.

The final passage to be addressed is found in II Timothy 2:2 where Paul admonishes Timothy in the following manner, "and the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." This verse is foundational for this researcher's project in that much of the focus is

² Francis Foulkes, *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 128.

not only on developing ministers but also on developing leaders who develop other leaders and ministers. This long-term approach is critical to both the sustaining of current Great Commission ministry and the developing of future Great Commission church leaders.

As a final note concerning the biblical/theological basis for this project, I will present the well supported rationale for doing ministry as a team. The biblical pictures are numerous: The Holy Trinity; Jesus and the twelve; the inner three; "the seventy-two"; "the women" (Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna); a family: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus; the disciples sent out by twos; Moses with Aaron and Miriam, or Hur; David's mighty men; Paul and Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Mark along with and entourage of the lesser knowns at various times; Barnabas with Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul; and the original Seven 'deacons'. This author by way of this research has found the following statement by E. Stanley Ott to be true, "Whatever sort of ministry you undertake – whether it be a ministry to an entire congregation or any ministry of worship, teaching, fellowship, or outreach – you will be most effective if you do it with a ministry team."

Statement of Methodology

This thesis project will study how the Nall Memorial Baptist Church of Graham,

North Carolina developed a vibrant, effective lay ministry team which provides

leadership for its 20/20 Youth Ministry. The members of this ministry team are united in

 $^{^3}$ E. Stanley Ott, Transform Your Church with Ministry Teams (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 7.

their passion for their Lord and His youth, and are diverse in their unique contributions to the team. The following chapters shall serve as an overview of the entire project:

- Chapter one contains an introduction to the topic, a statement of the problem, a statement of limitations, a biblical/theological basis, a statement of methodology, a review of literature, and a bibliography.
- 2. Chapter two shall contain a brief history of lay ministry in general and youth ministry in specific as has been experienced at NMBC.
- 3. Chapter three will communicate just how the vision for ministry teams at NMBC was born through the author's doctoral studies at Liberty Theological Seminary.
- Chapter four shall describe the creation of the 20/20 Youth Ministry Team at NMBC. The focus will be upon qualifications, recruitment, and training of team members.
- 5. Chapter five will reveal the essential elements of dynamic, successful ministry team life which have been taught and incorporated in this project. An appendix containing the class lessons concerning these principles shall be attached.
- 6. Chapter six shall offer the critical keys to our successful and almost seamless transition from a staff-led to a lay team-led youth ministry.
- 7. Chapter seven is a critical evaluation of the results which will list and discuss the benefits (both positive and negative) which have been observed.
- 8. Chapter eight will be dedicated to advice or recommendations for churches considering team led ministry.

Review of the Literature

The author's research for this project was multi-dimensional with foci upon lay renewal, the pastor as an equipper, team ministry, keys to successful transitioning, youth ministry, leadership training, and the uniquenesses of small church ministry. As such, the major resources employed in the academic groundwork for this work will be varied as well, and will be arranged and discussed in the following four categories of study:

- 1. Ministry Team resources,
- 2. Lay Renewal and Equipping resources,
- 3. Expository helps, and
- 4. Youth Ministry resources.

Ministry Team Resources

Roberta Hestenes' book, *Turning Committees into Communities*⁴ is a small book which gives both the vision and practical suggestions for helping to redesign task-oriented committees into more authentic caring Christian communities. The challenge of drawing relational cell group members into a more missional/service role in the local church is also addressed. This book was very helpful to the author in that it clarified the problem and necessary task of establishing balanced, biblical ministry teams.

The book by E. Stanley Ott entitled, *Transform Your Church with Ministry Teams*⁵ is in this researchers opinion a definite must read for any church leader entertaining the thoughts of moving to a lay ministry team focused church. This text

⁴ Roberta Hestenes, *Turning Committees into Communities* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1991).

⁵ Ott, Transform Your Church with Ministry Teams.

proved invaluable in shaping the researchers thoughts on what a biblical ministry team would look like, as well as the necessary dynamics of fostered fellowship and discipleship in team life.

George Barna's research text entitled, *The Power of Team Leadership*⁶ stresses the need for a departure from solo ministry which is fraught with pitfalls such as rampant burnout and low accountability. Barna shares necessary insights on the critical need of identifying leaders who are team players as well as the necessity of providing valuable and varied on-the-go training opportunities for team members and leaders.

The book, *Building Teams in Ministry*⁷, by Dale Galloway is a valuable compilation which has a double focus. The first section of the text addresses the development of lay ministry teams while the latter division covers issues related to developing a paid staff which is capable of expanding a church's ministry through lay ministry teams in the various departments of a larger, multi-staffed congregation.

Chapter two was of particular help in that it challenged contemporary pastors to rethink their role in the ministry and urged us to make a practice of giving away ministry for the good of the church and the glory of God.

Lay Renewal and Equipping Resources

Greg Ogden's book, Unfinished Business, Returning the Ministry to the People of God^8 is a contemporary classic on the subject of lay renewal. Ogden's thesis is that in

⁶ George Barna, *The Power of Team Leadership* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook, 2001).

⁷ Dale Galloway, *Building Teams in Ministry* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 2000).

⁸ Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, *Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003).

the protestant reformation the cherished doctrine of the priesthood of the believer was rediscovered, but was never sufficiently put into practice in protestant church life. While this researcher gained much information and inspiration from Greg Ogden's text, he does not fully agree with the extremes proposed for church practice particularly in the areas of ordination and the ordinances.

Sue Mallory's book entitled *The Equipping Church, Serving Together to Transform Lives*⁹ is highly recommended in that it portrays one church's journey toward becoming just that – a church that intentionally equips the saints for their work of ministry. Particularly helpful for this author were the insights concerning what worked and didn't work, as well as the essential need for owning, and reiterating with clarion call the vision that we all are ministers and missionaries.

Bill Hull, in his classics *The Disciple Making Church* and *The Disciple Making Pastor* and other church leaders who truly want theirs to become a Great Commission church. In *The Disciple Making Pastor*, Hull presents the biblical case for a pastor to cease and desist from being a jack-of-all-trades chaplain in order to answer his higher calling of making disciples and developing leaders so that Christ's mission and ministry can be multiplied. *The Disciple Making Church* focuses on implementing the Great Commission on a church-wide scale presenting the New Testament church at Ephesus as a model to be studied and followed.

⁹ Sue Mallory, *The Equipping Church, Serving Together to Transform Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001).

¹⁰ Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 1990).

¹¹ Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Pastor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 1988).

Expository Resources

A couple of books in particular helped the researcher do the biblical exegesis pertaining to the development of a theology of an equipping lay ministry from the New Testament. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary Series*¹², published by Zondervan and the *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*¹³ by Eerdmans are scholarly, conservative works which are geared for general pastoral study skills. These texts were of particular assistance in the exegesis of the Great Commission passage of Matthew 28 and the lay equipping passage found in Ephesians 4.

Youth Ministry Resources

Rick Chromey's book, entitled *Youth Ministry in Small Churches*¹⁴ is a must read for all who are interested in small congregation student ministry. Chromey does an excellent job of presenting the advantages and likely challenges that are inherent in small church youth work. This book was utilized by the researcher as a training tool for the entire lay youth ministry team which was developed in conjunction with this project.

The book by Rich Grassel entitled *Help! I'm a Small Church Youth Worker!* is another helpful text for this project. Of particular relevance is the final section in which Grassel presents four workable models that are designed for the unique nesses of small church youth ministry.

¹² Frank Gaebelein, *The Expositors Bible Commentaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978).

¹³ Foulkes, *Ephesians*.

¹⁴ Rick Chromey, *Youth Ministry in Small Churches* (Loveland, CO: Group, 1990).

¹⁵ Rich Grassel, Help! I'm a Small Church Youth Worker! (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

Doug Fields and Katie Edwards training book, *Youth Leader Training On the* Go^{16} which comes with an accompanying CD, CD ROM and 52 reproducible training pages are an absolute must for a busy pastor who wishes to train equally busy lay youth ministers in contemporary times. The researcher utilized this tool extensively and consistently throughout the training process. The primary author, Doug Fields, is the pastor to students at Saddleback Church in California and has written extensively with struggling youth ministers and ministries in mind and is truly on the cutting edge of biblically grounded, relevant youth ministry.

¹⁶ Doug Fields, Katie Edwards, Youth Leader Training On the Go (Loveland, CO: Group, 2006).

Chapter Two

History of Lay Involvement and Youth Ministry at Nall Memorial Baptist Church

Lay Ministry History

The history, which shall be discussed in this chapter, shall be restricted to the time frame represented by the thirteen-plus years in which this researcher has served as pastor of the Nall Memorial Baptist Church. In a word, the lay ministry in general and the youth ministry at NMBC during these years have definitely been *varied*. Varied in approach, structure and varied in results.

In the earliest years, when the average age of the congregation as a whole was approximately sixty-years-old and sixty regular members strong, the church was for the most part very supportive in heart and yet obviously limited in ability. This author looks back with great fondness on those early years when he thinks of some of those elderly, now dearly departed saints, who offered so much encouragement and who epitomized the fact that one never really retires from serving the Lord.

The lay ministry structure which was in place in those early years was one of a typical committee-laden, Southern Baptist format. Committees such as the Building and Grounds Committee, the Nominating Committee, and the Church Activities Committee

were most prominent and active during that time. In addition to these standing committees, the church had (and has) a deacon board and an age graded Sunday School. Various other administrative offices were standard and present such as the Sunday School Superintendent, Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, Choir Director, Church Clerk/Secretary, Church Treasurer, Church Historian, and the Church Flower person.

In terms of effectiveness, this structure served the church well for that particular period, especially considering the fact that the church had gone without a senior pastor's leadership for over two years during an interim period prior to this author's arrival. Such a committee-laden lay structure has as both its strength and weakness the characteristic known as *maintenance*. This committee/officer structure served to keep the essential tasks of church life alive during some very lean years in which there were real shortages of both finances and vision. Such a structure then was a positive, in that it did indeed foster lay involvement and served to keep the church maintained during that troublesome period.

While this maintenance structure served positively in the aforementioned survival context, we realize that the Lord's church is called to higher purposes than those of maintenance and survival. Church committees, while often demonstrating the ability to 'get the job done'; have traditionally been plagued with a very real deficit in regards to fostering other spiritual dynamics such as fellowship, leadership development, and discipleship. Such was definitely the case with the committee structure which was in place during that time period.

In addition to these shortcomings, the typical nominating (slot-filling) process, while serving to maintain an existing church structure, incorporated no spiritual gift

inventories. This 'nominating process' was characterized by the terms; last minute, honorary, desperation and relief (when all slots were filled). Roberta Hestenes in her book, *Turning Committees into Communities*, writes about the seriousness of deciding who serves and states, "If you have the wrong kinds of motivations and processes for nominating people, you will get the wrong people on your boards. You will find those people very difficult to change because they have joined the committees for the wrong reasons...Is nomination to service on the committee done on the basis of getting people involved?...Wrong approach! Is service on the board given to recognize distinction or position in the community?...Wrong approach!...Is nomination given in recognition of wealth?...Wrong again!" 17

The New Testament teaches very clearly that it is Christ who gifts individuals and arranges them within the body as He pleases (Romans 12:3-8, I Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:7-16). Therefore, the nominating, or better, the ministry identification and facilitation process is one which must be approached very carefully and prayerfully and with much pastoral insight and involvement (Ephesians 4:11-12).

As time progressed during those early years (years 1-3, 1994-1997), this author witnessed a shift in the committee life at NMBC. The committees which once functioned in a survival, maintenance mode gradually shifted to becoming committees in name only with very sparse meetings and little, if any function. The threat of church demise and the consequent need to survive appeared to have disappeared with the arrival of a young, full-time pastor. And so, the committee structure died a gradual death. During this time, this pastor and the deacons tended to assume more and more responsibility, and the

¹⁷ Roberta Hestenes, *Turning Committes into Communities* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991), 17.

church shifted to a much more vigorous outreach-oriented mentality. In the ensuing years (1997-2005) the church was characterized by numerical growth and decline cycles, an outreach emphasis, gifted-individual led ministry, and burnout.

While we had shifted to a more biblical approach of 'doing church', with an emphasis on outreach and teaching ministries, the church still suffered from not having a strong ministerial infrastructure and having a weak future-leadership development system. These two issues were the major culprits which accounted for the tendency toward the roller coaster membership numbers and gifted lay leadership burnout. In essence, we were top-heavy with a weak foundation. We now realize that this is remedied by focusing on the ministers as well as the ministries. The support systems of mutual discipleship and fellowship were non-existent in our gifted-individual led approach to ministry. Because of good intentions as well as leadership ignorance, we had become a church that was a mile wide and an inch deep.

In the fall of 2005, a major shift occurred in the children's ministry of NMBC which proved to be monumental. For years the mid-week children's ministry (grades 1-6) had been led by a solo lay teacher. However, the Lord had at this time provided several more talented, motivated individuals with a heart for children's ministry and the church moved to incorporate the Word of Life Olympians 18 children's discipleship program into the midweek children's ministry. Seven young adults (5 women and 2 men), were assembled and became Nall Memorial's first real experience with a semblance of a ministry team. The team was then given initial training by the regional Word Of Life missionary, and in January of 2006 the ministry was officially launched

¹⁸ Word of Life Olympians is a program of Word of Life Church Ministries, a division of Word of Life International, Inc., Schroon Lake, NY.

with tremendous success. This success in the children's ministry was providential and proved to be vitally strategic in the subsequent evolution of the youth ministry leadership at NMBC.

Youth Ministry History

Upon arrival at Nall Memorial in the summer of 1994, the author found himself at a ministry with a grand total of three teenagers and a church body that was eager to do 'something' to reach the younger generation. The 'youth ministry' was basically limited to a youth Sunday School class and an annual trip to a major amusement park. Again, I do credit the faithful parents, students, and class teachers who stuck it out through those lean interim years. It is truly amazing the level of loyalty that is often found in a small church setting. Rick Chromey, in his fine book entitled, *Youth Ministry in Small Churches*, highlights this strength of faithfulness when he writes, "...small churches are resilient. A crisis comes, and the church pulls together to weather the storm. The pastor may resign, but weekly attendance will remain relatively steady. In contrast, if a large church loses its pastor, dozens – if not hundreds – of people might leave the church...Much of this toughness comes because members are highly committed to the church. It's their church, and they won't let a temporary crisis destroy what they've worked so hard to create." ¹⁹

Again, the word 'maintenance' is operative here. However, as previously stated, the aging church had a burden to reach the younger generation. This burden led to a financial step of faith and in 1995 the church called its first part-time youth minister.

Rev. Rodney Murray, (who was at the time a recent graduate of Liberty Bible Institute of

¹⁹ Rick Chromey, Youth Ministry in Small Churches (Loveland, CO: Group, 1990), 25.

Lynchburg, Virginia, and had been this researchers roommate at Liberty), was a man with a passion for young people. During his ministry at NMBC, a new outreach-oriented midweek youth meeting was started. These meetings were characterized by high energy, excitement, and a contagious evangelistic fervor. As a result, attendance grew from three to almost twenty in just a few weeks time.

Rev. Murray's ministry tenure at Nall Memorial lasted for about one year and was characterized by a sincere desire to reach young people in a culturally relevant manner. However, this cultural relevance proved to be a bit too contemporary for a traditional and aging congregation. This conflicting philosophy and approach to ministry, combined with a young, inexperienced senior pastor with a very real staff-leadership ability deficiency, did much to account for our short-lived, staff-led youth ministry during those early years.

From 1996 to 2001, the youth ministry was a lay-led operation. Leadership was provided by a highly gifted and devoted young lady who happens to be this researcher's wife – Dannette Cox. With Dannette's teaching ability and energy, combined with the efforts of some extremely supportive parents and other volunteers, the youth ministry grew in depth and gradually in number of students through those years. The mid-week youth meeting was moved to Sunday evenings and teaching was mostly of a biblical/topical nature. It was during these years that the Lord brought to NMBC several younger families with children and youth who became foundational for a solid future ministry. As a testament to this integrated lay teacher/parental support approach, Nall Memorial still retains a number of the students of that youth ministry era. These former students are still faithful and active in the life of the church.

The drawbacks to this youth ministry leadership approach which was utilized during those years were the aforementioned tendency toward burnout and lack of shared leadership. The major culprits for these can be identified as a lack of mutual support at the leadership level as well as a deficiency concerning an apprenticing network for shared leadership. The church was basically trying to grow in number without providing an accompanying strategy and vehicle for developing new leaders to accommodate that numerical increase. We had shared ministry support as evidenced by the increased parental involvement but we had no real shared leadership. Stan Ott, in addressing the pitfalls of solo leadership in ministry, identifies the following problems which come with this approach:

- 1. The ministry tends to last only as long as the leader lasts and is ended by the leaders moving away, health difficulties, or his/her growing tired of the ministry.
- 2. When one person is the lone leader, the scope of the ministry is limited to the energy level of that individual.
- 3. The sole leader who 'does it all' denies others to the opportunity to use their spiritual gifts and to serve.
- 4. No one is prepared to assume the leadership of the ministry when the present leader steps down, and
- 5. The ministry, though perhaps served well by one dedicated person, lacks the energy, love, vision, and follow-through that an entire team can offer.²⁰

In the year 2001, having experienced some growth which was being maintained at about an average of 110 on Sunday mornings, coupled with the fact that finances were being freed by the elimination of the church mortgage debt, the church family at Nall Memorial again felt led to call a part-time staff youth minister. The call was extended,

²⁰ Stan Ott, *Transform Your Church with Ministry Teams* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004) 13-14.

and in September of 2001, brother Ryan Epps, along with wife Brittany, became Nall Memorial's second staff youth minister. Ryan, who had been a youth ministry student at Liberty University, and who had served as a youth minister in Alabama, was also the researcher's brother-in-law.

The youth ministry under the leadership of Ryan Epps was characterized by energy, growth, a genesis of apprenticing, and a sincere passion for student spiritual development. Ryan proved to be a youth minister who really connected with his students, and was subsequently greatly loved by them. Several items in the youth ministry found their beginning during these years such as monthly or quarterly youth activities which were of a mixed emphasis on fellowship, outreach and/or service. Also emphasized during these years was the crucial need for student discipleship with the essential of a daily quiet time stressed religiously.

As previously stated, this era saw a genesis of apprenticing. Parents and other volunteers were enlisted to take part in the youth ministry with varying degrees of involvement and success. Some of the involvement was at the level of observation and general assisting, while others were found with a mutual sense of interest in student ministry. These volunteers, who discovered a sense of calling for student ministry, began to rise to a greater level of involvement and shared responsibility.

In the spring of 2006, having earned his bachelors degree from Liberty University, Ryan answered the call to a full-time student ministry position at a 1000 member church in Tennessee. The youth ministry at Nall Memorial, once again, as with each stage of its growth and development, had progressed. And, as with each stage,

much was learned as to what works, what needs strengthening, and what needs to be prioritized in the ministry.

The departure of a paid staff youth minister, the identification of a potential core of lay youth ministers, the incorporation of Word of Life Olympians in the children's ministry, as well as the positive signs of success with a rudimentary team approach – all proved to be providential. Though the student ministry was saddened with the departure of its staff leader, this church leader/researcher was absolutely confident in the Lord concerning the church's direction at such a time as this. A Youth Ministry Leadership Team which would incorporate the necessary spiritual elements of mutual fellowship, discipleship & leadership development as well a providing top-notch youth ministry leadership was about to be born.

Chapter Three

The Vision for Ministry Teams

The Birth of the Vision

Before we proceed and describe the process of transitioning and developing this new paradigm of youth ministry leadership at Nall Memorial, the author shall now back up once again and describe just how this vision was born. The Bible states in the ancient wisdom book of Proverbs that, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18a KJV). While we weren't quite to the point of perishing, we were languishing in comparison to where we needed to be. This vision for dynamic lay leadership at Nall Memorial was quite frankly born of frustration. This frustration was the fruit of years of church ministry with major shortcomings in the areas of a lack of leadership development, an anemic discipleship process, and the resultant high burnout and membership turnover ratios. As one can see from the history of lay ministry in general and the youth ministry in particular as described in chapter two, many lessons and principles were discovered through years of ministry experiences. Some of these experiences were positive, while other lessons it seems, could only be learned the hard way. Some of the lessons learned from our ministry history which have had a direct affect upon this project are:

- 1. Groups of individuals can most often carry out ministry work more effectively than a single individual.
- 2. Staff-led ministries have a tendency to create apathy among the laity. The mentality can easily become, "That's what we pay him for." And lay initiative thus decreases.
- 3. The traditional committee approach to lay ministry, while often efficient in 'getting the job done,' is neither designed nor intended to develop the spiritual lives of its members.
- 4. A ministry led by a solo gifted individual with only occasional and menial assistance from others is generally a sure path to leadership burnout and decreased ministry effectiveness.
- 5. The absence of a plan for lay leadership development creates frustration among the laity who are eager to serve in more meaningful ministry. This frustration then has a potential to cause such individuals to either 'cool off', or search for another congregation altogether.
- 6. The absence of a comprehensive program for intentional, mutual discipleship results in a shallow, high-flux membership.

The Refinement of the Vision

In addition to these lessons derived from the author's church ministry experience, there was another major contributing source to the birth of this lay ministry team vision – the author's doctoral studies at Liberty Theological Seminary. This author entered the Doctor of Ministry program at LTS in the summer of 2004 at the ten-year mark of pastoral ministry at Nall Memorial. Armed with a great deal of knowledge of what does not work in ministry leadership, as well as an acute awareness of his own ministerial strengths and weaknesses, this researcher was hungry for a greater understanding of just how to more effectively equip God's called people to be the best ministers they could be to His glory. The author therefore began studies at LTS with great trepidation and high expectation. And while every bit of the of the author's twenty-four hours of coursework

was incredibly enlightening and applicable, two courses in particular were exceptionally instrumental in re-forming and crystallizing this researcher's understanding of and approach to church ministry.

In the spring of 2005, this researcher participated in the course EDMN 974,

Developing Lay Leadership, which was taught by Dr. Frank Schmitt. In this course of study, by way of challenging class lectures and by independent study of required texts, the biblical principles of the priesthood, calling, gifting and ministry of each believer were heavily emphasized. Along with this lay emphasis, another principle was continuously trumpeted: the pastor as equipper. This principle was emphatically born out in one of the required texts for the course. The following quote by author and lay renewal champion, Greg Ogden, emphasizes this critical element of lay development: "The equipping pastor initiates the maturing of the body by assisting the people of God to practice the ministries to which they are called. In other words, equipping pastors deploy their gifts in such a way that the members of the body discover and are developed in accord with their God-ordained function in the church and world." 21

Perhaps no one addresses the subject of the equipping pastor quite as emphatically as disciple-making author Bill Hull, "Evangelical churches tragically waste pastoral talent. Eager, well-trained young men are being abused by the traditional model. They are required to be jacks-of-all-trades, and they are failing...They find themselves officiating at Awana dinners, Sunday-school parties, Christian camp fundraisers, vacation Bible school, and Bible study breakfasts. Add to that the congregational desire to have the pastor attend every committee meeting, and you have a traditional pastoral life-style.

²¹ Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business, Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 133.

The most difficult and debilitating expectation is that the pastor is at the beck and call of every congregational member...Obeying God's clear directives relieves the pastor of the trivialities that can make his ministry taste like mush. He does what God called him to do: training people to do God's work. He senses that he is making his life count on God's terms"²²

Another vital concept which was gleaned in the EDMN 974 course of study was that of team-oriented lay ministry. Concerning this principle and it's implications on equipping, Sue Mallory writes, "You will not have a local church based on the biblical model without some kind of team mind-set. The word *equipping* immediately assumes a team model – those who do the equipping and those who are equipped. One group needs the other. They form a team." Again, Greg Ogden adds to the discussion at hand when he states, "The goal of leadership in an equipping ministry is for all believers to accept before God their responsibility to be stewards of their gifts and call in order to make a contribution to the health of the whole body of Christ and to the extension of its witness to all spheres of life throughout the whole world." One major trend which this author has observed in discussing the concept of team ministry with other pastors, (and has been guilty of himself), is that of just changing the name of committees to that of ministry teams without understanding the significant differences between the two. To assist in understanding these key distinctions, Roberta Hestenes offers the following chart:

²² Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 1988) 185,188.

²³ Sue Mallory, *The Equipping Church: Serving Together to Transform Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 22.

²⁴ Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 212.

Distinctions Between Committees and Communities

<u>Factors</u>	<u>Committees</u>	Mission Communities	
1. Commitment level			
To task:	Limited and varied	Serious commitment	
To others in group:	Usually low, casual caring	High with focused energy	
2. Meeting frequency	2:2 or more hours/ once a month	As often as necessary to get task done, within agreed limits.	
3. Task assignment:	Determined by structure and appointment; tasks are institutionally determined. What do we need to run program?	Gifts determine assignments.	
4. Method of Assignment:	Assigned by others.	Self-chosen with group input.	
5. Responsibility For success:	Low – often vote on things for others to accomplish; Separation of authority from responsibility.	High – if we don't do it, it won't happen.	
6. Involvement of The whole person:	Assumed but minimally included.	Taken seriously and time provided.	
7. Spiritual gifts:	Usually ignored.	Taken into account.	
8. Spiritual Dimensions:	Little care about 'inward journey' of members.	Spiritual accountability care for personal Spiritual life	
9. Sense of work as Ministry:	A job to be done; duty. Highest values: Efficiency and pro- ductivity.	A ministry to be accomplished; service Highest values: love and doing the will of God ²⁵	

²⁵ Roberta Hestenes, Turning Committees into Communities (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991) 15-16.

Genuine calling-based lay ministry, a mutual team model, and an intentional equipping approach! Great things begin to happen when frustration is confronted and countered with new knowledge. The previously stated frustration which arose from faulty approaches to 'doing church' was now beginning to be remedied by the introduction to a sound and practical ecclesiology. The piece of the puzzle yet to be addressed was just how we could create a new model of lay ministry which would build up the ministers as well as the ministry. To state our dilemma in other words, how were we to develop ministry teams which are more than just task-oriented committees with new names?

The other highly significant and formative course of study which this author participated in was, EDMN 997 Small Group Ministries which was taught by Dr. Rod Dempsey in the winter of 2006. Through this intense, guided course of study, the author was introduced at a deeper level to the concepts of disciple multiplication through leadership development as well as the necessary church functions which must be facilitated in order to fulfill the Great Commission. The absolute necessity of creating an intentional strategy for reaching the lost on a larger scale through the investment in quality prospective lay leaders was central to the whole course. The following principles were all either discovered and/or freshly owned by the author in those weeks of study:

- investing in the laity,
- fostering a healthy environment for Christians to not only survive, but to actually thrive,
- disciples making disciples,
- disciple makers making disciple makers,

- the indispensable need for mutual accountability, and
- the essential function of genuine fellowship for church health.

As previously stated, Nall Memorial's lay ministry efforts were sorely lacking in some key areas. Not the least of which was a supportive network and sense of community for its lay leaders and ministers. This need is articulated in the following statements by Russ Robinson and Bill Donahue of Willow Creek Church, "If we (the church) treat this hunger (for community) casually, we subtly deny the truth of creation. However, when our churches own the responsibility to move people into relationship, we validate the nature of the God whose image we bear. We are created in God's image; therefore we are created for community. It's a part of being an image bearer of God Himself." Also, "Love is the overriding Christian virtue, and it must be expressed between leaders. A leader who is loved is a leader who will serve well for a long time. A leader who is loved is a leader who can be given more responsibility, because he or she will receive it appropriately." ²⁷

Not only were we not providing the spiritual support networks for our existing leaders, we did not have a viable vehicle in place to develop potential future leaders — which is a critical element of kingdom expansion. Concerning this essential factor, Carl George writes, "The idea of a mentored leadership team seems to be central to most of the role models throughout scripture...The central leadership task of the church — after hearing from God - is to develop leaders...Two thousand years of history demonstrate

²⁶ Bill Donahue & Russ Robinson, *Building a Church of Small Groups* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001) 24.

²⁷ Ibid.; p. 149

that the churches which have made a difference got people together in groups of about a dozen or less and held them accountable to obey the Word of God – not just to listen to it."²⁸

While the small groups course was of a great benefit to this researcher, especially concerning the discovery of the principles mentioned above, there was nonetheless a major problem to be solved. Most of the material studied in the course primarily addressed the home cell group movement. The author became quite excited about the reproductive potential of such a ministry, however, it was also immediately realized that it would be neither wise nor viable to attempt to artificially introduce such a ministry into a traditional small church such as Nall Memorial with its very limited resources.

This concern was founded upon the author's understanding of the scriptural teaching that the Lord Himself calls, gifts, and arranges the members of His body according to His sovereignty (I Corinthians 12:18). Just as a human body has many members, and each of these members are arranged in mutually interdependent, functioning systems (example: the hand is made of different parts for the purpose of fulfilling it's designed purposes, grasping, scratching, etc.), so also the church is arranged in different 'systems'. As it relates to this thesis, this body 'system' would carry out the function of biblical youth ministry; the parts of the system would be the interdependent, individually-gifted lay youth ministers; their unity of purpose would be found in their sense of calling to youth ministry; the rest of the body would be enhanced by their service and contribution, and the Head of the body would be glorified through the life changing / body building Great Commission ministry.

²⁸ Carl F. George, *Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership* (Mansfield, PA: Kingdom, 1997) 45,46.

This concern surrounding home cell groups and small traditional churches was further raised by the author during the class time for the EDMN 997 course in the following ways:

- Given the current time demands upon most faithful church members, how could a church (particularly a small one) possibly justify asking it's members to participate in another ministry (cell groups) and attend yet another meeting during the week?
- Would not the separating of fellowship/outreach groups from in-church ministries create disparity and possible resentment among the in-church workers, thus serving a counter-productive purpose?

These legitimate concerns raised by this researcher proved to be well founded, as is born out in Dr. Dempsey's experiences which are recorded in his own doctoral thesis in which he shares, "Even this seemingly 'good fit' had its challenges. First, the AWANA workers began to feel that they were just here for the groups. The attitude of some AWANA workers was this, 'the small group members are out there (in homes) having fun, while we are stuck here watching their children." Concerning these very real shortcomings of a 'just-us' tendency of small groups, and the subsequent low church ministry involvement which plague many contemporary cell group models, cell group ministry expert Jeffrey Arnold writes, "While groups bond well and care deeply, they seem to encounter difficulty in growing and in caring for people beyond their group...the cultural impact of small groups has been relatively weak. The small group system is succeeding less because it is bucking the system than because it is going with the flow...

On the one hand, the small group movement has unbelievable potential; on the other hand, its impact is less than impressive. How can we encourage groups to become more

²⁹ Rod Dempsey, *Thesis: A Strategy to Transform a Traditional Church Educational System to a Small Group System* (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty Theological Seminary, 2004) 78.

ministry oriented? How can we motivate our people for service, outreach and justice?"³⁰ Adding to the discussion concerning this propensity for small groups to major on fellowship and minor on ministry, small groups consultant Roberta Hestenes writes, "I have found it to be true (contrary to what some small-group materials say) that relationally oriented people organized in Christian small groups seldom "spontaneously" erupt into mission or serious Christian service...If from the very beginning of the group's life together, the leader has not built in the importance of Christian ministry as one desirable purpose, it is difficult to add it later."³¹ While the potential of cell groups and the legitimate needs that they help to address can be readily observed, however, because of the concerns addressed above, this author/pastor definitely had no leading to introduce a purely cell-based ministry at NMBC.

The Clarification of the Vision

Our challenge then is this: given the history of Nall Memorial's lay ministry efforts and personnel, and given the new insights gained by the pastor during his doctoral training, how could we do the following?

- 1. Provide a vehicle to develop the laity according their calling and spiritual gifts as well as develop future ministry leadership.
- 2. Create both an environment and processes by which our lay ministers were not only on the giving end, but also would receive the legitimate, necessary elements which would support their own spiritual development. Elements such as group support and accountability, deep fellowship, and spiritual nurture which are normally provided in cell group contexts. And,

³⁰ Jeffrey Arnold, *Small Group Outreach: Turning Groups Inside Out* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998) 23.

³¹ Roberta Hestenes Turning Committees into Communities (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991) 9.

3. Greatly enhance the effectiveness of current ministries as well as provide a simple yet effective model for future ministries to be developed with.

Simply stated, our vision was to pioneer a new approach to making disciples and doing lay ministry at Nall Memorial. With this new approach, the pastor would take the necessary steps to assume more of a biblical equipping role. This vision saw the demise of solo leadership led ministries. This vision saw the invigorating dynamics of genuine fellowship, mutual discipleship, evangelical accountability, and gift-based ministries combined into existing and future group-based ministries. This vision saw a never before experienced return to a more biblically-based model of local church ministry at Nall Memorial. This vision saw a model that would be more natural to the existing church culture than would be realized with the artificial introduction of a cell group structure which would very likely serve to divide and not unite the body. And finally, this model would prove to be more biblical because it is built on the supernatural arranging of the body member-ship according to the God given callings, gifts and desires of His people.

Chapter Four

Bringing It All Together:

The Creation of the 20/20 Youth Ministry Team Of Nall Memorial Baptist Church

Team Selection

With the impending departure of our part-time staff youth minister and with a firm conviction that a ministry team approach to youth ministry leadership was the direction that the Lord would have us to proceed towards, the task now centered on the selection of such team. Writing about this critical step, pastor and author Stan Ott writes, "One of the most significant acts of any athletic coach happens before the team even gathers. It is through the process of finding the right players to join the team that much of the team's destiny is determined. This is as true with a ministry team as it is with any other team. When you invite people who love God and care for people and who have a vision for the ministry, and you organize them properly, great things can happen." Added to this insightful statement, Ott proceeds to offer the following key issues involved in considering potential team members, they are:

- > Search out a serving heart.
- Consider a person's interests, Spiritual Gifts, and abilities.

³² Stan Ott, *Ministry Teams*. p77

- ➤ Consider an individual's personal qualities.
- ➤ Look for faith A heart for God.
- \triangleright Look for hope A heart and passion for the task.
- \triangleright Look for Love A heart for people.
- ➤ Look for a willingness to learn.
- ➤ Look for faithfulness and humility.
- ► Look for availability.³³

In addition to this wise counsel, this author cannot stress enough the absolute essential of prayer in this whole process. With the announced resignation of Ryan, Nall Memorial automatically entered a season of prayer. This period of intense seeking helped to provide conviction and clarity as to the certainty of going in the direction of ministry team leadership. In the spring of 2006, the church organized and conducted four consecutive home prayer meetings for our youth ministry. These prayer meetings were conducted in the homes of youth ministry student's families as well as in homes of lay youth ministry helpers. God accomplished much through these 20/20 Youth Ministry prayer meetings, such as:

- Emotional healing for the students and helpers which were needed with the departing of the youth minister.
- An opportunity for the pastor to connect with the students in a fresh new way and to assure them that they were foremost in his heart.
- A solidifying of the conviction that ministry team leadership was God's will for the 20/20 youth ministry.

³³ Ott, *Ministry Teams*, 81-87.

- An opportunity to communicate with confidence, clarity and passion the vision for the ministry team.
- A growing certainty of who should serve on this pioneering ministry endeavor.

As we engaged in this 'significant act' of recruitment, we proceeded with the following criteria:

- The potential team member must be a born-again Christian church member with a consistent, growing relationship with Jesus.
- 2. The potential team member must possess a desire to serve the Lord in Great Commission ministry and not view their service as just 'church work'.
- 3. The potential team member must exhibit the fruit of the spirit with particular excellence in the essential qualities of faithfulness, humility, teachability and servanthood.
- 4. The potential youth ministry team member must have a genuine heart's desire to be involved in student ministry.
- 5. The potential youth ministry team member must genuinely love teens and like to be around them.
- 6. The potential team member must be willing and able to fulfill the requirements of a youth ministry team member.

The first and most obvious place which we looked for potential ministry team members was the church members who were currently helping in the youth ministry and/or who have had past youth ministry experience. An effective tool for churches to

employ in identifying potential ministry team members is one of the comprehensive lay ministry testing products available today such as Rick Warren's SHAPE³⁴, Wayne Cordiero's DESIGN³⁵, John Power's SERVE³⁶ or Dr. Mels Carbonell's UniquelyYou³⁷. These tools are extremely helpful in that they not only assist in identifying spiritual gifts, but also ministry interests, past experience, and in some cases, personality types. While we did not have to employ one of these tools for initial recruitment, we did use the Uniquely You online computer testing program to help with identifying ministry roles and assignments.

Using the aforementioned criteria, five individuals were personally approached, selected, and were led to minister on our first ever 20/20 Youth Ministry Team, they are: Scott and Carrie Russell, Danny and Hope Foster, and Eric Davis.

These five, fine youth minister's ministry/personal profiles can be found in Appendix A of this work.

Ministry Descriptions play a crucial part in the recruiting and training processes of successful lay ministry. Good ministry descriptions succinctly define the ministry to be engaged, the qualifications for the minister, the amount of time expected to successfully do the ministry, who the minister is accountable to, and a list of general duties that accompany the particular ministry. The author has included Ministry Descriptions for both the team members as well as the team leader. These documents are found in Appendix B of this project.

³⁴ Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995) 369-75.

³⁵ Wayne Cordiero, *Doing Church as a Team* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2001) 67-72.

³⁶ John Powers, *BodyLife Journey* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay, 2001) 4.

³⁷ Mels Carbonell, http://www.UniquelyYou.NET.

Leader Selection

Every successful basketball team must have a floor-general or point guard to encourage the team, call the plays, run the offense, etc. Successful football teams have excellent quarterbacks who operate on the football field in much the same way that the point guards do on the basketball court. Military squadrons must have NCOs (non-commissioned officers) who command and coordinate small combat units to execute effectively so as to survive and excel as a team on the battlefield. What is true in the sports and military realm is equally true in the mission-driven church of Jesus Christ. Dr. Falwell often declared, "Everything rises and falls on leadership". It is therefore incumbent upon the equipping church leadership to properly and wisely select potential team leaders.

In addition to the aforementioned requirements of potential youth team members, the author used the following criteria for leadership selection:

- Previous leadership experience.
- History of faithfulness & long-term commitments.
- Giftedness.
- Education.
- Desire to lead.

Employing these criteria along with the leadership/servant hood standards of Acts 6 where we find the following initial scriptural qualifications for lay leaders, "Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;" (Acts 6:3 NKJV), we felt led by

the Lord to ask Scott Russell to be our first 20/20 Youth Team leader. The following qualities will help demonstrate why Scott was selected, he:

- Was raised in a local SBC church
- Was saved at a young age
- Was active in his youth group at his home church
- Served in a youth ministry leadership role at the church he attended while in college
- His gifts are 1) pastor/shepherd, 2) exhortation, and 3) teaching
- As a Physical Therapist, Scott had shown the ability to follow-through and complete tasks by completing both a Bachelors and Masters Degree.
- Was already serving as a youth ministry helper while Ryan Epps was serving as Youth Minister.

Upon personally asking Scott to assume this leadership, and thoroughly sharing with him the responsibilities of such a position, we allowed him time for a season of prayer. After praying and seeking the Lord's will concerning the matter, Scott accepted the challenge and then the on the job training began.

Training in Youth Ministry

Having prayerfully and successfully recruited the team in April of 2006 prior to the departure of our part-time staff youth minister, we immediately turned our attention to the critical issue of training. This was indeed a crucial period and a major task.

Realizing that lay people are extremely busy and that time is of the essence, and also that not every one learns in the same ways, we proceeded with a determination to be varied,

accommodating, and thorough in our approach to ministry training. The following is a synopsis of the approaches employed in training the team to effectively minister to our students:

1. II Timothy 2:2 Stair-stepped Mentoring – having determined that Scott Russell would be our initial team leader. The author began to immediately to meet with Scott weekly for mentoring/vision sharing lunches. Soon an initial youth ministry training text was selected; we used the book Youth Ministry in Small Churches by Rick Chromey. This is an outstanding book which really concentrates on the uniquenesses of the small church and offers a wealth of encouragement and practical helps for developing a successful small church youth ministry. Copies of this text were then ordered and given to each team member/couple. As the author and team leader would meet weekly and discuss the chapters, then the team leader and his team would meet monthly and discuss those same chapters. This not only helped to train the team, but it also served to build camaraderie and cohesion between the pastor and team leader, as well as between the team leader and his team. After meeting weekly with the team leader for about four months, then an every other week format was adhered to for the next eight months. Also, following the successful completion of the first training text, the same technique was employed with the book, The 17 Essential Qualities of a Team Player by John C. Maxwell. Whereas the first book concentrated on youth ministry, this second text's focus was upon the necessary principles and practices of working together as a successful team.

- 2. Weekly E-Training having secured the email addresses of each of the ministry team members, the author then began to send high quality weekly training pages. These fifty-two weekly training vignettes which were sent as attachments were found on a compact disc which is included in the tremendous book *Youth Ministry Training On-The-Go* by youth ministry guru Doug Fields of Saddleback Church along with Katie Edwards. This material is as informative as it is convenient. This author cannot stress enough just how much a God-send this book is for any pastor seeking to develop lay youth ministers. The fifty-two lessons are arranged in monthly themes such as:
 - Essentials of a Healthy Volunteer
 - Working as a Team
 - Leaders are Learners
 - Ministry in a Busy Life
 - Tough Stuff in Youth Ministry
 - Relational Youth Ministry
 - Supporting the Ministry
 - Shepherding Students
 - Care and Counseling
 - Family-Friendly Youth Ministry
 - Understanding Youth Culture, and
 - Don't Give Up!
- 3. Program Training while NMBC is not a church of programs, it is nonetheless a church with discipleship programs. Having observed the

tremendous quality and success of our Word-of-Life Olympian discipleship program for our elementary aged children, we prayerfully chose to incorporate the Word-of-Life Teens³⁸ discipleship program in our 20/20 Youth Ministry. The WOL program is tailor made for this, our new approach to discipleship team leadership. Why Word of Life for us?

- Each team member has a role to play and ministry to perform in accordance to his/her gifts and abilities.
- The advantage of having each leader and student on the same page devotionally is a great asset for us.
- The utilization of PT (personal time) wherein each team member meets with 2-5 students as part of the weekly youth meeting greatly assist in mentoring and connecting.
- The advantage of having quality weekly programming helps and lessons is a must for lay ministers.
- The advantages of having a regional WOL missionary whose specific ministries are, (1) to assist the ministry team, (2) to help develop team leadership, and, (3) to help churches to be successful in their discipleship ministries.

Having had a summer ('06) to transition from a staff led to a team led youth ministry, and having decided as a church, team and pastor to incorporate the Word of Life Teen program into our youth ministry, we then scheduled three, 3-hour training sessions for the team with the regional Word Of Life

 $^{^{38}}$ Word of Life Teens is a program of Word of Life Church Ministries which is a division of Word of Life International, Inc., Schroon Lake, NY.

missionary, Mr. Ray Deck. Two of the sessions were conducted before the launch of the ministry program, and another occurred one month after the launch as a follow-up session. The Word of Life Teen discipleship program officially launched in the 20/20 Youth Ministry on Wednesday, September 6, 2006, and has been greatly used to develop team leadership, teach the Word, win souls and develop young disciples of Jesus Christ.

- 4. Conferences and Associational Training Events the team members were encouraged to (and did) participate in local and regional training opportunities such as a Southern Baptist Associational youth ministry training event as well as regional Word-of-Life training conferences.
- 5. Student Leadership Training any youth ministry leadership development strategy should be considered short-sighted if it does not provide for the training of student leaders. These student leaders should be carefully and prayerfully enlisted. The potential student leader should presently exhibit the essential qualities of a genuine love for Christ, moral virtue, faithfulness in disciplines, servanthood, inclusiveness, and a commitment to the youth ministry. In the summer of 2006 Amanda Dellinger, who had recently graduated high school and was soon to attend Liberty University, served as a ministry intern as an integral part of the ministry team. Amanda attended and participated in each of the initial ministry team meetings, led some of the younger middle school aged girls in devotional segments of mid-week youth meetings, and assisted in other various supportive ways as were necessary. In the summer of 2007, Amanda will again serve as a youth ministry intern but

will undergo a more advanced training opportunity. Along with the aforementioned on the job training opportunities, she will be studying Doug Fields book entitled, *Help! I'm a Student Leader*, ³⁹ which is an incredible training text designed for this purpose. Again, the mentoring/book study method will be incorporated as ministry team members Hope Foster and Carrie Russell will be reading the book as well, and meeting with Amanda regularly for discussion and application.

³⁹ Doug Fields, *Help! I'm a Student Leader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2005).

Chapter Five

Our Model for Ministry Teams

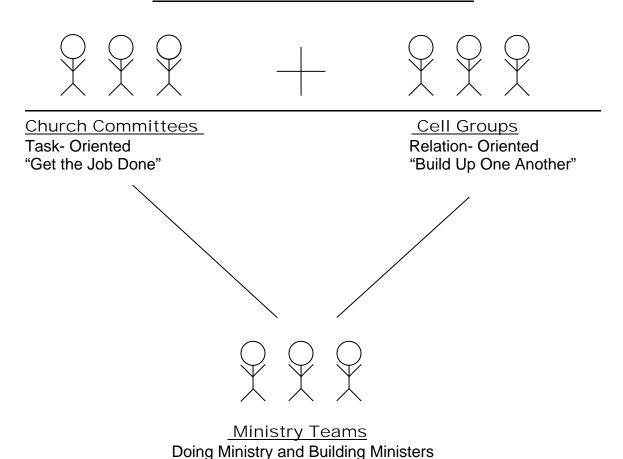
Introduction

Having demonstrated the criteria for selection of the ministry team and describing the comprehensive approach which was incorporated to train the fledgling team in the basics of youth ministry, we now turn our attention to the more general yet important subject of how the group would function as a team. As previously emphasized, we were looking for more than a group of individuals to carry out a ministerial task. This researcher firmly believes that both his own experience as well as the plethora of information which was gained through personal, in-depth study demanded that we form a team with small group characteristics. These indispensable attributes of mutual discipleship and genuine fellowship, along with the facilitation of leadership development simply had to be part of this new endeavor. We were determined that our team would not only provide ministry to a group of others, but would also function to build up one another as team members as well.

What follows in this chapter is the description of our model for team ministry which this author has developed for this thesis and has been successfully implemented through this project. The goal of this model is to provide effective ministry as well as facilitating leadership development. The vision is for a long-term self-perpetuating team

approach which constantly builds up current leaders and develops future leaders for His kingdom. As one can see, our aim was and is much more than just filling slots and getting a job done. The material communicated in this chapter which describes our approach to team ministry served as the basis for the four ministry team lessons which were taught to our initial team and are included in the Appendix C of this thesis. We now begin our journey with a wedding.

The Two Shall Become One



The model of ministry leadership by teams as incorporated in the 20/20 youth ministry at Nall Memorial Baptist Church is the fruit of both past experiences and new knowledge. This model incorporates the effective task-completing qualities that have been long associated with traditional church committees with the disciple-building, support qualities of contemporary cell groups. These non-negotiable, defining characteristics of our team life are: Ministry, Discipleship, Fellowship, and kingdom leadership development.

Ministry

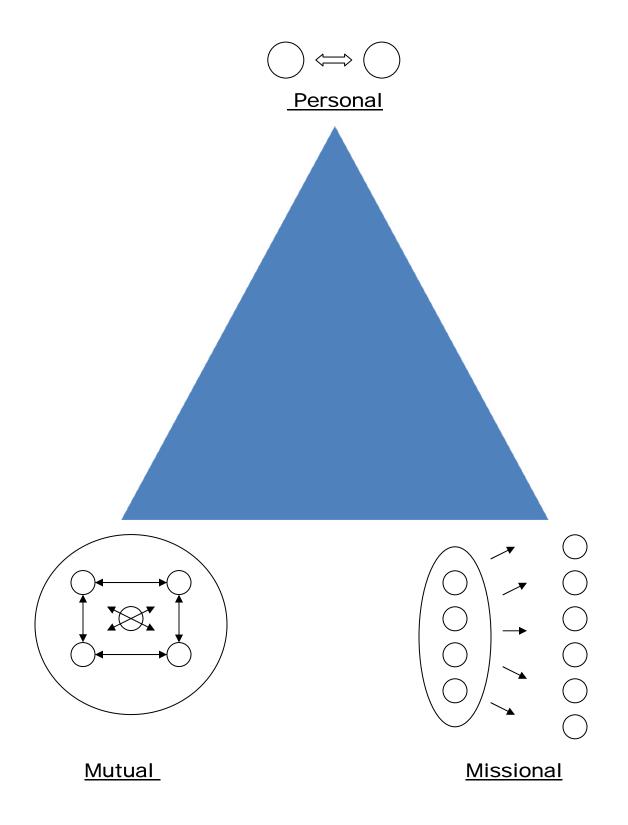
Dr. Gene Mims defines ministry simply as, "meeting another person's need in the name of Jesus, expressed as service to people inside the church family and expressed as missions to those outside the church with the resources God provides." This model is characterized by ministry which is far more biblical, effective, diverse and durable than a solo-based ministry leadership model and even than that of traditional church committees. This superiority is borne out in the following ways, this ministry approach is:

- 1. Biblically-based in its mission. The Great Commission charges us to be the church and not to just 'do church'.
- 2. Calling-based in its formation. Each member serves with a much greater passion which arises from a biblical sense of calling of which lay members experience.

⁴⁰ Gene Mims, *The Kingdom Focused Church* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003) 83.

- 3. Multi-gifted in its contribution. As a body system arranged by Christ, each team member brings a totally different gift and experience mix which multiplies the effectiveness of the ministry.
- 4. Team-based in it's orientation. This superiority is further reiterated by the following passage, "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 NKJV).
- 5. Dually-directed in its delivery. While some ministry teams are more task-oriented (Facilities, Media, Meals) and others are more people-oriented (bereavement, counseling, benevolence), there must be a balanced approach to the ministry. Task-oriented teams can become more people oriented by remembering that they are indirectly serving people by accomplishing their duties, while people-centered teams must remember that their ministry to others will most often be delivered more effectively through wise organization and programming. For the ministry teams which provide leadership to groups, this balance is essential. However, these leadership teams must realize that in the ministry, while it is important to advance the program, we must always know that it is people before program.

The Ministry Team's Triple Focus of Ministry



Effective, well-rounded Ministry on teams must be:

- Personal each member is a called, gifted member of the body of Christ and
 therefore should exercise their gifts in ministry not only in the context of team
 or church life, but also as a way of life. This is accomplished through serving
 Christ by serving others with the motivation of love and the glory of God.
- Mutual each ministry team member recognizes the fact that the team is
 family, and therefore covenants to care for one another. The team members
 should exercise their gifts in loving service to one another, thereby edifying
 one another and strengthening the team as a whole.
- Missional the team as a unit engages in effective ministry to the group of
 people to whom they are specially called to reach out to and make disciples
 of. The team thus fulfills a pastoral care ministry to the ministry group as well
 as to prospects for the group and families members of the group members.

Discipleship

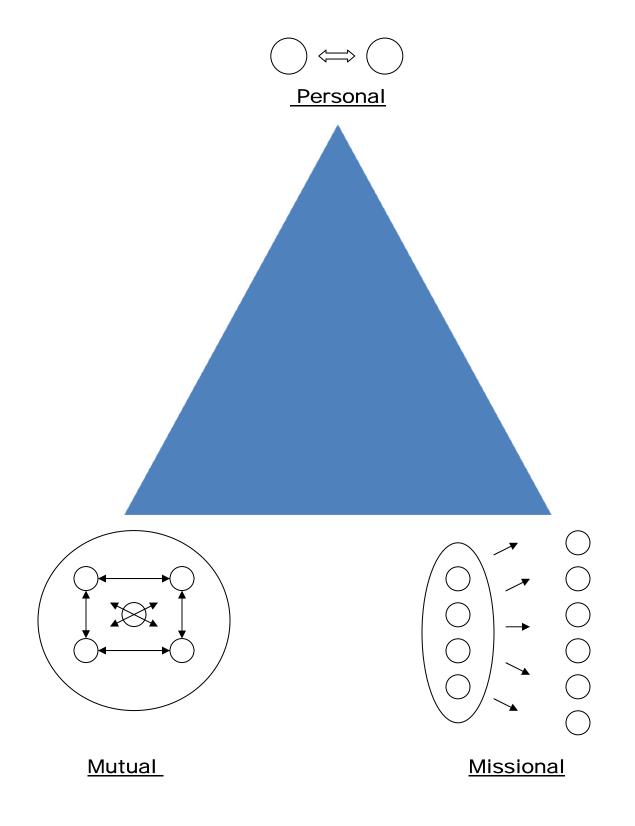
This model recognizes the extreme shortcomings of traditional church committees in regards to fostering an on-going, life-transforming environment. Dr. Gene Mims defines discipleship in the following way, "Discipleship is a lifelong journey of obedience to Christ that transforms a person's values and behavior and results in ministry in one's home, church, and the world. Discipling is the process of teaching new citizens in the kingdom of God to love, trust, and obey Him, and teach them how to win and train others to do the same." This model recognizes this divine mandate to make disciples

⁴¹ Gene Mims, The Kingdom Focused Church (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003) 79.

and realizes that the small group is perhaps the most effective context for disciple development. This goal of discipleship within the ministry team life shall be facilitated in the following ways:

- Team member accountability the team members covenant to watch for one another's souls and not only give permission, but actually encourage each another to ask penetrating questions concerning their personal Christian walks, (i.e. Worship attendance, spiritual disciplines, witnessing).
- Unified devotional curricula each team member is 'on the same page' in regards to daily devotional material.
- 3. Word-Share-Prayer each ministry team planning meeting begins with a team member leading in a scriptural devotional, followed by a time of life sharing for prayer needs, which is then followed by a season of praying for one another.
 This time must be fiercely guarded and not become a token exercise.
- Program discipleship each member is involved in the team goal of making disciples and each contributes and participates in the church's program of discipleship.
- 5. Mentoring discipleship is personal as well as program at NMBC. The equipping pastor mentors the team leader who in turn mentors team members as he has been guided (II Tim. 2:2). The team members in turn disciple individual ministry group members thus the principle of kingdom multiplication is engaged.

The Ministry Team's Triple Focus of Discipleship



Effective discipleship within the context of Ministry Teams must be:

- Personal each team member acknowledges their personal call to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Christ on a daily basis. Each team member covenants to exercise personal spiritual disciplines from a heart of sincere love for their Lord with the goal of knowing Him and growing into His likeness. Also, in the context of disciple-making, the individual team members understand that they are to be way-of-life witnesses for Christ in their day-to-day lives.
- Mutual each team member covenants to hold each other lovingly
 accountable concerning their individual walks with Christ, to encourage and
 exhort one another unto greater devotion and faithfulness to Christ, and to
 pray for one another's testimony daily.
- Missional the team recognizes that their primary ministry is to make
 disciples through evangelism and Christian growth teaching. While each
 member is gifted in diverse ways, each member understands the ultimate
 purposes of the spiritual gifts are for the glory of God and the building up of
 the body of Christ. The team individually and collectively functions as a
 disciple-making unit.

Fellowship

This ministry team model also recognizes the essential contribution of genuine, biblical fellowship to team life. Fellowship is sharing a unity in Christ; it is relational, involving sincere trust and a commonality of calling and purpose. When a Christian

group lives in genuine fellowship, it has the effect of providing an ideal environment for growth and fruitfulness – much like a spiritual greenhouse effect.

Concerning this fellowship, Stan Ott writes, "Ministry team fellowship does not automatically happen. Committees and other ministry organizations are often made up of highly motivated people who carry out an assignment together and then go back to their individual lives with little ongoing interaction." Fellowship must be fostered and guarded by the ministry team members, all the while, being ever vigilant to keep from being cliquish in relation to the greater church body. The following practices will go a long way toward fostering fellowship on ministry teams:

- Beginning each ministry team meeting with 'small-group life' using the
 previously mentioned Word-Share-Prayer format to open each meeting will serve
 to foster shared life as well as Christian growth.
- 2. Prayer Partnerships in James 5:16 we as believers are charged to 'pray for one another'. As ministry team members obey this exhortation and enter into mutual prayer partnerships, their mutual life will be deepened as they share needs to be prayed for as well as the joys of prayers answered. Partnerships should be rotated on a monthly or semi-monthly in order to make sure that a whole team life effect is realized instead of fragmentation.
- 3. Sharing of meals few things assist in developing and deepening friendships quite like eating together. The early church definitely realized this and it help to foster an amazing commonality among the members (Acts 2:41-47). Ministry team fellowship can be enhanced by all team members purposely gathering for meals at least quarterly.

⁴² Stan Ott, *Ministry Teams*. 98.

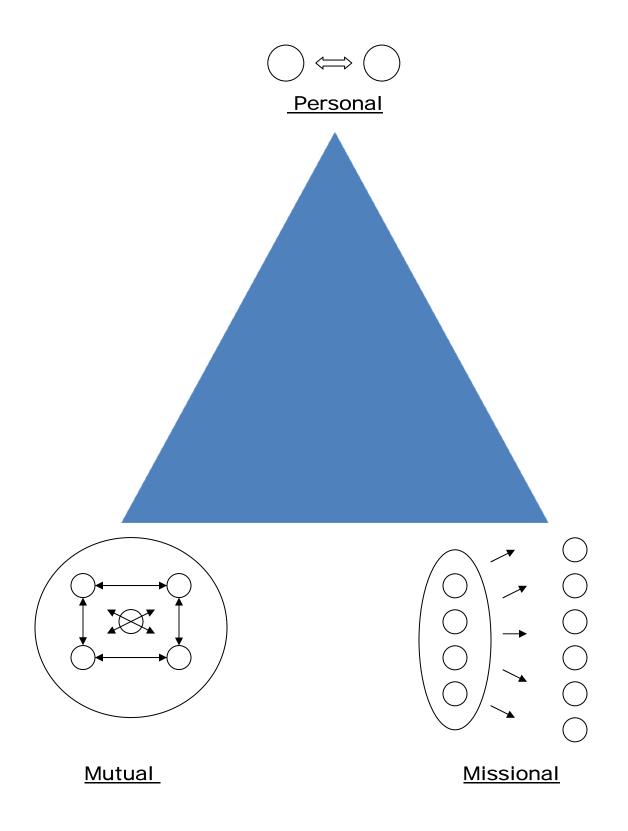
- 4. Recreation and Retreats ministry team life is also deepened when the team members simply share life outside of ministry activities in recreation and leisure by just 'hanging out' together. Also, the positive benefits of learning together at conferences and retreats cannot be stressed enough.
- 5. Showing mutual respect and integrity by covenanting to honor one another, put down gossip, recognize one anothers value, and by genuinely living and liking each other, the team life will flourish. There is no substitute for each member living daily in the fullness of the Spirit and bearing His fruit abundantly.

Ministry Team 5-C Covenant

- 1. **Care** Our team covenants to shepherd one another; to weep with those who weep, to rejoice with those who rejoice, to pray for one another, to provide special ministry to one another in times of crisis.
- 2. **Confidentiality** Our team covenants to keep team conversation within the team. We respect the confidences of others.
- 3. **Communication** Our team covenants to communicate directly, respectfully, thoroughly, and prudently. We introduce significant issues face-to-face. We resolve differences in person. We seek to engage in language which serves to build-up one another.
- 4. **Clear Expectations** Our team covenants to clarify and understand our common vision. We understand that together we can achieve far more than we ever could as a number of individuals working separately. We acknowledge each other's unique roles and contributions to the team's mission.
- 5. **Christian Health** Our team covenants to engage in the spiritual disciplines faithfully and from a loving heart of devotion. We further covenant to kindly hold one another accountable in our Christian walks.

As a Ministry Team Member I he	reby pledge
to faithfully live the Covenant by	His grace
Signed	

The Ministry Team's Triple Focus of Fellowship



Effective fellowship within the context of Ministry Teams must be:

- Personal while personal fellowship may seem to be quite an oxymoron,
 what is meant here is maintaining a personal fellowship with Christ. This fellowship is assisted by the confession of sin, the faithful practice of the disciplines, and by regular worship.
- Mutual each team member recognizes the essential need to truly love each other in Christian love. The team understands that there is a direct correlation between the team's fellowship and their effectiveness in ministry. The team further understands that the enemy seeks to destroy effective ministry teams, and that a divided team is no team at all, and is not useful for kingdom work.
- Missional the team recognizes it does not exist only for itself, and that true fellowship is not cliquish and is to be developed and shared especially with those to whom they are called to minister and reach out to. The team operates with the understanding that ministry and disciple-making only effectively occur within the contexts of Christian love and growing relationships.

Leadership Development

At the heart of long-term, big picture Great Commission kingdom work lays the essential task of developing leaders. Jesus Himself modeled the concept that disciples are best made in the context of small groups. Ministry is best delivered and expanded in the context of small groups, and fellowship is at its strongest in the context of like-minded small groups. Small groups need leaders in order to be effective in their kingdom endeavors – whether it be providing leadership to a youth group or reaching out to a

particular neighborhood in a pure cell group outreach effort. If small groups are so effective in kingdom enterprise and if small groups need quality trained leaders to reach their maximum potential, then it only stands to reason that the more group leaders the church develops, the more potential multiplying kingdom ministry it can accomplish. The apprenticing of good leaders was at the heart of Jesus' long-term redemption strategy, and it must therefore be a major priority and practice of His church today. Concerning this concept, Gareth Icenogle writes, "Leadership is therefore the leading of a small group or the leading of a small network of groups. Jesus understood this basic leadership rule: lead a small group of leaders who will in turn lead their small group of leaders, who will lead the people...Leadership, to be effective, must be in the midst of a leadership community. Jesus selected and developed His own leadership community and they changed the world."⁴³

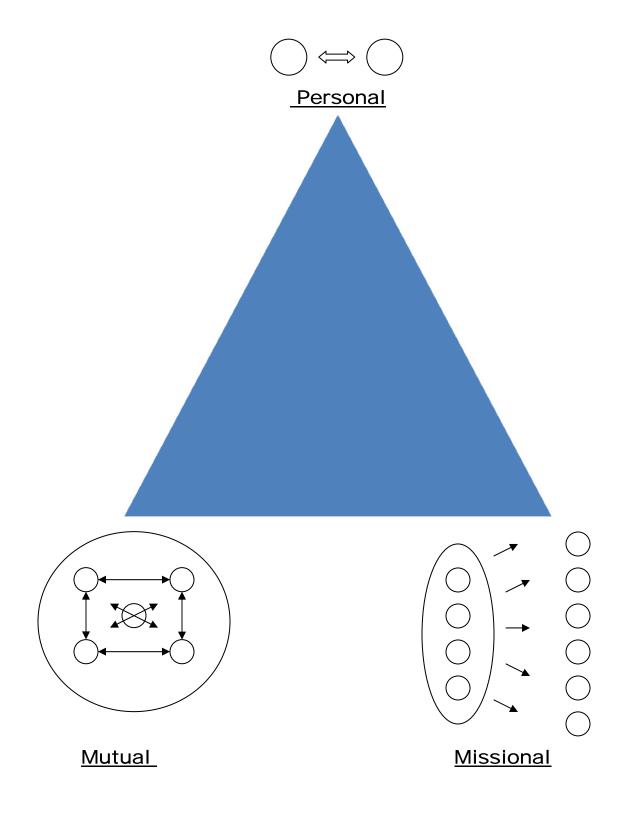
Not only do small groups such as ministry teams need quality leadership, they also provide the ideal context by which to develop such leaders. The following reasons point to this truth:

- 1. Small groups provide a safe environment to grow, experiment, fail, and learn from mistakes.
- 2. Small groups provide a context for shared responsibility and experiences in ministry which doubles the chances of effectiveness and personal growth.
- 3. Ministry Teams are purposely designed so as to tap into an individual's personal calling and gifting thus providing a context that is conducive for success in ministry.

⁴³ Gareth Icenogle, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry: An Integrational Approach* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994) 161.

- 4. Ministry Teams, as a type of small groups, are designed to not only provide ministry to a group, but also to develop the team members as disciples of Jesus.
- 5. Ministry Teams which have the responsibility to provide leadership and ministry to a group of people such as youth, develop leaders as the individual team members serve and disciple small groups of the greater group.

The Ministry Team's Triple Focus of Leadership Development



Effective leadership development within the context of Ministry Teams must be:

- Personal ministry team members grow as leaders as they faithfully serve the Lord and His people not only in accord with their personal passion and gifts, but also by exhibiting a true servant's heart by joyfully ministering and helping out in many other ways as needed in the body of Christ. Ministry team members grow in their leadership ability by personally investing in the lives of those the Lord places in their circle of influence (family, neighbors, co-workers, etc.).
- Mutual the ministry team shall strive to develop leaders among themselves
 through training, apprenticing, accountability, service, Christian character
 development and shared ministry. Ministry teams shall operate with a bigger
 'kingdom' vision in mind a vision which encompasses the principle of
 developing and sending new leaders from among its own ranks in order to
 provide leadership for new ministries as lead by our Great Leader.
- Missional the ministry team recognizes that its purpose is to make disciples
 not only of one another, but also of the ones they are called to minister to.
 The team further recognizes that a major part of 'disciple-making' is
 developing leaders who will in turn one day be disciple-makers. Thus, the
 goal of the team is to become a disciple-maker making entity for Christ.

Chapter Six

Keys to a Successful Transition from a Staff Led To a Lay Ministry Team Led Youth Ministry

This project not only represents the development of a new paradigm for ministry at Nall Memorial Baptist Church, but as one can readily assume, anytime a church makes a shift of this magnitude, there are transitional issues which must be anticipated and planned for. In addition to the absolutely essential extended season of fervent prayer for the youth ministry which was previously discussed in chapter four (page 37), this author has included the following sound pieces of advisory material which were instrumental to our amazingly, virtually seamless transition from a staff-led youth ministry to a lay-team led youth ministry.

Clarity and Unity of Mission

One of the major priorities of any New Testament church is to create and communicate a clear, concise and scriptural mission statement. The importance of churches having a mission statement and supporting defining articles cannot be overstressed, especially as one (church) considers embarking upon a major change.

These defining articles which clarify an individual church's uniquenesses, will serve to provide a beacon and sound foundation upon which to determine any new directions that

the church may endeavor to proceed in. George Barna defines a mission statement as, "A broad, general statement about who you wish to reach and what the church hopes to accomplish."44 He goes on to clarify its purpose when he states, "It (the mission statement) is designed to reflect a heart turned to God in service and obedience in which the church is a vehicle used to *unite* people to do His will."⁴⁵ Bill Easum and Tom Bandy co-authored a very thought provoking book in which they explored the core vision, values, and beliefs that lead to mission in a congregation. Easum calls this the DNA of a congregation that shapes the life of each of the affiliate groups and activities of that church. 46 Stressing the unifying qualities of such a shared congregational DNA, Stan Ott writes, "Vital congregations articulate clearly their philosophy of ministry, their defining vision and their defining practices...Only with such a philosophy of ministry may a ministry team within a congregation design initiatives that are not only consistent with but also an actual expression of the congregation's vision for ministry."⁴⁷ With the clear wisdom of these statements understood, we can therefore proudly share the following components of Nall Memorial's DNA.

The stated mission of Nall Memorial Baptist Church is:

To Glorify God

By Making, Maturing and Multiplying

Disciples of Jesus Christ

⁴⁴ George Barna, *The Power of Vision* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1992) 38.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 38

⁴⁶ Bill Easum and Tom Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1997)

⁴⁷ Stan Ott, *Ministry Teams*, 53.

The stated mission of the 20/20 Youth Ministry of Nall Memorial Baptist Church is:

To Glorify God

By Making, Maturing and Multiplying Student Disciples of Jesus Christ

The Core Values of Nall Memorial Baptist Church in regards to ministry teams are:

- We value growing disciples of Jesus Christ who actively serve Him according to their calling and gifting by Him.
- We value the extreme importance of relationships and small groups as an ideal context for effective ministry and mutual discipleship.
- We value the interdependence principle of effective ministry.
- We value the team approach to doing ministry as a biblical vehicle of communicating the practical love of Jesus Christ.
- We value apprenticing future leaders within a ministry team context.
- We value stair-stepped mentoring philosophy based on II Timothy 2:2 by which instruction and equipping pass from pastor to team leader to ministry team to ministry group.
- We value making disciples (converts), maturing them (discipleship proper)
 and multiplying them (kingdom leadership development) as the truest
 interpretation of our biblical mandate.

Some of the defining practices of Nall Memorial Baptist Church are:

- ➤ The crucial contribution and ministry of every born-again church member.
- Ministry within the context of teams whenever possible.
- Mutual accountability within the context of small groupings of believers.
- The inescapable responsibility and practice of lifestyle evangelism of each member.
- ➤ The ongoing practice of a pastoral equipping ministry thru the personal mentoring of church leadership.
- ➤ The mutual valuing, acceptance and appreciation of lay ministry by fellow member-ministers of the congregation.

High Visibility and Support of the Pastor

The author cannot stress enough the value of a steadying influence especially during tumultuous times of transition. Knowing that the upheaval of losing a beloved staff member would be terribly distressing to the church as a whole, and particularly for the students, this author purposely interjected himself and became much more visible to the youth ministry during the transitional period of the summer of 2006. Some of the helpful, stabilizing practices were:

- Being present at all four youth ministry home prayer meetings along with the students, parents and team members.
- Being present at a complete mid-week youth ministry meeting for the express purpose of answering concerns, vision sharing (looking forward), helping to heal

hurts, expressing confidence in the team, and communicating confidence and excitement.

- Consistently and confidently communicating the vision and promise for team-led ministry. This is a must! Communicate, Communicate, Communicate.
 Confidence, Confidence, Confidence. The pastor must have the vision, and the vision must have the pastor. This was no time for uncertainty. The pastor's absolute confidence was contagious, and anxiety never had a chance to capture the hearts of the congregation, the lay leaders, nor the students.
- Weekly mentoring meetings with the team leader and monthly with the ministry team. In addition to these formal settings, this author sought to spend more time with the team in casual settings such as after church lunches on Sunday afternoons.

The Value of Victories and the Novelty of the New

In his fine book *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*⁴⁸, author John C. Maxwell defines two irrefutable laws as the 'Law of Victory' and the 'Law of the Big Mo' (momentum). Understanding that victory produces momentum which in turn increases the likelihood of additional victories which produce even greater momentum, and also understanding that successful new activity serves to create interest and excitement, this author purposely and prayerfully sought to put these critical principles into action during this transition period. Here's what we did:

⁴⁸ John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998) Chapters 15 and 16.

- The ministry team led the students to immediately plan and conduct the first ever Youth Sunday service at Nall Memorial. This service, which occurred in mid June just weeks after the departure of our staff youth minister, was led entirely by our youth ministry. It was an overwhelming success!
- The ministry team led the students to participate in each Sunday evening service with a new '20/20 Youth Ministry Moment' in which various students would sing, read a challenging martyr's devotional, lead in responsive reading, play instruments, etc.
- The students, some parents, and the pastor attended a brand new (to them) summer camp in July.
- The ministry team and students took their first fun-day trip to a large amusement park in Charlotte, NC. It was a great bonding experience.
- The ministry team and students sought ways to serve the community together,
 ministering in homeless shelters and nursing homes.
- Members of the ministry team, parents and students participated in their first ever mission trip to rural coastal North Carolina. Ministering in a twenty-five member church by conducting a full Vacation Bible School.
- The ministry team and students conducted the first ever senior citizen banquet in which they provided transportation, a meal, dessert, and entertainment for the seniors (55+) of NMBC.
- The 20/20 youth ministry launched a new and comprehensive student discipleship program (Word-of-Life Teens) in September of '06.

This author vividly remembers the late Dr. Jerry Falwell often stated that, "Failure to plan is to plan to fail", and that we must, "Work as if everything depends on us, and pray as if everything depends on God". We prayed, planned, and worked hard, and all glory to God, He gave us success and momentum throughout a virtually seamless transition.

Chapter Seven

A Critical Evaluation of the Results

Positive Benefits

An Expanded Leadership Base

Having transitioned from a part-time staff led youth ministry to a five member lay ministry team led youth ministry not only greatly increased the present leadership, but also provided a tremendous means and model for developing future kingdom leaders in the church. The author distinctly remembers his first vision sharing luncheon with then potential ministry team leader Scott Russell. At this lunch, the author shared his vision and confidence that a called, gifted lay team could do just as good a job at leading the youth ministry as any paid staff person, and that this was very likely the direction that we were going to go. Scott was surprised by this assertion and the confidence of the one sharing it with him. His response was classic and betrays the overwhelming mindset of laity in churches everywhere who have been either overtly or covertly taught that such could not be the case. "We can't do that, we haven't been to seminary!" was his automatic, immediate reply. What a disservice we have done in most protestant

churches. The very catholic separation between the clergy and the laity still plagues us to this day!

Now, just over one year later, the results are in, the Bible is true and this thesis project is proof and proven. A called, gifted ministry team comprised of committed laity not only can, but has led an entire ministry successfully. This has been accomplished by and large because each team member has caught the vision and has taken ownership of their ministry. When I think of someone with a vision and who owns a ministry, I think of someone who is going to be committed to the success of that ministry. And when you put five of those somebody's together under the Lord's leadership and provide quality training and ongoing support – look out because great things are going to happen.

Not only do we now have five new leaders who are leading their present ministry, but we also have five leaders who could potentially provide leadership in other ministries in the future (such as an anticipated partial divide of Junior High and Senior High ministries). In addition to this potential, we also have demonstrated for the church body that they too can be kingdom ministers as well and not just be content to fill slots in a token role of support – nothing sells like success.

The Evolution of Lay Pastoral Care

This result represents an ongoing, major transition in pastoral ministry at Nall Memorial. This project has served to move the congregation from the priesthood of believers as a nice doctrinal idea to the actual practice of gladly giving and graciously receiving and valuing one another's ministry. Discipleship author Bill Hull writes convincingly on the subject when he states, "Pastoral care, one part of that (lay-equipped)

ministry is a work given to the entire body of Christ, not to the clergy alone. Indeed, in most cases, the least prepared by gifts, professional training, and desire are the clergy...most people filling the office of pastor are gifted in leadership, teaching, administration, exhortation, and so on. They are not strong in traditional pastoral care. They do it because people expect it... Decentralization of pastoral care does not mean the person filling the office of pastor no longer does them. It is a question of degree...Every Christian is to be part of the total team effort. The full potential of the body can be realized only when every person exercises his or her gifts."

While this author/pastor has and always will try to be there for his congregation in times of major crisis, one can only concur with Rev. Hull that the Bible clearly teaches that all believers are ministers and are therefore called to minister to one another, and that the pastor's major role in the ministry is to train ministers. As the ministry team gradually caught on to this concept and were progressively trained, this author observed a definite increase in both ministry confidence as well as practical pastoral ministry administration on behalf of the ministry team. The team members have come to see the students as members of their flock and have taken a personal interest in both their spiritual growth as well as their general well being. This is visibly borne out in the following examples:

- Ministry team members calling students in their PT groups whenever they are absent or randomly just to talk.
- Ministry team members sitting with students during worship services.
- Ministry team members providing general biblical counsel to students.

⁴⁹ Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 1988) 181-182.

- Ministry team members attending various important events in the student's lives such as graduations, recitals, games, parties, etc.
- Ministry team members regularly praying for their students before meetings.
- Ministry team members actively reaching out to the friends and family members of the students.
- Ministry team members visiting students in the hospital or visiting the homes and services for deceased family members of students.

What pastor wouldn't love to have such a lay-team who has both the heart and ability to care for those to whom they feel especially called to minister to? What a blessing it is to see God's people functioning as He has purposed for them to function by doing the work of the ministry.

Another critical element which is involved in the success of this evolution of lay pastoral care has to do with the acceptance of that ministry by the ones being ministered to. While this concept is thoroughly biblical in principle, unless it's owned by the flock as well, it remains just that – a principle and not a practice. This author will likely never forget an exchange which occurred between he and team member Danny Foster while the two were on their way to rural eastern North Carolina for a pre-project visit for an upcoming youth mission trip. On this four hour drive the author and Danny were discussing the youth ministry when Danny casually brought up the fact that one of the students had recently called he and Hope at 4:00 in the morning to request prayer for her dad who had just been taken to the emergency room. Danny shared that he and Hope prayed with the student and that he (Danny) went by the hospital to check on the dad before going to work that morning. When the author heard of this occurrence, he got so

excited that he almost had a wreck on the highway (not really). The author cannot begin to express just how huge this is! The student in crisis immediately called upon the ones whom she viewed as her care-giving ministers – her youth MINISTERS.

Increased Student Involvement

Next to the increased confidence and ministry involvement as realized by the team members, perhaps the ones who have been most positively affected have been the students themselves. The author believes that by seeing the high quality ministry which has been provided to them by 'regular church members', the students have begun to catch the biblical vision as well. This is evidenced by a noticeable increase in both confidence and actual participation as well. A very real, 'we are important, we can do it' spirit has gradually filtered its way from the lay leaders to the students. Examples of the increase in student confidence and its subsequent involvement can readily be seen in the following:

- Students readily taking a part in Sunday evening services as well as
 helping in ministries such as Vacation Bible School, assisting in the
 church nursery, greeting guests, tidying up the sanctuary immediately
 following services, etc.
- 2. Students participating in a 40-hour fast in order to raise funds for hunger relief in third world countries.
- Students serving the elderly through meals and entertainment at a first ever student-led Seniors Banquet.

- Students volunteering for the first time to help at an Operation Christmas Child⁵⁰ warehouse.
- 5. Students regularly reaching out to their community by writing and/or preparing gifts for shut-ins, volunteering at a local homeless shelter, etc.

Growth in Pastoral Equipping Ministry

Prior to the implementation of this project, this author had possessed a very real awareness of his calling to train the laity for ministry, but had neither the plan nor vehicle to effectively carry this out. Past efforts at equipping and attempts to develop leaders were inconsistent and, by in large, ineffective. Limited techniques such as sporadic conferences and seminars, both in-house and regional, along with occasional 'with me' efforts which were centered in home visitation training were about the extent of previous equipping efforts. These attempts were characteristically short-sighted due to a key missing element known as the leadership multiplication principle. We simply had no long term strategy to develop leaders who would in turn develop future leaders.

One of the strong points and lasting benefits of this project has been the beginning of the rectification of this pervasive problem of which so many churches (especially small ones) face. The trickle down effect of pastor equipping team leader, team leader equipping team members, and team members discipling ministry group members; has been a readily visible and viable method and means. This project has provided this author/pastor the following benefits as pertaining to his equipping ministry:

⁵⁰ Operation Christmas Child is a ministry of Samaritan's Purse International, Boone, NC.

- A greater clarity concerning the nature and mechanics of the pastoral equipping ministry.
- 2. An enlarged, biblically-induced vision and motivation to purposefully shift toward becoming a disciple making pastor.
- 3. A proven, effective model and means to not only train leaders, but also to multiply his effectiveness through those leaders.
- 4. A proven, effective model and means to return the ministry to the God-called & gifted people of God.
- 5. A proven, effective model and means to not only train leaders and deliver multiplied ministry, but also to sustain and build the ministers themselves through small group fellowship and discipleship dynamics.

Improved Youth Ministry Effectiveness

A very noticeable benefit of this project has been a definite improvement in the overall ministry to students in the 20/20 Student Ministry at Nall Memorial over previous ministry paradigms. This is evidenced by the following:

- Increased student involvement in the overall church program.
- A very real excitement and passion evident in the student's demeanor at church.
- An increase in faithfulness to daily devotions on the part of the students.
- An increase in the number of visitors being brought by the students.
- An observable increased sense of stability, settledness and belonging in the lives
 of the students.

While some of these benefits are surely more tangible than are others, they are each nonetheless present and have been observed. What then would be the chief causes behind these noticeable positives? The following will definitely serve to account for them:

- A much improved minister to student ratio We purposely shifted from one (staff) youth minister with ministry helpers to five called, gifted & trained lay ministers, thus greatly decreasing the minister to student ratio.
- 2. The elimination of a 'one minister fits all' philosophy and practice of delivering ministry We came to realize that each individual is unique and that we each relate to some people better than we do to others. Based upon this principle, it only stands to reason that a team of ministers will most likely be able to relate to and connect more effectively with a varied array of students.
- 3. A greater stability and continuity in the ministry programming Under a single, gifted lay leader paradigm as well as a single part-time staff leader paradigm, when the leader is incapable of providing his/her usual leadership, the whole ministry suffers and effectiveness greatly decreases. However, with the team approach, if one or two are necessarily unable to be present, the other team members together are quite capable of carrying on effectively.
- 4. The aforementioned sense of ownership on behalf of both the students and the lay leaders People are obviously going to be more excited and

involved in ministries when they are personally involved in decision making, doing the ministry, and sharing in the results.

Negative Results

Heavier Initial Load for the Pastor

As a small church pastor transitions from being a traditional 'jack-of-all-trades' chaplain to his congregation, to a more biblical role of that of an equipper, there will necessarily be a short-term increase in his workload. This is primarily because he is trying to fill two roles and paradigms of ministry at once. This dual nature is a necessity, for pastoral care must be given, and until a team is trained, they will not be effectively equipped to share the load. This sharing of the load of ministry to others must be purposely and intentionally striven for. As the team leader and his team gains experience, knowledge, and confidence they will gradually be able to accept a more meaningful role in providing ministry.

The pastor must anticipate this increased work load and be prepared to pay the price in the short run in order to reap the long term benefit of meaningful shared ministry. In addition to this anticipation, the pastor must do much in the way of preparation so as to have a clear vision of just where he intends to go and where this transition will lead his ministry. Many of the textbooks included in this researcher's Bibliography and Review of Literature which address and describe the lay renewal revival are considered must reads.

After twelve years of frustration and no real progress toward effective shared leadership, this author considered the cost and determined that the cost of doing nothing was far greater than the sacrifice made during this transition. This author cannot stress enough that this negative of a short term increase in one's workload must be anticipated and worked through and that the previously stated long-term benefits are well worth this short-term sacrifice.

The Equipping Pastor and the Lazy Pastor Perception

Another price which a pastor must anticipate if he seeks to transition to more of an equipper is the inevitable perception of laziness which some traditionalists will have of him. This is definitely a negative result which was experienced by this author as the laity began to assume more of the pastoral ministry workload. Traditionalists have been taught and conditioned to believe that only an ordained pastor can render effective, meaningful ministry and that any ministry rendered by non-ordained persons is merely token in nature and of a lesser quality. This is extremely unfortunate. The priesthood of believers, the purpose of the body, and the viability of lay ministry must be persuasively taught and success stories continuously celebrated in order to counter this unbiblical ideology.

In all honesty, this perception was held by a relatively few parishioners and never grew to be anything near a major issue. It was however, present. The author strove to take special note of these dear people and sought to bring them along as best he could while striving to meet their ministry needs in a more traditional pastoral way. Again, anyone considering such a move toward an equipping pastor/lay ministry paradigm must

anticipate the likelihood of this perception and realize that effective transitions necessarily take a long-term commitment.

More Ministers / Fewer Ministries

While this issue was not a particular negative for Nall Memorial, I have included it recognizing that some pastors and churches believe that the more diverse and numerous types of ministries they offer – the better. Such as these reckon that more must always be better than less. Such ministries are characterized by multi-multi-programmed institutions and much bureaucracy. While some multi-staffed, mega-churches can quite possibly handle such a diverse approach to church ministry, the fact is that this author believes that small churches <u>cannot</u>, nor should they try! The secret to power, success and effectiveness is found in concentration. Pastors must allow the scripture and not a consumer-driven culture to dictate how we should lead and organize our congregations.

It stands to reason that if a small congregation which has traditionally sought to provide too many ministries which have been led either by solo lay persons or by small committees constituted of members (who also serve on numerous other committees), that transitioning to a specialized team-based operation will necessarily decrease the number of ministries provided. The biblical principle which bears this out is that the Lord has called and gifted His people for a special ministry, and that the traditional nominating approach does not recognize this and rather tends to fill slots by appointing the laity to 'ministries' in a haphazard manner, so as to just keep the programs going. Again, this approach is neither biblical nor effective. The secret is to be driven by our biblically

based mission, vision and values. This aids greatly in giving us the ability to say no to the good that we might always say yes to the best.

Conclusion

Recognizing that there will always be plusses and minuses in any new ministry endeavor, and realizing that the greater the change, the greater the risk involved, this project represents quite an ambitious shift for this author and his church. However, on the other side of the equation one must realize that great changes can also prove to be just that – great. The benefits have greatly outweighed the problems, and this researcher realizes that many of the benefits of such a biblical paradigm shift will likely be realized in the future as the principles and practices represented in this thesis are expanded to other existing and potential ministries.

If a person could grade the benefits and negative results encountered as a result of this project's implementation and realization using a scale of 1 to 10, in this researchers estimation, it would look like the following:

Benefits

1.	Expanded Leadership Base	10
2.	Evolution of Lay Pastoral Care	8
3.	Increased Student Involvement	8
4.	Growth in Pastoral Equipping Ministry	9
5.	Improved Youth Ministry Effectiveness	8
	Total Score:	43

Negatives

1.	Heavier Initial Load for Pastor	7
2.	Lazy Pastor Perception	4
3.	More Ministers/Fewer Ministries	<u>4</u>
	Total Score:	15

As one can readily observe, the positives have outweighed the negatives by nearly three to one. In this honest and straightforward evaluation of this lay leadership development and implementation program the researcher has shown conclusively that it has indeed been an effective, wise and biblical move on the part of Nall Memorial Baptist Church. Lay ministry teams do indeed create an ideal environment and vehicle for providing effective ministry and developing effective ministers.

Chapter Eight

Recommendations

Anytime a church opts to pursue a new direction in ministry there will always be challenges as well as successes – provided that the direction has the merit of common sense and has a biblical foundation. Extensive research, along with a thorough knowledge of ones ministry environment will provide much in the way of anticipating obstacles and promising options. The leader who considers such a philosophical and practical shift as represented in this thesis should absolutely prayerfully heed the advice of Jesus when He warned us to 'count the cost' (Luke 14:28 NKJV).

By way of more specific counsel, the author shall offer the following recommendations. These recommendations, prepared by the author, follow the acrostic "T.E.A.M.S. W.I.N."

Talk with the Master and Gain His Vision

This is a crucial and critical first step. Our Master, Jesus Christ, knows what He wants to accomplish through each of His pastors and churches. Only He knows us so intimately regarding our personalities, cultural surroundings, giftings, experiences, church make-up, and futures. We must get back to prayerfully listening to Him and earnestly seeking His face concerning all aspects of our lives – including our ministries.

We must resist the constant temptation to just do something, and rather learn again to follow Him patiently. In writing on this subject concerning the relationship between vision and prayer, Dan Southerland writes,

"One of my favorite passages on prayer and vision is found in Jeremiah 29:11-13. Notice the progression of the promise that is found in these verses.

'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' Jeremiah 29:11

That sounds a lot like vision, doesn't it? God has a plan. And it is a good plan. It is a plan to prosper His people. His plan is not to be feared but will give us hope and a solid future. How do we find that plan? The next verse tells us.

'Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.' v.12. Many of the promises of the Bible have a condition. The promised vision of verse 11 is based on the condition of verse 12 – that we pray. In fact, the verse tells us three times that we are to pray – 'call upon Me and come and pray to Me.'

The following verse gives us the details of the condition:

'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart' v. 13.

If you want to find all of God's vision you must seek Him with all of your heart."⁵¹

This author has learned that to seek the Lord's guidance and His vision is a must in the ministry. Yes, it may take more time in the beginning, but it really pays off in the long-term scope of things. When one does finally have that heartfelt, biblically inspired vision from the Master, one can then, and only then, move forward like a man possessed – possessed with by a vision that instills both confidence and conviction.

⁵¹ Dan Southerland, *Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through Change* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999) 35-36.

Evaluate Ministry Options Scripturally

Oftentimes in the past this pastor (along with most others I suspect), would go to a conference or read a book trumpeting this program or that product's astounding success. Implied in the advertising is that if it worked for 'Joe Pastor' at 'Anywhere Baptist Church', then surely it will work for you as well. How many time's must we compulsively try and fail with these beautifully packaged promotions before we will wise up? When will we again allow the Bible and not our culture to determine what true success in ministry really is.

This author strongly urges the reader not to impulsively act on a whim and immediately attempt to incorporate the program as represented by this thesis. Rather, the reader is encouraged to baptize himself in the scriptures and in sound ecclesiological writings in order to critically evaluate modern ministry movements. Only then will one be able to proceed to build a ministry with the assertiveness which only comes from resting upon and rising up from a firm foundation.

Adopt and Adapt

This author has striven to major upon the vital principles from which this project arose. Only as a leader thoroughly acquaints himself with the philosophies behind the programs will he then be able to sift through the fluff and discover the concrete foundations which make for sound biblical ministry. And while the principles of the equipping pastor, the need to nurture leaders, along with the amazing viability and possibilities of lay ministry are biblically grounded, the leader must evaluate different practical models in order to adopt the principles and adapt the practices which would fit

him and his ministry context. Dr. Rod Dempsey said it well when he stated, "Ultimately the implications, ramifications and applications of the Scripture must be grasped by a group of believers in a local church. For local church leaders it means that it is important to take into consideration, before adopting any approach or methodology, what is the church's ministry history, location and context."⁵²

Mentor

"...and the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

(II Timothy 2:2 NKJV)

Again, we must come back to this familiar verse for, as pastor Dave Early wrote, "Paul understood that in ministry there is no success without a successor." In his fine book entitled, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, Dr. John C. Maxwell presents the following reasons why we must mentor, or as he puts it, why leaders need to reproduce leaders:

- 1. Those closest to the leader will determine the success level of that leader.
- 2. An organization's growth potential is directly related to its personnel potential.
- 3. Potential leaders help carry the load.
- 4. Leaders attract potential leaders.
- 5. Leaders who mentor potential leaders multiply their effectiveness.

⁵² Rod Dempsey, Thesis, 100.

⁵³ Dave Earley, 8 *Habits of Effective Small Group Leaders* (Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources, 2001) 66.

- Developed leaders expand and enhance the future of the organization.
 And,
- 7. The more people you lead, the more leaders you need. 54

This recommendation will represent a tremendous shift in the ministry of most pastors. This shift will be reflected in a change in the pastor's calendar and palm-pilot, as well as the church's budget if embraced wholeheartedly. The key here is to think long-term and to no longer allow oneself to be a slave to the tyranny of the ministerial urgent. It also involves an ego check on behalf of the pastor, the pastor must learn and be willing to share the ministry along with its 'attaboys' with other ministers (lay ministers).

Simplify

"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 3:13-14 NKJV

In moving toward a more biblical approach of 'doing church', this author firmly believes that the average church leadership circle should seriously compare what their church is doing and spending on with the simple biblical mandates as communicated by Christ in the Gospels and exhibited in the epistles. Far too much time, energy, and finances are wasted on a lot of church busy-work which really doesn't amount to much in the light of eternity. Concerning this tendency, authors Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger write, "...simple churches are growing and vibrant. Churches with a simple process for

⁵⁴ John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1995) 3-13.

reaching and maturing people are expanding the kingdom. Church leaders who have designed a simple biblical process to make disciples are effectively advancing the movement of the gospel. Simple churches make a big impact. Conversely, complex churches are struggling and anemic. Churches without a process or with a complicated process for making disciples are floundering. As a whole, cluttered, complex churches are not alive...Unfortunately, the overprogrammed and busy church is the norm."55

This project is built upon this premise that simple is better and that ministry teams as described in this thesis provide a simple, effective vehicle for realizing biblical, kingdom ministry growth. Again, this author must state that this model is not to be considered 'the' best approach, but rather it has proven to be effective in the context of the 20/20 Youth Ministry of the Nall Memorial Baptist Church. Again, the emphasis here is upon the straightforward recommendation for churches to be simplified in their approach to kingdom work.

Welcome Shared Leadership

The sad reality is that many pastors of small churches (and some larger ones as well) have control issues. This author knows this well for he is a pastor and is himself a recovering 'controlaholic', and this author knows many other pastors as well who confide concerning the same issue. By way of a major recommendation to any pastor considering a leadership development program which will be manifest through effective ministry teams – Thou must give 'it' up. The 'it' emphasized here is the 'it' of control concerning every decision made in the church and being too 'hands-on' in ones approach to leading the church. Bill Easum lowers the boom on this pastoral tendency with the following

⁵⁵ Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2006) 14.

statement, "Permission for members to act responsibly on their own behalf of the Body of Christ threatens insecure or dictatorial pastors. Permission-giving means that the members no longer need co-dependent pastors to take care of them. Pastor's whose self-worth is wrapped up in how much people need them are overwhelmed by a feeling of inadequacy. Much of the fuel for the raging insecurity among pastors has been provided by a weak understanding of the enabler model of ministry, or perhaps stems from the person who entered the ministry primarily to be a counselor...Once again, Christians need to be set free, free from slavery and captivity to the Controllers who say no to new forms of ministry and routinely withhold permission from individuals to exercise their God-given gifts."⁵⁶

Three things which will help alleviate the fears which control-type pastors have concerning a permission giving ministry approach are:

- A prayerful approach to leadership selection which helps ensure the recruitment of trustworthy, same-page lay leaders.
- 2. The mentoring process which serves to both bond the pastor and team leader, as well as helping to secure a shared vision. And,
- 3. The unifying linkages of the ministry team's commitment to the church's vision, mission, core values, and defining practices.

Inform, Inform, Inform

It has often been rightly said that, "People are down on what they are not up on."

One of the keys to success in church life, family life, and life in general is the practice of effective communication. As leaders we must remember that before our people can get

⁵⁶ William Easum, Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1995) 36-37.

the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time." (Habakkuk 2:2-3a NKJV). As a leader catches the vision from the Lord concerning a new direction for ministry, he must realize that he is to be the chief communicator of that vision to the church body. Writing about this critical aspect Stan Ott writes, "First, communicate the vision for teams throughout the congregation. Have conversations beginning with key decision-makers and moving outward in concentric circles to include more and more congregational leaders and participants...Communicate the philosophy of team, the implications of becoming a team-sending ministry, and the training to be made available on an ongoing basis."

Some ideas for effective communication are:

- Preach often on topics such as the Priesthood of Believers, Lay Ministry,
 Spiritual Gifts, the Biblical role of the Pastor, the Great Commission, etc.
- 2. Publish your mission statement, vision, values, etc. on PowerPoint announcements, in the weekly bulletin, and monthly newsletters.
- 3. Email your leaders regularly.
- 4. Publish vision-supportive success stories (whether in your church or from other churches) in the pastor's column of the newsletter.
- 5. Utilize the church phone tree to enhance communication with reminders concerning upcoming meetings and events.
- 6. Teach a new members class in order to indoctrinate in regards to the vision, expectations, and practices of your particular church.

⁵⁷ E. Stanley Ott, *Ministry Teams* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004) 37.

No More Super-Pastor!

Dr. Ronny Russell writes rather insightfully about the plight of many small church pastors in an entry to his journal. A portion of his journal entry reads as follows:

"Pastor, Preacher, Clergyman, Man of the Cloth, Man of God, Shepherd, Reverend, Right Reverend, Left Reverend, Holy Man, Handy Man, Unhandy Man.

Administrator, Counselor, Exhorter, Proclaimer of the Gospel, Worship Facilitator, Comforter, Teacher, Servant, Sometimes even Janitor, C.E.O. (Chief Exhortation Officer).

What's in a name anyway? I worked like a man possessed to earn a doctor's degree. Dr. Ronny Russell, I liked the sound of it. But it never changed a thing about me. My wife still asked me to take out the garbage. Parishioners still called me to see if I got the church van serviced and gassed.

A table needs moving from one building to another. A john has overflowed – it's Monday morning and the floor is ankle deep in water. Someone's kid gets beaten up by the church bully. It's the middle of the night and a drunken husband is on the rampage. The local PTA needs a fund raiser. A marginal church member's third cousin twice removed is in the hospital.

Who you gonna call? It's a job for...HOLY HANDYMAN.

He was caretaker of the house of God. He was responsible for the replacement of burnt-out lightbulbs, and for the cleanliness of the church, and the care of the Bibles, and the hymnbooks, and the placards on the walls...

'That's what I am,' I thought. HOLY HANDYMAN."58

⁵⁸ Ronny Russell, Can a Church Live Again? (Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys, 2004) 7.

While the thoughts articulated in this journal entry are somewhat humorous at times, most pastors know all to well the painful realities of which Dr. Russell writes from first-hand experience. Brothers, this is not the way the Lord meant pastoral work to be. We are called to be equipping coaches. We are called to help others to share the burdens and joys of kingdom ministry. We are called to be used by Christ to help enable His church to reach their God-called potential to the Glory of His grace. It is the desire and prayer of this author that any and all pastors and laymen alike who thoughtfully read this thesis project will catch the liberating vision of just what biblical lay leadership teams can do for the Lord's church, pastors, and Great Commission work to the Glory of God our Savior.

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VITA

S. Wade Cox

PERSONAL

Born: March 28, 1966

Married: Alecia Dannette Rausch, July 16, 1994. Children: Margaret Michaela, born August 19, 1997 Courtney Alecia, born July 25, 1999

EDUCATIONAL

A.A.S., Alamance Community College, 1986 Diploma, Liberty Home Bible Institute, 1990 B.S. (cum laude), Liberty University, 1991 M.A.R. (summa cum laude), Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 1993 M.Div. (magna cum laude), Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 1994

MINISTERIAL

Ministry Intern: Staunton Baptist Church, Huddleston, Virginia (1993) Ordination: April, 1994, Staley Memorial Baptist Church, Burlington, North Carolina.

Pastor: Nall Memorial Baptist Church, Graham, North Carolina (1994-present).

APPENDIX ONE

PERSONAL / MINISTRY PROFILES OF THE 20/20 YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM:

Scott Russell Age 27, Married

Employment: Physical Therapist, Stewart Physical Therapy

Ministry Experience: Youth Leader in 2001 at Midway Baptist Church, youth ministry helper for 2 years at NMBC.

Spiritual Gifts: 1) Pastor/Shepherd, 2) Exhortation, 3)

Teaching, 4) Administration

DISC Personality Blend: Guarded – 'S' Steady Specialist

Unguarded: S/C Steady Competent

Primary role(s) on Youth Team: Team Leader,

Teacher, Worship Leader

Carrie Russell: Age 26, Married

Employment: School Media Specialist, Alamance/Burlington School System

Ministry Experience: 3 National/International mission trips, summer campground ministries, youth ministry

helper for 2 years at NMBC

Spiritual Gifts: 1) Serving, 2) Mercy, 3) Exhortation

DISC Personality Blend: Guarded – 'S' Steady

Specialist (through the roof)

Unguarded: S/C Steady Competent

Primary role(s) on Youth Team: PT (small group) leader for girls, Ministry administration & helps.

Danny Foster: Age 33, Married

Employment: Operations Manager, Long Bros.

Landscaping

Ministry Experience: Youth Ministry helper for 2 years

at NMBC, Church Lawn Maintenance for 3 years,

Church softball team coach for 2 years.

Spiritual Gifts: 1) Serving, 2) Mercy, 3) Exhortation

DISC Personality Blend: Guarded - 'S' Steady

Specialist

Unguarded: S/C Steady Competent

Primary role(s) on Youth Team: PT (small group)

leader for guys.

Hope Foster: Age 31, Married

Employment: Telemarketing Manager

Ministry Experience: Children's Church, VBS,

Nursery, Senior Banquets, Youth ministry helper for 1

year at NMBC.

Spiritual Gifts: 1) Evangelism, 2) Exhortation,

3) Administration

DISC Personality Blend: Guarded: S/D Steady Doer

Unguarded: S/C Steady Competent

Primary role(s) on Youth Team: Ministry

Administration, PT leader for girls.

Eric Davis: Age 41, Married, 2 daughters (one in youth ministry)

Employment: Machinist, ECI II

Ministry Experience: Deacon for 3 years, Youth

Ministry helper for 2 years at NMBC.

Spiritual Gifts: 1) Mercy (tie) Serving; 2) Shepherding

(tie) Giving.

DISC Personality Blend: Guarded – S/I Steady

Influencer

Unguarded: CIS - Competent Influencing Specialist

(most outgoing on team)

Primary role(s) on Youth Team: Servant/helper,

Drama, Encourager

APPENDIX TWO

MINISTRY DESCRIPTIONS FOR TEAM MEMBERS AND TEAM LEADER:

20/20 Youth Ministry Team

The youth ministry team member is responsible along with the other team members for providing leadership for the 20/20 Youth Ministry of Nall Memorial Baptist Church. This leadership shall be geared toward realizing the 20/20 Mission which is in full accord with the greater mission of NMBC which is "To Glorify God by Making, Maturing and Multiplying Disciples of Jesus Christ."

Preferable Gifts: Shepherding, Administration, Helps, Mercy, Teaching, Exhortation.

Talents/Abilities: Varied, must be a good role model who is able to lead by example. Must be a team player and be willing to serve according to ability and also as otherwise needed.

Passion: Must have a genuine devotion to Christ and must truly love the students He loves and wants to reach.

Accountable to: Team Leader

Anticipated time commitment: 3-5 hours/week.

Duties:

- Provide general leadership for the entire program of the youth ministry.
- Plan, participate and assist in the weekly youth meetings.
- Help plan, carry out, and supervise youth ministry activities and outings.
- Provide discipleship, leadership development opportunities, and spiritual direction for teens.
- Work with youth class members to identify, witness to, and minister to prospects and enroll new members into the youth ministry.
- Participate in monthly ministry meetings which are geared toward team building as well as ministry planning.

- Actively seek to build the fellowship, ministry, and discipleship aspects of both the team and the ministry group.
- Pray for the students of the youth ministry both members and prospects.

Youth Team Leader

The team leader is responsible for coaching the ministry team so as to fulfill its ministry purposes. Special attention shall be given to leading by example, ministry agenda advancement, task assignment according to giftedness and ability when applicable, and fostering team unity and spiritual growth.

Preferred Gifts: Leadership, Teaching

Talents/Abilities: Previous ministry leadership a plus. Ability to communicate the ministry's mission motivate others toward its realization.

Passion: For Christ, His youth ministry, and for His ministry team.

Accountable to: Pastor

Anticipated time commitment: 4-7 hours/week.

Duties:

• Serve as a shepherd of your ministry team.

- Provide general leadership to the youth ministry team.
- Plan and lead in monthly team leadership meetings.
- Actively promote team discipleship, fellowship and ministry effectiveness as equipped to do so.
- Share and develop leadership abilities of team members through training, example and delegation.
- Lead the team by being their servant actively looking for ways to be a blessing to them.
- Pray daily for the team members as well as the ministry group members.
- Actively share Christ as a lifestyle witness and in group meetings/events.
- Own and communicate the mission of NMBC in general and the 20/20 youth ministry in particular and prayerfully move the ministry to reach its mission.

APPENDIX THREE

MINISTRY TEAM TRAINING MANUAL:

Ministry Teams 101

Building Kingdom Ministers

And

Providing Kingdom Ministry

Developed by: Pastor Wade Cox Nall Memorial Baptist Church Graham, NC

Ministry Team ? Basics

Lesson One

Introduction to Ministry Teams

Discussion - List positive terms to describe the following:

Church Committees

- organized
- > task oriented
- > get job done
- structured

Home Cell Groups

- > relationships
- discipleship
- accountability
- > fellowship

Now describe both by pointing out any negatives:

Church Committees

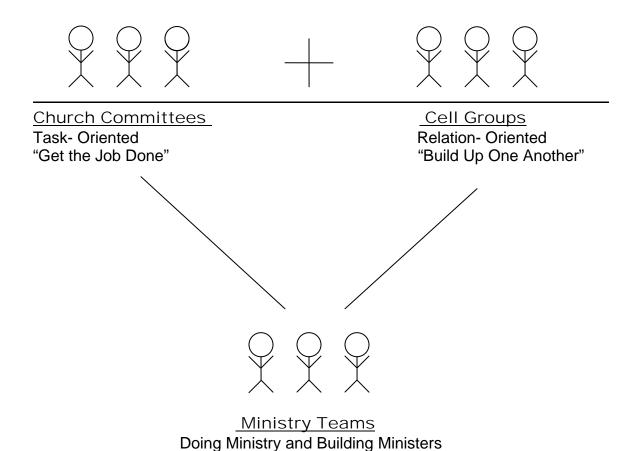
- ➤ boring
- > restrictive
- bureaucracy
- all business

Home Cell Groups

- us-focused
- > separate
- ▶ lazy
- > exclusive

In Ministry Teams we combine the best of both worlds by way of a Wedding of sorts:

The Two Shall Become One



Ministry Teams are designed to provide:

- Genuine Fellowship
- > Mutual Discipleship
- Leadership Development, and
- Effective Ministry & Service

So then, the Ministry Team has the 'Task-Oriented, Get the Job Done' characteristic of the traditional Church Committee, and the relational/transformational aspects of Cell Groups combined into one!

So what exactly is a Ministry Team anyway???

A Ministry Team is not an old paradigm church committee with a hip new name!

Stan Ott's definition:

The Ministry Team is a distinct leadership and ministry entity that aims to nurture its own fellowship and discipleship while serving the people and the task to which it has been called.

Pastor Wade adds:

A Ministry Team is a group of lay ministers who are united in passion and diverse in contribution to a particular ministry to which each is called.

In Ministry Teams we seek to Build Ministers while providing Life-Changing Ministry!

Biblical Foundations for Ministry Teams:

The Examples:

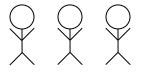
- ➤ The Trinity
- > Jesus and the Twelve
- The seventy-two
- ➤ The 'women'
- ➤ The Disciples (2X2)
- Moses with Aaron, Miriam, or Hur
- David's mighty men
- Paul and: Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Luke, Mark
- ➤ Any others?

The Exhortation:

"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor, for if they fall, one will lift up his companion, but woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up."

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Ministry Teams



W//N!!!

"Whatever sort of ministry you undertake – whether it be a ministry to an entire congregation or any ministry of worship, teaching, fellowship, or outreach – you will be most effective if you do it with a ministry team." – Stan Ott

Ministry: Much more than just busy-work!

Lesson Two

Ministry Team Ministry

What exactly is Ministry?

Gene Mims definition:

Ministry is simply meeting another person's need in the name of Jesus, expressed as service to people inside the church, and expressed as missions to those outside the church with the resources God provides.

Ministry Team Ministry is:

- Biblically Grounded in its Mission
- ➤ Calling Based in its Formation
- Multi-Gifted in its Contribution
- > Team Centered in its Orientation
- Dually Directed in its Delivery

Committee 'ministry' is typically exclusively task centered.

Cell Group 'ministry' is typically either groupcentered or non-existent. Ministry Team Ministry – is designed for a balance between people and program, with an emphasis of people over program (life to life).

Discussion:

What is your team's primary ministry?

Is your team's ministry primarily task-centered, people-centered or an even balance of both?

How can a task-centered team be more peopleoriented?

Why must a people-centered team have a program orientation?

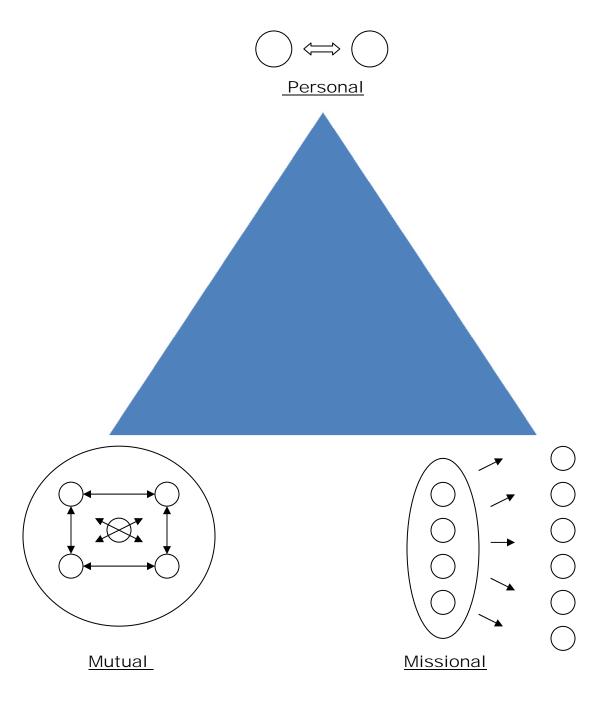
What is your primary Spiritual Gift?

What is your primary ministry interest?

What is you primary contribution to the ministry of your team?

The Biblical Superiority of Ministry Team Ministry is seen in its unique 'Triple Focus':

The Triple Focus of Ministry Team Ministry



Ministry Team Ministry is:

Personal – this is the team member's way of life ministry as individual followers of Jesus Christ.

Mutual – this is ministry expressed as the team member's covenantal care and service to one another in the context of the team itself.

Missional – the team as a unit engages in ministry to the ones to whom they have been called to minister to.

Discipleship: The Commission In Action

Lesson Three

Ministry Team Discipleship

Rediscovering our Mission:

Our Mission is to Glorify God By Making, Maturing, and Multiplying Disciples of Jesus Christ

"Discipleship is a lifelong journey of obedience to Christ that transforms a person's values and behavior and results in ministry in one's home, church, and the world." – Dr. Gene Mims

- Discipleship is best accomplished within the context of relationships.
- ➤ The most efficient and effective paradigm for discipleship is Jesus' example The Small Group.
- Discipleship focuses on a changed heart, head and hands.
- Discipleship which does not provide for and facilitate ministry to others is incomplete.
- Ministry teams provide an ideal context for mutual discipleship!

Our Four-fold approach to Disciple-making:

- 1. Pulpit-Oriented Discipleship
- 2. Person-Oriented Discipleship
- 3. Program-Oriented Discipleship
- 4. Process-Oriented Discipleship

Discipleship on Ministry Teams is facilitated through:

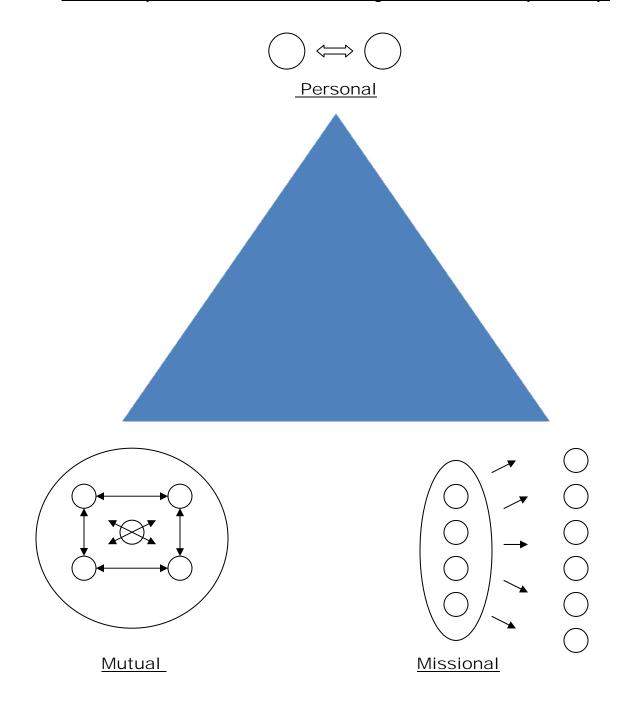
- Team Member Accountability
- Unified Devotional Curricula
- Word-Share-Prayer
- Discipleship Programming
- Mentoring & Apprenticeships

Defining Practices of Discipleship:

- Way-of-Life Witnessing
- Bible Study
- Prayer
- > Service
- Worship
- Stewardship
- Accountability Relationships

The Biblical Superiority of Ministry Team Discipleship is seen in its unique 'Triple Focus':

The Triple Focus of Ministry Team Discipleship



Ministry Team Discipleship is:

Personal – this is the team member's individual walk with Christ which shall be maintained through spiritual disciplines from a sincere heart of love and devotion.

Mutual – each team member covenants to hold each other lovingly accountable concerning their individual walks with Christ, and shall engage in relational discipleship exercises such as book studies and prayer partnerships.

Missional – this is the team in action as a Great Commission unit. Here the team engages those to whom they are called to lead and reach in evangelistic and Christian growth activity.

Fellowship:
The Greenhouse
Of
Spiritual Growth

Lesson Four

Ministry Team Fellowship

Discussion

What comes to mind when you think of fellowship?

How is fellowship important to a Christian's life?

How is fellowship important to a ministry team?

So what is fellowship anyway?

Fellowship is sharing our unity in Christ; it is relational, involving sincere trust and commonality of life, calling, and purpose.

The Spiritual GreenHouse Effect

Fellowship provides an ideal environment which aids in facilitating spiritual growth and fruitfulness.

Fellowship:

- Is not generally strong on Committees
- Is not cliquish
- Is a strongpoint of Cell Groups
- Is a must for Spiritual Health and Growth

How Can Ministry Teams Foster Fellowship?

- 1. Begin each Ministry Team meeting with 'Small Group Life' (Word-Share-Prayer).
- 2. Establish rotating Prayer Partnerships among team members.
- Share meals together (monthly or quarterly).
- 4. Share leisure time together (concerts, recreation, etc.).
- Attending conferences and retreats together.
- 6. Adhering to the Team Covenant.

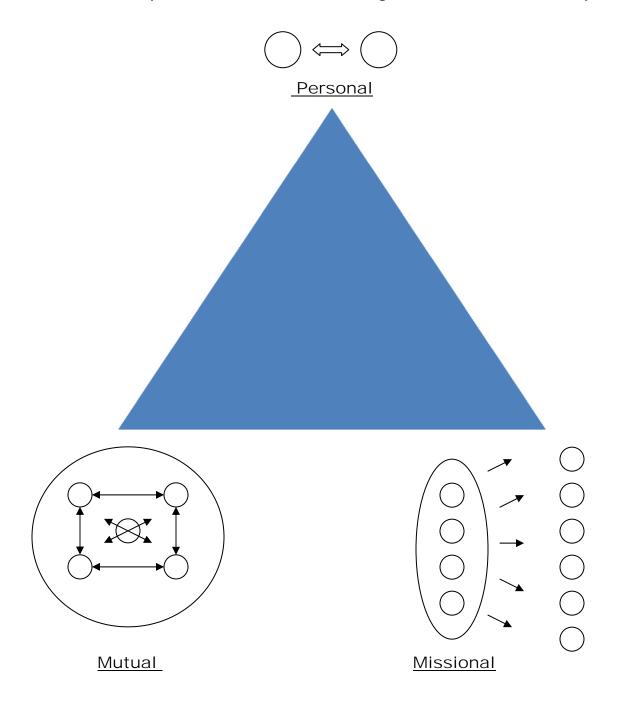
The Ministry Team 5-C Covenant

- Care Our team covenants to shepherd one another; to weep with those who weep, to rejoice with those who rejoice, to pray for one another, to provide special ministry to one another in times of crisis.
- 2. Confidentiality Our team covenants to keep team conversation within the team. We respect the confidences of others.
- 3. Communication Our team covenants to communicate directly, respectfully, thoroughly, and prudently. We introduce significant issues face-to-face. We resolve differences in person. We seek to engage in language which serves to build-up one another.
- 4. Clear Expectations Our team covenants to clarify and understand our common vision. We understand that together we can achieve far more than we ever could as a number of individuals working separately. We acknowledge each other's unique roles and contributions to the team's mission.
- Christian Health Our team covenants to engage in the spiritual disciplines faithfully and from a loving heart of devotion. We further covenant to kindly hold one another accountable in our Christian walks.

As a Ministry Team Member I hereby pledge
to faithfully live the Covenant by His grace.

The Biblical Superiority of Ministry Team Fellowship is seen in its unique 'Triple Focus':

The Triple Focus of Ministry Team Fellowship



Ministry Team Fellowship is:

Personal – this is the team member's individual relationship with Christ which is enhanced through the confession of sin, spiritual disciplines, and praise.

Mutual – each team member realizes that there is an essential need to genuinely love and care for one another, and that the team's fellowship must be carefully guarded by covenant keeping and 'doing life together'.

Missional – the team realizes that it does not exist for itself and that it must guard against becoming a clique within the church body. Fellowship is to be developed and shared with those to whom the team ministers to.

Leadership Development: Kingdom Multiplication

Lesson Five

Kingdom Leadership Development

Leadership development is the missing link in Great Commission efforts of many churches.

Leadership development is the key to a long-term, multiplication minded Great Commission strategy.

The Rationale for developing kingdom leaders:

- We are called to make disciples.
- Disciples are best made in the context of small groups.
- ➤ Effective small groups require trained Great Commission 'kingdom' leaders.
- The more kingdom leaders that are developed, the more potential disciples that can be made.

Our Church's Mission is grounded in these principles.

Our mission is to glorify God by making, maturing, and multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ.

Our goal then is to make disciples who will become disciple makers.

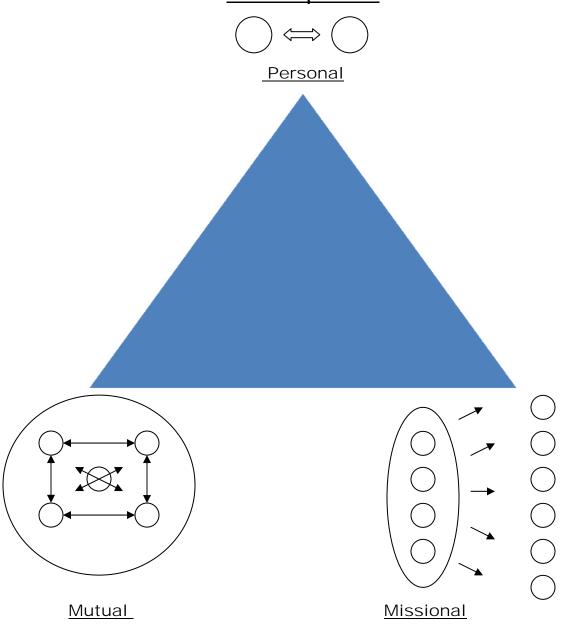
Ministry teams are ideal for kingdom leader development because:

- 1. Ministry Teams provide a safe environment for potential leaders to grow, experiment, fail, succeed, and learn from mistakes.
- 2. Ministry Teams provide a context for shared responsibility and on-the-job 'with me' training.
- 3. Ministry Teams are purposely designed to help team members to discover, develop, and deploy their spiritual gifts in a ministry to which they feel called to.

- 4. Ministry Teams provide a context for balanced Christian growth. 'Being' and 'Doing' are each focused upon.
- 5. Ministry Teams which minister to groups grant opportunities for team members to lead small groups of the ones to whom they are called to minister to.
- 6. A church of Ministry Teams provide an ideal environment for trained apprentices to be 'sent' that is to be given the opportunity to lead new Ministry Teams as the Lord leads and opens doors.

The Biblical Superiority of Ministry Team Leadership Development is seen in its unique 'Triple Focus':

The Triple Focus of Ministry Team Leadership <u>Development</u>



Ministry Team Leadership Development is:

Personal - Ministry Team members grow personally as leaders as they invest in the lives of those the Lord places with their sphere of influence (family members, co-workers, neighbors, etc.).

Mutual – the Ministry Team strives to develop leaders among themselves through training, apprenticing, mentoring, accountability, Christian growth, and ministry. The Ministry Team functions with a bigger 'kingdom mindset' which teaches the members to keep a Great Commission vision for the team.

Missional - the ministry team recognizes that its purpose is to make disciples not only of one another, but also of the ones they are called to minister to. The team further recognizes that a major part of 'disciple-making' is developing leaders who will in turn one day be disciplemakers. Thus, the goal of the team is to become a disciple-maker making entity for Christ.