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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING THE EQUIPPERS A COVENANT GROUP TRAINING MODEL FOR PASTORS

Debra Kaye Wallace-Padgett

The purpose of this project was to develop, implement, and evaluate a replicable training model that will increase the effectiveness of bi-vocational and full-time local pastors in the core competencies of equipping laity for ministry and centering in Christ. The methodology for accomplishing this purpose was an evaluation study utilizing a quasi-experimental, nonequivalent control group. The intervention treatment consisted of six monthly two-hour enrichment sessions offered through three covenant groups, each composed of the researcher/designer, a mentor, and four to eight participants. Both quantitative instrumentation (a researcher-designed multiple choice questionnaire) and qualitative instrumentation (journals and interviews) were utilized in measuring changes effected by the intervention in the awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of covenant group participants.

This study verifies that participation in the intervention treatment resulted in an increase in awareness and positive attitudes related to the core competency of equipping laity for ministry. Changes in biblical/theological understandings and behaviors were initiated, though additional reinforcement was needed for significant biblical/theological changes and a longer time period for changed behavior.

A serendipitous discovery was an increase in regular personal devotional practice by both covenant and control group participants. The researcher/designer hypothesizes that raising the question in the pre-test of having a regular devotional time with God heightened awareness in control and covenant group participants, evoking the significant level of change in devotional habits.

The willingness of part-time and full-time local pastors to participate in this research project suggests an openness among bi-vocational pastors to participate in covenant group sessions that meet their hunger for fellowship and competency development.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled
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A COVENANT GROUP TRAINING MODEL FOR PASTORS

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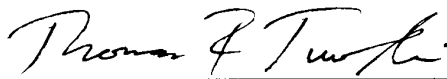
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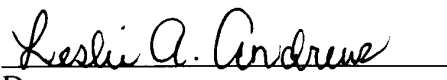
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A COVENANT GROUP TRAINING MODEL FOR PASTORS

A Dissertation
presented to
the Faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary

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Doctor of Ministry

by Debra Kaye Wallace-Padgett

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CHAPTER 1

Overview of the Study

This research study was driven by a portion of a vision statement set forth to fifty-plus leaders in Kentucky Methodism by Bishop Robert C. Morgan in October 1997. Bishop Morgan stated that his vision for the Kentucky Annual Conference included having “an effective pastoral leader in every congregation and the laity in ministry in their communities and the world” by the year 2020 (2020 Vision Statement). This vision caught my imagination as I applied it to my ministry in the five-hundred-member church that I was then serving.

One year later, this excerpt of the vision was reiterated at a Kentucky Conference personnel team meeting. Chris Harman, the Kentucky Conference Director of Leadership Formation, stood before the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry presenting a strategy that would help increase the pastoral effectiveness of probationary members of the annual conference. She reminded us of our goal that every church in the Kentucky Conference be appointed effective pastoral leadership.

The potential for application of this goal in my ministry had increased by nearly fifty-fold as I was then serving as Prestonsburg District Superintendent of the United Methodist Church, responsible for fifty-three churches and forty-eight pastors. As I again considered the vision and its implications, it became clear to me that a major emphasis of my ministry in the Prestonsburg District would involve effective pastoral leaders who would in turn equip laity for ministry in their communities and the world. Slowly, it dawned upon me that with sixty percent of the pastors in the District bi-vocational, the accomplishment of

this goal would require special attention to the leadership development needs of part-time local pastors. Thus, the seeds for this dissertation project were born.

The Prestonsburg District has many effective leaders at every level of clergy status. As I have circulated among the churches, my heart has leaped with joy at the vibrant and purposeful ways in which some of the Prestonsburg District pastors are leading their congregations. But the reality is that other churches are stagnant or declining and some of our pastors are frustrated and ineffective in their efforts. The vision of effective pastoral leadership in every congregation is far from a reality in the Prestonsburg District.

Where does one start in the daunting task of developing effective leadership for every local church? The Kentucky Conference Board of Ordained Ministry has begun to address this issue through the work of a task force created for the purposes of defining clergy effectiveness and moving toward the goal of determining the means by which to measure it. This task group has defined effectiveness as “the graced ability of the pastoral leader to guide the local congregation in fulfilling its primary task.” Four core competencies are essential to accomplish effectiveness. Centering in Christ is key to each of the remaining three competencies that include preaching/teaching, leading and equipping (1998 Journal Kentucky Annual Conference 406-407).

This research project has focused upon the core competencies of equipping laity for ministry and centering in Christ. I am convinced that as pastors increase their proficiency in these areas, the biblical charge to equip God’s people to build up the church will be fulfilled effectively in every congregation in the Prestonsburg District. The people of God and the church will benefit greatly!

The Prestonsburg District

The Prestonsburg District of the Kentucky Annual Conference is nestled in the mountains of eastern Kentucky. Travel accessibility has improved dramatically in the area during the last twenty-five years. Major highways include Route 23, Route 80 and Kentucky Mountain Parkway.

Basic employment in the region includes coal-and oil-related jobs, surface industry, farming, manufacturing, and service professions. Community leaders continue to work strategically to attract additional industry to the area.

The percentage of persons who live below the federal poverty level varies from 18 percent in Boyd County to 40.1 percent in Wolfe County (Summary tape file 3 1990 56-57). The unemployment level ranges from 4.8 percent in Wolfe County to 13.5 percent in Magoffin County (Kentucky Department for Employment Services). Population trends include an increase of 1,772 people in Morgan County within the past ten years and a decrease of 887 in Boyd County within the past six years (Summary tape file 3 COH-L-80).

The Prestonsburg District of the United Methodist Church is a rural district consisting of fifty-three churches spanning thirteen counties. Elders pastor sixteen of these churches. A probationary member who intends to eventually be ordained as an elder serves one of the churches. Three of the churches benefit from the leadership of full-time local pastors. The remaining thirty-three churches are served by twenty-six part-time local pastors, two certified lay speakers, and two seminary students.

The Problem

This study addresses effective pastoral leadership as defined by the Kentucky Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Increasing effective pastoral leadership is the most significant issue that I have identified in the Prestonsburg District of the United Methodist Church. The Prestonsburg District has several effective pastors serving in local churches. However, even the most skilled leaders can improve and grow. It is important to note that there is no direct correlation between effectiveness and appointment status. For instance some part-time local pastors are highly effective.

In the past 2½ years, the Kentucky Annual Conference has taken significant strides in moving toward the goal of providing effective pastors in every local church in the Kentucky Conference. This improvement is enhanced by the outstanding leadership of the two cabinet-level staff members whose roles focus primarily in the areas of spiritual formation and leadership development.

The primary beneficiaries of the recent efforts to increase pastoral effectiveness have been our full-time clergy. The time frames and settings of the training models offered are often two-day events scheduled in a regional location or three-day retreats for probationary members. These settings are feasible for full-time clergy available to commit themselves to such workshops. But bi-vocational pastors, some of whom work six days a week in their other careers, find it difficult to participate.

These training events have been appropriate starting points in this huge task the Kentucky Conference is tackling. But a different approach will be necessary to reach bi-vocational pastors.

My objective is to develop a model for accomplishing this same goal with the local pastors, certified lay speakers, and student pastors who serve churches in the Prestonsburg District. This group of clergy must be targeted if the Kentucky Conference goal of effective pastoral leadership in every church is to become a reality.

My overall goal is to address the four competencies over a three-year period. Each year's focus will include the core competency of spiritual formation (centering in Christ). Year one will also address equipping laity for ministry. Year two will highlight teaching and preaching/worship. Year three will focus upon leadership. (See Appendix B)

The time frame for this dissertation project is limited to year one. However, training of covenant group participants will continue for 2 years beyond the initial pilot phase. During year one, three monthly covenant groups will be launched to focus on the topics of spiritual formation and equipping laity for ministry.

The competency of centering in Christ is essential to the effective pastor. Without a vibrant relationship with Jesus, the efforts and ministry of the pastor are empty. This competency also takes a second direction: an emphasis on spiritual formation as the starting point in equipping laity for ministry.

This realization came to me after eighteen years of ministry- eleven of them as a director of leadership development in a large downtown church. During my years in that role, I focused on the task of identifying, recruiting, training, and supporting laity in ministry. Job descriptions, skills, and how-tos were the tools I offered to those in my charge. Many of the laity with whom I worked were appreciative and productive, serving effectively in a variety of ministries for our Lord.

Yet, I knew that something was missing in my approach to equipping laity for ministry. Later, when pastoring another local church, I continued my search to discover the missing piece in my leadership development philosophy. Then one day the “aha” dawned upon me. I realized that I had been going about the equipping process backwards. My emphasis with leadership development had been on skills instead of relationship with Jesus. I had focused upon head knowledge instead of habits of the heart. I had assumed that spiritual formation habits were in place with all Christians, when in reality, though some practiced the holy habits faithfully, others did not have them in their repertoire.

This insight totally changed my approach to the nominations and personnel team, leadership development, and the critical task of equipping laity for ministry. It helped me to realize that the first step in equipping laity for ministry emphasizes the nurturing of relationship with Jesus Christ. This relationship is enhanced by the disciplined practice of holy habits such as prayer, reading Scripture meditatively, studying Scripture, fasting, and journaling. Certainly identifying, recruiting, training, and supporting laity in ministry opportunities is an essential dimension to the equipping task. But it is secondary to the first and foremost challenge of offering tools that will assist laity in developing vibrant and growing relationships with Jesus Christ.

In summary, this project addresses effective pastoral leadership among local pastors in the Prestonsburg District. Emphasis is upon a two-fold approach to the core competency of equipping laity for ministry. The foundational goal introduces participating pastors to a curriculum that presents basic tools of spiritual formation to new believers. The secondary goal focuses on the primary function of the nominating team: identifying, recruiting,

training, and supporting laity in ministry. As pastors discover ways to balance this two-fold approach, they grow in the core competency of equipping laity for ministry.

Definitions

Conference board of ordained ministry--This group of elders, permanent deacons, diaconal ministers, and laity is the personnel committee for the annual conference. The task before them is monumental, with a particular focus on credentialing clergy and diaconal ministers.

A second area of responsibility that is particularly relevant to this project is defined in paragraph 633.2q of The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 1996. “The duties of the annual conference board of ordained ministry shall be: . . .to provide a means of evaluating the effectiveness of ordained ministers in the annual conference. In cooperation with the cabinet, the board shall develop standards of effectiveness for clergy serving as pastors of congregations in that annual conference.”

Elders--Elders are ordained ministers who, by God’s grace, have completed their formal preparation and whose call by God has been confirmed by the Church. They itinerate, after consultation, under the discretion of the bishop and cabinet of the Conference in which they serve. (Discipline 1996 par. 323-324).

Permanent deacons--“Deacons are persons called by God, authorized by the Church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word and Service to both the community and the congregation in a ministry that connects the two.” Though under the appointment of the bishop of the annual conference in which they serve, permanent deacons seek their own appointment with an appropriate local church or employing agency (Discipline 1996 par. 320).

Probationary members--Probationary members are clergy who have been examined and approved by the conference board of ordained ministry. They have been ordained as transitional deacons who will eventually become elders or commissioned as probationary members. Probationary members will either be discontinued or ordained as elders or permanent deacons in full connection after a trial period of two to eight years for those who began the process under The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 1992 and three to eight years under The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 1996.

Transitional deacons--Transitional deacons are clergy moving toward elders' orders. Though the changes in The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 1996 eliminate the transitional deacon status for the future, transitional deacons who began the process under previous rules may complete it (Discipline 1992 par. 434).

Course of study--The course of study is a basic theological education program of the Division of Ordained Ministry, Section of Elders and Local Pastors (Discipline 1996 par. 1426.2). Regional schools offer the Course of Study each summer in two-week modules. Many of the regional schools also have extension centers that offer courses in a two- or three-weekend format. Students finish the basic course of study upon completing twenty courses.

Local pastor--"A local pastor is approved annually by the district committee on ordained ministry and licensed by the bishop to perform all the duties of a pastor including the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion as well as the service of marriage, burial, confirmation, and membership reception, while appointed to a particular charge."
(Discipline 1996 par. 340).

Part-time local pastors--Part-time local pastors do not devote their entire time to the charge to which they are appointed. Part-time local pastors often serve in secular vocations for their primary source of income. Part-time local pastors shall complete two courses per year in a course of study school until they have met the basic requirement of twenty courses (Discipline 1996 par. 343.2).

Full-time local pastors--Full-time local pastors devote their full time to the church in the charge to which they are appointed. Full-time local pastors shall complete four courses per year in a course of study school until they have met the basic requirement of twenty courses (Discipline 1996 par. 343.1).

Certified lay speakers--Certified lay speakers are laity who have met the qualifications for certification, including a basic and advanced course of study. A certified lay speaker may serve in a pastoral role in local churches other than the local church in which membership is held. However, lay speakers do not have the authority to baptize and to serve Holy Communion (Discipline 1996 par. 270-272).

Mentor--The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 1996 refers to mentors as elders or permanent deacons assigned to local pastors during the period of time when they are completing their course of study (par. 340.4). These clergy must meet all of the standards for ordination set forth by the General Board of Ordained Ministry. In addition, they enter into a special covenant with other clergy members of the annual conference by virtue of their election and ordination (Discipline 1996 par. 313-333).

In this project, mentors work with a group of pastors in a group context. The mentoring relationship is supportive-with the intent of offering encouragement and assistance to local pastors as they learn from reflecting upon ministry events occurring in

their lives. The focus is on the feelings and experiences of local pastors. The Kentucky Conference has specifically stated that the mentor's role is neither supervisory nor evaluative. Rather, mentors help local pastors to reflect upon their vocation and role. Mentors receive orientation training to serve in the role. It is acceptable for one mentor to work with several local pastors in a group context.

Nominations and personnel committee--This committee includes the pastor, lay leader and a maximum of nine additional members elected annually by the charge or church conference of the local church. The role of the nominating committee is to identify, recruit, train, and support volunteer leaders within the congregation (1996 Discipline, par. 262.1).

Many qualities are important for members of the nominating committee to embody. Priorities include knowledge of the gifts and graces of members of the congregation, an encouraging spirit, an ability to listen, and an eye for leadership.

A characteristic that underlies these crucial qualities is a prayerful and discerning heart. The practice of prayer and discernment by members of the nominating committee ensures that God is directing the nominating process (Morris 119-120).

Note that the task of nominating leadership is best handled by a team of people. George Cladis describes the team orientation as a reflection of the image and community of God as Trinity. Characteristics of ministry teams that mirror our Creator include covenanting, visioning, culture creating, collaboration, trust, empowerment, and learning. As ministry teams exhibit these qualities, they not only demonstrate effective leadership, but they also serve as witnesses to our Triune God (31).

Covenant group--Each of the three covenant groups developed in the Prestonsburg District to pilot this study consisted of three to eight local pastors, one full connection elder (the group mentor) and the district superintendent. The focus was twofold: 1) to assist participants in further development of equipping laity for ministry and 2) to give participants the opportunity to develop potential mentoring relationships within the group setting.

Effective pastoral leadership--The Kentucky Conference Board of Ordained Ministry is taking seriously the task of developing standards of effectiveness for clergy. A task force from within the Board of Ordained Ministry has developed the following definition of effective pastoral leadership: "Effectiveness is the graced ability of the pastoral leader to guide the local congregation in fulfilling its primary task" (1998 Journal Kentucky Annual Conference 406). The Kentucky Conference understands the primary task of the local congregation in the following terms: (1) to invite people into relationship with Jesus Christ, (2) to relate them to the church, (3) to nurture them in the Christian faith, and (4) to equip them for service in the world.

The task force has identified four core competencies necessary to fulfill the above definition of effectiveness: preaching/teaching (II Timothy 2:15), equipping (Ephesians 4:12), leading (I Peter 5:2a) and centering in Christ (Matthew 6:33a). Scripture and experience tell us that all of these competencies flow out of our relationship with Christ (Appendix A).

Biblical, Historical, and Theological Foundations

Biblical Foundations

God calls the whole people of God to be in ministry. This statement requires a clear understanding of three major concepts: the whole people of God, calling, and ministry.

Who are the whole people of God? God initially called the Israelites to be God's chosen people, a people dedicated to God alone (Exodus 19:6). In time, that family grew to include all people baptized into union with Jesus (Galatians 3:28-29).

What does it mean to be called? God our Creator has called us by name (Isaiah 43:1). We are called not by our virtue, but by God's grace and mercy. Though only some accept this grace and mercy, it is extended to every human being (Ephesians 1-2).

What does it mean to be in ministry? Ministry is the response to God's grace in our lives. It is the outward expression of gratitude by those who have accepted God's cleansing grace and salvation.

All Christians are called to ministry. Particular ministries take a variety of shapes, depending upon the gifts and graces God bestows upon the ministers. Administration, evangelism, age-level ministries, care-giving ministries, worship, teaching, and preaching are some of the essential forms of ministry through the local church. But whose responsibility is it to equip laity for ministry?

The epistle writer stresses that some are called to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12). Thomas Oden emphasizes that these verses mean that some

persons are appointed to be pastors and teachers for the purpose of building up or edifying the body of Christ (156).

In summary, God calls every human being to be a part of the family of God. However, each individual has the choice of accepting or rejecting this invitation. Every person who responds to God's call of salvation and discipleship upon his/her life is a member of God's family. Again, ministry is an outward expression of gratitude for the tremendous gift received through Jesus.

One of the primary tasks of the pastor is to equip laity for ministry. As we fulfill this task, we accomplish an important pastoral function.

Historical Foundations

In the early days of the church, all Christians were understood as *laos*, the people of God. The clergy class did not emerge until the third century (Harkness 26). That division grew as corrupt practices escalated within the clergy ranks, eventually contributing to the Protestant Reformation.

A radical declaration of the Protestant Reformation was the concept of the priesthood of all believers. Though theoretically the acceptance of this biblical truth eliminated a clergy/lay hierarchy, centuries later our theology and practice do not match.

Several contemporary church leaders assess that in the last thirty years we have begun to reclaim the momentum of the Protestant Reformation. They speak of The New Reformation that reaches back to the Protestant Reformation and even further to the first days of the church. In that regard, the new is not new, but simply a return to the original biblical and historical understanding of the pastor's role of equipping all Christians for ministry.

Theological Foundations

The concept of the “priesthood of all believers” is at the core of understanding the importance of laity in ministry. All Christians are “priests” with direct access to Jesus Christ’s saving grace. That grace is accompanied by a calling to a lifetime of service to God and humanity.

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 1996 states it this way. “All Christians are called to this ministry of servanthood in the world to the glory of God and for human fulfillment. The forms of this ministry are diverse in locale, in interest, and in denominational accent, yet always catholic in spirit and outreach” (par. 104).

Ephesians 4:11-12 defines the equipping function as a primary role for pastors and others with appropriate gifts. “The gifts (God) gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” (NRSV)

What does it mean to prepare God’s people for ministry? The starting point for equipping Christians for ministry is in assisting them as they develop tools that will enhance their personal relationships with Jesus Christ. Many Christians have the essential tools for spiritual formation in place. But others are lacking in the understanding and practice of basics such as prayer, reading Scripture formatively, fasting, and journaling.

The equipping pastor begins with an emphasis on the spiritual disciplines. He/she moves from that foundation to the nuts and bolts of identifying, recruiting, training, and resourcing laity for specific ministry opportunities.

The Purpose Statement

The purpose of this project was to develop, implement, and evaluate a replicable training model that will increase the effectiveness of local pastors in the core competencies of equipping laity for ministry and centering in Jesus Christ. Follow-up segments will be presented by the researcher/designer to participating pastors upon their completion of the training model. The follow-up segments will target the core competencies of leading and teaching/preaching. Spiritual formation will remain central to the follow-up segments.

Research Questions

The following research questions were crucial to this study.

Research Question #1

a) What attitudes did the covenant and control group participants bring to the table about laity in ministry prior to the intervention? b) What changes occurred in the attitudes of covenant group participants as compared to the control group following the intervention treatment?

Research Question #2

a) What biblical/theological understandings of laity in ministry characterized participants prior to the intervention treatment? b) What changes occurred in the biblical/theological understandings of the covenant group participants as compared to the control group following the intervention treatment?

Research Question #3

What practices of lay ministry development emerged during the intervention process?

Project Description

This project focused on the first six months of a three-year training cycle for local church pastoral leadership in the Prestonsburg District. The participants were local pastors and lay leadership at various stages in completing candidacy or the course of study school.

The intervention consisted of monthly enrichment sessions offered to covenant groups of local pastors, candidates for ministry, student pastors, and lay speakers. Each group of four to eight participants met one Sunday afternoon a month for a two-hour enrichment session over a six-month period. Participants earned .2 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for each of the six training sessions for a total of 1.2 CEUs..

Mentors for the covenant groups were crucial to the process. They participated in the leadership of each session, served as resource persons for group members, and demonstrated authenticity in their interactions and behaviors. Their presence and leadership strengthened the covenant groups.

The three covenant group mentors in this project had specific characteristics that made them ideal for this type of role. Each mentor was selected based upon the following criteria: (1) he was a full connection elder in the United Methodist Church; (2) he had a unique passion for the ministry of local pastors; and (3) he was a model pastor, with good follow through ability, a positive attitude and a strong work ethic. (In this project geography and limited availability of women clergy resulted in three male mentors. Competent women clergy would be equally effective.)

The mentors were equipped for their role through individual conversations with the researcher/designer prior to the launch of the covenant groups. Their roles were defined and agreed upon in those conversations.

They also participated in a one-day training event entitled “Clergy Mentors and Local Pastors Traveling the Journey Together . . .”. Christine Harman and Dick Stormant, members of the General United Methodist Church clergy mentor resource team, led this orientation for local pastors and clergy mentors from the Corbin and Prestonsburg Districts and Red Bird Missionary Conference. In addition to group building, the leadership presented information from guidelines of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry’s Division of Elders, Section of Elders and Local Pastors.

The content of the covenant group sessions related to the four core competencies adopted by the Kentucky Conference Board of Ordained Ministry: centering in Christ, equipping laity, preaching/teaching, and leading. As previously noted, centering in Christ and equipping laity for ministry were emphasized in this six-month period.

Central to each of the other three core competencies is the commitment to center in Jesus Christ in every aspect of life and ministry. Maintaining a solid relationship with Jesus is foundational for all of the other competencies.

Though it would require three years to cycle through these competencies, the dissertation project was limited to evaluating the effects of six months of year 1- equipping laity for ministry. This segment was launched in May and concluded in November.

The group process within the covenant group structure was as crucial to the learning experience as the content. The dynamics of the group included an emphasis upon relationships, trust, teamwork, and cohesion. Group members were recruited with a

strong emphasis placed on the expectation of full participation by all group members.

Group members made a six-month commitment to their groups. The option was available to renew the commitment after the successful completion of each six-month segment.

The researcher/designer's prior experience with this project's target audience of local pastors had resulted in a deep respect for the skills and commitment that they bring to ministry. The moving stories of personal sacrifice and inspiring demonstrations of effective ministry were evidence that they had much to teach in the covenant group process. Thus, the design of the teaching sessions was built upon the assumption that the learners, leader, and mentors were co-learners together.

Course Outline

The objective of year one was to develop the core competency of equipping laity for ministry. This involved a two-fold emphasis.

First, covenant group participants were introduced to curriculum designed for them to offer to new Christians and others in the early stages of their Christian development. The curriculum presented the basics of the holy habits of prayer, Bible study, journaling, and fasting. This spiritual formation emphasis was derived from the conviction that a growing relationship with Jesus Christ is the starting point for Christian ministry. The practice of spiritual disciplines facilitates that type of relationship.

Many people in our culture are resistant to terms such as spiritual disciplines. The concept sounds binding to the ears of numerous twenty-first-century Americans. However, the reality is that instead of binding us, spiritual disciplines free us to experience the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ more fully. We are not called to practice the holy habits merely for the sake of self-discipline and denial. Rather, practicing the holy

habits enables us to grow in our relationship with Jesus. As that relationship grows, we discover an increasing love for God and humanity and a desire to be in ministry.

This desire to be in ministry leads to the second emphasis in the curriculum: the specific how-tos of equipping laity for ministry. Though the how-to principles remain the same, a variety of systems are used to equip laity for ministry. The system that was presented in this project utilized the language of the United Methodist Church. Readers from other denominations are encouraged to replace the terms with comparable language from their church cultures in applying these same principles.

Teaching Style

The teaching style utilized in the group sessions included a variety of approaches. Adult learning theory was an important reference point, with a strong emphasis placed upon experiential learning modes.

The covenant group setting added strength to the learning process. In a presentation to the Board of Ordained Ministry, Terry Walling of Church Resources Ministries made this comment about the potential power of small groups: “What brings changes in pastors is not the content material, but the relationships within the group” (Walling).

Methodology

The purpose of this project was to develop, implement, and evaluate a replicable training model that would increase the effectiveness of local pastors in the core competencies of equipping laity for ministry and centering in Christ. The methodology for accomplishing this purpose was an evaluation study utilizing a quasi-experimental, nonequivalent control group.

Subjects

The population for this study was composed of thirty-five pastors and leaders who serve United Methodist Churches in the thirteen East Kentucky counties that comprise the Prestonsburg District. These leaders were classified according to United Methodist clergy standards as follows: three full-time local pastors; twenty-six bi-vocational, part-time local pastors; two student pastors; two certified lay speakers; and two clergy spouses exploring ministry as a vocation. (See chart on page 22.)

Seventeen of the subjects volunteered to be in the intervention program. Following the first session, two of the volunteers changed to the control group due to time schedules that prevented their regular participation in the covenant group. The remaining eighteen subjects also agreed to be in the control group, bringing the total in that group to twenty.

The fifteen in the intervention program included three full-time local pastors; nine part-time bi-vocational pastors; one student pastor; and two candidates for ministry. The three full-time local pastors had varied years of experience in ministry, ranging from four to seventeen years.

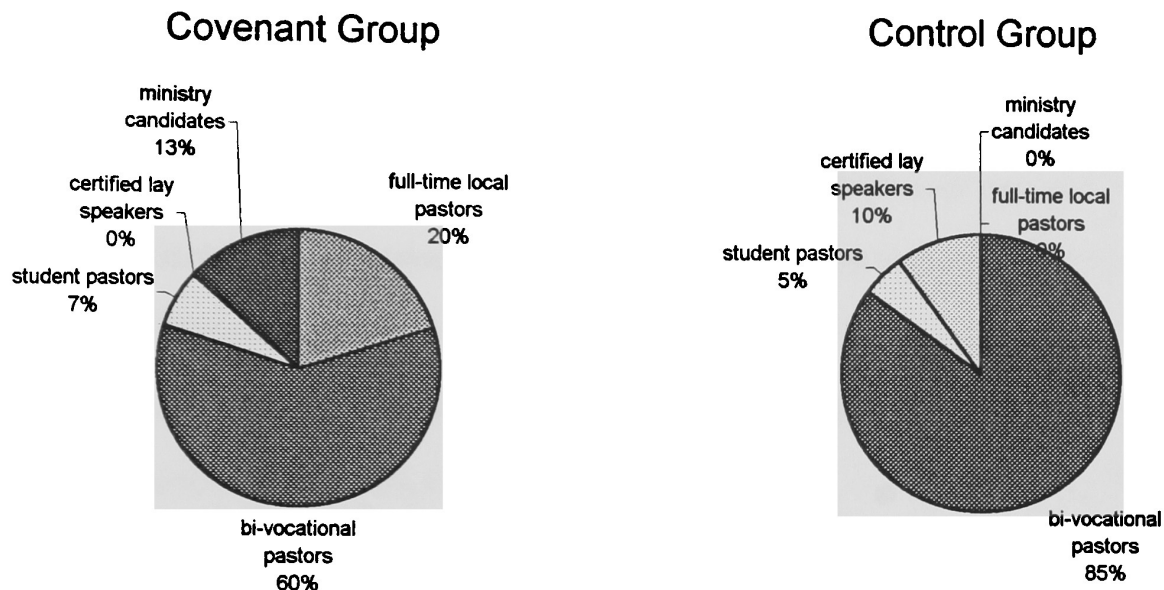
The nine part-time, bi-vocational pastors and one certified lay speaker also had varied levels of experience. Three were novices, having less than three years of pastoral experience. The other six had served as local pastors in the United Methodist Church from four to eighteen years. The student and candidates for ministry were also novice pastors, although the two candidates had served extensively and effectively in lay leadership roles and as pastors' spouses. The student began the program as a part-time local pastor and transitioned into seminary in September.

The recruitment process for the covenant groups included two steps. First, the researcher/designer described the developing covenant groups during the annual individual consultations with local pastors. Each pastor was asked to think about how he/she desired to be involved and to anticipate receiving a formal letter with details. The researcher/designer acknowledged in the consultation and follow-up letter of invitation that this commitment to a covenant group would not be feasible for some local pastors. However, each pastor was invited to consider being either a part of a covenant group or the control group.

In February, 1999 a letter of invitation and an accompanying response form were mailed to every local pastor and lay speaker serving a church in the Prestonsburg District (Appendix C). Local pastors and lay speakers whose service to a United Methodist Church in the Prestonsburg District commenced after the date of the letter received a verbal invitation to participate in the project as a participant or as part of the control group.

The majority of the pastors returned their response sheets, indicating how they desired to participate in the process. Follow-up phone calls sought the responses of those pastors who did not return their response sheets.

Population Chart



Variables

The independent variable of this research project was the series of two-hour monthly covenant group sessions over the six-month period. Though the course content was central to the training sessions, consideration was also given to the potential impact of the covenant group on the learning process. Particular attention was paid to building cohesive groups with high trust levels.

The dependent variables of this study were the cognitive and affective changes of covenant group participants in the core competency of equipping laity for ministry. Intervening variables that likely affected the process were participants' readiness to enhance their competency in this area, progress in the Course of Study, role models, years

of experience in ministry, gifts and graces, gender, preferred learning styles, personality profiles, commitment to confidentiality, and context of past and present ministry opportunities.

Instrumentation

The hypothesis was that the intervention experienced by the covenant group participants would result in their increased effectiveness in the core competency of equipping laity for ministry. Two forms of instrumentation were utilized in researching this hypothesis.

First, quantitative analysis was gathered from the quasi-experimental nonequivalent (pre-test and post-test) design. An identical pre-test and post-test was developed and given to the fifteen covenant group participants and twenty control group members. The results of these tests were analyzed and compared by statisticians to measure the effect of the intervention on the awareness, knowledge and attitudes of the covenant group participants.

The pre-test/post-test was developed by the researcher/designer to specifically measure the core competency of equipping laity for ministry. The questions on the test evolved from the desired outcomes stated for the individual sessions of the proposed treatment.

Statisticians from the University of Kentucky provided statistical analysis. These statisticians initially planned to utilize repeated measures analysis of variance to test differences between the two groups. Due to the small sample size and the use of only two time points (pre-test/post-test), they changed to the non-parametric method testing difference and grouping variable with Mann-Whitney Test.

Secondly, feedback was gained by two qualitative research methods. For instance, covenant group participants were asked to journal throughout the six-month period, responding to questions designed to provoke reflection upon the input of each session. The questions distributed to participants on a handout following sessions four and five also gave opportunities for participants to describe in their journals specific ways in which they were demonstrating increased competency in equipping laity for ministry.

At the conclusion of the study, the journals were reviewed by a retired elder in the Kentucky Annual Conference who had served effectively for many years in the Eastern and Central Kentucky areas. This pastor utilized a standard form developed by the researcher-designer to identify signs of increased competency in equipping laity for ministry (Appendix I).

In addition, qualitative feedback was gleaned from post-treatment, unstructured, open-ended interviews with participating pastors. The interviews were conducted by the same retired elder who reviewed the journals.

Data Collection

Quantitative

Group mentors distributed the pre-tests to covenant group participants as they arrived at the first session (Appendix G). Participants were asked to complete the pre-test as the first agenda item of session one. The group mentors collected the completed tests before the session continued.

The pre-tests were mailed to control group participants one week prior to the launching of the study. In a letter (Appendix F), each participant was asked to complete and return the pre-test in an enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope within a week.

The post-tests were distributed to covenant group members following the leadership input and discussion of session six. Participants were asked to complete and return the post-tests to the group mentors prior to the conclusion of the session.

The post-tests were mailed to control group participants one month prior to the completion of the project. Each participant was asked to complete and return the post-test in an enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope within a week (Appendix F).

Confidentiality was carefully maintained in this project with the use of self-created codes. The codes consisted of the first letter of the participants' mothers' birth names and the last four digits of the participants' social security numbers.

Qualitative

Participants in the treatment group were invited to make weekly journal entries in response to sets of open-ended questions distributed at the conclusion of each session. These questions were designed to reinforce learning and to garner data regarding behaviors related to the core competency of equipping laity for ministry. Though journaling was strongly encouraged throughout the covenant group process, six of the fifteen participants did not journal during the intervention treatment.

Following the intervention treatment, group mentors collected the journals to be reviewed by a retired elder in the Kentucky Annual Conference. This elder utilized content analysis in noting qualitative data that indicated changes in the attitudes, values, and behaviors in the core competency being addressed (Appendix I). He prepared a written summary from each journal for the use of the researcher/designer.

The same retired elder gave individual interviews with covenant group participants at the conclusion of the study. The interview questions were presented and fine-tuned in

advance at a congregational response team meeting. Anecdotal responses were welcomed in the interviews. A written summary from each interview was returned to the researcher/designer for analysis (Appendix J).

Delimitations and Generalizability

This research project evolved in response to leadership development needs in the Prestonsburg District of the United Methodist Church. Sixty percent of the United Methodist clergy in the Prestonsburg District are bi-vocational. Their limited availability excludes them from many of the typical continuing education and enrichment events. The covenant group model provides the opportunity for regular, continuing education of these pastors as well as the positive byproducts of networking and mentoring opportunities.

The researcher/designer initially identified the need for this type of process. The potential audience indicated their receptivity to the training model by a forty-two percent ratio of volunteer participation in the intervention treatment. The control group consisted of the remainder of the target population.

The study was limited to Prestonsburg District ministry candidates; certified lay speakers; student pastors; part-time, local pastors; and full-time local pastors. The topics of the project were limited to centering in Christ and equipping laity for ministry.

Similar outcomes of this study could be expected if it were replicated in the Prestonsburg District with the focus on a different core competency. Comparable results are also likely in any district similar to the Prestonsburg District in terms of numbers of part-time and full-time local pastors, composition, geography, and openness to the project.

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 of this project reviews the literature related to the two core competencies emphasized during the six-month intervention treatment. The first segment of the literature review focuses on being centered in Christ through continuing spiritual formation. The second segment of Chapter 2 gives attention to the area of equipping laity for ministry. In addition Chapter 2 includes a section on adult learning theory and implications.

Chapter 3 of the project describes the study design. Segments are included on the role and training of mentors, instrumentation, and data collection.

Chapter 4 reports the findings of the study. These findings are substantiated by both quantitative and qualitative datum. In addition a serendipitous finding is reported.

Chapter 5 discusses conclusions drawn from the findings of the study. General conclusions and implications are stated.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The model of effective pastoral leadership adopted by the Kentucky Conference Board of Ordained Ministry pictures continuing spiritual formation as primary for all pastoral leaders. Our calling and empowerment to be effective pastors are rooted in our relationship with Jesus Christ. Three additional competencies encircle our relationship with Jesus: leading, preaching/teaching, and equipping laity for ministry (Appendix A).

The specific focus of this literature review targets the two core competencies of effective pastoral leadership that are addressed through the intervention treatment of this project: continuing spiritual formation and equipping laity for ministry. In addition, the final segment of this chapter relates to adult learning theory and implications.

The former core competency focuses upon Christ as central in the life of the pastor. The literature review relating to the latter competency includes five subsections: biblical background, historical background; theological background; spiritual disciplines essential for growing Christians; and the how-tos of identifying, recruiting, training, and supporting laity for ministry.

Continuing Spiritual Formation

Continuing spiritual formation is essential for effective leaders. This foundational core competency precedes all others. A pastor must be centered in Christ to be an effective preacher and teacher. A pastor must be centered in Christ to be effective in leading. A pastor must be centered in Christ to be an effective equipper of laity. In the words of Dick Wills, “You cannot share what you do not have” (Wills plenary session).

Segment one of the literature review highlights resources that address the issue of pastors' continuing spiritual formation. Several resources are salient to this theme. First, Steve Martyn's "Half-Time Appraisal" is a challenging call for ministers to focus on the priorities of ministry. Martyn wrote this article as he approached his twenty-year mark as a clergyman in the United Methodist Church. His reflection upon the first half of his ministry includes a growing awareness that without a clear sense of priorities and mission, ministry time is spent doing good works while neglecting the best works.

What do the best works involve? Though that varies from person to person, the best works ALWAYS include nurturing a vibrant daily relationship with Jesus Christ. Martyn writes, "There may be true crises when the majority of our time and energy must be given to the needs of the church, but the Lord of the church does not call us to . . . give our devotional time away!" (Martyn 35).

Rick Warren also emphasizes focusing on priorities. He reminds the listener that God has a purpose for our lives. Writing a purpose statement defines both what we do and what we do not do, thus eliminating a lot of trivia.

People who are living purpose-driven lives apply God's values to budget, time, and relationships. When our priorities are in line, we will give a significant percentage of our money and time to building a solid relationship with God (Warren audiotope series 2).

Most clergy want to live purpose-driven lives. The majority of us start out the journey with our priorities in order. So often, though, the passion that initially burned within our souls begins to wane. We lose sight of the purpose that originally consumed us. What must we do to stay on course?

Eugene Peterson offers a refreshing approach to the practice of a Christ-centered ministry. He skillfully describes the dilemma facing today's pastor. Particularly, he names the decision that many of us make to climb on the ship to Tarshish instead of pastoring effectively in Ninevah where God has called us.

Tarshish and Ninevah are not places, but rather contrasting approaches to ministry. Those travelling to Tarshish focus on career advancement, program coordination, and ministry as means to accomplish their goals. On the other hand, those ministers travelling to Ninevah emphasize their relationship with God, ministry with people, and general ministry as the means to accomplish God's plans.

Peterson's personal struggle with his destination culminated after his five-year-old daughter pointed out to him that he had not been home for thirty-eight straight evenings. Soon thereafter he resigned as pastor of his congregation. His parishioners asked,

What do you want to do?" Peterson responded, "I want to study God's Word long and carefully so that when I stand before you and preach and teach I will be accurate. I want to pray slowly and lovingly so that my relation with God will be inward and honest. And I want to be with you, often and leisurely so that we can recognize each other as close companions on the way of the cross and be available for counsel and encouragement to each other" (Peterson, Under Plant 38-39).

Peterson continued as pastor of his congregation, but he rerouted his ship from Tarshish towards Ninevah. This involved immersing himself in prayer, spiritual disciplines, and a vital relationship with God.

How do we immerse ourselves in the spiritual disciplines? The Nike shoe motto that took the United States by storm in the late eighties and early nineties comes to mind: "Just do it." Certainly it is important that we make adequate preparations before plunging

into the spiritual disciplines. But eventually we must stop discussing and planning our new lifestyle and take the leap of faith to “just do it.”

Take and Read: Spiritual Reading: An Annotated List by Eugene Peterson is a wonderful resource that helps us to “just do it.” Peterson encourages the reader to utilize his book as a starting point for building a library of spiritual “friends.” Take and Read is a roadmap that can help the reader to begin his/her spiritual reading on solid ground.

Categories of books compiled in this resource include basics, classics, the Psalms, prayer, spiritual formation, and spiritual direction (vii).

A Practical Guide to Spiritual Reading by Susan Annette Muto is a similar resource. Muto’s sample bibliography lists four main categories of spiritual reading: essential, secondary, edifying, and recreative (iii-iv).

What happens when we immerse ourselves in the spiritual disciplines? Alan Jones describes the outcomes of such an immersion. Though the author’s perspective and tone sometimes border on skepticism and cynicism, in the end he states that an emphasis on our relationship with God is foundational for ministers. He writes, “True spiritual discipline, far from setting us into a rigid pattern, continually prepares us for the coming of the new” (Jones 126).

Jones continues, “What do I do to stay in shape for delight, to keep in touch with the wellsprings of joy? My primary goal is to learn to be still and stay quiet” (155).

Jones submits this book as a survival manual for ministers of all religious traditions. After naming the temptations and difficulties that often face clergy, the author prescribes developing the rhythm of sacrifice (self-offering) and delight (relishing in the experience of being) as means which add spark and joy to the vocation of ministry.

Author Sue Monk Kidd also emphasizes the concept of delight with a creative and fascinating autobiographical description of her mid-life spiritual crisis. In her concluding chapter she writes, “When the True Self breaks through, a new and impassioned approach to life often makes itself known. We tap into an inner radiance that I call delight. I’m speaking of a unique kind of response to life that can coexist with our most painful realities. I’m speaking of the joy of saying yes to life in the core of our being” (184).

Transformation from the false self to the true self, from the old to the new, takes a lifetime to experience. This transformation begins at conversion with the experience of justifying grace. It continues throughout the growing disciple’s life. As the Christian is transformed in his/her relationship with Jesus, he/she becomes a new and changed creature.

Several Scripture passages describe this process of transformation in Christ. For example, Galatians 3:26-28 (NRSV) reads, “For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Similarly, II Corinthians 5:17 (NRSV) states, “So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” Putting on Christ, becoming a new creation, and experiencing transformation occur as we are continually formed in Jesus.

Equipping Laity for Ministry

Being centered in Christ is the foremost basis for effectiveness in ministry. The other core competencies flow out of this base. The remainder of this literature review focuses on the core competency of equipping laity for ministry.

Several categories of literature address the competency of equipping laity for ministry. These categories include biblical background, historical overview, theology of equipping laity, basic spiritual formation, and practical how-to resources.

Biblical Background

God calls the whole people of God to be in ministry. This statement includes three key concepts: the whole people of God, a call from God, and ministry.

Who are the whole people of God? God called the Israelites, Jacob's descendants, to be God's chosen people, a people dedicated to God alone (Exodus 19:6). Through the cross, the family grew to include all people baptized into union with Christ: Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free, men and women. Those belonging to Christ are Abraham's descendants and will receive God's promise (Galatians 3:28-29).

The author of Ephesians stresses that Gentiles are fellow citizens with the Israelites and full-fledged members of the family of God (Ephesians 2:19). In union with Christ, we are brothers and sisters.

It follows that clergy and laity alike make up the body of Christ. As we work together fulfilling our particular roles in the church, lives are transformed and God's kingdom is expanded.

What does it mean to be called? God, our Creator, has called us by name (Isaiah 43:1).

We were not called because of our high social standing, wisdom or power

(I Corinthians 1:21-31). At one time we were not God's people; we did not know God's mercy. But now we have received God and God's mercy (I Peter 2:9-10). II Timothy 1:9 reminds us that we have been called to be God's people, not because of anything that we have done, but rather through the grace of Jesus Christ, even before creation

(Wallace-Padgett 2-3).

Os Guinness distinguishes between our primary and secondary calling. First and foremost, we are called to Someone (God), not to something or somewhere. Our secondary calling may result in a call to a specific occupation. Guinness writes, “Secondary callings matter, only because the primary calling matters more” (31).

What does it mean to be in ministry? Anderson and Jones define ministry of the laity as “the outward, active, expressive life and activity of those persons who, through baptism, regard themselves as belonging to the people of God” (Anderson and Jones xii).

Jesus sums up ministry in response to a scribe’s question, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answers by expanding upon Deuteronomy 6:4-5. “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these (Mark 12:28-30 NRSV).

We are in ministry as we love God with our whole hearts and then extend ourselves in love to our neighbors, family members, and communities. This may occur in major or minor ways. It may involve extreme sacrifice or simple thoughtfulness. Regardless, ministry is defined as loving God and others.

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church adds specificity to this concept, emphasizing that Christian ministry includes “gratitude and devotion, witness and service, celebration and discipleship. All Christians are called to this ministry of servanthood in the world to the glory of God and for human fulfillment”

(Discipline 1996 108).

Whose responsibility is it to equip laity for ministry?

The Book of Discipline 1996 gives direction to clergy related to this. Paragraph 303.2 lists several tasks of ordained persons, including a call to equip others for ministry (171).

This understanding of clergy as equippers is informed by both the Old and New Testaments. The following section cites one Old Testament and three New Testament examples for pastors to imitate as we equip laity for ministry.

First, Exodus 18:14ff is an example of one of God's greatest leaders learning to equip others. Jethro helps Moses learn to share the leadership load. The Jethro principle involves leading by finding gifted persons and equipping them to share in leadership tasks (Oden 156-157).

Secondly, Jesus demonstrated a lifestyle from which pastors can learn much about equipping laity for ministry. D-B Heusser identifies nine characteristics of Jesus' life that constructively affected his ability to equip laity for ministry.

- . Jesus had a relationship with God.
- . Jesus was person-centered.
- . Jesus viewed persons as alive, active, and responsible.
- . Jesus was perceptive of persons' needs.
- . Jesus respected persons.
- . Jesus used a variety of leadership techniques.
- . Jesus did not run from conflict situations.
- . Jesus delegated responsibility.
- . Jesus appreciated and encouraged people (Heusser 13-18).

Thirdly, in Ephesians 4:11-12 the epistle writer stresses that Christ gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, to equip God's people for work in his service" (NEB). Oden emphasizes that all of these gifts are given "for the equipping of God's people for the work of serving." He interprets this to mean that some persons are appointed to be pastors and teachers for the purpose of building up or edifying the body of Christ (156).

Finally, the Apostle Paul did more than talk about equipping laity. He demonstrated this competency in his own ministry. He enlisted, trained, and utilized such persons as Timothy, Titus, Silas, Priscilla, Aquila, Phoebe, and Lydia to assist him in his ministry efforts (Marshall 1).

Historical Background

Historical background provides a baseline that is essential for understanding the evolution of the concept of equipping laity for ministry. It is crucial to know our starting point in order to truly understand where we have been and where God is calling us to go.

The Greek word *laos* translates "the people of God." This derivation of "lay" is from the Greek *laikos*, which means the chosen people of God.

Initially there were NO ordained clergy. Rather, all Christians were laity. One status was equally important in God's eyes, all making up one fellowship. Within the fellowship were varying gifts and functions such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Harkness 26).

The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church is a detailed history of the development of the laity and clergy classes during the first five centuries of the church.

Part one describes the birth of laity during the first and second centuries. Part two discusses the third century division between clergy and laity. Part three highlights the fourth-to sixth-century developments including the addition of the monk to the already existing clergy/laity division.

Laity and clergy distinctions are not evident in the writings of the early church until Ireneaeus' treatise Against Heresies in 180A.D. (Faivre 39). Prior to that time, each Christian, regardless of function, was simply referred to as a follower of Jesus.

Before Ireneaeus' treatise, the term laity appears only one time in a Christian context: in the first epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians. The contemporaries of the epistle writer ignore the new word for nearly a century (Faivre 15). Instead of lay/clergy class divisions, all disciples are given priestly rank!

During these early centuries, the church is very Christocentric. The body of Christ looks to Jesus as the head, the central figure in all that they do. Christ is the leader and all Christians are Christ's disciples (Faivre 40).

Then Ireneaeus writes his treatise that includes the concept of good presbyters. The presbyters are responsible for correct interpretation of Scripture. Ireneaeus makes it clear that each individual is called to become a spiritual disciple, a perfect person. But perfect disciples only evolve as they listen to the presbyters in the church (Faivre 39).

Ireneaeus' presbyters evolve into "masters" and then clergy for Christ's disciples (Faivre 40). The clergy/laity classes are born!

The lay class of the early Christian period is not comparable to laity today. Rather, it is an exclusive group that consists of males who have married only once. The fourth century

arrives before the term lay also applies to women. From that point on, laity refers to all nonclergy persons (Faivre 209).

In the period from the fifth century forward, the laity/clergy class distinctions grow. Corrupt practices escalate within the clergy ranks, eventually contributing to the Protestant Reformation in the fifteenth century. One of the radical declarations of the Protestant Reformation is the concept of the priesthood of all believers. In theory, this concept eliminates a clergy/lay hierarchy. Yet, nearly six centuries later, our theology remains inconsistent with our practice.

In the last thirty years, we have begun to reclaim the heritage of the Protestant Reformation. Many of today's leaders are saying that we are in a New Reformation. A Greg Ogden book title paints the picture well: The New Reformation- Returning the Ministry to the People of God. Ogden writes, "The New Reformation is a spiritual battle bent on replacing our old thinking patterns, which have crippled the church with a new set of pastoral expectations that can empower God's people for ministry" (81).

The New Reformation reaches back into history to the period of the Protestant Reformation. It connects there and then continues moving back through time until it arrives at the first days of the early church when all Christians understand themselves to be called to ministry. It stretches beyond a clergy/laity class distinction to a point in history when each Christian is on equal footing with every other Christian, called and commissioned to service by God at baptism.

Elton Trueblood is representative of prophetic contemporary leaders instrumental in laying the groundwork for the New Reformation. Nearly fifty years ago Trueblood called the church to return to the biblical understanding of laity in ministry. He reminded his

readers that “non-ministering Christians were non-existent in the early Christian pattern” (Trueblood 45).

Those who line up with Trueblood on this issue perceive that a major aspect of their pastoral role involves preparing and resourcing others for ministry. Pastors do this by preaching the biblical concept of the priesthood of all believers. They do this by demonstrating their commitment to sharing power and ministry with laity. They do this by investing time and energy in identifying, recruiting, training, and supporting volunteers for ministry. In the end, these pastors discover that old patterns of thinking have been replaced with a new set of pastoral expectations. But the new is not really new. Rather, it is the original biblical and historical understanding of the pastor’s role to equip all Christians for ministry.

Theological background- equipping laity for ministry

The priesthood of all believers is often cited in relation to laity in ministry. This concept stresses that the church is a corporate fellowship of Christian believers. Every member of the church is a sinner, justified by faith and grace alone.

Thus, all Christians are priests, capable of approaching God through Jesus Christ and witnessing to God’s saving grace by obedience and service to God. For some this means giving their lives to ordained ministry. For others, it means a similar commitment to the Christian lifestyle lived out in the home and business. The difference in clergy and laity is purely functional (Harkness 70).

This understanding is at the heart of Christian doctrine. “All Christians are called to this ministry of servanthood in the world to the glory of God and for human fulfillment. The

forms of this ministry are diverse in locale, in interest, and in denominational accent, yet always catholic in spirit and outreach” (Discipline 1996 par. 104).

All Christians are called to ministry and service. Each gift is important and necessary for the work of the body of Christ. The distinction comes in the function of those with various gifts.

Ephesians states that those gifted as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are to equip God’s people for ministry. “It was God who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:12-13 NIV). We equip God’s people for service so that the church, the body of Christ, is edified.

What does it mean “to prepare God’s people for works of service?” Does that involve teaching others how to do the works of ministry? Does equipping consist of teaching others to perform functions such as leading, coordinating, and organizing? Yes, teaching how-tos is an important aspect of preparing God’s people for works of service.

However, the starting point in equipping laity lies in a place other than skill development and how-to manuals for particular ministries. The foundational building blocks for equipping Christians are in spiritual formation.

The videotape “Word on the Street” includes a segment in which teenagers are asked by an interviewer to define specific theological phrases. The majority of those interviewed are clueless to the meanings of these basic terms.

This phenomena is not limited to teenagers. The number of secular people in our society is on the rise. George Hunter defines secular as those people who “are not substantially influenced by Christianity.”

Six percent of American adults in a 1952 George Gallup random sample indicated that they had no religious training. In 1965 the figure was 9 percent. In 1978, it was 17 percent. Since 1978, the figures have continued to rise in the same direction. Add to these numbers the many people whose religious training has made little to no lasting impact upon them and we have a majority of the people in the U.S. who are functionally secular (Hunter 20).

Similarly, it is false to conclude that every church member has a solid grasp on Christian theology. Though many do have a well-developed faith, others still struggle to take the initial steps in spiritual formation.

How do we equip Christians in spiritual formation? A variety of approaches are offered in response to this issue. For instance, Rick Warren’s Purpose-Driven Church model moves Christians from membership to maturity to ministry to mission. Spiritual formation is the second phase of the process and is essential for the continued growth of every Christian (Warren [The Purpose Driven Church](#) Simulcast).

Similarly, the primary task of Kentucky Methodism lifts up four key words in the cycle of discipling: inviting, relating, nurturing, and sending forth ([Journal Kentucky](#) 314). Nurturing involves teaching Christians the basics of the faith, including the spiritual disciplines.

In summary, the initial phase in equipping laity for ministry focuses on the spiritual disciplines. The second phase involves the nuts and bolts of skill development. This

includes job descriptions, how-tos, training, and supporting. Both phases one and two are necessary for the equipping process. Either without the other is a partial process.

Equipping: Basic Spiritual Formation

A variety of approaches can be used to equip laity with the basics of spiritual formation. This project presents a methodology for offering group spiritual direction.

The intent of phase 1 of the project is to equip pastors in the covenant groups with tools that will assist them in offering group spiritual direction to their parishioners. In this section of the literature review, consideration will be given to some of the theoretical, theological, biblical, and psychological understandings essential to group spiritual direction. These understandings will be presented through a question-and-answer format.

What is spiritual formation?

Spiritual formation is the process by which our spirits are formed in God's way. This inclusive term refers to a spiritual journey that begins at infancy and continues for as long as we live. It includes everything from the religious teaching that we receive as small children to church camp experiences as teenagers to our corporate worship life as adults. It also incorporates God's movement in our lives outside of the church environment in the secular arenas of life. In the words of Morton T. Kelsey, "Spiritual formation includes all that we do to lay the foundation for religious belief and practice" (Kelsey 6).

Robert Mulholland defines this process in powerful imagery. "Christian spiritual formation is the process of being conformed to the image of Christ" (Mulholland 27).

This definition captures the essence of spiritual formation. It is a process that takes a lifetime to complete. It involves our being conformed by God. It focuses on our becoming more and more like the image of Christ.

As we participate in the process and we allow God to take charge and conform us in the likeness of Jesus, we experience spiritual formation. Our outlooks are changed and our spirits are transformed as the God of the universe works in our lives.

What is spiritual direction?

Spiritual direction is the help offered by one journeyer to another. It involves assisting the other to hear and see God's movement and voice in the daily activities of life.

Barry and Connolly describe spiritual direction as follows. "We define Christian spiritual direction, then as help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship" (8).

Spiritual direction occurs within the framework of spiritual formation. It is one very important aspect of the larger process of spiritual formation.

What is the role of a spiritual director?

A spiritual director is a "soul friend" to the directee. This implies an intimate relationship bonded by "a shared attachment to God through Jesus Christ" (Leech ix).

What qualities are essential for an effective one-on-one spiritual director?

This dissertation project employs group spiritual formation. However, group spiritual formation directors must have one-on-one spiritual formation skills. Thus, listed below are essential characteristics of Christians practicing one-on-one spiritual direction. These qualities are common to every spiritual director, regardless of denomination, gender, and personality.

First, a spiritual director is on the journey him/herself. He/she practices spiritual disciplines and is reflective about his/her own spiritual life. Foster writes, “A spiritual director must himself or herself be on the inward journey and be willing to share their own struggles and doubts. There needs to be a realization that together they are learning from Jesus, their present Teacher” (Foster 161).

Secondly, a spiritual director is committed to the truth that the Holy Spirit is the real “Director” of the relationship. The Holy Spirit is the one forming and shaping and directing the relationship. The director simply points the way to the directee. “It is to God and only to God that the soul has to be led by the soul friend” (Leech ix).

Thirdly, an effective spiritual director is trustworthy. Tilden Edwards writes, “You need to intuit that the director is someone with whom you feel free to unlock your heart and trust” (121). This trustworthiness includes the unequivocal capacity to demonstrate total confidentiality with the other’s thoughts, insights, and confessions.

Fourth, an effective spiritual director is a good listener. To be a good listener includes the ability to give oneself fully to attending to the other’s story. It involves ascertaining the picture before suggesting ways to improve upon it. It assumes a basic trust of the other’s capacity to resolve issues and deal with difficulties. It requires restraint from jumping into the middle of situations with a “fix-it” attitude.

The spiritual director is expected to be a good listener at several levels. He/she listens with “a third ear” to the directee’s words, body language, and spirit. He/she also listens attentively for God’s movement in the directee’s life.

A good listener is a rare and precious jewel in our fast-paced, egocentric society. Yet, effective spiritual directors must be good listeners.

Finally it is helpful for the spiritual director to be experienced. His/her effectiveness is enhanced by experience in walking the Christian way, in practicing the Christian disciplines, and in understanding the complexities of life itself. The maturity that often comes with years of experience is an asset to the spiritual director (Edwards 121).

What are the qualities of an effective group spiritual director?

In addition to the qualities of the one-on-one director, the effective group director needs special sensitivity to group dynamics. Tilden Edwards lists some of the unique characteristics needed by the group spiritual director.

1. Caring for the group. Certainly the Holy Spirit is the primary mover in the group. However, the group leader has many opportunities to provide an environment with a special receptivity to the leading of the Spirit. Examples of this include prayer for group members, meeting one-on-one with those in crisis, and setting a caring tone in the group meetings.

2. Respect for the uniqueness and shared journey of each group member. Each person is unique in gifts, limitations, life situation, and personality type. Simultaneously, each person is on a shared journey wherein there is much common ground with other group members. The group leader must find that balance in responding to the individual and the corporate needs of the group.

3. Flexibility in responding to the Holy Spirit's leading. It is important that the group leader be attentive to the mood and needs of the group and to the leading of the Holy Spirit. This can best be done when the leader has adequately prepared for the group session in advance.

The Holy Spirit is at work long before the actual group meeting. For instance, the

prayerful and open group leader will invoke the Holy Spirit's guidance during the lesson preparation time. Similarly, the group leader may invite God's Spirit to go ahead of the group participants, preparing their hearts for the group session.

When the actual group session begins, it is helpful for the group leader to stay on task, trusting that God's Spirit has been at work throughout the week. God's prevenient grace that teaches, guides, and draws us to Christ has gone before the leader in the preparation of the lesson and in the preparation of the class members' hearts for this moment.

Sometimes staying on task requires that the leader be assertive in gently guiding the group in the direction of the objective of the meeting. However, there are other occasions when the Holy Spirit guides the leader to throw the lesson plan to the wind and to go in a completely different direction than anticipated. In these instances the leader's willingness and ability to be flexible is very helpful. Attentiveness to the Holy Spirit and the group dynamics helps a group leader to know when such an occasion is in order.

4. Flexibility in leadership style. Similarly, a flexible leadership style is an asset.

Sometimes the group dynamics call for energetic, forceful leadership. On other occasions, an attitude of quiet and patient listening is the order for the day. The ability to respond with a wide range of leadership styles increases the likelihood of the effectiveness of the group spiritual director.

5. Awareness of group dynamics. The effective group spiritual director must have basic group leadership skills. These include good communication skills, helping group members to feel comfortable when they have made themselves vulnerable, guiding a discussion, and handling dominating group members.

6. General knowledge of Scripture, ascetic tradition, and human development.

A general understanding of Scripture, ascetic tradition, and human development provides useful background for a group spiritual director. Such resources can help the participants feel connected to their heritage (Edwards 189-192).

What are the general guidelines for groups involved in spiritual direction?

1. A workable size for this type of group ranges from eight to fourteen participants. Eleven participants plus the leader is the ideal size.

2. As with any group, it is useful to start and end on time. A sixty- to ninety-minute meeting time is a reasonable and manageable expectation.

3. A specific time frame for the group allows participants to comfortably exit at the appropriate point. Tilden Edwards recommends that the group contract for no less than six weeks and no more than ten months. At the conclusion of that period, group members who desire to do so will have the option of recommitting for another specific period of time (182).

4. It is certainly appropriate to be selective about group membership. Some people are proven antagonists in group settings. A leader who knowingly allows such persons to enter the group is setting up the group for failure.

5. It is very helpful to identify which audience groups are present in each spiritual direction group. Warren Hartman defines five general audience groups represented in most churches. The fellowship group places a high value on interpersonal relationships. The traditional group has a deep respect for and commitment to longstanding customs, practices, values, and ways of doing things. The study group is extremely interested in studying, learning, and applying the Christian faith to daily life. The social action group is

energized by living out its faith as an agent of social change. Finally, the multiple interest group is a combination of the characteristics found in two or more of the other four basic audience groups (Hartman 25-28). The nature, focus and objective of a group is largely affected by the nature of the audiences composing it. A perceptive leader will allow insights about the composition of the group to help shape content, format, and leadership style.

6. Similarly, the life of the group is enhanced by the leader's awareness of various preferred learning styles. For instance, Reginald Johnson categorizes twenty-two different teaching strategies based on Myers-Briggs personality types. The leader increases the likelihood of a satisfactory experience for all participants by utilizing methods and materials that relate to each personality type (Johnson 147).

7. Building follow-up on absent members into group procedure helps to create a caring atmosphere within the group. It also helps participants to feel their accountability to the group.

What is the biblical basis for the focus on involving Christians in spiritual formation?

The Bible highlights the concept of spiritual formation on numerous occasions. Though the term is not used as such, the idea is prevalent. For instance, the psalmist describes the motivation that often drives us toward practicing the spiritual disciplines. "As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the Living God" (Psalms 42:1-2 RSV).

The process of spiritual formation is evident in both the Old and New Testaments. Sue Monk Kidd gives examples of this in her descriptions of the cycle of the Exodus story and Jesus' death in preparation for Resurrection. Kidd reminds the reader that "the

three-fold cycle of waiting, separation, transformation and emergence” is applicable to three critical features in the Exodus story: Egypt, wilderness, and the promised land (78). She compares Jesus’ time of transition in a similar way, applying the three-fold cycle to the wilderness, the garden, and the tomb (14).

Then in the life of Jesus we sense the rhythm of one who is being formed in God’s way. Jesus is the primary New Testament source for spiritual guidance. His procedure includes ministering with individuals, groups, and crowds, as well as recharging in solitude with God (Edwards 41).

Jesus is God, but he is also human. His human need to talk and walk with God results in intense periods of prayer, fasting, and worship. Also, his incredible grasp of Scripture indicates that he spends much time studying and meditating on God’s Word.

Finally, the New Testament epistles frequently refer to the process of spiritual formation. For example, Ephesians 4:15 (RSV) reads, “But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head.” Similarly, Colossians 1:28 (RSV) challenges us to present everyone “mature in Christ.” Another graphic biblical description of spiritual formation is found in Galatians 4:19 (RSV): “My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.” These and many other Old and New Testament Scripture references make it evident that spiritual formation is crucial to a relationship with God.

What is the United Methodist Church’s historical connection with the process of spiritual formation?

In 1739, eight to ten persons approached John Wesley in London for advice on how to “flee from the wrath to come.” He formed a group that met every Thursday evening and served as spiritual director for the rapidly growing group.

That was the start of the United Society which began in Europe and then later came to America. The society was “a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.”

Each society divided into classes consisting of about twelve persons. Each class member was to continue to evidence a desire of salvation by: (1) doing no harm; (2) doing good; (3) attending upon all the ordinances of God, such as: the public worship of God, the ministry of the Word, the Supper of the Lord, family and private prayer, searching the Scriptures, and fasting or abstinence (Discipline 1996 69-72).

Emphasis on the process of spiritual formation was one of the strengths of The Methodist denomination’s earliest days. As Methodism reclaims that part of its early heritage, its members will likely find themselves rekindled in zeal and commitment to Christian living.

Equipping: Practical How-tos

Marlene Wilson describes the tragic situation that results when basic equipping does not occur with church volunteers. “Today’s church too often is a happening that never quite happened, or, as Thielecke expressed it, dynamite that failed to go off. The pews are filled with potential unrealized and energy unstopped. As a result, both the gathered and scattered ministry of the laity is in trouble in a great many churches” (Wilson 21).

Pastors and other church leadership are likely to avoid the above scenario when they understand basic dimensions of volunteerism. Several key concepts are described below.

For instance, trends in our culture are reshaping the nature of volunteerism. Sue Vineyard names the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century as the decade of service. In this period of our history, Americans are showing high commitment to volunteerism as an essential ingredient to improving the quality of life in our nation (Vineyard 31).

Secondly, Vineyard's summary of contemporary trends in our society is a great help in understanding the evolution of volunteerism in the last forty years. One particular insight holds significant implications for pastors. Vineyard writes, "In addition to needing highly developed management skills, volunteer administrators must gather and share appropriate information with their volunteers. Volunteer administrators must move from managing volunteers to managing systems that attain goal empowerment" (13).

The role of equipping laity for ministry involves more than managing individual volunteers. The pastor who is effective in this core competency will understand the importance of managing an entire system. In the United Methodist Church, that system is the nominations and personnel committee.

The likelihood of a local church raising the priority of an equipping ministry is increased by integrating a lay ministry emphasis into the existing system, rather than attempting to create an entirely new structure. Four models can be woven naturally into existing church structures:

1. All departments report to a central staff member of the leadership board in the centralized model.

2. Department chairs are responsible for the bulk of leadership development in the departmental model.

3. Large adult Sunday School classes are the training ground for laity in ministry in the Sunday School or adult fellowship model.

4. Small groups assimilate, teach and support members in the small group model (Rehnborg 1-49).

The model that is practiced in this dissertation project is the centralized model. The nominating committee is developed as a leadership board responsible for equipping laity for ministry.

The nominations and personnel committee is the system that United Methodist Churches of all sizes have in place to attain the goal of empowering laity for ministry. In many churches it is an untapped goldmine. As pastors invest their energy and time into the effective utilization of this established system, new levels of competency and effectiveness will be demonstrated.

Thirdly, this literature review has consistently illustrated that committees are no longer in vogue. Ministry teams are being lifted up as a more effective means than committees for accomplishing meaningful ministry.

The contrast between a team and a committee approach is substantial. Teams focus on ministry, people, and service. Committees emphasize tasks, timelines, and meetings (Kalajainen plenary session).

Accomplishing the purpose of the nominations and personnel committee requires the characteristics of a team, not a committee. The nominations and personnel committee can operate at an optimal level only as the group embodies team principles.

Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: Mobilizing to Serve is a useful resource for pastors who are developing or maintaining an effective nominating committee. This booklet defines the task of the nominations and personnel committee of filling leadership positions for the local congregation. The author also suggests a volunteer committee to work in conjunction with the nominations and personnel committee in identifying, recruiting, training, and supporting all members in the congregation in ministry (p. 7). Ideally the nominations and personnel committee and the volunteer committee collaborate to accomplish the task of empowering every disciple to be in ministry.

The nominations and personnel committee's work is an ongoing process. It includes: (1) recognizing outgoing leaders and officers; (2) installing new recruits; (3) updating information about the gifts and graces of congregational members, especially new members; (4) writing job descriptions; (5) providing nurture and support to all leaders; (6) assessing which positions are open for the coming year; (7) matching ministry opportunities with gifted persons; and (8) recruiting appropriate leaders to fill open leadership positions.

The nominations and personnel committee plays a powerful role in the life of the church. When operating at its best, this committee holds the potential to help the congregation fulfill its critical task of equipping laity for ministry.

Adult Learners

The final segment of this literature review deals with adult learners. Basic understandings of learning styles of adults vary from individual to individual. Adult development, orientations to learning, and adult learning theories are considerations in developing a teaching style that is appropriate for adult learners.

Adult Development

A unified theory of adult development is nonexistent. Rather, various perspectives paint a picture that assists the leader in understanding adult learners, their learning motivations, and capacities for learning.

For instance, all adults experience some changes as they age physically. However, many adults demonstrate the capacity to compensate for the physical changes to the extent that learning may not be affected at all. Note that this observation challenges widely held assumptions about adult learners related to learner capacity and age.

Secondly, researchers group psychological changes in categories of ages and stages, life events, and transitions. These categories define situations and periods of time that are likely to trigger learning.

Finally, social and cultural factors affect adult development. Background, past experiences, cultural norms, values, and context play a role in the development of learners of all ages, including adults (Merriam and Coffarella 119).

Orientations to Learning

Two of the four orientations to learning described by Merriam and Coffarella were combined in this project. For example, behaviorists define learning as change in behavior. The purpose of education is to bring about the behavior change. The teacher's role is to arrange the environment in a way that brings forth the desired response. Behavior objectives emphasize competency-based education, skill development, and training. Similarly, the purpose of education in social learning is to model new roles and behavior. The leader's role is to demonstrate and guide these new behaviors (138).

The covenant group process offered through this project emphasized behavior and social goals. Although new behaviors were not expected to be demonstrated by the conclusion of the course, the ultimate goal was that the covenant group participants would eventually begin to act in new ways as a result of the intervention and follow-up treatment. The building blocks for the new behaviors were changes in awareness, knowledge, and attitudes.

Likewise, emphasis was upon competencies and skill development through the covenant group process. The researcher/designer was clear in her goal of behavior changes in the covenant group participants' competency levels of equipping laity for ministry.

The researcher/designer did this through role modeling the key concept that she desired to drive home with participants. The foundational principle for this project is that equipping laity for ministry begins with offering tools of spiritual formation to participants. In addition to verbalizing this at each session, the researcher/designer devoted half of each of the six monthly sessions to a curriculum that introduces young Christians to spiritual disciplines. This gave pastors a hands-on method for implementing the primary theory upon which the project is based.

Implications of Adult Learning Theories

Jane Vella describes several implications derived from adult learning theories.

1. A needs assessment of the target audience is essential homework for the leader of adult learners. Listening for and addressing the themes and issues that are important to the learners is both a practice and principle of adult learning.
2. Adult learners have a high need to be in a safe learning community. Atmosphere,

clear objectives, room set-up, and the attitude of the leader affect the sense of security.

3. Sound relationships between leaders and learners are necessary for the optimum learning experience. Respect, safety, open communication, listening, and humility help to create these types of relationships.

4. Sequence and reinforcement are essential in the adult learning process. Sequence refers to ordering the programming of knowledge, skills, and attitudes from simple to complex and from group to individual processes. Reinforcement involves repetition of facts, skills, and attitudes in various interesting ways until the learning objectives are accomplished.

5. Adult learners tend to learn best by doing. This is demonstrated by the preference of doing-reflecting-changing as opposed to reflecting-changing-doing.

6. A mutual respect is an essential dynamic for effectiveness in teaching adult learners. Offering as many choices as possible to the adult learner helps to convey mutual respect.

7. The effective leader of adult learners will consider three aspects of learning: ideas (cognitive), feelings (affective), and actions (psychomotor). The interaction of these three dimensions enhances the learning process.

8. Adults benefit from applying their new learnings immediately. The opportunity to “go and do” enables the learners to integrate the learning more thoroughly into their thought processes.

9. Dialogue between leader and learner is important in creating an effective adult learning environment. Ideally this dialogue occurs both within and outside of the classroom.

10. Adult learners often prefer a team approach to learning. Working together on a task is an effective means for learning.

11. Engagement of learners in the learning process heightens the quality of the experience. Learners who are wholeheartedly involved in learning are likely to give high energy and commitment to the task at hand.

12. The accountability of the adult leader to the learner is a crucial principle that synthesizes all of the other principles. Have the learning objectives been addressed by the leader? Have they been accomplished by all of the learners? (Vella 3-22).

The covenant group process incorporated an awareness of the characteristics of adult development, orientations to learning, and the implications of adult learning theories in the following ways. First, various teaching styles were utilized, including journal-keeping, lecture, discussion, and experiential learning. Though each learner in the covenant groups preferred certain orientations, the variety of approaches enabled every participant to utilize their preferred learning style at times.

Secondly, much attention was given to the learning atmosphere. Group ground rules were set in session one. Respect was consistently demonstrated for every participant. The leader described herself as a co-learner and attempted to demonstrate that attitude in her leadership style.

Thirdly, the design of the intervention treatment was practical in nature. Major themes were emphasized repetitively. Much of the course content consisted of sample applications of the themes to the local church setting.

Finally, the issues addressed in the covenant groups were of an urgent nature. For example, the two core competencies targeted in this study are central to the effectiveness

of pastors. Centering in Christ and equipping laity for ministry are areas that affect pastors' daily lives and ministries. They are cutting edge topics for pastors who are striving for excellence in their work.

Conclusion of Literature Review

Many additional resources are available related to continuing spiritual formation, equipping laity for ministry, and adult learning theory. However, the resources cited in this chapter are the ones that I found particularly useful in developing the project design.

CHAPTER 3

Design of the Study

Effective leadership is essential for healthy and productive churches. Bishop Robert C. Morgan of the United Methodist Church in Kentucky has stated a goal of effective pastoral leadership in every United Methodist Church in the Kentucky Annual Conference. Effective pastoral leadership has been defined by United Methodists in Kentucky in terms of four competencies: (1) centering in Jesus Christ, (2) leading, (3) teaching/preaching, and (4) equipping laity for ministry.

Careful attention must be given to pastors of all church sizes in order for Kentucky United Methodism to accomplish our goal. In the Prestonsburg District this particularly means providing training opportunities for the 60 percent of our pastors who serve as certified lay speakers, part-time local pastors, and full-time local pastors.

The purpose of this project was to develop, implement, and evaluate a replicable training model in the Prestonsburg District that increased the effectiveness of participating local pastors in two core competencies: centering in Jesus Christ and equipping laity for ministry. Follow-up sessions targeting other core competencies will be offered to participants at the conclusion of the six months of intervention. The cycle will continue until all of the four competencies have been addressed. As previously noted, this project was limited to the phase of the training model that highlighted equipping laity for ministry and centering in Jesus Christ.

The Role and Training of the Mentors

The covenant group mentors were essential to this project. They partnered with the researcher/designer in leadership, provided support and resources for participants within

and outside of the group setting, and were exemplary role models in their maturity and interpersonal skills. In each instance, they added important perspective, reinforced the basic concepts being presented, and were perceived in a positive light by participants.

The basis used for selecting the three pastors who served as covenant group mentors included the following criteria. (Note that though all three of the mentors in this particular project were male; female clergy with the same characteristics would be equally appropriate.)

1. He was a full connection elder in the United Methodist Church.
2. He had a unique passion for the ministry of local pastors.
3. He was a model pastor, with good follow through ability, a positive attitude, and strong work ethic.

Prior to the launch date of the covenant groups, the mentors attended a regional training event held in Hazard, Kentucky for clergy mentors and local pastors. Both trainers were members of the clergy mentor resource team, a General Church resource group at the national level that focuses on clergy mentoring.

Trainer Chris Harman states that the clergy mentor resource team's approach and process is evolving, with the likelihood of changes in legislation at the 2000 General Conference. However, a central and unchanging focus is the core value of reflection on ministry.

Chris and her team believe that the value of reflective practice rises in the eyes of participating pastors as their mentors assist them in the process. This has the potential to create valuable lifelong habits among local pastors of engaging in mentoring relationships and intentional reflective behaviors (Harman phone interview).

The mentors were also equipped for their role through individual conversations with the researcher/designer prior to the launch of the covenant groups. The role was defined for the covenant group mentors related to this project as follows:

1. Attend the monthly meetings with the assigned covenant group.
2. Provide leadership at the training sessions as requested in advance by the researcher/designer. For instance, mentors role-played during two teaching sessions and responded at each covenant group meeting to questions that arose from participants in class discussions.
3. Participate in the covenant group sessions, feeling free to add input to discussions as appropriate.
4. Be a resource/support person for the members of covenant group.

Though in the first six months the researcher/designer developed and presented the majority of the curriculum for the sessions, she anticipates handing off primary leadership to the mentors in future covenant group settings. This project could be replicated in other settings with the variation of primary leadership from the mentors, and minimal input from the district superintendent. The revision would require additional initial orientation and preparation of the mentors.

The researcher/designer mentored the mentors who in turn became mentors to the participants. This step in leadership development is an important component of mentoring (Easum 84). It allows for the continuity of the covenant group in the face of inevitable appointment changes. Ideally, in the second six-month series, the role of the researcher/designer will diminish as that of the mentors increases. Eventually, the

researcher/designer will have a minimal role in the process and the mentors will have mentors in training assisting them in leadership.

Dale Galloway names this process as the “one step principal for developing leaders.”

The process raises leaders step by step. The five steps are:

1. Modeling: I do it;
- 2, Mentoring: I do it, you are with me;
3. Monitoring: You do it, I am with you;
4. Delegating: You do it;
5. Multiplying: You do it, someone is with you. (Galloway Seminar, Leadership 36).

Research Questions

The purpose statement of this project evoked three research questions. These questions were central to the design of the study.

Research Question #1

What attitudes did the covenant and control group participants bring to the table about laity in ministry prior to the intervention? How did the attitudes of the covenant group participants change following the intervention?

The findings of part one of this research question were critical to the project. This marked the starting point for the comparative analysis that followed the six months of training. This information was essential in order to measure changes in participants following the intervention treatment.

The findings to part two of the question were also critical. The comparative analysis of changed attitudes led to the conclusions regarding the impact of the covenant group experience upon participants.

Research Question #2

What biblical/theological understandings of laity in ministry characterized covenant and control group participants prior to the intervention? What changes occurred in the biblical/theological understandings of the covenant group participants following the intervention?

The answer to this research question determined the primary conclusions drawn from the study. The subjects participated in six monthly two-hour sessions that specifically targeted the cognitive and affective domains of the core competency of equipping laity for ministry. The hypothesis was that six months of training and processing this material in a covenant group context would result in the increased awareness, knowledge, and valuing of this core competency.

A comparison of the pre-test and post-test results of control and covenant group members provided data for quantitative analysis of how the intervention treatment impacted covenant group participants. This data was enhanced by the qualitative research derived from the post-study interviews and analysis of journals.

Research Question #3

What practices of lay ministry development emerged throughout the intervention process? This question was addressed through the pre-test/post-test, journal summary sheets, and interviews with covenant participants.

Population and Sample Boundaries

The population for this project was twenty-six part-time local pastors; three full-time local pastors; two student pastors; and two certified lay speakers who serve United Methodist churches in the Prestonsburg District. Two spouses in the process of exploring

ministry as vocation requested and were also accepted as part of the population. The sample consisted of nine part-time local pastors, three full-time local pastors, one student pastor, and two clergy spouses--all of whom volunteered from the population to participate in this covenant group experience.

Though it was understood by all involved that regular attendance was essential, some covenant group participants missed some sessions. The post-test included a question about how many sessions were attended. This controlled for the number of training sessions each participant experienced.

Intervening Variables

Potential intervening variables included age, readiness of participants to enhance their competency in this area, progress in the Course of Study, past role models, years of experience in ministry, gifts and graces, gender, preferred learning styles, and context of past and present ministry opportunities. These factors were controlled by random placement within the covenant groups.

Instrumentation

Quantitative instrumentation

A researcher-designed multiple choice questionnaire was the instrument used in measuring quantitative changes affected by the intervention in the awareness, knowledge, and attitudes of covenant group participants. This questionnaire served as a pre-test prior to launching the six-month training series and as a post-test immediately upon concluding the study.

The twenty-eight-question tool was developed for the specific purpose of measuring changes in effectiveness in the competency of equipping laity for ministry. Many of the

questions evolved out of the learning objectives that were established for the monthly training sessions.

The ultimate goal of the project was to challenge and assist participants in making changes in awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and behavior related to equipping laity for ministry. From the onset, the researcher/designer realized that six months was an inadequate time period in which to measure new behaviors related to this particular core competency. Thus, though the covenant group participants were asked to reflect upon their behavior changes through journal entries, the individual interviews at the conclusion of the study, and four pre-test/post-test questions, the researcher-designed questionnaire focused primarily on the prerequisites for behavior changes: awareness, knowledge, and attitudes.

After developing the questionnaire, the researcher/designer identified thirty novices and thirty skilled clergy in the core competency of equipping laity for ministry. The initial novice sample consisted of probationary members of the Kentucky Annual Conference. However, it was evident following a first peruse of their responses that the probationary members were not representative of part-time and full-time local pastors. Thus, a second novice sample was identified, consisting of all of the part-time and full-time local pastors serving in the Kentucky Conference in locations other than the Prestonsburg District.

The skilled clergy sample consisted of twenty permanent deacons whose administrative roles required equipping skills and thirteen district superintendents. A cover letter and questionnaire were distributed to each of these clergy, explaining the project and asking them to complete and return the questionnaire in a self-addressed stamped envelope. A self-created code was requested to insure anonymity. The code asked for the first initial of

the mother's birth name and the last four digits of the participant's Social Security number. This code was important in the comparative work that statisticians later derived from the test results.

The questionnaires received by novices and highly skilled clergy were identical in content. For the comparative analysis, the questionnaires for the novice group were on green paper while those of the expert group were on white paper.

Two weeks later, both novices and skilled clergy received the same questionnaire to be completed and returned for comparison with the original questionnaire. This time, questionnaires for novices were on green paper and questionnaires for skilled clergy were on white paper.

Data collected from this process tested the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Reliability was established when the highly skilled clergy scored higher on the test than did novices. Concurrent validity was established when the test-takers scored similarly both times that they took the test.

In addition, the researcher/designer asked the congregational reflection team, her mentor, and Dr. Leslie Andrews to evaluate the face validity of the test. Their general collective impression of the validity of the test was the basis for this determination.

The researcher/designer revised the pre-test/post-test based upon the results of the pilot questionnaire and input received regarding face validity. Particularly, she moved to a Likert scale test instead of multiple choice.

Developing the Quantitative Instrument

Objectives for the intervention treatment focused in the cognitive and affective domains. The cognitive domain included objectives related to knowledge and the

development of intellectual abilities and skills. The affective domain included objectives related to interests, attitudes, and values (Taxonomy 7).

Six major classes in the taxonomy provided a natural progression from the simplest to the most complex learning objectives in the cognitive domain: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (18). Similarly, five classes categorized the affective domain of the taxonomy of educational objectives: receiving, responding, valuing, organization, and characterization (35).

These classifications were considered in the development of the learning objectives listed below for the six sessions of the training intervention. Each session included learning objectives from both the cognitive and affective domains.

Session One: Laity in Ministry--Biblical, Historical, and Theological Basis

Cognitive Objectives.

Knowledge: Covenant group participants will demonstrate that they know the biblical view of equipping laity in ministry by articulating it clearly to a partner.

Comprehend: Covenant group participants will demonstrate that they comprehend the clergy/laity class distinction that developed over the centuries by correctly marking major events on a timeline that begins with the birth of the early church and continues through the present.

Application: Covenant group participants will apply the knowledge and understandings from the two above goals in writing a one-page summary of the biblical and historical views of equipping laity in ministry.

Analysis: In pairs, covenant group participants will analyze their practice of equipping laity for ministry in relationship to biblical and historical views.

Synthesis: Covenant group participants will demonstrate an integration of the presented material by writing a two-paragraph reflection paper on how this session has affected their theology of equipping laity for ministry.

Evaluation: Through weekly journal entries during the six-month training intervention, covenant group participants will evaluate the congruencies and incongruencies of their theology and practice of equipping laity for ministry.

Affective Objectives.

Receiving: Covenant group participants will develop an awareness of the biblical view of laity in ministry as demonstrated by articulating it clearly to a partner.

Responding: Covenant group participants will grow in their willingness to involve laity in ministry.

Session Two: Introducing Group Spiritual Direction

How-tos of Equipping Laity for Ministry--Defining the Task of the Nominations and

Personnel Committee

Cognitive Objectives.

Knowledge: Covenant group members will demonstrate their knowledge of the role of the nominations and personnel committee by successfully completing the following fill-in-the-blank statement. “The nominations and personnel committee (identifies), (recruits), (trains), and (supports) charge conference elected lay leadership in the local church.”

Comprehend: Covenant group members will demonstrate their comprehension of the role of the nominations and personnel committee by working with a partner to develop a paragraph describing the role of the nominations and personnel committee.

Affective Objectives.

Receiving: The covenant group participants will be inspired to consider an increased variety of ministry opportunities that can be effectively fulfilled by laity in ministry.

Responding: Covenant group members will discover within themselves an increased motivation to involve laity in ministry.

Valuing: Covenant group members will assume the value of setting a goal of “every member a minister.”

Session Three: Curriculum for Young Christians--Prayer

How-tos of Equipping Laity for Ministry--Identifying Potential Volunteers and Job

Descriptions

Cognitive Objectives.

Knowledge: Participants will describe to a partner the major components in a volunteer job description.

Evaluation: Participants will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their process of identifying volunteers.

Affective Objectives.

Responding: Participants will experience the joy and excitement that comes from empowering laity for ministry.

Valuing: Participants will grow in their desire to develop the ability to equip laity for ministry.

Organization: Participants will determine the significance of the pastor's role in equipping laity for ministry.

Session Four: A field trip to observe laity in ministry

The purpose of this field trip was twofold. First, several of the covenant group participants had not previously seen in action a small- or medium-sized church that intentionally and systematically practiced the theology of equipping laity for ministry. A face-to-face interaction with members of an equipping church broadened the potential horizons for participants.

Secondly, the field trip particularly targeted learning objectives in the affective domain. Though these objectives were addressed throughout the training sessions, the field trip gave a special opportunity for accomplishing them.

The original intent was to take the field trip to a church in another district. This plan was adapted by bringing the church to the Prestonsburg District. Rev. David Calhoun and three of the laity from the Russell Springs United Methodist Church led a workshop for the covenant group pastors on the topic of “Ministry By Multiplication: How to Train and Mobilize Your Members for Maximum Ministry.” This workshop received high evaluation from participants.

The primary affective learning objective set forth by this training session was to value laity in ministry. The following taxonomy of objectives was launched with this session and continued throughout the ensuing months of the study.

Affective Objectives.

Receiving: The covenant group participants will be inspired to consider an increased variety of ministry opportunities that can be fulfilled effectively by laity in ministry.

Responding: Covenant group members will discover within themselves an increased motivation to involve laity in ministry.

Valuing: Covenant group members will assume the value of setting a goal of “every member a minister.”

Session Five: Curriculum for Young Christians--Journaling

How-tos of Equipping Laity for Ministry--Identifying and Recruiting

Cognitive Objectives.

Comprehension: Participants will demonstrate their comprehension of the recruitment process by describing the key steps involved in effective recruiting.

Application: Participants will apply their knowledge and understanding of the recruitment process by role-playing a successful recruitment strategy.

Affective Objectives.

Receiving: The covenant group participants will be inspired to consider an increased variety of ministry opportunities that can be effectively fulfilled by laity in ministry.

Responding: Covenant group members will discover within themselves an increased motivation to involve laity in ministry.

Valuing: Covenant group members will assume the value of setting a goal of “every member a minister.”

Session Six: Curriculum for Young Christians-- Meditative Bible Study

How-tos of Equipping Laity for Ministry--Supporting and Training

Cognitive Objectives.

Application: Covenant group members will develop a monthly calendar to describe how the tasks of the nominations and personnel committee can best be accomplished in their church.

Analysis: Covenant group members will analyze their current nominating process in comparison with the calendar that they developed in the meeting the application objective for this session.

Synthesis: Covenant group members will prepare and share with the class a one-page summary that describes a strategic and effective plan of action for the nominating process in the coming year.

Evaluation: Covenant group members will constructively critique each plan of action, affirming strengths and questioning “holes.”

Affective Objectives

Receiving: The covenant group participants will be inspired to constructively critique the ways in which they offer support and training to volunteers in ministry.

Responding: Covenant group members will grow in their desire to provide adequate training to laity in ministry.

Valuing: Covenant group members will assume a high value of the role of the nominations and personnel committee in equipping laity for ministry.

General Objectives for Sessions One through Six

All of the objectives presented thus far target the segment of equipping laity for ministry that involves the work of the nominations and personnel committee. Another set of objectives that the researcher/designer set forth for each of the six sessions relate to the area of equipping laity with the holy habits of spiritual disciplines.

This set of objectives was addressed by a “how-to” study that was integrated into each session. The introductory curriculum covered some of the building blocks of spiritual formation such as prayer, Bible study, and journaling. The curriculum was taught

experientially with the intent of equipping the participating pastors to implement it in their own settings.

Cognitive Objectives.

Comprehension: Covenant group participants will grow in their understanding that many Christians who are young in the faith benefit from an introduction to the basic tools of spiritual formation.

Application: Covenant group participants will identify appropriate settings and target audiences in their churches for the introductory course on spiritual formation.

Evaluation: Covenant group participants will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the introductory course on spiritual formation, developing a potential adaptation for their settings.

Affective Objectives.

Receiving: Participants will grow in their awareness that the first step in equipping laity is to teach spiritual disciplines.

Valuing: Covenant group participants will assume the value of equipping laity with the holy habits.

Characterization: Covenant group participants will be characterized by their commitment to regular practice of the holy habits.

Many of the pre-test/ post-test questions evolved from the above objectives (Appendix F).

Qualitative instrumentation

Two tools facilitated the qualitative dimension of this study. First, participants were presented at the initial session with a blank looseleaf journal for their use throughout the

process. They were instructed to make at least one journal entry a week, recording their learnings, insights, and feelings throughout the six-month period. Three purposes of the journal were stated: (a) to enhance and reinforce the learning throughout the process, (b) to give participants a record of their experience that would help them to evaluate their growth, and (c) for data collection at the conclusion of the six months that would help the researcher/designer in the interpretation of results of the project.

It was made clear to all covenant group participants that at the conclusion of the study the journals would be reviewed for pertinent qualitative data. Anonymity would be maintained by identifying the journals with the same self-created code assigned to the pre-test/post-tests. The participants would also be encouraged to cover or remove any journal entries that they felt uncomfortable revealing. A commitment was made to participants that any data cited in the dissertation project would be presented in a sensitive way that would ensure no embarrassment to anyone.

A retired elder in the Kentucky Conference reviewed the journals, noting evidence of growth in the core competency of equipping laity for ministry. He was particularly attuned to journal reflections that indicated the following and similar signs of growth:

- (a) an increased awareness of the importance of equipping laity for ministry,
- (b) an understanding that the first step in equipping laity for ministry is teaching the importance and skills of regular practice of spiritual disciplines,
- (c) the identification of one or two people to disciple and a stated strategy for entering into a discipleship relationship with at least one person,
- (d) the practice of discussing with others ideas related to equipping laity and spiritual formation,

- (e) further reading of resources related to equipping laity and spiritual formation,
- (f) casting a vision to the administrative board or nominating committee,
- (g) teaching a class on the basics of spiritual formation (holy habits),
- (h) encouraging laity to participate in training related to his/her ministry role through district and conference events or by offering in-house training at the local church,
- (i) an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the current practice of the nominating committee in the role of identifying, recruiting, training, and supporting,
- (j) the development of a specific plan of action for the nominating process of the congregation (Appendix I).

Secondly, qualitative data was gathered by post-treatment, unstructured, open-ended interviews with covenant group participants. Each covenant group member was interviewed by the same retired elder in the Kentucky Conference who had reviewed the journals. Ten of the interviews were conducted face-to-face and four via telephone.

The interviews included open-ended questions such as:

1. How important do you think it is for pastors to equip laity for ministry?
2. How would you rate your effectiveness in that competency prior to the beginning of the covenant group experience? Place yourself on a scale of one to five with five being excellent and one being poor.
3. How do you rate your effectiveness in that competency now? Place yourself on a scale of one to five with five being excellent and one being poor. Elaborate on how your attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors have changed.
4. If someone were to ask you about the most important thing that you learned in the covenant group experience, how would you respond?

5. Name some of the ways in which you are currently equipping laity for ministry in your local church. When did you begin doing this and why?
6. What are your next steps in equipping laity for ministry?
7. Have your personal practices of prayer, journaling, studying Scripture, and finding time to work on your relationship with God changed during the past six months? If so, how and why?
8. Describe the positive and/or negative impact of the covenant group upon your ministry (Appendix J).

Data Collection

The quantitative data collection consisted of the pre-test and post-test of the control and covenant groups. The pre-test was mailed to the control group members during the week prior to the first covenant group session. A cover letter and self-addressed stamped envelope accompanied the pre-test. The identical post-test was mailed to the same audience immediately prior to the final covenant group session. Again, a cover letter and self-addressed stamped envelope accompanied the post-test (Appendix F).

The covenant group members completed the pre-test when they arrived at the first training session. Similarly, they completed the post-test at the conclusion of the final session.

For analysis purposes, the pre-tests and post-tests were color-coded as follows: purple pre-tests for the covenant group members, peach post-tests for the covenant group members, yellow pre-tests for the control group, and red post-tests for the control group.

The self-created identification code and the color-codes enabled the statistician to identify and compare individual changes in responses to questions in the pre-tests and

post-tests from individuals. The statistician analyzed the statistical data and then presented it to the researcher for interpretation and conclusions.

Confidentiality was a high value in the quantitative data collection. The self-created identification code and color codes allowed for anonymous comparative analysis.

Qualitative data was collected in two ways. To ensure confidentiality the self-created code used for the pre-test/post-tests was written on the outside of the journals and interview summaries.

First, following the final session of the intervention treatment, covenant group participants who were willing to do so submitted their journals to be reviewed for data collection. As previously noted, a retired pastor in the Kentucky Annual Conference reviewed the journals, looking for evidence of changes in attitudes, values, and behaviors related to the core competency of equipping laity for ministry. He summarized the journal entries in the designated categories and returned the summary sheets and journals to the researcher/designer for analysis.

Secondly, the same retired United Methodist pastor interviewed the fifteen covenant group participants. This pastor was oriented to the process with two conversations that included an overview of the project, goals, research questions, journal data, and interview questions.

The interviews included questions designed to detect changes in attitudes, values, and behaviors in the core competency of equipping laity for ministry. Each interview was summarized on one page and given to the researcher/designer for review and interpretation.

Intervening Variables

Tenure, age, course of study training, gifts and graces, gender, preferred learning styles, and previous role models of the local pastors may have been intervening variables. The researcher/designer attempted to neutralize these variables by the random placement of participants in covenant groups based upon geographical factors.

Data Analysis

The pre-test/post-test comparisons were analyzed by statisticians at the University of Kentucky. A statistician from the University of Kentucky was also consulted in developing the test.

CHAPTER 4

Findings from the Study

Pastors serving in this day and age are expected to do many things well. The leaders in Kentucky Methodism have prioritized the variety of expectations placed upon pastors by defining the following four core competencies as essential for effective pastors: leading, teaching/preaching, equipping, and centering in Christ.

The purpose of this project was to develop, implement, and evaluate a replicable training model that increased the effectiveness of local pastors, particularly part-time local pastors, in the core competencies of equipping laity for ministry and centering in Jesus Christ. Similar follow-up segments will be presented to participants targeting the core competencies of leading and teaching/preaching.

The methodology for accomplishing this purpose was an evaluation study utilizing a quasi-experimental, nonequivalent control group. This research involved an experimental variable with intact groups. In addition, qualitative data were gathered through analysis of journal entries and post-treatment, unstructured, open-ended interviews with covenant group participants.

As previously noted, the population for this study was composed of thirty-five pastors and leaders who serve United Methodist Churches in the Prestonsburg District of the Kentucky Conference. These pastors and leaders included three full-time local pastors, twenty-six bi-vocational pastors, two student pastors, two certified lay speakers, and two clergy spouses in the process of exploring ministry as vocation.

Three research questions were addressed in this project (p. 14). Instrumentation included quantitative and qualitative analysis (pp. 23-24).

Quantitative analysis resulted from the quasi-experimental nonequivalent (pre-test and post-test) design. An identical pre-test and post-test was developed and given to the fifteen covenant group participants and twenty control group members. All fifteen of the covenant group participants completed both the pre-tests and post-tests and returned them to the researcher/designer. Two of the pre-test/post tests did not have matching codes and thus were not analyzed with the other thirteen.

Ten of the twenty members of the control group completed and returned pre-tests/post-tests to the researcher/designer. Two additional pre-tests and three post-tests were returned by pastors who either did not list a self-created code or listed codes that did not match with their counterparts. These pre-tests/post-tests were useless for analysis purposes.

The pre-test/post-test was designed specifically to measure the core competency of equipping laity for ministry. The questions correlated with the objectives of the six sessions. (See pages 67-74.)

As mentioned previously, statisticians from the University of Kentucky provided statistical analysis. The original proposal called for them to utilize repeated measures analysis of variance to test differences between the control and covenant groups. This statistical technique partitions variance in a distribution of scores according to separate sources of factors, testing for differences between means. Due to the small sample size, only two time points (pre-test and post-test), and distributions that are not normal, the statistician implemented a change in methodology. The final analysis utilized the nonparametric method when analyzing the datum. In addition, the nonparametric bivariate correlation using Spearman's correlation coefficient was employed to identify significant

changes between the pre-test/post-test responses for covenant group participants. Also, the Mann-Whitney test was used to see if differences of pre-tests and post-tests were significant between control and covenant groups. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

Qualitative feedback was received through journal reviews and interviews with covenant group participants. A retired United Methodist pastor (who had no other involvement with the project) conducted these reviews and interviews.

Group participants were asked to respond through regular journal entries to questions designed to provoke reflection upon the input of each session. At the conclusion of the study, the journals were reviewed and pertinent data summarized for the use of the researcher/designer. Nine of the fifteen participants provided journal entries to be used to determine qualitative data (Appendix I).

Similarly, additional qualitative data was garnered from post-treatment, unstructured, open-ended interviews with covenant pastors. Ten of the fourteen interviews were conducted face-to-face and four by telephone. One covenant group participant was unavailable for an interview. In each instance, the interviewer asked standardized questions pertaining to awareness, attitudes, values, and behaviors related to the core competency of equipping laity for ministry (Appendix J).

The following three research questions have set the parameters for the study. The findings related to these research questions will provide the structure for the remainder of this chapter.

1. What attitudes did the covenant and control group participants bring to the table

about laity in ministry prior to the intervention? What changes occurred in the attitudes of covenant group participants as compared to the control group following the intervention?

2. What biblical/theological understanding of laity in ministry characterized participants prior to the intervention? What changes occurred in the biblical/theological position of the covenant group participants as compared to the control group following the intervention?

3. What practices of lay ministry development emerged during the intervention process?

Changes in Attitudes

Pre-test/Post-test Analysis

Pre-test/post-test questions one through thirteen addressed attitudes regarding equipping laity for ministry. (The full questionnaire is found in Appendix G.) Two questions from this section showed a significant difference between the pre-test/post-test.

Question two refers to teaching spiritual formation disciplines as a first step in the equipping process. Statistical analysis showed a positive correlation of $p=.023$ in comparing pre-test/post-test responses to question two with the number of group sessions attended. This suggests that the intervention treatment resulted in an increase in awareness that teaching holy habits is foundational for equipping laity for ministry (Appendix K Table 4A).

The analysis of pre-test/post-test question number six measured and compared the potential that covenant and control group participants placed upon the value of the nominations and personnel committee. A significant difference of $p=.023$ was shown between the comparative pre-test/post-test responses of the control and covenant group

participants (Appendix K Table 4B). These results suggest that the intervention treatment raised the covenant group participants' awareness and understanding of the value of the nominations and personnel committee.

The researcher/designer did not ask for journals or interviews from the control group. Thus, the qualitative process utilized by the researcher/designer did not compare responses of the control group to those of the covenant group. However, the process did provide considerable data about changes in attitudes of the covenant group participants following the intervention treatment.

Journal categories

Summary categories three, ten, and eleven provided data related to changes in attitudes. These three categories emphasize the importance of teaching spiritual disciplines in equipping laity for ministry, analyzing strengths and weaknesses of current committees and developing a plan of action for the nominating process.

Journal category three ascertains an understanding among covenant group participants that the first step in equipping laity for ministry involves teaching the importance and skills of the regular practice of spiritual disciplines. Three of the participants discussed spiritual formation as the starting point for equipping laity. Two wholeheartedly endorsed this concept while the third compared the pros and cons of the approach.

One participant wrote, "People need a good, solid, biblical background of what a life with Christ means. As (they) use their skills and talents they reflect on it and then continue to study and pray so that they will be prepared for future times. Valid ministry is not possible without spiritual disciplines and a willingness for God to form you into His image. This is an extremely important foundational principle for those in leadership."

A similar viewpoint was stated by a second participant. "I agree that the starting point (for equipping laity) is spiritual formation. It is important to begin to develop a regular fellowship with the Lord before one begins to minister to others . . . Ministry without this relationship with God will leave one depleted in all areas."

The participant who questioned this principle commented, "(I am) not sure it is true in a universal and exclusive sense . . . It makes sense to build a firm foundation under a Christian and let their deeper, growing relationship to God be the springboard from which they launch out in ministry. That is probably the normal way. There are people on the fringes of our church or with a low level of commitment who for some reason are attracted to a ministry-- a volunteers-in-missions project or working with an after-school project and through that come to the desire to deepen their spiritual life--just the opposite of the statement above."

Journal categories ten and eleven analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the current practice of the nominating committee in the role of identifying, recruiting, training, and supporting. Category eleven also identified the development of a specific plan of action for the nominating process of the congregation.

Four of the nine journals suggested changed attitudes about the role of the nominations and personnel committee in equipping laity for ministry. The assessment of the present compared with plans for the future were particularly revealing.

One participant acknowledged, "The current process has no organized process . . . (The committee) meets once or twice a year." The participant continued, "The nominations and personnel committee will become an ongoing and effective working group by following the calendar." (This refers to the yearly timetable suggested by the

researcher/designer in the training intervention). “The group should be three or four people who are well informed about the congregation . . . and people who have the gifts and talents can be identified. It will require each member (of the nominations committee) to perform work assignments between scheduled sessions.”

A second participant described the current nominating process in dismal terms. “(Our nominating process is a) total weakness. (We) just fill the sheet with names.”

The vision for the future presented by this participant offered a sharp contrast. “We must get to the point of first having people on (the nominating committee) who seriously want to have ministries in the church that are 100% effective in ministering for Jesus in our world. By next year I plan on having a much more effective and Holy Spirit led committee. We are preparing as a church to be much more organized and effective in our process for recruiting, training, and supporting those interested in ministry.”

A third participant assessed current practice and future plans in a similar vein. “We have not done a good job . . . mostly because we had to do it for the records . . . (but) we have turned the corner . . . and are starting to get leaders that will take (it) seriously.”

The fourth participant described the present in contrast with hopes for the future as follows. “Our current nominating committee process falls extremely short of an effective process- once a year. Beginning (in January, we will) develop and or modify job descriptions for all the ministry areas. All year long, (we will) be on the lookout for new leaders. (We will) meet several times during the year.”

Interview questions

The first three interview questions related to changes in attitude. These highlighted self-evaluation of effectiveness prior to and following the intervention treatment and the importance of pastors equipping laity for ministry.

Interview question one asked “How important is it for pastors to equip laity for ministry?” Responses to this question made it clear that following the intervention treatment, a high value was placed by covenant group participants upon the pastors’ role of equipping laity for ministry. With one exception, all participants stated that it is crucial for pastors to equip laity for ministry. These colorful and descriptive responses included comments like:

“It is the life-blood of the ministry.”

“(It is) very, very important. I didn’t realize how important until I studied the biblical basis.”

“(It is) essential. If we don’t equip the laity we are not fulfilling the great commission.”

“(It is) most important, outside of one’s own spiritual life.”

“It is our primary goal. Laity are to learn how to help others, not sit like stones. Each person has a purpose, everyone has a ministry.”

“(It is) vitally important.”

The individual who was unconvinced of the importance of pastors in equipping laity believes that someone needs to train the people. “It is important for people to be trained, but the minister may not be the one to do all of it. Ministry is to be shared.”

Interview questions two and three utilized self-evaluations of the covenant group participants in regard to their growth in effectiveness in the core competency of equipping

laity for ministry (See Appendix J). Ten of the fourteen covenant group members who were interviewed indicated that their effectiveness in this competency had increased. The other four group members stated no change in their effectiveness, though one of the four indicated that he/she now had a broader view and more tools to use than prior to the intervention treatment. Another of the four indicated continued frustration in receiving cooperation from his/her people to serve in ministry roles.

Those who indicated that they had experienced significant growth contributed their changes in attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors to increased awareness and new tools for equipping laity. One group member stated, "I was made aware of a lot of things about how to equip laity and how important it is. We get so preoccupied that we don't stop long enough to see or get a chance to reflect on what's been done or can be done."

A second group member said, "I tried to do everything. I received information about organizing and the nominations committee. Now I have a better understanding and handles on delegation and expectations."

Comments from a third participant were similar. "The job was more overwhelming before the covenant group. I have found specific ways to go about training the laity. I can concentrate on it. The covenant group gave tools to make the job easier." This same individual continued in response to question four. "(The most important thing that I learned in covenant group was the) discussion about the committee on nominations and how to make it more effective. The calendar concept was very helpful. Before, it was a one-time thing. Now it covers the whole year and involves the whole ministry of the church."

Finally, the fourth participant shared with the interviewer, “It was so helpful to talk to (other) pastors to support me in my inexperience and to find materials to relate to others in the church. These helped me to help the people to understand they have a ministry and how they can do it.”

Changes in Biblical/Theological Understandings

Pre-test/Post-test Analysis

Pre-test/post-test questions three, four, twelve, and twenty-three through twenty-eight addressed biblical/theological understandings of the covenant group participants prior to and following the intervention (See Appendix G). Statistical analysis showed no significant difference between the pre-test/post-test responses to these questions of the control and covenant group participants. Likewise, the intervention treatment did not bring any significant changes between the pre-test/post-test responses for covenant group participants.

The researcher utilized responses found in the journals and interviews to gather qualitative data related to biblical/theological understandings. The researcher/designer did not ask control group participants to provide qualitative data through journal entries and interviews.

Journal categories

Summary category one identified an increased awareness of the importance of equipping laity for ministry. For instance, five of the journals included biblical/theological statements about laity in ministry. Each of these entries reflected upon a dimension of the biblical/theological teaching content presented during the intervention treatment.

One participant commented, “The Scriptures . . . clearly show that all believers are called to be in ministry . . . The work of the church is a team approach . . . using their own particular gifts to further God’s work, to reach the unsaved. Jesus set the example in His discipling. Paul mentored several in the ministry.”

Another participant focused on Jesus as our role model for the practice of equipping people for ministry. “People become aware of who they are in Christ (kingdom of priests, etc.) and what ministry means as we model the lifestyle of Jesus.”

A third individual stated that the ideas are not new to him/her and thus the “studies have (not) had much effect . . . They have only brought (the emphasis) into the forefront.”

A fourth journal included an entry that discussed Moses and Jesus as leaders who “modeled giving leadership to others . . . [Also] in Ephesians 4:11-16 we are told to equip people for ministry . . . It is time to give it (ministry) away to those God wants to do his ministry in the world.”

The final participant to include a biblical/theological basis for equipping laity wrote emphatically, “The biblical basis for laity points repeatedly to recognizing God’s calling on peoples’ lives, and to the step(s) we are to take. We should listen closely to the voice of God, and equip them through studies and allowing them to grow by working within the different offices within the church. God calls the whole people of God to be in ministry.”

Interview questions

Interview questions one, four, and five resulted in qualitative datum related to biblical and theological understandings (See Appendix J). Responses pertained to a biblical basis for equipping laity for ministry.

Four of the fourteen covenant group participants interviewed alluded to a biblical basis as support for the high value that they placed upon equipping laity for ministry. Each example cited reflected upon a passage reviewed in session one of the intervention treatment.

One participant said, “The Jethro principle is important (Exodus 18:13-27). (Pastors) need to let the people experience the joy of God’s blessings coming through them.”

“It is our primary goal . . . Each person has a purpose, everyone has a ministry.”

“If we do not equip the laity we are not fulfilling the great commission. They (laity) are ministers.”

“(I) didn’t realize how important (it is for pastors to equip laity for ministry) until I studied the biblical basis, etc. Pastors cannot do it alone.”

A biblical/theological rationale translated into current practices of ministry in at least two instances. One individual said, “(I) teach the importance of good Bible Study at the beginning of each day . . . to put God first.”

The second individual responded in a similar manner. (The most important thing that I learned in the covenant group was) “spiritual formation, the process of being changed into the image of Christ.”

Changes in behaviors

Pre-test/Post-test Analysis

Pre-test/post-test questions fourteen through seventeen targeted changes in behavior. Statistical analysis identified significant correlation with the number of group sessions attended by covenant participants in comparing pre-test/post-test responses to questions fourteen, fifteen and seventeen. Question fourteen showed a p-value = .039. The p-value

of question fifteen = .025. Question seventeen indicated p-value = .023 (Appendix K Table 4A).

Responses to questions fourteen through sixteen indicated no significant change between the covenant and control groups. Question seventeen showed p-value = .047 (Appendix K Table 4B).

Data for this research question also surfaced from responses to journal categories four through nine (Appendix I) and interview questions three, five and six (Appendix J). These categories and questions addressed behaviors of lay ministries developed during the intervention training.

Journal categories

Three covenant group participants indicated in their journals that they were involved in new discipling relationships. Another group member implied that he/she planned to be more intentional in building those types of relationships.

Also, three journals reflected the practice of talking with others about ideas presented through the covenant group sessions. One of the three indicated that this was not a new practice to him/her.

None of the covenant group participants indicated that they have pursued further reading in the areas of equipping laity and spiritual formation. Three of the group members did write of a plan to read from the bibliography list in the future.

One covenant member described how he/she was involved in casting a vision for equipping laity in their church. Three others wrote that they planned to do this in the future. Another individual requested more information and training on how to cast a vision.

Teaching the basics of spiritual formation (holy habits) was a recurrent practice described in the journals. One individual outlined two existing Bible study and Sunday School groups in his/her church. He/she expressed discouragement that men in his/her congregation are not drawn to these types of groups.

Two other participants described spiritual formation training opportunities that have developed in their churches recently. Another pastor wrote of plans to start such a class. Four other group members commented on their dreams of offering these types of groups in their churches.

Finally specific descriptions of the pastor's promotion of a recent district training event received attention in seven of the nine journals. One of the seven pastors acknowledged discouragement at the lack of response to the opportunity.

Interview Questions

Interview question three asked for a self-evaluation of covenant group participants that compared effectiveness in the equipping competency prior to and following the intervention treatment. Question five asked that covenant group participants name ways in which they were currently equipping laity for ministry. Question six focused on next steps in equipping laity for ministry.

Ten of the fourteen covenant group members who were interviewed indicated that their effectiveness in this competency had increased. The other four group members stated no change in their effectiveness, though one of the four indicated that he/she now had a broader view and more tools to use than prior to the intervention treatment. Another of the four indicated continued frustration in receiving cooperation from his/her people in serving in ministry roles.

Four of the participants perceived that their competency levels had increased significantly. Two of these increased from 2 to 4 on a Likert scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). The other two rated themselves at 2.5 prior to the intervention treatment and at 4 following the course.

Three participants described behavior changes that had taken place in their lives as a result of the intervention treatment. These new behaviors included: (a) helping the people to understand that they have a ministry and how they can do it; (b) helping the nominations committee to focus on the total picture; and (c) requiring regular meetings of the outreach and worship committees.

Every covenant group participant listed ways in which he/she equipped laity for ministry. The examples given included: starting discipleship groups, using effective recruitment methods, affirming volunteers, organizing committees more effectively, and offering teacher training sessions.

Every participant had a vision of his/her next steps in equipping laity for ministry. Though some visions included more than one category, the basic categories and the number of responses in each were training (7), discipleship (4), and empowering (2).

Variables

The independent variable of this research project was the series of monthly covenant group sessions. The dependent variables of this study were the cognitive and affective changes of covenant group participants in the core competency of equipping laity for ministry.

A source of bias in this project was the participation of two of the covenant group pastors in the Kentucky Annual Conference Purpose-Driven Church pilot project. This

project was developed in conjunction with Saddleback Church, Church Resource Ministries and the Kentucky Annual Conference. The nine-month experience included an emphasis on equipping laity.

A similar variable was the participation of three of the covenant group members and ten control group members in a course of study class offered in the district entitled “Christian Education for Congregational Development.” Again, equipping laity for ministry was an aspect in the course.

A third variable was the covenant group facilitators, all three of whom brought unique strengths to the process. The researcher/designer tried to temper this variable by giving mentors similar content and instructions prior to the covenant group sessions.

Tenure, age, educational background, course of study training, gifts and graces, gender, preferred learning styles, and previous role models of the local pastors may also have been intervening variables. These variables were neutralized by the random placement of participants in covenant groups based upon geographical factors.

A Serendipitous Finding

The statistical analysis showed no difference between the arithmetic means of the covenant and control groups. The statistician then looked at the total difference of pre-test/post-test results, considering as one group the experimental and control groups. Question nineteen (that asks if participants practice a daily devotional time with God) showed a significant difference of .047. The researcher/designer hypothesizes that raising this question in the original survey increased awareness in the control and covenant group participants of the importance of having a devotional time with God. The implications of this and other findings will be discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 5

Summary and Conclusions

Summary

Changes in attitudes

This study verifies that participation in the intervention treatment resulted in an increase in effectiveness related to the core competency of equipping laity for ministry. Awareness and attitudes were particularly affected.

Changes in biblical/theological understandings

The statistical analysis showed no significant difference between the pre-test/post-test responses of control and covenant group participants to questions related to biblical/theological understandings. Neither did the intervention treatment bring any significant changes between the pre-test/post-test responses for covenant group participants.

However, qualitative data did provide evidence that the intervention treatment affected the biblical/theological understandings of covenant group participants. This data was identified through the journals and interviews.

Five of the nine journals included biblical/theological statements about laity in ministry. In every instance these biblical/theological statements assimilated material presented in the teaching session.

Similarly, allusions were made by four participants to a biblical basis as support for the high value that they placed upon equipping laity for ministry. In addition, one participant wrote that the most important thing he/she learned in the covenant group was “spiritual formation, the process of being changed into the image of God.”

Though some changes occurred in the biblical/theological understandings of laity in ministry, covenant group members did not demonstrate a solid grasp of the subject matter. The one teaching session that focused on the topic was helpful background, but insufficient to accomplish the goal of providing a strong biblical basis for equipping laity for ministry. Applying Jane Vella's recommendation of reinforcement for adult learners (see p. 56) would be helpful in improving this design flaw. Future learners would benefit from an adjustment to allow for reinforcement of the biblical basis of equipping laity.

Changes in behavior

Though some reports of behavior changes were evident, a longer study would be necessary to witness significant changes in behavior. Pre-test/post-test questions fourteen and fifteen identified indicators of general behavior demonstrated by the participants. Questions sixteen and seventeen addressed long-range behavior.

In comparing pre-test/post-test responses to questions fourteen, fifteen and seventeen, statistical analysis showed a significant correlation with the number of group sessions attended by covenant participants. No significant change was shown between the covenant and control groups.

Similarly, though a minority of journal entries described changed behavior following the intervention series, most of the journal reflections indicated plans for future changes. These comments reflected intended behavior, as the pastors needed a longer period of time to demonstrate significant behavior changes in this aspect of the core competency.

The interviews included a self-evaluation comparing covenant group participants' competency in the area of equipping laity for ministry prior to and following the intervention. Ten of fourteen covenant group members indicated that their competency

levels had grown. Four participants rated their growth increase as high as 1½ to 2 points on a Likert scale of 1 to 5.

Every group participant listed equipping behaviors that he/she was currently using. When asked about next steps, each participant articulated a vision for the future.

In summary, the intervention treatment affected the behavior of participants. However, six months is too short of a time period to reach the full potential for changed behavior. A research project worthy of future study would test for changed behavior over a longer period of time.

General Conclusions Drawn From This Study

How-tos are important follow-up to theory.

The self-evaluation by covenant group pastors linked their new skills and tools with increased effectiveness in equipping laity for ministry. They had been introduced to these concepts through license to preach school and course of study classes. However they needed assistance in making the leap from the biblical and theological foundational understanding to the practical application in their local churches.

All but two of the participants had either completed or were participating in the course of study. Many of them did their course of study work through a satellite of Candler School of Theology, (Appalachian Local Pastors' School). When asked if ALPS included a focus on equipping laity, coordinator Ed LeMaster stated, "Yes. For instance, a goal in the course on congregational development is for each pastor to leave the congregation stronger than when he/she arrived" (telephone interview, December 7 1999).

Raising awareness and changing attitudes are building blocks for the core competency of equipping laity. The covenant group setting reinforced the equipping values taught in

the course of study. In addition, a how-to methodology was presented and modeled for participants. They had the opportunity to witness first-hand the steps of identifying, recruiting, training, and supporting volunteers. They also experienced curriculum that was designed to equip Christians young in the faith in the basics of spiritual formation.

Adequate Time is required to implement behavior changes.

This study demonstrated that six months of time is insufficient to measure changed behaviors in participants. Several factors contributed to this reality.

First, the timing of the nominating work in participating churches coincided with the beginning and middle segments of the training sessions. The pressure was on for pastors to produce results immediately and thus behavior changes were risky and difficult to implement.

Secondly, the shift in orientation to the nominating process as presented by this intervention treatment was a radical change for the covenant group pastors. Changes of this magnitude require time to implement, particularly when dealing with a group that has the potential power and status of the nominations and personnel committee. Throughout the intervention treatment, the researcher/designer encouraged the pastors to demonstrate patience in implementing this process. She projected that a three-to five-year period would be required to fully institute a system that thoroughly addressed the components of identifying, recruiting, training, and supporting volunteer leaders.

It would be fruitful for further research and reinforcement to be done with the participants in these covenant groups. An opportunity to do that will be presented to the researcher/designer and mentors through the continuation of the covenant groups with a new focus on teaching and preaching. Though the emphasis will be on a topic other than

equipping laity, the researcher/designer will include occasional reinforcement segments on the equipping competency. These reinforcement segments will range from references to presentations. Continued attention to the theme of equipping laity will be critical to permanent behavior changes in participants.

It would be revealing for the researcher/designer to continue to measure behavior changes in covenant group participants for a three-year period. An annual evaluation assessing behavior changes would be an invaluable measure of long-range effectiveness of the intervention treatment.

Many bi-vocational pastors are hungry for fellowship and support from colleagues.

The fellowship and support from other covenant group members were highly valued by the participants. In fact, several participants were drawn to the covenant group experience for a reason other than the researcher/designer's primary objective of structuring a forum in which to assist pastors in the further development of the core competencies. For these individuals the opportunity to meet regularly with other local pastors was more significant than the content of the sessions.

This desire for relationship with colleagues became evident to the researcher/designer in the opening session. The Pikeville covenant group composite of responses was representative of all groups. When asked to share what they hoped to gain from the experience, the participants in the Pikeville covenant group stated three categories of goals. Two of the three categories included affiliation needs. These two categories were:

(1) "to gain insight about self, grow personally, help the congregation (that I serve), and be encouraged by interaction in the group."

(2) “to develop a closer relationship between pastors and churches. To bond more closely.”

This dynamic of appreciating collegial fellowship and support continued throughout the six sessions. This was verified by the written evaluation that each participant completed at the conclusion of the sessions. The most common responses to the question, “What was most helpful about this session?” remained consistently “the group discussion” and “fellowship.” Though the number of these responses varied from session to session, they were present in every session except for the workshop setting in which all three of the covenant groups met together. The nature of that session was unique with a leader from outside of the district sharing on the topic, “Ministry by Multiplication.” The participants were highly satisfied with the session but did not mention the discussion and fellowship aspects in their evaluations.

Part-time local pastors often find themselves in a difficult dilemma. Since many of them are bi-vocational, their ministry time is very limited. Thus, they tend to focus this time solely in the highly visible tasks of preaching/teaching and visitation. They perceive that their capacity to devote sufficient time to these priorities is diminished when they become involved in meetings and fellowship with other pastors. The result is that local pastors often work in isolation with little time for networking or mentoring relationships.

Yet the networking/mentoring relationships are essential for the growth and health of pastors. Sondra Higgins Matthaei defined faith-mentoring as “a nurturing relationship that facilitates the meaning-making, meaning-discerning activity of life in response to God”

(15). Making and discerning meaning is central to Christian growth!

The desire of many local pastors in the Prestonsburg District to receive this type of networking and mentoring was evident from their responses to the voluntary opportunity to participate in this research project. Of the thirty-five local pastors and church leaders who were invited to participate in the covenant groups, fifteen responded affirmatively. In addition, two spouses of local pastors expressed an interest in participating in the groups with their husbands. Both of these two individuals were in the candidacy process for ordained ministry.

Two of the seventeen original participants dropped out after one session due to time constraints that prevented them from meeting with the group at the designated time. In both of these instances, the participants who dropped out made it clear to the researcher/designer that though the group met an important need for them, their time schedules made it impossible for them to continue.

The participants ranged in age and experience. The youngest participants were in their thirties and the oldest was retirement age. The pastor with the least experience was in her first year of service in comparison to the most experienced pastor who had served as a pastor for seventeen years.

Teaching the basics helps the leader to practice the basics.

The curriculum designed for this study emphasized that the first step in equipping laity for ministry involves teaching the spiritual disciplines. The group invested approximately fifty percent of each session experiencing a curriculum that introduced the basics of prayer, Scripture reading, and journaling. The intent behind this design was to train participants to teach this curriculum in their own settings to Christians young in the faith. Though the covenant group members were mature Christians who had practiced the

spiritual disciplines for many years, half of them indicated in the interviews that this aspect of the covenant group sessions affected their personal attitudes and practices regarding regular immersion in the spiritual disciplines.

This by-product of the covenant group sessions was validated by the following comments given in response to the interview question, “Have your personal practices of prayer, journaling, studying Scripture, and finding time to work on your relationship with God changed during the past six months? If so, how and why?” The first two responses cited below describe a change in behavior and the remaining five are indicative of attitudinal changes. These responses particularly resonate with Steve Martyn’s challenging statement that the “Lord of the Church does not call us to . . . give our devotional time away!” (see p. 29).

1. “(I) read and study God’s Word more consistently. The group was a reminder and renewed my commitment to my devotions.”
2. “(I am) not studying as hard. (I am) more comfortable with the relationship with Christ, rather than following a legalistic requirement of so much of this and so much of that.”
3. “Yes. (I) see much more the importance of time for personal spiritual formation, spiritual time for myself. (I) need to study and grow, not just study for others.”
4. “Yes/no. I have journaled at times, (writing) prayers. Then I become swamped with family, professional and church responsibilities. Time gets stolen. (I) have special helps for devotional times.”
5. No--(but it) made me feel guilty. (I) will be better.”

6. “Not much. (I) have done some journaling a few times in the past, but with short success. The group has inspired me in my need to study and continue to develop a more disciplined and structured time for study and preparation. (I) need to find more time.”

7. My priorities have changed. (I have) made (my) mind up that some things have to go in order to give time to renewing my personal life and devotional life.”

Role modeling is a powerful teaching tool.

Three of the participants indicated in the interviews that much of their learning came from observing the researcher/designer as a role model. One participant said, “(My next step in equipping laity for ministry is to offer) a spiritual formation class. (I) can follow Debbie’s modeling in the covenant group.” Another commented, “(The positive impact of the covenant group) was the reinforcement of the way to grow a group with love. (I) saw the group as a model in leader’s support despite (the) diversity of (the) group. Love broke down barriers and modeled how to break down barriers between clergy and laity.” The third individual stated, “She modeled for us our role as equippers.”

Role modeling is the first step in a five-step process of developing leaders (see page 62). It is an important step, particularly for demonstrating another way of being and leading.

A Serendipitous Conclusion

When the statistician found no difference between the means of the covenant and control groups, she looked at the total difference of pre-test/post-test results. She discovered that question nineteen, which dealt with personal devotional practices, showed a significant positive difference for all participants.

Though further research would be needed to determine the meaning of this occurrence, the researcher/designer hypothesizes that raising the question in the pre-test of the importance of having a devotional time with God heightened awareness in the control and covenant group participants. This evoked the significant level of change in the participants' devotional habits.

Implications of the Study

Training will result in positive changes in competency development.

Chapter one of this project began with an excerpt from Bishop Robert C. Morgan's 2020 vision statement for Kentucky Methodism in relationship to effective pastoral leaders in every congregation and the laity in ministry in their communities and the world. To accomplish this, all pastors, including those who are bi-vocational, must demonstrate competencies in four areas: teaching/preaching, leading, centering in Christ, and equipping laity for ministry.

This study offers evidence that a six-month training series in the covenant group context effected positive changes in the awareness and attitudes of the participants toward the targeted core competencies. It can be expected that positive changes will also occur in the other core competencies as they become central subject matter in the covenant groups.

Local pastors will respond to invitations to participate in learning opportunities that are feasible for them to attend.

Part-time and full-time local pastors are noticeably absent at district meetings and training events. However, in this study 42 percent of the part-time and full-time local pastors in the district made and fulfilled a six-month commitment to monthly covenant group meetings.

Relevant content attracts participants. Fellowship bonds group members.

The characteristics of Warren Hartman's study group were evident in the covenant groups (see pp. 47-48). Though fellowship was the bond that held the covenant groups together, the group members would have been less likely to participate in a setting that was designed primarily for fellowship. Content that enhanced the skills of local pastors drew them to the covenant group. The fellowship was a by-product that served as glue to help them complete the time-consuming process.

Covenant groups provide relevance, accountability, and fellowship.

Covenant group members showed a high commitment to attending sessions. 4 people attended every session, 7 were present at 5 sessions, 1 attended 4 sessions, 1 attended 3 sessions and 1 attended 2 sessions.

This is a remarkable level of participation in comparison to the population's attendance at other district functions. The researcher/designer identified three factors that contributed to this high commitment level to covenant group meetings.

1. Covenant group members found the sessions to be relevant to their ministry. They could take what they learned home with them to apply in their particular contexts!
2. The development of relationships with colleagues heightened the commitment to the groups. The relationships grew quickly; in some instances, they developed instantaneously. Group members looked forward to being together at the sessions.
3. The small group size increased the accountability of participants to the covenant groups. Group members realized that their absences would adversely affect other participants.

Role modeling is strengthened by occasional pauses for reflection.

Feedback from covenant group members showed that some of them had keen awareness of the effect of the researcher/designer's role modeling in this process. It would be helpful in future sessions to draw upon these types of insights from participants. This could be accompanied by occasionally pushing the pause button to invite participants to reflect upon what they have observed in the leader's role modeling. The following kinds of questions could be teaching tools. Was the role modeling effective? How do you respond to it? What was the intent behind the behavior? When would it be appropriate for you to display a similar behavior in your leadership roles?

Accountability motivates pastors to be faithful in our devotional practices.

It follows that pastors would benefit from regular questions about personal devotional practices. For instance, the district superintendent could ask this question as a part of the annual consultation with pastors. Similarly, pastors could covenant to ask this question of mentors and soul friends on a regular basis.

Pastors know the value of practicing the spiritual disciplines. However, the many demands upon time often squeeze out this crucial function to make room for more visible but less important tasks. Accountability helps to keep the practice of spiritual formation a priority for pastors.

Limitations

The size of the population sample for this study was problematic. It was difficult to draw conclusions from quantitative data for only thirty-five people, twenty of whom were in the control group and fifteen in the covenant group.

Also, the study could have been strengthened by a longer period of time in which to observe behavior changes. Though it appears that some behavior changes occurred, this perception could be verified by a longitudinal study that doubled the length of the observation period.

Contribution to Research Methodology

This study contributes to research methodology in the area of developing effective leadership among part-time and full-time local pastors. It indicates that a monthly covenant group design has the potential to strengthen the skills and core competencies of local pastors. It also suggests that there may be an openness among bi-vocational pastors across the country to participate in covenant group sessions that meet their hunger for fellowship and competency development.

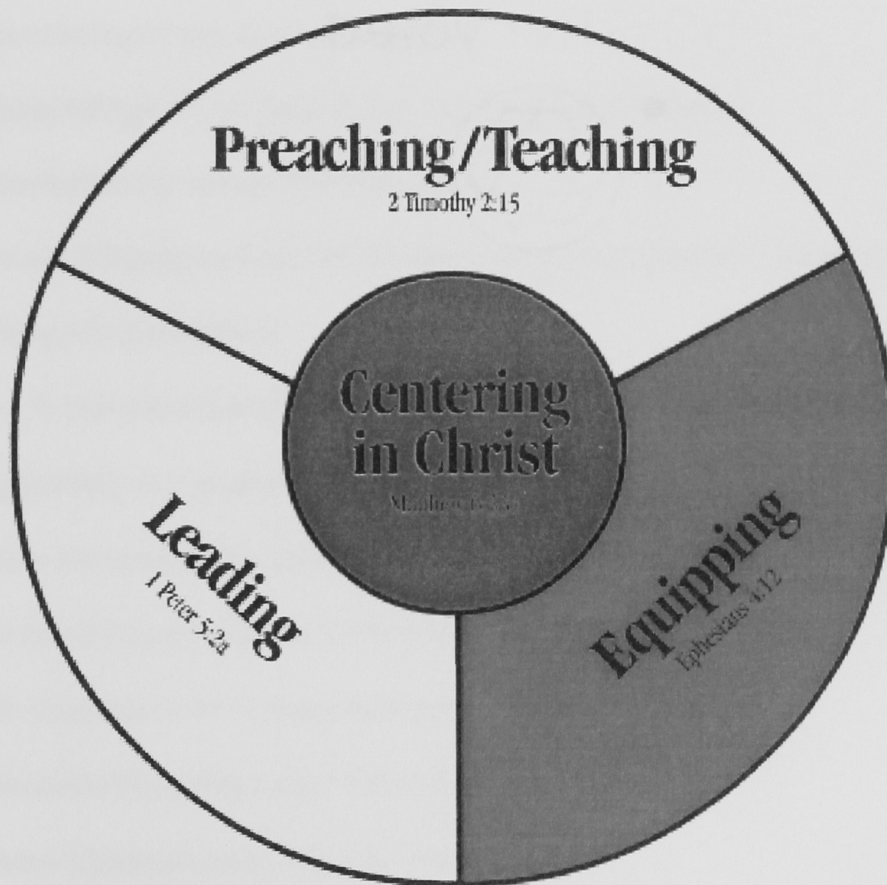
Further Research

Due to the small sample, the quantitative aspect of this project was helpful only as a preliminary pilot study for further research. The conclusions of the next study would be strengthened by targeting a substantially larger population. This could include part-time and full-time pastors in an entire conference instead of a district. The larger geographic area and number of covenant groups would require that the mentors serve as sole leaders of the covenant groups. With the exception of variations in sample group size and mentors' roles, it would be possible to replicate the rest of this project.

Another study would also be necessary to test the researcher/designer's preliminary hypothesis that raising the question of regular devotional times in the original survey increased awareness in the control and covenant group participants of the importance of having a devotional time with God.

APPENDIX A

Effective Pastoral Leaders Core Competencies



Appendix B

Outline of Three Year Cycle for Covenant Groups

Year 1--Equipping Laity for Ministry

The objective of year one is to address the following topics in a six-month training period.

May--Laity in Ministry: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Basis

Introduction of a sample study course to be taught to young Christians on spiritual disciplines

June--Introducing Group Spiritual Direction

Defining the task of the Nominations and Personnel Committee

July-- Curriculum for young Christians: Prayer

How-tos of Equipping Laity for Ministry: Identifying Potential Volunteers and Defining Job Descriptions

August-- A field trip presentation from David Calhoun, a pastor who has effectively equipped laity in a small membership church setting

September--Curriculum for Young Christians: Journaling

How-tos of Equipping Laity for Ministry: Identifying and Recruiting

October--Curriculum for Young Christians: Meditative Bible Study

How-tos of Equipping Laity: Supporting and Training

December-- Christmas party, wrap-up, next steps

Year 2-- Teaching and Preaching/Worship

The objective of year two is to address the following topics in two six-month segments.

Segment One--Teaching

The teaching segment will be taught from February through May with four-hour segments in April and May. The extended length will be appropriate for the April and May topics.

February--A Theology of Teaching

March-- Methods of Teaching

April--Basic Beliefs (four hours)

May-- Curriculum Resources, including Disciple Bible Study (four hours)

Segment Two--Preaching and Worship

The Preaching/Worship segment will be taught from June through November.

June--A Theology of Preaching and Worship

Experiential-based worship and preaching

July--Inductive Preaching

August--Deductive Preaching

September--Storytelling as Preaching

October--Holy Communion

November--Baptism

December--Christmas Party, wrap-up, next steps

Year 3--Leadership

The objective of year three is to address the following topics in twelve sessions.

January--Theology of leadership

February--Servant leadership

March--Inventories of leadership styles

April--Power over, power within, and power with

May--Understanding group dynamics and how they affect leadership

June--A group is born: a self-analysis of the covenant group

July--Administrative skills that make or break a leader: Understanding your mission and setting goals

August--Administrative skills that make or break a leader: time management

September--Interpersonal skills: part 1

October--Interpersonal skills: part 2

November--Case studies of some effective leaders in Kentucky Methodism

December--Wrap-up, celebration of completion of the three-year course and sending forth

Appendix C

Recruitment Memo to Potential Pastors for Covenant Groups

February 23, 1999

To: Prestonsburg District Local Pastors
From: Debbie

Greetings from the Prestonsburg District Office. I trust that all is going well with you during this Lenten season.

I am writing to invite you to be a part of a small covenant group experience that will be launched in the Prestonsburg District in April or May of this year. The purpose of each covenant group is twofold. First, we will focus on enhancing the following core competencies for pastors as set forth by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry: equipping laity, preaching and teaching, leading and staying centered in Christ. Secondly, we will provide support and encouragement for one another as we minister together in the Prestonsburg District.

I am developing a three-year cycle for our covenant groups. The first year will emphasize equipping laity for ministry. It will be the subject of my dissertation project as I work to complete my D. Min. degree at Asbury Theological Seminary.

Each covenant group will meet one Sunday afternoon a month at a mutually convenient site. Participants will include 4-5 local pastors, a full connection elder and me. In addition to a content presentation by me, our two hours a month together will include the opportunity to share ideas, joys, and frustrations related to the topic of the day.

Many of you have indicated that you are interested in the covenant groups. I also understand that due to time limitations and other factors some of you will be unavailable to participate in this process. If you do not choose to participate in a covenant group, will you consider anonymously completing four to five short questionnaires during the next several months? Comparing the responses of nonparticipants with the responses of those who are in the covenant groups will help me to measure the effectiveness of the project.

Persons choosing to participate in the covenant groups will be asked to attend an orientation session at Bowman Memorial in Hazard on Saturday, March 20. More details on that session will follow. Thank you for considering this opportunity. I look forward to continued ministry together with each of you in the coming year.

Please check all applicable responses and return today to:

Debbie Wallace-Padgett
343 East Court Street
Prestonsburg, KY 41653

Yes, I am interested in being in a covenant group that meets one Sunday afternoon a month from 2:00- 4:00 p.m. My preferred meeting place is: _____
(Louisa, Prestonsburg, Pikeville)

Yes, I will attend the orientation meeting for the covenant group on Saturday, March 20 in Hazard, KY.

No, I am unable to be in a covenant group.

Though I am unable to be in a covenant group, I will complete and return the brief questionnaires mailed to me periodically throughout this process.

Name _____

Appendix D

Letters related to developing pre-test/post-test

April 12, 1999

To: District Superintendents
From: Debbie Wallace-Padgett

Enclosed you will find a survey that will take approximately ten minutes to complete. It is an evaluation tool that I have developed for a research project to be launched in the Prestonsburg District in mid-May of this year.

The survey is designed to measure effectiveness in the core competency of equipping laity in ministry. I am piloting this survey with two groups of ministers, those who are novices in equipping laity for ministry and those who are experts at equipping laity in ministry. You are in my "expert" category.

Since you have a high degree of skill in the equipping competency, your willingness to pilot test this survey will be very helpful. Would you consider completing the survey and returning it to me this week while we are here in Grand Rapids? Within two weeks I will mail you this same survey to complete and return to me again. By comparing the results of your two completed surveys, I will be able to test the validity and reliability of the survey. Please note that the self-created code at the beginning of the survey will insure anonymity.

Thank you very much for your help with this. Blessings on you in all that you do.

April 24, 1999

To: Part-time local pastors of the Kentucky Annual Conference
From: Debbie Wallace-Padgett, Prestonsburg District Superintendent

Greetings from Prestonsburg Kentucky! I trust that all is going well with you in this Easter season.

Enclosed you will find a survey that will take approximately ten minutes to complete. It is an evaluation tool that I have developed for a research project to be launched in the Prestonsburg District in mid-May of this year.

The survey is designed to measure effectiveness in the core competency of equipping laity in ministry. I am piloting this survey with three groups of ministers, including part-time local pastors of the Kentucky Annual Conference. Please note that the self-created code at the beginning of the survey will insure anonymity.

Would you consider completing the survey and returning it to me in the self-addressed enclosed envelope as soon as possible? The results will assist me in testing the validity and reliability of the survey. Thank you very much for your help with this. Blessings on you in all that you do.

Second letter mailed to District Superintendents and Christian Educators to pilot test the project

Dear friend,

Greetings from Prestonsburg, Kentucky.

Two weeks ago you received a survey that I am developing as an evaluation tool for a research project to be launched in the Prestonsburg District in mid-May. I am piloting this survey to test its validity and reliability. To complete the pilot, I need to compare the responses of the identical test taken by individuals twice within a two-week period. The self-created code at the beginning of the survey will ensure anonymity, while allowing me to compare responses.

Would you consider completing the enclosed survey and return it to me in the self-addressed enclosed envelope as soon as possible? Thank you so much for your help with this project.

Shalom,

Debbie

Appendix E

Follow-up letter to pastors who committed to a covenant group

May 4, 1999

To: Covenant Group participants
From: Debbie Wallace-Padgett

Dear friends,

I am very excited about the covenant groups that are being formed in the Prestonsburg District. My understanding is that you plan to be involved in one of these groups. Each covenant group will meet from 2-4 p.m. on one Sunday afternoon a month throughout 1999. The launch dates and groupings are listed below. Please be in touch with me if you have questions or if the launch date to which your group has been assigned does not work with your calendar.

Thanks for your interest in a covenant group. My expectation is that all of us will benefit immensely from the networking, support and learning that will occur through this experience. Unless I hear from you otherwise, I will look forward to seeing you at our initial round of covenant meetings.

Covenant Group Participants

Louisa group at Louisa First UMC on Second Sunday of month. Due to Annual Conference, the June session will be on June 20.

Facilitator- Don Barnett

Participants: Kate Dilley, James Booth, Brad Tackett, Joe Sublett, Howard Bowen,

Pikeville group at Pikeville First UMC on fourth Sunday of month beginning May 23.

Facilitator: Ernie Carmicle

Participants: Geoffrey and Alice Tackett, Pam Ison, Levi Coleman, Randy Blackburn, Kaminski Robinson, Darrel Griffin, Dennis Love, and Donald Riggs.

Prestonsburg group at District Parsonage on First Sunday of Month beginning June 6.

Facilitator- Troy Poff

Participants: John and Karen Bunn, Bobby Isaac

Appendix F

A Memo to Prestonsburg District part-time local pastors not in a covenant group

To: Prestonsburg District Pastors who are completing surveys

From: Debbie Wallace-Padgett

Date: June 1, 1999

Subject: Surveys _____

Dear Friends,

Several months ago you received a letter from me about the covenant groups that are being formed in the Prestonsburg District. I asked you to consider either being a part of a covenant group or completing and returning to me several short surveys. These surveys will be completely anonymous. The purpose of this project is to help me to measure the effectiveness of the covenant group process in increasing the core competency of equipping laity for ministry.

Will you consider completing the enclosed survey and returning it to me in the self addressed envelope as soon as possible? At the end of the year I will mail you this same survey to complete and return to me again. The self-created code at the beginning of the survey will ensure anonymity while allowing me to compare responses.

Thank you so much for your help with this project. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Appendix G

Pre-test/Post-test

Date:

Self- Created Code: Please list the first letter of your mother's birth name and the last four digits of your Social Security Number.

Please circle the response to each question that most nearly represents your perspective.
5= strongly agree 4= agree 3= neither agree nor disagree 2= disagree 1 = strongly disagree.

Category 1: Awareness

1) The nominations and personnel committee generally should function year round.

5 4 3 2 1

2) A first step in equipping a lay person for ministry involves teaching him/her the holy habits of spiritual formation.

5 4 3 2 1

3) Ministry is a role fulfilled primarily by pastors.

5 4 3 2 1

4) Persons are most often commissioned to ministry at their baptism.

5 4 3 2 1

5) General information is usually best utilized in the church by keeping it to yourself to be used at the right time, in the right way.

5 4 3 2 1

Category 2: Attitudes

6) I feel that the work of the nominations and personnel committee is generally a waste of time.

5 4 3 2 1

7) I believe that the nominations and personnel committee has the potential to be one of the most influential committees in the church.

5 4 3 2 1

8) It is important that I provide hands-on leadership for most of the significant ministries in the church.

5 4 3 2 1

9) I need to be the central clearinghouse for most important decisions in the church.

5 4 3 2 1

(OVER)

2

10) I find recruitment to be one of the joys in ministry.

5 4 3 2 1

11) My motivation for involving laity in ministry is minimal.

5 4 3 2 1

12) I believe that most members of my church should be in ministry.

5 4 3 2 1

13) I believe that it is important for clergy to be skilled in the area of equipping laity for ministry.

5 4 3 2 1

Category 3: Behaviors

14) I am skilled in working with the nominations and personnel committee.

5 4 3 2 1

15) I often find it easier to handle large ministry tasks myself rather than to delegate them to another person.

5 4 3 2 1

16) The majority of members in the church that I pastor are involved in some kind of ministry.

5 4 3 2 1

17) I will probably offer a training workshop for Sunday School teachers and leaders in the congregation within the next year.

5 4 3 2 1

Category 4: Teaching the Spiritual Disciplines

18) I am skilled in teaching the spiritual disciplines of prayer, journaling, and Bible Study.

5 4 3 2 1

19) I have a daily devotional time with God.

5 4 3 2 1

20) My primary reason for studying the Bible is to learn more about God and Jesus.

5 4 3 2 1

21) I journal as a part of my walk with God.

5 4 3 2 1

22) I pray on a regular basis.

5 4 3 2 1

Category 5: Important information to know.

Please choose the answer that best reflects your response to each of the following questions.

23) The Protestant Reformation was a movement that:

- a) resulted in the availability of Bibles available to the masses.
- b) reclaimed the concept of the priesthood of all believers.
- c) a and b.

24) The Great Commission is intended as a directive for:

- a) all Christians.
- b) clergy.
- c) people with the gift of evangelism.

25) The Bible teaches that pastors are to:

- a) teach and preach.
- b) equip laity for ministry.
- c) both a and b.

26) Laity and clergy distinctions first surfaced:

- a) immediately following Jesus' death.
- b) at the Jerusalem Council.
- c) nearly two centuries after the birth of the church.

27) The priesthood of all believers refers to:

- a) the concept that every Christian is commissioned to be in ministry.
- b) a contemporary movement with the purpose of increasing volunteerism among church members.
- c) neither a nor b.

28) The New Reformation is:

- a) a contemporary movement that is reclaiming the priesthood of all believers.
- b) an effort to reform some of the corruption in today's church.
- c) neither a nor b

Post-test question for covenant group participants:

29) How many of the six covenant group sessions did you attend?

Appendix H--Session Notes

Session one

Laity in Ministry: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Basis

Preparation: VCR/TV, Bibles for each participant, nametags, pre-tests, pencils, journals, overhead projector, tables and chairs arranged in horseshoe shape, and refreshments.

Arrival: As each participant arrives, the group mentor will hand him/her a nametag, pencil, and pre-test. During the first ten minutes of the session, the pre-test will be completed by participants and collected by the covenant group mentor.

As participants complete the pre-test, they will be asked to find a partner and discuss the following:

1. Introduce yourselves to one another including name, place of service, other current vocation (if appropriate), and family information.
2. Share the most positive ministry experience that has happened to you this year.
3. Share the most frustrating ministry experience that has happened to you this year.
4. What do you hope to gain from participating in this covenant group?

Welcome: Welcome participants to covenant group.

Ask volunteers to share in the total group what they hope to gain from participating in this experience. The group mentor will make notes on the chalkboard as ideas are brainstormed.

Define the two-fold purpose of the Prestonsburg District clergy covenant groups:

1. to assist participants in further development of the core competency of equipping laity for ministry.
2. to provide mentoring relationships through the monthly covenant group experience.

Housekeeping: Distribute and discuss the six-month outline and schedule of class listed below for each group.

Pikeville Group: May 23, June 27, July 25, August 22, September 26, October 24

Prestonsburg Group: June 6, July 18, August 1, September 19, October 3, November 7

Louisa Group: June 20, July 11, August 8, September 12, October 10, November 14

Ground rules: Discuss ground rules of the covenant group.

1. Maintain confidentiality at all times.
2. Listen respectfully to each other, especially when in disagreement.
3. Plan to be present at every session.

Biblical Background--Equipping Laity for Ministry

Distribute handout found on pages 126-128 to participants. Research and discuss biblical background section in groups of three. Utilize pages 33-36 as resource material for total group discussion of this section.

Historical Background--Equipping Laity for Ministry

Give historical overview in five-minute lecture format based upon material found on pages 36-39. Instruct participants to sketch clergy/laity divisions during the last twenty years on appropriate section of handout for session one (127).

Theological Background-- Equipping Laity for Ministry

Lead a discussion utilizing questions found on theological understanding section of handout for session one. See pages 39-50 for background information.

Distribute and explain journals

“Journaling can be a wonderful means of enhancing learning. You are asked to make at least one journal entry a week during this six-month experience. These entries are to be

in response to take-home questions that are offered to you at the conclusion of each session.

In addition to enhancing learning, the journal will give you a record of your experience that will help you to evaluate your growth. This will be useful to you in preparation for a debriefing interview in November or December.

Finally, you will be asked to submit your journal anonymously to be reviewed at the conclusion of the six-month study. Prior to doing so, you are encouraged to cover or remove any entries that you are uncomfortable revealing. The purpose of the journal review is for pertinent data collection that will be of assistance in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the study. I commit to you that the data collection will be presented in an anonymous and sensitive way that will ensure no embarrassment or awkwardness.”

Assignment for session two

Distribute journal assignment for session two (129) and take home reading- a handout that consists of the section related to spiritual direction groups found on pages 42-50.

Evaluation of session one (130)

Handout for session one

Biblical Background

I. God calls the whole people of God to be in ministry. This statement includes three key concepts: the whole people of God, a call from God, and ministry.

A. Who are the whole people of God?

1. Exodus 19:6
2. Galatians 3:28-29
3. Ephesians 2:19
4. Other

B. What does it mean to be called into ministry?

1. Isaiah 43:1
2. I Corinthians 1:21-31
3. I Peter 2:9-10
4. II Timothy 1:9
5. Other

C. What does it mean to be in ministry?

1. Numbers 3:7
2. Matthew 27:55
3. Mark 12:28-34
4. Acts 6:4
5. Romans 15:66
6. Other

II. Whose responsibility is it to equip laity for ministry?

- A. Exodus 18:14ff
- B. Jesus' lifestyle
- C. Ephesians 4:11-12
- D. Actions of the Apostle Paul
- E. Other

Summarize to one another your biblical view of equipping laity for ministry.

Historical background

Based upon lecture notes, sketch clergy/laity divisions during the last twenty centuries.

Centuries Timeline

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Theological understanding

I. In triads, discuss the following questions.

- A. What is the meaning of the priesthood of all believers?
- B. God has graced all Christians with gifts.
- C. Paragraph 104 from The Book of Discipline 1996.

“The heart of Christian ministry is Christ’s ministry of outreaching love. Christian ministry is the expression of the mind and mission of Christ by a community of Christians that demonstrates a common life of gratitude and devotion, witness and service,

celebration and discipleship. All Christians are called to this ministry of servanthood in the world to the glory of God and for human fulfillment. The forms of this ministry are diverse in locale, in interest, and in denominational accent, yet always catholic in spirit and outreach.”

D. What does it mean to “prepare God’s people for works of service” (Ephesians 4:12).

II. Fill in the blanks from group discussion.

Main idea: The starting point in equipping laity is spiritual formation.

The need: See videotape segment, “Word on the Street”.

Secular people are those who “are not substantially informed by Christianity.

A majority of people in the United States are functionally secular.

Many of our church members are struggling to take first steps in spiritual formation.

The response: How do we equip Christians in spiritual formation?

Rick Warren’s Purpose Driven Church model:

membership to maturity to ministry to mission.

The primary task of Kentucky Methodism:

invite, relate, nurture, and send forth.

Conclusion: Step one to equipping laity is teaching spiritual formation.

Journal Assignment for Session Two

(to be distributed at conclusion of session one)

Week one: After reviewing notes from session segment on biblical background, write a two-paragraph description of the biblical basis for equipping laity for ministry.

Week two: Define “the priesthood of all believers.” How is this lived out in the lives of your people?

Week three: Reflect upon how this month’s session has affected your theology of equipping laity for ministry.

Week four: Evaluate the congruencies and incongruencies of your theology of equipping laity for ministry with your current practice.

Week five: Respond to the following statement. “The starting point for equipping laity for ministry is spiritual formation.”

Session two

First Steps in Spiritual Formation and

How-tos of Equipping Laity for Ministry

Preparation: Nametags, markers, journals and pre-test for any who missed the first session.

Arrival: As newcomers to the group arrive, they will be asked to complete the pre-test.

Spiritual Formation

Discuss responses to the journal reflections completed since the last session.

Review key point of session 1: The first step in equipping laity for ministry is spiritual formation. Effectiveness in ministry is directly correlated to relationship with Jesus Christ. As laity are equipped to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ, they serve Jesus more effectively.

Introduce the concept of spiritual formation through group spiritual direction. The session leader and mentor will role-play the assigned question/answer segment entitled “Equipping: Phase 1- Basic Spiritual Formation. (42-50). This will be followed by discussion about the process of group spiritual formation.

Equipping Laity for Ministry through the Nominations and Personnel Committee

Define the job description of the nominations and personnel committee.

Participants will be instructed to work with a partner in accomplishing the following two tasks.

Fill in the blanks on overhead transparency, “The task of the nominations and personnel committee is to (identify), (recruit), (train), and (support) charge conference elected leadership in the local church.

Develop a paragraph describing the role of the nominations and personnel committee.

Assignment for session three

Distribute journal assignment for session three (133) to all participants.

Evaluation of session two (134)

Journal Assignment for Session Three

(to be distributed at conclusion of session two)

Week one: Describe your response to the concept of group spiritual formation.

Develop a one-page plan of action defining a group spiritual formation class that would be feasible to offer in your congregation. What would be the purpose of the class? Who would you invite? When, where and how often would you meet? Who would lead the group process?

Week two: Define the role of the nominations and personnel committee.

Week three: Develop a monthly calendar to illustrate how the tasks of the nominations and personnel committee can best be accomplished in your church.

Week four: Analyze your current nominating process in comparison with the calendar you developed in response to week two instructions.

Week five: Prepare a one-page summary that describes a strategic and effective plan of action for the 1999 nominating process in your congregation.

Session three

Intercessory Prayer and Job Descriptions/ Identifying Volunteers

Preparation: Picture of Jesus praying in Gethsemane, reflective worship music, The Workbook of Intercessory Prayer by Maxie Dunnam, The Methodist Hymnal 1932, audiotape of the Lord's Prayer, a praying hands object, laminated copies of the Lord's Prayer for each participant, Celebration of Discipline (Foster 30-40), Spiritual Direction (Morneau 11-28), Sanctuary for Lent 1997 (Escamilla 34), and "The Praying Hands" (e-mail). The first seven days of Sanctuary for Lent 1997 will be assigned at the conclusion of the previous week's session.

Spiritual formation--intercessory prayer

The session will begin with a time of worship. Reflective music will be played as participants focus upon a picture of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Following the time of reflection, an opportunity for group intercessory prayers will be offered. Participants will be invited to name prayer concerns for the group to image before God. A moment of silence will follow each concern as the group lifts up to God their silent petitions for the individual or situation. The leader will break the silence with the words, "Lord, for this your child we pray." The group will respond, "God, we entrust this situation to your care." This segment of the session will end with the group forming a circle and singing, "Hear our prayer O Lord" The Methodist Hymnal 1932 596.

Leader input for this session will draw upon The Workbook of Intercessory Prayer (Dunnam 87-103), Celebration of Discipline (Foster 30-40), and Prayer (Foster 191-201).

1. Discuss the following definitions of intercessory prayer:
 - a. Intercessory Prayer is one dimension of prayer, that lifts to God our

concerns for other people and situations.

b. Henry Emerson Fosdick defines intercession as “the result of generous devotion, not logical analysis” (Dunnam 100).

c. “When we move from petition to intercession we are shifting our center of gravity from our own needs to the needs and concerns of others. Intercessory Prayer is selfless prayer, even self-giving prayer” (Foster Prayer 191).

2. Examine the following passages to discover two great role models of intercessory prayer.

a. Moses: Exodus 17:8-13

b. Jesus: John 17:20-26

3. Talk about some ways in which you lift others to God in intercessory prayer.

a. Name people and situations.

b. Imaginatively picture the person being held in God’s loving, healing, and protective arms.

c. Utilize the structure defined in “Praying Hands” (e-mail).

“Your thumb is nearest to you. So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest ones to remember. To pray for loved ones is as C. S. Lewis once said, a ‘sweet duty.’

The next finger is the pointing finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, and ministers. They need support for pointing others in the right direction. Keep them in your prayers.

The next finger is the tallest finger. It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the president in business, industry, and administrators. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion. They need God’s guidance.

The fourth finger is our ring finger. Surprising to many is the fact that this is our weakest finger, as any piano teacher will testify. It should remind us

to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain. They need your prayers day and night. You cannot pray too much for them.

And lastly comes our little finger, the smallest of all. This is where we should place ourselves in relationship to God and others. As the Bible says, "The least shall be the greatest." Your pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself. When you have prayed for the other four groups, your own life will be put into proper perspective and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively."

d. Brainstorm other methods of intercessory prayer.

4. How does corporate intercessory prayer differ from individual intercessory prayer?

a. Read and discuss Matthew 18:20, Isaiah 56:7, and Luke 19:46.

b. Discuss the Myong-Song Presbyterian Church experience in southeastern Seoul. Each morning twelve thousand people gather for three prayer meetings- at 4:00 a.m., 5:00 a.m., and 6:00 a.m. Those waiting for the next session bring hot tea or coffee so that they can remain warm in the cold (Foster, Prayer 198).

Debriefing and discussion:

This is session three in the six-week series introducing spiritual formation to new Christians. Invite the group to describe their experience. Ask them to define the best aspects of the curriculum, the least helpful aspects of the curriculum, and what they would change. Ask them to assess how their potential class participants in the local church will respond to the curriculum.

Context for session three

Session two focuses on the basic elements of prayer. The session will begin with a time of worship. An audiotape of "The Lord's Prayer" will be played as participants focus on a praying hands object.

Group members will then be invited to sit quietly in God's presence, listening for a word of direction, comfort, or encouragement from the Holy Spirit. This "listening time" will be concluded with the group praying the Lord's Prayer in unison. (To be sensitive to group members who do not know the Lord's Prayer by memory, a laminated copy will be distributed as group members arrive).

Following the worship period, the group will discuss the basics of prayer. They will be invited to share their experiences and thoughts from the previous week's daily prayer times.

The acronym PRAY will be utilized with the leader describing in detail four components of prayer: praise, repentance, asking, and yielding. Other leader input for this session will draw upon chapter 3 of Celebration of Discipline (Foster 30-40) and chapter 1 of Spiritual Direction (Morneau 11-28). A third of the class time will be given to writing a prayer using either the PRAY acronym, praying hands (See pp 136-137), or the format from Sanctuary for Lent 1997 (Escamilla 34). The final third of the class period will involve the sharing of individual written prayers with one another.

Nominations and Personnel Committee--Job Descriptions/Identifying Potential Volunteers

Preparation: Guidelines for Nominations and Personnel Committee, Job Description

Cards for Local Church Leaders, Service Preference Form-2000 (140-141), New Member Card (142) and Outgoing Leader Card (143).

Job descriptions.

Review job description of nominations and personnel committee

Distribute Guidelines for Nominations and Personnel Committee to each participant and circulate Job Description Cards for Local Church Leaders.

Identify potential volunteers.

Brainstorm ways to address the function of inviting the nominations and personnel committee in the ongoing task of identifying potential lay leadership.

See service preference form, outgoing leader card and new member card.

Assignment for session four

Distribute journal assignment for session four (144) to all participants.

Evaluation of session three (145)

SERVICE PREFERENCE FORM-2000

NAME _____ PHONE NUMBER HOME _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

Local Church Involvement

We believe that all Christians are called to be involved in service for our Lord Jesus Christ. This Service Preference Form is an opportunity for you to serve in particular area(s) of ministry during the CALENDAR YEAR OF 2000.

You are encouraged to mark the area(s) in which you wish to serve. The appropriate leaders will then be in touch with you as they organize their ministries for 2000. Thank you.

AGE LEVEL MINISTRIES

1. a. ___ Teach Sunday School
b. ___ Coordinate a special event (i.e., hayride, Easter eggstravaganza)
2. YOUTH MINISTRIES
a. ___ Leader for Sunday School
b. ___ Leader for Sunday evenings
3. HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRIES
a. ___ Contact in-town college students
b. ___ Contact our students away at school
4. YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES
a. ___ Council Member
5. ADULT MINISTRIES
a. ___ Council member
b. ___ Baby Boomer Council member
c. ___ Lead a short-term Wednesday evening study elective
d. ___ Teach a Sunday School class
6. FAMILY MINISTRIES
a. ___ Plan church picnic
b. ___ Plan family camping

WORK AREAS

7. VOLUNTEER HELP FOR:
a. ___ Community kitchen
b. ___ God's Pantry
c. ___ Hospital Auxiliary
d. ___ Programs for the homeless

8. COMMUNICATIONS
 - a. ___ Operate sanctuary sound system-Sunday AM
 - b. ___ Photograph special events
 - c. ___ Assist with Newsletter
 9. MISSIONS
 - a. ___ Participate on Volunteers In Missions Team
 - b. ___ Mission education
 10. WORSHIP
 - a. ___ Usher (___ 8:45 ___ 10:50)
 - b. ___ Help prepare Communion
 11. MUSIC
 - a. ___ Sing in the Chancel Choir
 - b. ___ Choir parent
 12. ADMINISTRATIVE
 - a. ___ Do typing
 - b. ___ General office work
 13. EVANGELISM
 - a. ___ Visitation of prospective members
 - b. ___ Participate in neighborhood Bible study
 14. OTHER
-

___ Please contact me to brainstorm how my gifts might be utilized in service through the church.

NEW MEMBER CARD

FAMILY LAST NAME _____ PHONE _____
ADDRESS _____

FIRST NAME _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____
METHOD OF JOINING _____ DATE JOINED _____
OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS AT THIS CHURCH RELATIONSHIP _____

MARITAL STATUS _____ ANNIVERSARY _____

SPONSOR _____ PHONE _____

SPONSOR ADDRESS _____

OCCUPATION _____ PHONE _____

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE _____

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE _____

LEISURE ACTIVITIES/HOBBIES _____

VOLUNTEER: Preferred age level _____ Preferred Time: _____

Preferred area _____ Weekday _____

Evening _____

Saturday _____

Other _____

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

PRESENT:

PAST:

What do you least enjoy doing? _____

What would your dream job be (paid or volunteer)? _____

AREAS OF MINISTRY IN WHICH YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BEING INVOLVED:

What attracted you to this church? _____

INFORMATION CARD FOR OUTGOING LEADERS

(The questions on this card serve to guide interviews with outgoing leaders. The interviewer is asked to complete filling out the card immediately following the interview).

DATE: _____ BY: _____

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

Position in past year:

What have you enjoyed most about the office you are leaving?

What have you enjoyed least about the office you are leaving?

What do you most enjoy doing?

What do you least enjoy doing?

What would your dream "job" be (either volunteered or paid)?

Are you ready to become involved in another area of volunteerism soon or do you need a period of laying fallow to rejuvenate?

In what area of the church do you see yourself becoming involved next?

Journal Assignment for Session Four

(to be distributed at conclusion of session three)

Week one: Describe the value and/or downsides of writing job descriptions for volunteers in the church.

Week two: Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your process for accomplishing the nominations and personnel committee task of identifying, recruiting, training, and supporting volunteers.

Week three: How important is it for the pastor to equip laity for ministry?

Evaluation of Session Three

- 1) What was most helpful about this session?
- 2) What was least helpful about this session?
- 3) What would you like to see changed for future sessions?

Session four

A field trip presentation

Welcome and overview

Distribute bibliography (147-149)

Presentation: This session will be led by a pastor and laity from a small church effective in equipping laity for ministry.

Assignment for session five

Distribute journal assignment for session five to all participants (150).

Evaluation of session four (151)

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Journal Assignment for Session Five

(to be distributed at the conclusion of session four)

It is important that we move from learning about biblical, theological and historical rationale for equipping laity to actual practice of the competency. Below are examples of practicing what is being taught. Write one or two paragraphs about each item, describing either how you are implementing the practice or how you plan to implement it.

- 1) Identify one or two people you can disciple. Plan a strategy for entering into a discipleship relationship with at least one person.
- 2) Discuss ideas you are learning with others.
- 3) Do further reading. (See attached bibliography).
- 4) Cast your vision for equipping laity to your administrative board or nominations and personnel committee.
- 5) Develop a setting in which to teach spiritual disciplines such as prayer, reading scripture, and journaling.

Session five

Journaling and Identifying/Recruiting

Preparation: Notebooks, pencils, tape player, The United Methodist Hymnal,

Companions on the Inner Way, Spiritual Friends, and recording of reflective worship music.

Spiritual Formation--Journaling

The session will begin with a quiet time of worship and prayer. Group members will be given notebooks and pencils and asked to prayerfully write down or draw symbols representing thoughts or insights that come to their minds as they listen to reflective music. After the music is concluded, group members will be asked to write a “letter to God” about whatever is on their hearts at that time. The worship period will conclude with the group singing together, “Alleluia” (The United Methodist Hymnal 186).

Leader input and discussion will include a description of personal experience with journaling, chapter seven of Companions on the Inner Way (Kelsey 126-163) and pages 156-158 of Spiritual Friends (Edwards). Following the discussion, group members will be asked to find a partner in the group with whom to share feelings and thoughts about journaling. The following questions will be presented as discussion starters.

- 1) What do you think about the process of journaling?
- 2) Have you practiced this discipline in the past?
- 3) How do you feel about our journaling process today?
- 4) Do you think this tool might be helpful in your personal spiritual formation journey?

It will be made clear to the participants that these journals are for their personal use. No one will be privileged to see the journal entries without an invitation.

This segment of the session will conclude with an announcement of the next week's assignment to make a daily journal entry during private devotional times. Starter questions are adapted from Wendy Miller's Learning to Listen (33).

1. What is my prayer experience like?
2. What happens when/if I pray or meditate on scripture?
3. What areas of my life is God touching?
4. How am I experiencing God's grace?
5. What is God like for me in scripture, in times of prayer, or other times?
6. How have I cooperated with God this week (month)?
7. What am I not bringing openly before God (e.g. anger, fear . . .)?
8. Where have I missed experiencing God's grace or love?
9. What do I need to confess?
10. What is changing within me as I listen to God?
11. What attitudes am I experiencing as I relate to others in my life?

Nominations and Personnel Committee--Identifying and Recruiting

Develop a brief lecture, utilizing the following notes.

Identifying. Identifying includes a major thrust on discovering your spiritual gifts. Bill Easum states a crucial understanding of the importance of this dimension of identification. "Instead of asking people to serve based upon the need of the institutional church . . . ask people 'What gifts do you bring to the Body of Christ, and what do you need from the Body to help you exercise them? Tell us and we'll equip you to use them'" (Easum 51).

This aspect of the nominations and personnel committee's work has the potential to breathe new life into an old structure. As the nominating team focuses on where people are in their spiritual journeys and works with them at their point of need, rather than the church's need, spiritual growth will result. The beauty of the process is that though the focal point is on the needs of the individual, the needs of the church will also be met.

Apostle Paul writes, "Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of workings, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good (I Corinthians 12:4-7 RSV).

All of these gifts are from our Creator God, who knows what gifts a church is lacking. God will supply members of the church with whatever gifts are needed to edify the body of Christ.

Debrief regarding journaling from the previous month. Ask, "Are there any comments or questions regarding this past month's assignments for the journal?"

Using the following information, clarify the instruction from the journal assignment to, "Cast your vision for equipping laity to your administrative board or nominations and personnel committee."

"A vision is the ability, or the God-given gift, to see those things which are not as becoming a reality" (Galloway, 20/20 Vision 29). As is implied in this definition, visions come from God. It is as we wait upon God that God's dreams formulate in our hearts.

In Acts 2:14ff, Peter gives his Pentecost sermon. "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters

shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” God is the giver of prophecies, visions, and dreams.

God’s general vision for our lives is defined in Ephesians 1:3-14. In summary, the writer to the Ephesians proclaims that through Jesus Christ’s love and forgiveness we stand holy and blameless before God as God’s adopted children for the purpose of God’s praise.

What a tremendous vision God has for each of us. Out of that general vision evolves God’s specific vision for individuals and congregations.

The specific vision that I believe God has for me is that I will be formed in God through relationship with Jesus Christ. This relationship will be enhanced by the practices of prayer, journaling, reading Scripture, and other disciplines of the faith. Out of that relationship will flow my effectiveness as a pastor.

My vision for Prestonsburg District United Methodist Churches is that we will be vital bodies of believers who invite people into relationship with Jesus Christ, relate them to the Christian community, nurture them in the Christian faith, and equip them to go forth into the world to continue the process.

Take a few moments to reflect upon the vision that you believe God has for you. What is the vision that you believe God has for your congregation in relationship to the core competency of equipping laity for ministry? Draw a picture of your vision with symbols and then turn to a partner to explain your picture.”

Recruiting.

Lead participants through the following recruitment exercise.

“1. Ask the committee members to respond “popcorn” style with words or phrases

that come to mind when they think of recruitment.

2. After recording these on newsprint, describe an upbeat concept of recruitment, pulling from key words that are shared during the “popcorn” responses.

“Recruitment is an invitation for persons to dialogue about involvement in a particular ministry opportunity. Five key words are invitation, persons, dialogue, ministry, and opportunity.

3. Distribute and lead discussion on the handout, “My Plan for Recruiting a Volunteer Leader” (Wallace-Padgett 82).

4. Ask two committee members to role play the recruitment of an Administrative Board member.

5. Lead the group in evaluating the interviewer’s techniques by asking: How was rapport established? Was full job description information given? Did you hear why the interviewee was chosen? How did the interviewer demonstrate effective listening?

6. Have each person select another with whom to practice recruitment for the administrative board chair position.

7. Invite the group to evaluate how they feel about recruitment by sharing:

- any difficulty they had approaching the interviewee.

- how it felt to be asked to do this job.

- If when playing the interviewee role they responded “yes” to the invitation to be an Administrative Board member, did they do so out of guilt or out of interest and commitment to the ministry? How did saying “yes” feel?

- If when playing the interviewee they responded “no” to the invitation to be an Administrative Board member, how did that feel? Were they affirmed when they said “no?”

- How can interviewees who say “no” be affirmed?

- Did they enjoy being a recruiter?” (Wallace-Padgett 74-75).

Assignment for session six

Distribute journal assignments for session six (157) to all participants.

Evaluation of session five (158)

**Journal Assignment for Session Six
(to be distributed at the conclusion of session five)**

- 1) How are you developing lay leadership in your congregation?

- 2) How did you encourage laity to participate in the August 29 event? How did they respond?

- 3) Are you feeling any conflict with the reality of your situation and the concept of laity in ministry? For instance, are your people open to being equipped for ministry? Or is there a “we pay the preacher to do that” attitude? If there is such an attitude, what will you do to address it?

Evaluation of Session Five

- 1) What was most helpful about this session?
- 2) What was least helpful about this session?
- 3) Name one idea presented today that you will take home with you.

Session six

Meditative Bible Study and Supporting/Training Volunteers

Preparation: Cassette player and audiotape of reflective music, notebooks, pencils, Bibles, and worship center that focuses on an open Bible and post-tests.

Opening: Begin the session with an acknowledgement that this is the final class for the six-month covenant group experience. Outline the schedule for the day, including a reminder that the meditative Bible study is designed for Christians in the beginning stages of their walks with God.

Review the plans for the journal reviews and interviews to be conducted by Dr. Jim Stratton during the month of November. Assure the group participants that all quantitative and qualitative data will be acquired anonymously with the exception of the post-treatment interviews. The summary sheets of those interviews will be presented to the researcher and in the dissertation with no names attached.

Spiritual Formation--Meditative Bible Study

Enter into a quiet time of worship. Play reflective music and encourage participants to focus on an open Bible that is placed in the worship center. Read selections from Psalm 119, including verse 105. Conclude the worship time with a prayer in which the participants hold their Bibles in their laps. Invite them to “close their eyes and touch the Bibles to their ears, praying that they might hear God’s Word . . . to their foreheads, praying that they might understand God’s Word . . . to their lips, praying that they might be able to witness to God’s Word . . . and to their hearts, praying that they might come to love God’s Word” (Follow Me 71).

Discuss the following two questions. What happens when I pray or meditate on Scripture? What is God like for me in Scripture?

Follow the discussion with a presentation on meditative Bible study. Include segments from Wendy Miller's section on "Praying the Scriptures: Meditation and Contemplation" (46-47) and use Dick Murray's format for using your five senses in reading Scripture (57-64).

Focus the majority of the session on practicing the use of senses in Bible study. Utilize Dick Murray's format on Luke 5:1-11 (59-61).

Invite participants to spend thirty to forty-five minutes during the next week in meditative Scripture study with the text, Mark 2:1-12 (61-64). Close this session with a unison round of "Jesus loves me! This I know" (The United Methodist Hymnal 1989, 191) or "Thy Word is a Lamp unto my Feet" (601).

Nominations and Personnel Committee--Supporting and Training

Supporting Leaders.

1. Review the task of the nominations and personnel committee.
2. Circulate copies of Beyond Banquets, Plaques and Pins: Creative Ways to Recognize Volunteers and Staff by Sue Vineyard. Using Vineyard's ideas to stimulate creativity, brainstorm as many methods of support for volunteers as possible.
3. Choose at least three ways to support volunteers in the coming year. Ask the following questions:
 - (a) When placing oneself in the position of the volunteer, how supportive does the idea feel?
 - (b) How practical is it to implement this idea?

- (c) What will this method of support cost?
 - (d) Is the time and money that will be involved in implementing this idea worth the benefit for the volunteer?
4. Consider matching each member of the nominations and personnel committee with three or four leaders in the coming year. The task of the committee members is to be in communication with their assigned leaders at least three to four times throughout the year to hear concerns, joys, and questions. The relationship that develops between the nominations and personnel committee members and their assigned leaders will be a vital link of support and communication.

Training Leaders.

List possible ways of providing training for volunteer leaders. Possibilities include:

1. Plan an orientation meeting between incoming and outgoing volunteers leaders.
2. Schedule a meeting with pastor or staff to discuss Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation and job description.
3. Organize a council on ministries or administrative council orientation that includes an overview of how to process a new idea, who to call with questions and for support, and other general expectations and information.
4. Attend conference and district training opportunities.
5. Contact district ministry consultant for one-on-one support and guidance.

Session Closing

Ask the mentor to distribute evaluations (163), plans for the future (164), and the post-test. The mentor will collect these items as individuals complete them. After all items

have been collected, have the group to form a circle for thank yous from
researcher/designer followed by circle prayer.

Future covenant group meetings

Dear friends,

Thank you for participating in the covenant group pilot project. I appreciate very much your willingness to be a part of this experience.

We have completed the initial six-month commitment. Some of you have expressed an interest in continuing to have monthly covenant group meetings. Please respond to the following questions in order to assist me in evaluating next steps related to the covenant groups.

Again, thank you for a wonderful six months together in this project.

Shalom,

Debbie

Name _____ Date _____

I would like to continue to meet in the covenant group setting.

I would be interested in continuing to focus on equipping laity for ministry with an emphasis in discipling others.

I would be interested in a focus on preaching and teaching.

I would like to meet in December for a Christmas get-together that includes spouses.

I am not interested in continuing in a covenant group.

Other comments:

Appendix I

Summary of Journal Entries

Self-Created Code:

List examples of any of the following signs of increased competency in equipping laity for ministry.

1. an increased awareness of the importance of equipping laity for ministry
2. an increased regularity in practicing spiritual disciplines personally
3. an understanding that the first step in equipping laity for ministry is teaching the importance and skills of regular practice of spiritual disciplines
4. the identification of one or two people to disciple and a stated strategy for entering into a discipleship relationship with at least one person
5. the practice of discussing with others ideas related to equipping laity and spiritual formation
6. further reading of resources related to equipping laity and spiritual formation
7. casting a vision to the administrative board or nominating committee
8. teaching a class on the basics of spiritual formation (holy habits)
9. encouraging laity to participate in training related to his/her ministry role through district and conference events or by offering in-house training at the local church
10. an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the current practice of the nominations and personnel committee in the role of identifying, recruiting, training, and supporting
11. the development of a specific plan of action for the nominating process of the congregation

Appendix J

Covenant Group Participant Interview Summary

1. How important do you think it is for pastors to equip laity for ministry?
2. How would you rate your effectiveness in that competency prior to the beginning of the covenant group experience? Place yourself on a scale of one to five with five being excellent and one being poor.
3. How do you rate your effectiveness in that competency now? Place yourself on a scale of one to five with five being excellent and one being poor.
Elaborate on how your attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors have changed.
4. If someone asked you about the most important thing that you learned in the covenant group experience, how would you respond?
5. Name some of the ways in which you are currently equipping laity for ministry in your local church. When did you begin doing this and why?
6. What are your next steps in equipping laity for ministry?
7. Have your personal practices of prayer, journaling, studying Scripture, and finding time to work on your relationship with God changed during the past six months? If so how and why?
8. Describe the positive and/or negative impact of the covenant group upon your ministry.

Appendix K

Table 4A
Nonparametric Correlations

Question	Analysis Used	P – Value *
#2: A first step in equipping a lay person for ministry involves teaching him/her the holy habits of spiritual formation.	Spearman's rho—compares pre-test/post-test responses with the number of covenant group sessions attended.	.023
#14: I am skilled in working with the nominations and personnel committee.	Spearman's rho—compares pre-test/post-test responses with the number of covenant group sessions attended.	.039
#15: I often find it easier to handle large ministry tasks myself rather than to delegate them to another person.	Spearman's rho—compares pre-test/post-test responses with the number of covenant group sessions attended.	.025
#17: I will probably offer a training workshop for Sunday School teachers and leaders in the congregation within the next year.	Spearman's rho—compares pre-test/post-test responses with the number of covenant group sessions attended.	.023

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level.

Table 4B
Test Statistics

Question	Analysis Used	P – Value *
#6: I feel that the work of the nominations and personnel committee is generally a waste of time.	Mann-Whitney U Monte Carlo Sig.--compares covenant and control group responses.	.023
#17: I will probably offer a training workshop for Sunday School teachers and leaders in the congregation within the next year.	Mann-Whitney U Monte Carlo Sig.--compares covenant and control group responses.	.047
#19: I have a daily devotional time with God.	Mann-Whitney U Monte Carlo Sig.	.047

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level.

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