

THE CASE FOR SMALL GROUPS (CELLS)

Biblical & Practical

Intro – It was the 70’s. Linda and I, having just graduated from Bible College, were full of vision, expectancy and youthful energy. Still in our 20’s and pastoring of our first church, we read a book by Yonggi Cho from South Korea, introducing the world to “small groups” (cells) in a church. Having the world’s largest church (some 200,000+ at the time) commanded a platform, respect and listening ears to what this man had to say. Deeply moved by what I read, and convinced that it would be a good thing for us to do, I approached the other leaders about replacing our Wednesday evening meeting (one of 3 whole church gatherings every week) with cells. Needless to say, it didn’t go over very well, and was ultimately rejected. However, in the two churches we planted since then, small groups (cells) played a major role in their success. Today, in preparation for starting our own small groups (cells) in January, 2009, I will be laying out the case, both Biblically and practically, as to why I believe this will not only be a very important move, but also one that will produce good fruit and Biblical success for our church family.

JETHRO PRINCIPLE

Ex 18:14, 17-19, 21-23 – *“Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening? ... **What you are doing is not good.** You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you ... select capable men from all the people ... and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and **tens** ... have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.”*

JESUS PRINCIPLE

Matthew 9:36-10:1a – *“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, **like sheep without a shepherd.** Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field’. **He CALLED his twelve disciples and GAVE them authority ... These twelve Jesus SENT out...**”*

1. BIBLICAL

- **HARVEST**

* *“At Bethany, the case for the cell church is closed. The people are being **pastored better than ever.** They all have a format to **evangelize their friends**; they are also finding place for the **leadership skills**” (THE CELL CHURCH, Larry Stockstill, p. 22)*

1. Discuss how small groups help assimilate the harvest.

- **HOSTILITY**

* **2 Tim 3:12** – *“...everyone who lives a godly life in Christ Jesus **will be persecuted.**”*

2. Discuss how small groups could be very valuable as hostile conditions increase.

PLEASE TURN THE PAGE OVER

- **RELATIONAL & FLUID**

* *Ephesians 2:21* – “In him you too are being **built together** to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”

3. Discuss how small groups help build relationships.
4. What is meant by the church being “fluid”?

- **DECENTRALIZED – MULTIPLE LEADERS**

* *Exodus 18:14* – “Why do you alone sit as judge?”

5. What are the dangers and disadvantages of “superstar, lone ranger leaders”?
6. What are the advantages of multiple leaders assisting the main leader?

- **PARTICIPANTS v SPECTATORS**

* *1 Cor 14:26* – “When you come together **everyone has a,,,**” (“Hatha Meetings”)

7. Discuss how small groups help people become participants.
8. Why is it imperative that large churches have small groups if they want to fulfill the Biblical model of coming together?

2. **PRACTICAL**

- **K.I.S.S.: “KEEP IT SIMPLE SAINTS”**

9. Discuss why successful small group ministries keep it simple.

- **USING MESSAGE NOTES**

- a. *Helps to keep it simple enough for most to lead (No bottleneck)*
- b. *Same Page*
- c. *Follow Up / Discussion*
- d. *Knowing the Condition of the Flock*
- e. *Doers of Word v Hearers of Word*

10. Discuss the advantages of using “message notes”.

- **GEOGRAPHICAL, BUT RELATIONAL**

* *Ephesians 2:21* – “In him you too are being **built together** to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”

11. What are the advantages to geographical cells?
12. Why should relationship even trump geography?

- **TO SUCCEED, MUST BE GIVEN PRIORITY**

13. Why is this absolutely necessary?
14. What do the small groups (cells) become if not prioritized?

Isaiah 6:3,5,7-8* – “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory. ‘Woe is me!’ I cried. ‘I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips ... and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.’ Then one of the seraphs flew to me ... and said ... ‘your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.**’ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘**WHOM SHALL I SEND? AND WHO WILL GO FOR US?**’ And I said, “**HERE AM I. SEND ME!**”