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# Raising and Multiplying Leaders for Vietnamese Ministries in the Converge Worldwide/Baptist General Conference-U.S.

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# Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

This ministry focus paper entitled

RAISING AND MULTIPLYING LEADERS FOR THE VIETNAMESE MINISTRIES  
IN CONVERGE WORLDWIDE/BAPTIST GENERAL CONFERENCE-U.S.

Written by

TU ANH TRUONG

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

has been accepted by the Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary

upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:

  
Kurt Fredrickson

Date Received: March 22, 2013

RAISING AND MULTIPLYING LEADERS FOR THE VIETNAMESE MINISTRIES  
IN CONVERGE WORLDWIDE/BAPTIST GENERAL CONFERENCE-U.S.

A MINISTRY FOCUS PAPER  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

TU ANH TRUONG  
AUGUST 2012



## ABSTRACT

**Raising and Multiplying Leaders  
for Vietnamese Ministries in the Converge  
Worldwide/Baptist General Conference-U.S.**  
School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary  
Tu Anh Truong  
Doctor of Ministry  
2012

The purpose of this study is to develop a strategy to raise and multiply godly leaders for the Vietnamese (ConvergeViet) Ministries in Converge Worldwide/Baptist General Conference-U.S. churches and then provide practical approaches for mobilizing, training, coaching, and releasing leaders toward their full potential.

Since the Vietnamese Christian population in the United States is less than 2 percent of total Vietnamese population in the United States of nearly two million, there is a great need to raise and multiply leaders in ConvergeViet churches in accordance with the command in Matthew 28:18-20.

The focus of this study is to equip ConvergeViet leaders or Christian workers in the United States with a better understanding of the need to raise and multiply godly leaders for ConvergeViet Ministries. This process includes contextually adapting coaching questions and modeling for long-term change, as well as developing guidelines for using this new model in ConvergeViet Ministries-U.S.

This study is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter provides a ministry profile of ConvergeViet churches in the United States, while the second investigates the need for leadership development among ConvergeViet churches. The third chapter gives theological perspectives for leadership development, and the fourth addresses theological perspectives for leadership multiplication. The fifth chapter develops strategies of raising and multiplying godly leaders for ConvergeViet Ministries-U.S., the sixth creates ownership of raising and multiplying leaders in ConvergeViet Ministries, and the final chapter describes the implementation of strategies for raising and multiplying leaders for ConvergeViet Ministries in the United States.

This study provides biblical foundation and principles of leadership as well as a practically reproducible model of leadership development for other recent immigrant churches in the United States.

Content Reader: Kurt Fredrickson, Ph.D.

Words: 274

To all those who are living in the heart and leading from the heart  
in advancing God's kingdom. (Prv 4:23)

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## INTRODUCTION

The task of preaching the gospel in the twenty-first century is facing its biggest challenge of all time. Not only is the postmodern worldview impacting the younger generations' thinking and perception of objective knowledge and truth, but the rapid advancement of technologies to propel high-speed global communication has drastically increased the amount of information and ideas available to a huge audience.<sup>1</sup> Moral decisions and ethical values are increasingly neglected by elected government leaders in order to satisfy the emotional demand for tolerance circulated by the public mass media.

The death of singer Michael Jackson in June 2009 is more well-known today than the unflinching moral courage of John the Baptist before Herod's deadly wrath. The world is in a great hurry to live in the temporal existence of here and now, in contrast with the ideal life that J. P. Moreland and Klaus Issler describe: that is, "a life well lived, a life of virtue and character, a life [that] manifests wisdom, kindness, and goodness."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Moreland asserts that the world is not greatly interested in wisdom, character, virtue, or anything as deep as the rescue and renovation of the soul.<sup>3</sup> Human beings are happily sailing on the Titanic of modern technology, steering away from receiving what they truly need, and instead pursuing what they subjectively want. The church must do something to respond to this real challenge.

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<sup>1</sup>J. P. Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle: Recover the Christian Mind, Renovate the Soul, Restore the Spirit's Power* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 77-88.

<sup>2</sup>J. P. Moreland and Klaus Issler, *The Lost Virtue of Happiness: Discovering the Disciplines of the Good Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 25, quoting from Jean Porter, *Nature as Reason: The Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 141-230.

<sup>3</sup> Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle*, 141-164.

Even within Christian circles, it is sadly evident that the Church has become less fervent in exercising the freedom to preach the gospel the way it is; instead, the Church has to preach it the way the people like to hear it. Thirty years ago, a pastor could provide biblical counseling and teach the word of God with deep conviction, without any fear of losing members. Now, popular pastors must be versatile enough to handle divorce issues as well as debt management counseling in order to keep their jobs. Any church that solely provides a central place where God is worshipped, the gospel is preached, and life is changed through the application of biblical truth can be condemned as intolerant or labeled as irrelevant and out of touch with the world around it. In order to ensure that its budget is funded, the ideal church should now focus on the mission of entertaining its audience while striving to be politically correct.

Many “growing churches” nowadays are very successful at recruiting new members with exciting reality programs or building multi-million dollar campuses filled with hi-tech extravagance, but they are not so successful in reproducing real discipleship and authentic Christ followers. Truly, the Church is losing ground, going from being the agent of change to being a broker of services, from being the prophet of the message, to being the prostitute of the world.

The Church should awaken from its long sleep and rise up to face this challenge. Numerous books have been dedicated to evangelism, and stories abound of hundreds of good godly men and women who sacrificed their lives long ago for the cause of the gospel worldwide. However, unless Christians today commit to awakening the Church through earnest prayer and effective strategies, the churches of this generation will be like

those of the previous one. The cycle of failure will continue to spin, with churches powerlessly gazing at the world going by and Christians living like non-believers in a society without Christ. Meanwhile, the Great Commission is far from being completed and the bride of Christ is far from being prepared for His coming.

For the past twelve years I have served as a pastor in an ethnic Vietnamese Christian community in ConvergeViet Ministries, an intercultural ministry of the Converge Worldwide denomination (formerly known as the Baptist General Conference or BGC).<sup>4</sup> I have found that I can do only so much as a pastor if I simply focus on doing ministry without equipping, training, releasing, and supporting the members of the body. By doing ministry alone, I have not only put myself in harm's way, but I have also limited the power of God in myself and robbed the people of the opportunity to serve Him according to their capacities. By pastoring alone, I have committed a sin not only against God Himself but also against the people that God has entrusted me to lead. I have repented of this selfish pattern of ministry and accepted God's call to die with Christ and become alive with Him in the newness of life, a life motivated by the urgency of producing godly Vietnamese leaders for the sake of the gospel in this generation and generations to come.

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<sup>4</sup> “The Converge Worldwide Movement (formerly as [*sic*] the Baptist General Conference) was formed in 1852 out of the great revival in the nineteenth century and rooted in Swedish Pietism. It all started in a small town called Rock Island, Il. . . . Gradually with tremendous growth experienced both at local and national level [*sic*], the church formed their [*sic*] General Conference in 1879. . . . The Baptist General Conference of America was established and English became the official language at major gatherings. . . . In 2008, in Chicago, Ill., with deep conviction from a humble desire ‘to be what God wants them to be,’ the Baptist General Conference unanimously voted ‘yes’ to change their [*sic*] name to Converge Worldwide [www.convergeworldwide.org].” Vietnamese World Christian Fellowship, *Chua Vinh Quang: Tin Lanh Den Viet Nam, 1911-2011* [Glory to God: The gospel to Vietnam centennial celebration, 1911-2011], (Westminster, CA: Vietnamese World Fellowship, 2011), 64.

This D.Min. project intends initially to provide a basic understanding of the current situation of ConvergeViet Churches according to Fred R. David's SWOT Maxtix (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) model for strategic management.<sup>5</sup> On the basis of this understanding, this study then examines the socio-religious characteristics of the Vietnamese cultural group in order to shed light on how such a SWOT analysis interacts with Vietnamese cultural characteristics. The SWOT analysis together with the general socio-religious understanding of Vietnamese culture help explain why leadership development is a great need in Vietnamese churches.

The spiritual characteristics of Vietnamese churches are complex. They contain, for example, differences among new and old members in spiritual and emotional levels as well as in physical needs. This project intends to develop a strategy for raising and multiplying godly leaders in this context. Understanding leadership development will provide a suitable solution for transforming a society with the gospel of love and empowerment.

I hope to prevent certain undesirable outcomes by testing this strategy on a few selected pilot groups among the ConvergeViet churches with which I have contact. Finally, with the feedback from such fieldwork, the goal of this project is to first enable ConvergeViet Ministries leaders to identify potential leaders in their local churches and then provide practical methods for mobilizing training, coaching, and releasing these leaders. God has always intended His living creation to be fruitful and multiply and fill

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<sup>5</sup> Fred R. David, *Strategic Management, Concepts and Cases* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007), 221. See Appendix D for SWOT Matrix components.

the earth. The ConvergeViet churches can follow the track set forth in this project and set themselves a new standard for being church and doing church.

As a student of Fuller Theological Seminary, I have come to appreciate my professors and teachers, whose wisdom and practical advice have resulted in a leadership development network through a viable coaching method. These mentors have led me to believe that such an approach will benefit this generation of Vietnamese Christians greatly. In fact, this challenge is so personally meaningful that the plan introduced in the present study is intended to be put into effect right away, especially here in the United States. There are more than one and a half million Vietnamese people in this country, but only about forty thousand (or 2 percent) know Christ.<sup>6</sup> I hope that by developing a working, biblical system for reproducing Vietnamese leaders for future churches using all the tools available, at least the necessary momentum will be initiated and the mechanism for change will be engaged.

From a biblical standpoint, the theme of leadership in the present project is expressed in Psalm 78:72: “David shepherded his people with integrity of the heart, and with skillful hands He led them,” with emphasis on “with integrity of the heart.”<sup>7</sup> David is unquestionably an example of a godly man of spiritual integrity. He is a model, first and foremost, for ConvergeViet pastors to follow because he led God’s people out of his intimate relationship with God. The result is that David was a spiritual, capable, fruitful

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau/Atlanta Region, “The Vietnamese Population in the United States,” U.S. Census Bureau (updated June 2011), [http://www.vasummit2011.org/docs/research/The%20Vietnamese%20Population%202010\\_July%202011.pdf](http://www.vasummit2011.org/docs/research/The%20Vietnamese%20Population%202010_July%202011.pdf) (accessed August 17, 2012).

<sup>7</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the New International Version of the Bible (NIV), unless otherwise noted.

leader. Under the leadership of King David, God allowed His people to experience great achievements. From distant battles to the domestic backyard, everywhere David and his people set their feet, Israel's enemies trembled, and God's people prospered. David not only led, he also produced leaders following his own example, and Solomon, Israel's next king, was clear evidence of such a legacy.

According to John Maxwell, "Everything rises and falls on leadership."<sup>8</sup> No organization will supersede the quality and the character of its core leadership. This is true in God's business as well. For example, David was not the only leadership success story in the Bible; God raised up and chose many leaders to rescue Israel. Through Israel's history as recounted in the Bible, other great leaders such as Moses, Joshua, Solomon, and the good prophets have provided many lessons for Christian leaders today. Leadership did not end in the Old Testament era but also continued in the New Testament. Jesus spent time with the crowds, but, most of the time, He focused on and spent time with His twelve disciples, teaching, training, releasing, and supporting them to become fruitful. This biblical pattern suggests that the effectiveness of such spiritual leadership duplication is eternal. If it worked then, it will work now; if it worked with the most stiff-necked people like the Israelites, it will work with the most hard-working Vietnamese people today.

To obey Jesus' Great Commission to bring the good news to all Vietnamese people in the world, ConvergeViet churches are in great need of raising and multiplying godly leaders to reach out to the large Vietnamese population in the United States.

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<sup>8</sup> John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You – Student Workbook* (Duluth, GA: The John Maxwell Company, 2003), 2.

Leadership development must also play an important role in increasing the capacity to build up and make more disciples of Vietnamese Christians, small groups, and churches. The vision of the ConvergeViet leadership team is to raise up the next generation of pastors, church planters, and missionaries for the huge harvest of non-believers.

PART ONE  
MINISTRY CHALLENGE



## CHAPTER 1

### A MINISTRY PROFILE OF CONVERGEVIET CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES

ConvergeViet churches are a part of Converge Worldwide (formerly the Baptist General Conference). The denomination traditionally names a Swedish sailor, Captain Gustavus W. Schroeder, as the first Swedish Baptist in America. The church he started was an outgrowth of the *läsare* (“Bible readers”) movement of nineteenth-century pietism in Sweden: “Deep spiritual hunger brought these believers together for Bible study, prayer, and mutual support and edification. Persecuted for their beliefs, many sought religious freedom in a new land. They became the nucleus of what eventually became the Baptist General Conference.”<sup>1</sup>

A new missional name, Converge Worldwide, was adopted in 2008 while Baptist General Conference, the original name, continues to be the legal designation used in some contexts. The new name has been especially helpful in church planting and mission work. The denomination maintains that “[its] historic beliefs and values stand unchanged, but the new name helps new generations to continue the mission begun many generations

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<sup>1</sup> Converge Worldwide, “Our History,” <http://www.convergeworldwide.org/about/facts-and-info/our-history> (accessed August 1, 2010). Site has since been modified.

before.”<sup>2</sup> The philosophy of Converge Worldwide is centered on the actions “Connect, Ignite, and Transform,” and its ministries are based on the principles of “growing spiritually, planting churches, developing leaders, showing compassion, reaching nations and living generously.”<sup>3</sup>

In 1995, Converge Worldwide seized the opportunity to reach out to Vietnamese immigrants in the United States. Though individual churches around the world often operate independently from the other churches in the denomination, the denomination does equip each church with a vertical leadership structure. Through this vertical structure, the organization as a whole can lead all the member churches toward its set vision of “strengthening and starting churches.”<sup>4</sup> Below is a brief history of Vietnamese Americans and the growth of ConvergeViet Churches in the United States.

### **A Growth History of ConvergeViet Churches in the United States**

Many church denominations considering an ethnic outreach ministry would opt for an organizing structure that allows that ethnic body, while being a part of the denominational body, to operate exclusively and independently in order to preserve its cultural dynamics and vitality while presenting the gospel. In this vein, Converge Worldwide established the Vietnamese Initiative, now known as ConvergeViet

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<sup>2</sup> Converge Worldwide, “Our Missional Name,” <http://www.convergeworldwide.org/about/facts-and-info/our-missional-name> (accessed August 10, 12).

<sup>3</sup> *Chua Vinh Quang*, 64.

<sup>4</sup> Converge Worldwide, *Stand in Awe: Connect 2012*, Converge/Bethel Biennial Meetings (Landover, MD: Converge Worldwide, 2012), 32.

Ministries, in 1995 through the initiative of some pastors and groups of Christians when the need for reaching out to Vietnamese refugees began to increase.

### Vietnamese in the United States

Before 1975, Vietnam was known in the United States mainly because of the war that bears its name. Additionally, the few Vietnamese residing in the United States before 1975 were mostly spouses and children of American servicemen in Vietnam. According to Reg Reimer in his book *Vietnam's Christians*, from April 30, 1975, the Vietnamese came to the United States in four waves, but two of them are the most significant. The first wave included the evacuees who were taken by Americans on plane and ships right at the fall of Saigon.<sup>5</sup>

The second wave was populated by the so-called “boat people.”<sup>6</sup> According to Rita Chin-Yin Chung and Fred Bemak, the situation of the “boat people” was very miserable. They were victims of hunger, malnutrition, assault, rape, and robbery by pirates. Many children witnessed these violent behaviors.<sup>7</sup> However, many “boat people” were saved. To assist Vietnamese refugees, the United States Congress passed the Refugee Act of 1980 which reduced restrictions on entry to the United States.<sup>8</sup> Having left their poor, miserable and suffering country, the great majority of these Vietnamese

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<sup>5</sup> Reg Reimer, *Vietnam's Christians*, (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2011), 85.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Rita Chi-Ying Chung and Fred Bemak, “Lifestyle of Vietnamese Refugee Women” *Journal of Individual Psychology* 84, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 373-384.

<sup>8</sup> Marc Povell, “The History of Vietnamese Immigration,” American Immigration Law Foundation, [http://www.aifl.org/awards/benefit2005/vietnamese\\_essay.shtml](http://www.aifl.org/awards/benefit2005/vietnamese_essay.shtml) (accessed August 6, 2012).

immigrants have taken full advantage of resettlement opportunities by learning English to get good jobs, or going to schools or universities in order to earn enough money to live comfortably.

The third wave of Vietnamese immigration included a combination of Vietnamese refugee and immigrants in the Orderly Departure Program (ODP).<sup>9</sup> The United States Congress also passed the Amerasian Homecoming Act in 1987.<sup>10</sup> This law eased immigration of children born during the Vietnam War to Vietnamese mothers by American fathers. As a result, by 2009, about 25,000 Vietnamese Amerasians as well as 60,000 to 70,000 of their relatives had settled in the United States. In addition, the Vietnamese immigrants in general increased because many relatives of those Vietnamese Americans who came earlier were allowed to reunite with their family members under the American government's Humanitarian Resettlement Program.

The 2010 census showed that the population in the United States was 308,745,538 on April 1, 2010. Of that total 14,674,252, or 4.8 percent, reported themselves as Asian, and 1,548,449, or 0.5 percent, reported themselves as Vietnamese alone.<sup>11</sup> By far, California had the largest concentration of Vietnamese by state, (581,946), followed by Texas (210,913), Washington (66,575), Florida (58,470) and Virginia (53,529).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "The Vietnamese Population in the United States." Vietnamese refugees were divided into three categories: HO, former Re-education Center Detainees; U-11, former U.S. government employees; and V-11, former employees of private U.S. companies and organizations.

<sup>10</sup> Encyclopedia of Immigration, "Amerasian Homecoming Act of 1987," <http://immigration-online.org/337-amerasian-homecoming-act-of-1987.html> (accessed August 3, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "The Vietnamese Population in the United States."

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

After these refugees had been settled in the United States for twenty years (1975-1995), the Vietnamese population continued to grow in many communities while still maintaining its cultural identity, Converge Worldwide expanded ideas and plans to reach out to them: “Among many outreach ministries Converge Worldwide endeavored came the Vietnamese Initiative in 1997. Eight years from its start, the Vietnamese Initiative had established more than ten congregations in Oregon, California, Minnesota, Iowa, Texas, Colorado.”<sup>13</sup>

#### ConvergeViet Ministries’ Current Status

With the initial start-up of a few believers and visionary leaders, the ConvergeViet Ministry now has seventeen active member churches and two new church plants nationwide.<sup>14</sup> In 2005, the Vietnamese Initiative (or Vietnamese BGC/US) formed its first national leadership team with intentional focuses on leadership development, church planting and church mobilization.<sup>15</sup> The ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team (ConvergeViet Leadership Team) is composed of three members: the Reverend Thien An Le, the Reverend Phu Pham, and myself.<sup>16</sup>

As the ConvergeViet Ministries National Director/ Leadership Development Director, I have believed that God has laid on my heart a passion for raising and multiplying godly leaders for the advancement His kingdom by providing practical

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<sup>13</sup> *Chua Vinh Quang*, 65.

<sup>14</sup> See ConvergeViet Church Directory in Appendix A.

<sup>15</sup> *Chua Vinh Quang*, 65.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

approaches, such as ministry training and personal coaching, to maximize the potential of ConvergeViet church leaders. Taking the approach of spiritual formation on a personal level, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team believes that one can first empower oneself and then others through maintaining a relationship with Christ. Hoping that ConvergeViet churches in the next decade will experience deep changes, the Leadership Team is convinced that ConvergeViet Ministries needs to start building up its local leadership. I also believe that this incredible power of change will not only challenge the status quo, but also will minimize past failures and will prevent hindrances to God's uninterrupted blessings to our small groups and congregations, here and around the world.

Rev. Le, Director for Multiplication, believes that Christ has invited him to take part in the building of His kingdom by planting churches with ConvergeViet Ministries. In fact, he also believes that God has called him to plant five churches in the United States in the next five years (2010 -2015). He soon realized that, to be able to achieve this goal, he had to work strategically. For example, in 2008, he started one church and launched one ministry group. This humble start has resulted not only in answers to prayers from God but also blessings from sister churches of many districts. Rev. Le first plans to locate a specific community. He then will work with the related district (or vice versa) to set up a ministry team specifically through a local community leader, and will continue to coach members of ministry team. He anticipates that with continual updates of the training curriculum and seminars, ConvergeViet church planting will grow from an initiative to a movement.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Thien An Le, interview by author, San Diego, CA, March 16, 2010.

Rev. Pham, ConvergeViet's Global Mission Director, believes that God has given him the ability to connect and share Christian resources with others as well as to preach and teach biblical truth. By sharing their Christian resources, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team members are not only promoting unity, but also fulfilling the corporate call that God has designated for all. Rev. Pham is committed to helping raise the spirit of ownership among ConvergeViet churches in the next decade with creative fundraising and strategic partnerships. With better understanding of teamwork and accountability, the ConvergeViet Ministries is set to grow from doing mission in partnership with ConvergeViet pastors, and in some situations starting up missions itself.<sup>18</sup>

The ConvergeViet leadership team wishes to be a part of a healthy movement of churches through the application of training courses such as the Retooling Kit, which was created by Converge Worldwide as a process designed to enable leaders to mobilize vital, reproducing churches.<sup>19</sup> In the decades to come, ConvergeViet Ministries plans to apply these training courses in its churches. According to the ConvergeViet Leadership Team, spiritual landmarks—including new believer's baptisms, diligent missions, and the celebrations of spirit-filled churches—demonstrate not only that the churches have good characters but also that the churches are active in mission. Such kingdom impact requires the humble start of a mobilized congregation. One pilot church has come out of the training retreat during 2008-2010, and the journey has only begun. To have an effective strategy, ConvergeViet leaders need to know their strong points and weak points in order

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<sup>18</sup> Phu Pham, interview by author, San Diego, CA, March 16, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Baptist General Conference, *Retooling Kit Workbook*, (Arlington Heights, IL: Harvest Publications, 2005), 1.

to balance their ministry. Additionally, they must work to develop the movement's strengths and minimize its weaknesses to enable it to reach its full potential.

### SWOT Analysis and Key Issues to Be Addressed

“SWOT” stands for strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat. As part of the refocusing process, most leaders of ConvergeViet churches recently went through an analysis of their own strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). This analysis pointed out the following strengths in ConvergeViet Ministries:<sup>20</sup> Vietnamese pastors are still committed to Converge Worldwide; its pastors exhibit sacrifice and endurance; there are some growing and healthy churches; Converge Worldwide churches, districts, and individuals have shown support for ConvergeViet Ministries through the years; and young Vietnamese leaders are emerging.

The analysis also highlighted weaknesses in ConvergeViet Ministries. These include a lack of leaders for Vietnamese ministries in the United States, inadequate support of pastors and current church planters, lack of networking within Vietnamese churches, Vietnamese pastors and church leaders not being actively involved in their districts, a lack of Vietnamese materials to train and to equip Vietnamese pastors and lay leaders in local churches, and a lack of investment in second-generation ministry.

Besides the ConvergeViet Ministries' strengths and weaknesses, there are also ConvergeViet ministry opportunities: raising and multiplying godly leaders for the Vietnamese ministries in Converge Worldwide to reach out to the more than one and a

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<sup>20</sup> This SWOT analysis was done in October 2009 in Portland, Oregon, with the help of the Reverend Cirilo Doguiles, People Group Ministry Director of Converge Worldwide.



half million Vietnamese people in the United States. The Converge Worldwide national leadership understands that with such a large number of unreached Vietnamese people in the United States, it is urgent to raise and multiply godly leaders for this huge harvest. Therefore, Converge Worldwide has allocated resources to make the training available so that Vietnamese pastors can be equipped to reach out to the first and second Vietnamese generations. Together with many opportunities, ConvergeViet Ministries is also facing the following threats: the loss of Vietnamese churches if it cannot raise new leaders, loss of the second generation, membership decline in many churches, loss of interest in Converge Worldwide among some pastors; and the lack of benefits for pastors such as insurance and retirement plans.

Based on this analysis of the current strengths and weaknesses of ConvergeViet Ministries, and taking into consideration the opportunities and threats, the Vietnamese pastors in Converge Worldwide must determine the top issues to address in order to strengthen ConvergeViet Ministries in the United States over the next five years. The following are some of these key issues: developing a strategy to raise and multiply godly leaders among the ConvergeViet churches, empowering and resourcing the ConvergeViet Leadership Team, contextualizing the Converge Worldwide church mobilization and leadership development materials and pilot testing them in key Vietnamese churches, improving working relationships with districts and national bodies of Converge Worldwide, and church planting as part of the Vietnamese second-generation ministry.

## **Vietnamese Socio-Cultural and Religious Perspectives**

### Socio-Cultural Perspective

Obtaining an overall picture of the Vietnamese socio-cultural and religious background is also imperative in order to understand the attitudes and actions of Vietnamese Christian congregations and church leaders. This understanding will contribute additional components to the plan for developing leaders. To study the Vietnamese people, as well as their leaders, one should understand the various components that make up a society and a culture in order to know how to effectively communicate with its people. The following are a few critical socio-cultural elements that shape the worldview of many Vietnamese.

Vietnamese have the custom of respecting the elders and superiors, so Vietnamese Christian believers often respect the pastors or the elders in the church. To the Vietnamese, a quiet, dignified, and restrained voice and manner are expected; thus, most Vietnamese Christians exhibit a passive spirit. They often keep silent and do not show their ideas publicly.

However, *Tet*, the Vietnamese lunar New Year is a time for expressive public celebration. Vietnamese take their vacations on this occasion, especially during the first three days of the holidays. Like many East Asian peoples, most Vietnamese who work far away often go home to visit their parents and give gifts. On the first day of the holiday, children and grandchildren go to visit their parents and grandparents to wish them longevity. In turn, the parents and grand-parents as well as other adults give them “lucky money” (*tien li xi*). The Vietnamese often seek blessings during the *Tet* holidays.

Therefore, the ConvergeViet churches often use this opportunity to hold evangelism events and present the good news of the mighty God's blessings and forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ.

Some Vietnamese adults still live with their parents, who make all the family decisions while continually making great sacrifices for their children. Due to their cultural passivity, when believing in Christ, Vietnamese Christians as a whole often listen to their pastors and show great respect to the senior pastor as the administrative leader of the local churches. However, the ConvergeViet Ministries leadership team is making efforts to explain clearly to the members of local church that they have a responsibility to cooperate with the pastor and executive board and practice evangelism by bringing their family, relatives and friends to Christ on their own.

### Religious Perspective

To the Vietnamese, and to hundreds of millions of people in Asia, religious beliefs are sacred. Observing the religious life of the Vietnamese people, John Balaban writes, "Without any conflict of piety or ethics, a person can practice all of these religions in one day, depending on how he or she responds to family, to self, to other villagers, to the needy, and to ancestors."<sup>21</sup> In Asia, especially in Vietnam, at least four major beliefs have had a profound impact on the people and their culture and are reflected subtly or obviously in behavior and customs. These are Animism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. In addition, Caodai is a religion that originated in Vietnam.

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<sup>21</sup> John Balaban, *Vietnam: The Land We Never Knew* (San Francisco: Chronicle Press, 1989), 67.

According to Thuy Gia Vuong, animist beliefs in good and evil spirits have existed since ancient times, antedating the organized faiths, and have permeated Vietnamese society.<sup>22</sup> This belief is popular in Vietnam, especially in the countryside. The effect of ancestor worship upon Vietnamese society is profound. The Vietnamese believe that when their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents passed away, their souls remained with their children and grandchildren to protect them. Therefore, when Vietnamese people encounter any problem, they go to their family altar and pray to the dead, asking for help.

Confucianism was introduced to Vietnam in the first century A.D during the Chinese domination of the country.<sup>23</sup> Confucius (551-479 B.C.) was a Chinese philosopher who developed a philosophical and hierarchical social system. One of the long-standing influences on Vietnamese is his teaching to be good at self-discipline, manage one's household well, govern a state effectively, and bring peace to the world. If people want to be successful in their careers or become famous, they should live moral lives and their families should be very good, that is, they should have faithful spouses and obedient children.

The third religion that has affected Vietnamese thinking is Taoism. It was founded in China by Lao Tsu (604-531 B.C.) Lao Tsu advocated a philosophy of

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<sup>22</sup> Thuy Gia Vuong, *Getting to Know the Vietnamese and Their Culture* (New York: Frederic Ungar, 1976), 12.

<sup>23</sup> Binh Thanh Phan, "Overcoming Cultural Conflict to Strengthen Vietnamese Ministries" (D.Min. diss., Bethel Theological Seminary, 2001) 60.

harmony between human beings and between human beings and nature. Te Dinh Huynh gives a brief synopsis in his *Introduction to Vietnamese Culture*:

To achieve this state of harmony, all forms of confrontation should be avoided. The virtues of simplicity, patience, and self-contentment must be observed. By non-action and keeping away from human strife and craving, man can reach humanity with himself, other people, and the universe. Reason and knowledge cannot lead man to the right path (Tao) which can be reached only by inward probing and quiet meditation.<sup>24</sup>

Buddhism was brought into Vietnam from India in the early Christian era, between AD 159 and AD 189. The core Buddhist teaching is that human beings are born into a world of suffering. The “Noble Truth” of the origin of suffering “is the thirst to gratify the senses or the craving for material gains.”<sup>25</sup> The Noble Truth for the annihilation of suffering “is to give up, to get rid of, to be emancipated from the craving thirst that causes so much woe.”<sup>26</sup>

About two-thirds of Vietnamese say that they are Buddhist, but in reality, not all of those who make this claim go to temples often to worship or ask for blessings. Though Buddhism may be attractive to those “who find objective belief systems to be sterile and devoid of spontaneous reality” and are drawn to a faith in which “concepts of moral accountability in an afterlife are replaced with passive approach to traditional

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<sup>24</sup> Huynh Dinh Te, *Introduction to Vietnamese Culture* (1987; repr., San Diego: Multifunctional Resource Center, San Diego State University, 1989), 211.

<sup>25</sup> Binh Thanh Phan, quoted in Edward Rice, *Eastern Definition* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1980), 57.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

religious issues”;<sup>27</sup> in reality, to Vietnamese people, Buddha is a deity whom they petition for anything they need, and they use their own effort to earn his blessings.

Caodai originated in Vietnam as an attempt to unite all religions from East and West. Caodai temples contain images of gods and revered personages from Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Moreover, images of Pascal and other famous persons are also present. Caodai’s main religious center is in Tay Ninh, about sixty miles (one hundred km) northwest of Saigon. Caodai currently has seven to eight million followers in Vietnam and about thirty thousand members elsewhere, primarily in Asia, Australia, Canada, Europe, and the United States.<sup>28</sup>

So far in this brief study of the socio-religious background of the Vietnamese culture, one thing is particularly noteworthy: while migrating to the land of freedom, Vietnamese people also take with them their religious beliefs such as Animism, Buddhism, Caodai and so on, as do Vietnamese Christians. During such transitions, some values are continued, and some are discontinued due to the hardships of life in the new environment. Thus, in order to develop an effective strategy to reach Vietnamese people, ConvergeViet Ministries needs to contextualize discipleship training in its focus on mission especially within the United States.

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<sup>27</sup> Bob Larson, *Larson’s New Book of Cults*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1982), 80.

<sup>28</sup> “Caodaism (‘Kingdom of Heaven’): A Vietnamese-Centered Religion,” Religious Tolerance.org, <http://www.religioustolerance.org/caodaism.htm/> (accessed July 18, 2012).

## **The Current Status of the ConvergeViet Churches in the United States**

The previous sections provided a general history of Vietnamese Americans and a ministry profile of the ConvergeViet churches in the United States, as well as socio-cultural and religious perspectives of the Vietnamese people. This section will address the issue of the status quo of ConvergeViet Ministries and will also give suggestions for how to overcome it in order to bring change to this ministry. The outcome of this project—the change that is sought—will be the development of a strategy to raise and multiply leaders for ConvergeViet Ministries in the United States.

### **Ownership Versus Dependency on the Denomination**

To begin, it is helpful to understand the spirit of dependency in a general way and then to determine how to decrease that dependency by establishing instead a balanced life and a spirit of ownership. Consequently, the outlook of dependency among the Vietnamese must be overcome. In general, the Vietnamese spirit of dependency is somewhat like children depending on their parents or elders for material and spiritual support. In Vietnamese culture, even when a youth gets married, parents should choose their child's spouse. However, when people get old, they are to depend on their children for support. It is true that the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team and pastors should be aware that even as they strive to be as independent as possible, they should depend on the body of Christ. Thus, ConvergeViet churches are still dependent on Converge Worldwide and its districts for meeting some of their needs.

However, ConvergeViet Christians rarely consider “dependency on the denomination” to be a problem because they think it is the responsibility of the parenting denomination, Converge Worldwide, to continue to financially support the Vietnamese pastors. Vietnamese Christians think that what they are doing now, such as going to church faithfully every Sunday, is good enough. They do not have a strong desire for their churches to become self-supporting, self-sustaining, and self-governing. Some of these churches do not have the ability to provide a salary for their pastors or even cover such basic needs as sufficient insurance and health care for them because the Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters in the congregation still have a strong spirit of dependency on the denomination’s provision.<sup>29</sup>

This spirit of dependency should be eliminated from the life of Vietnamese churches. If ConvergeViet church leaders continue to accept a situation of dependency, they will never experience God’s blessing upon their ministry. They should practice generosity and learn the difference between healthy independence and the weakness of dependency. A pastor should live a life between dependency and independence that leads to fulfillment. Following are some suggestions for overcoming the obstacles of dependency.

Sometimes, ConvergeViet Ministries Christians act dependently because they may think that they do not have the ability or the education to carry out their responsibilities. However, they do not know that today there are many methods to help them learn how to handle problems or to make decisions, such as reading books, taking

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<sup>29</sup>Personal observation from ConvergeViet church visitations.



class, or asking mentors from ConvergeViet Ministries to pray for them and help them in solving their problems.

Vietnamese Christians have to stand on their own feet to find the way to overcome life's obstacles. Changing the Vietnamese mindset is indeed revolutionary. It will take a long time, but it is not impossible. Often people take responsibility for the collective good, but if people should take on an attitude of unselfishness and look after others before themselves, then they will be able to be independent and take responsibility for themselves. Looking after the collective good equals being responsible for one's own problems.

An example of a Vietnamese immigrant who became successful and reached out to others is John Vu Trong Tai. He entered the United States empty-handed after the events of 1975. However, after overcoming the language and job barriers and difficult situations, in 1980 he became the founder and chief executive officer of ABC Money Transactions, Inc., and he recruited many Vietnamese in Portland, Oregon to work in his business.<sup>30</sup>

Another positive change that can help Vietnamese Christians to minimize their habits of dependency is the development of a sense of ownership. In their book *Guts!* Kevin and Jackie Freiberg tell the successful story of Whole Foods Market, which began in 1980 in Austin, Texas.<sup>31</sup> Employee ownership is exemplified in this business. Freiberg

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<sup>30</sup> "Company Overview of ABC Money Transactions, Inc.," Bloomberg and Businessweek, <http://investing.businessweek.com/research/stocks/private/snapshot.asp?privcapId=27019513> (accessed July 19, 2012).

<sup>31</sup> Kevin Freiberg and Jackie Freiberg, *Guts!* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 2004).

says, “The concept of teamwork, autonomy, empowerment and ownership have become shopworn clichés in much of the business world. At the Whole Foods Market, these ideas are the foundation of a business model that is blowing the competition out of the aisles.”<sup>32</sup> According to the Freibergs, after twenty-three years (1980-2003), the business had grown to include 140 stores in twenty-five states and the number of employees had increased to 24,000.<sup>33</sup>

This example shows that ownership is a powerful force that can inspire even the most productive workforces to surpass themselves. The Whole Foods employees work with a wholehearted spirit because they consider the company their own. To Kevin Freiberg, “Gutsy people know that giving employees ownership and responsibility is a way of saying, ‘I trust you, I believe in you and you are an integral part of this company’s success.’”<sup>34</sup>

The examples from the Freibergs’ book and the life of Vietnamese businessman John Vu Trong Tai can teach the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team and pastors how to totally rely on God and have a strong desire to stand on their own feet. The leaders should think like owners and ask themselves, “Since this is my Father’s business, how will I sell the product on behalf of His company?” They might also ask, “Oh God, my life is yours, would you use my life to expand your kingdom?” Another response could be, “Should I give my life for full time ministry for God’s kingdom?” Finally, as

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

owners they might consider, “Since it is all about our Father’s business, it is all about how should I treat my Christian brothers and sisters.”

A core problem is that instead of relying totally on God, ConvergeViet church leaders still rely on the resources of the denomination. Without the support of the larger organization, it is very difficult for them to continue to serve God. If the leaders were asked, “What will you do if you do not get paid? Will you continue to serve God?” it would be hard for them to answer. When the leaders get mired in financial problems, instead of focusing on Jesus Christ and looking to Him for their financial provision, they focus on the declining economy and worry about receiving sufficient donations or contributions from the denomination or from the believers. ConvergeViet leaders should focus on how great God is, not on how big the problem is. The hope is that leaders can have a child’s faith, just believing and trusting in the Heavenly Father. He will take good care of His own as long as they listen to Him and fully obey what He commands.

For the purpose of enlarging the kingdom of God, ConvergeViet church leaders should consider God’s business as their own business and simply walk by the power of the Holy Spirit, trusting that the result will belong to God, not to them. When they do anything for God with all their hearts, God will reward them accordingly. ConvergeViet pastors must be challenged to focus on the Father’s heart, know what God wants them to do, then obediently do it. This is much more important than knowing what the denomination wants them to do and then following the denomination’s direction or the people’s will.

## Resistance to Partnering with Other Denominations

After visiting ConvergeViet churches in my role as National Director of ConvergeViet Ministries, I have concluded that in order to take hold of the kingdom perspective, ConvergeViet church leaders must remain as little children (Mk 10:14), very innocent and simple, believing that everything is possible, for it is. Many Vietnamese pastors have served God for a long time but really do not have God's kingdom perspective; they just focus on the kingdom of the denomination, and it is easy for that organization to become an idol in their eyes.

ConvergeViet pastors find it easy to stay in the "status quo" mode; they may feel happy in their own denomination, which can easily become their comfort zone. However, instead of being satisfied with their small community, their church members, and living comfortably, they should follow the Father's commandment as in Matthew 28:18-20. Their prayer should be that through the word of God, their own faith will grow every day and God will do great things in and through them. They must pray that God will draw great numbers of people and resources to them in order to maximize His kingdom on earth and save many suffering and hopeless souls.

The greatest gift that the church members can offer their denomination is to give it the resources that God gives them without expecting the denomination to pay them back. Many seminaries provide resources only for their own denomination, and many pastors serve only churches in their own organization. They do not have the big picture in their minds; what they see is only their small world. As pastors, they need to see a bigger

world where the Father is King and where they can hear His voice saying: “Everything of mine is yours.”

They also need to have a bigger vision to see that their brother’s need is also their need. If they always think of their need and forget the other’s need, they will become selfish. They must learn by heart that “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it” (Ps 127:1). The ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team and pastors have thought that if they worked hard, God would bless them, but God is interested in looking deep into the hearts of His people to search out their motivation for His kingdom. God blesses people more for what He sees in their hearts than for all of their busyness.

Many pastors and Christians nowadays have been locked inside their four walls and have failed to embrace the kingdom of God. They have been driven by their organization’s goals or denomination’s needs, and these motivations or the fear of failure lead them to selfishness. The apostle Paul advised people not only to look out for their own benefit, but for the benefit of others as well. ConvergeViet pastors should serve God with a perspective that declares, “I will contribute to other ministries for my brothers and sisters outside of my denomination in ways which will in no way profit my own. Then, my work will be about God’s kingdom.”

Additionally, church leaders must be about the Father’s business, accepting the responsibility to do God’s work with or without requests from people. When they have a perspective that what they do is for the Father, not to gain the favor of people, God will be pleased and treasure what has been done for Him and His kingdom. In order to overcome the issue of resistance to partnering with other denominations, one must have a

perspective of putting God's kingdom first, that is accepting God's sovereignty and the need to obey His will.

Jesus gave such a meaning to the kingdom, and the biblical records lend support as well. Those who really want to serve God effectively should focus on Jesus Christ Himself and should not focus too much their own denomination. Whatever any group has done is all about God's Kingdom, not a denomination's kingdom. Therefore, ConvergeViet Ministries seeks to promote kingdom-impacting partnerships with other Christian churches while upholding evangelical beliefs in word and deed.<sup>35</sup> However, one of the obstacles to enlarging the kingdom of God in ConvergeViet churches is the spirit of selfishness, that is, not wanting to cooperate with other denominations. When a church has a partnership with another denomination, this church should have a vision and passion for enlarging the kingdom of God, not simply working for the church's own benefit, such as drawing more members or earning more money.

The ConvergeViet Leadership Team's concerted prayer to God is that He help all denominational leaders to sit and work together, and especially to be partners with each other. Leaders should not have the spirit of competition with one another, but the spirit of completion so the Father's kingdom can be enlarged on earth. Then, the core value of the church in Acts 2 would come alive in leaders' hearts, and they would put all their resources together and share them for the purpose of advancing God's kingdom.

How wonderful it would be if Converge brothers and sisters become a group of people who make their specific giftings, skills, and resources known and available to

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<sup>35</sup>*Chua Vinh Quang*, 64-65.

others. They would look for ways to help others by doing what they are really good at doing. They would commit to using their gifts, skills, and talents for other ministries as seeds in the kingdom of God. The Leadership Team hopes that, in the near future, pastors and church members can have a place to help one another solve daily leadership and ministry issues, and, from time to time, bring their resources together around a cause that is bigger than any of them. To foster this kind of joint kingdom-building ministry perspective, ConvergeViet Ministries hosted a training seminar on October 30, 2010. Dr. Terry Walling from Fuller Theological Seminary shared his insight and experience of being “stuck in ministry” with both ConvergeViet Ministries churches and other churches in the greater area of Orange County.<sup>36</sup>

#### Insufficient Leadership Accountability

In the past, the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team and pastors have not had a good system to hold its leaders accountable before Jesus Christ and each other. A major threat to this organization is that pastors lead in isolation rather than working with others in teams. Therefore, ConvergeViet Ministries churches have grown slowly and remain in jeopardy. Thus, accountability and the steps to bringing responsibility to pastoral work are pressing issues.

Everyone wants to be a leader, but few are prepared to accept the accountability that goes with leadership. However, sometimes two persons are better than one when

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<sup>36</sup> Tu Anh Truong, Andrew Le, and Phu Hong Pham, *ConvergeViet Ministries Report 2010-2012* (n.p.: Converge Worldwide Ministries-Vietnamese Ministries, 2012), 2.

something needs to be done. According to the “Law of Countability” of John C. Maxwell, the ConvergeViet national leadership team suggested the five specific steps to holding ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders accountable for excellence.<sup>37</sup>

ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders begin with Step One: “Clearly Define the Expectations.” Before carrying out any project, church leaders should come together to give clear details of what they would like to do. They should let everyone know the vision or a whole picture of the project and the standards needed to accomplish the task.

The process then proceeds to Step Two: “Clearly Define the Standards.” During the meeting, ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders should discuss the project standards. If ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders are not suitable, they should make efforts to raise the bar. They should ask questions such as whether they think they can achieve this new standard or what factors must be consistent in order to meet the new standard. In doing so, ConvergeViet local church pastors and lay leaders show that every member of their group can value the others’ opinions, and they demonstrate that everyone is committed to accomplishing the solution.

Through an open discussion, ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders can implement Step Three, “Integrate the New Standards.” At this point, they can freely share their ideas and discuss the obstacles they may meet, the resources they need, and how they would overcome trouble so that they could take action. In addition, ConvergeViet Ministries will offer a seminar or training class on how to meet the new standards, for example,

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<sup>37</sup> John Maxwell, *Learning the 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork* (Atlanta: Maximum Impact, 2005), 36-39.



how to build teamwork or how ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders can contribute their efforts to enlarge the kingdom of God.

After integrating the new standards, the ConvergeViet church leaders can move on to Step Four, “Set Up Measurements to Quantify Success.” It is important that they establish a method which they can use to determine the successful application of the new standards. If ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders want their project carried out, they must have some type of measurements to assess the effectiveness of the team.

Finally, Step Five, “Recognize Success and Coach for Improved Performance,” requires ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders to follow up with any member who does well, in addition to working further with anyone who fails. That way, they can provide a reward for success for those that who have been successful in improving their performance or coaching for those who need help with improvement. In doing this, everyone can feel that the success belongs to the whole group. Moreover, the “Law of Countability” as described by John Maxwell is critical in building teams and in effective teamwork, especially when the stakes are high.<sup>38</sup>

In short, in order to have a good accountability system, ConvergeViet Ministries should have a good coaching system to encourage, coach, mentor, and guide God’s people on their spiritual journeys. As God’s people are equipped, empowered, and motivated for ministry, they need to learn to function as a team, share the same plan, and move in the same direction. As Don Shula and Ken Blanchard state, team members need to be inspired to do things together better than they thought they could do by themselves,

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

and they must be motivated to work hard and play as a team.<sup>39</sup> ConvergeViet pastors need to claim this responsibility of coaching God's team in their local congregations.

In addition to a coaching system, the ConvergeViet should have a good mentoring system in which Vietnamese pastors function as mentors and each one also has a mentor. Mentoring has not been a high priority among ConvergeViet pastors in their personal lives and their ministry contexts. Traditionally, ConvergeViet pastors have functioned independently of one another, protecting their rights and areas of ministry responsibility. Today, many Vietnamese non-believers come to ConvergeViet churches. ConvergeViet pastors no longer have all the skills to address these many needs. They are recognizing that they cannot do it alone any more and need help, support, and encouragement, which is leading them to team together with other professionals and people God has gifted in ministry. The mentoring process has begun for some ConvergeViet pastors as they have become vulnerable and have personally sought for themselves mentors who speak into their lives and journey with them.

At various times, the ConvergeViet pastors have hosted leadership seminars for Vietnamese pastors both within and outside ConvergeViet Ministries. Through these seminars, they continue to learn, to grow and to fellowship together as one community of Christ's disciples as well as sharing the privilege of participating together in the task of kingdom-building ministry. In my own life, God provided leadership development resources by providing a mentor, Terry Walling, and a coach, Bob Logan to enrich my

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<sup>39</sup> Don Shula and Ken Blanchard, *Everyone's a Coach: You Can Inspire Anyone to Be a Winner* (New York: Harper Business; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 11-12.

personal development. Only as pastors experience various mentoring and coaching relationships will they be able to mentor and coach other people.

This first chapter has provided a general history and a ministry profile of the ConvergeViet churches in the United States. It has also provided an understanding of the Vietnamese socio-cultural and religious perspectives which can contribute to the development of a strategy for leadership development, and has presented the need to overcome the obstacles to change.

The next chapter deals with ConvergeViet's urgent need for greater focus on leadership development and sets out a strategy of raising and multiplying godly leaders for ConvergeViet Ministries in the United States. This strategy will use many Scripture verses as its theological foundation and will serve as the focus for leadership training.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE NEED FOR GREATER FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR THE CONVERGEVIET CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES

ConvergeViet Ministries seeks to become a healthy movement for reproducing Vietnamese churches in the United States within the context of the political history of Vietnam since 1975, the history of Christianity in Vietnam, and the relationship of the gospel to a combination of Vietnamese and American culture. Such a goal requires a pathway for significant leadership development. This chapter will deal with ConvergeViet Ministries' urgent need for greater focus on leadership development. A strategy of raising and multiplying godly leaders for the ConvergeViet ministries in the U.S will then be presented.

#### **The Background of ConvergeViet Ministries in the United States**

After the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, Vietnam became a Communist country. Refugees fled Vietnam to seek asylum in different democratic countries, searching for freedom, a better life, a brighter future, and peaceful healing from the memories, torments, and ravages of the Vietnam War. Among these Vietnamese refugees were thousands of evangelical Christians. These believers were the fruits of the labors of

American missionaries from the Christian Missionary Alliance (CMA), a denomination that originated in the United States and pioneered the establishment of Protestant Christianity in Vietnam in 1911. Much earlier, in the first decades of the seventeenth century, the Roman Catholic Church had established Catholic believers within the local Vietnamese population.

Since most Vietnamese Christians—leaders and pastors—who settled in the United States in 1975 were members of Vietnamese evangelical churches in Vietnam that had strong ties with the Christian Missionary Alliance, these Vietnamese Christians were not very familiar with other mainline evangelical denominations in the United States. Consequently, it was difficult for Vietnamese to plant an evangelical church under a different Protestant denomination in the United States in the years 1975-1985. However, when more Vietnamese Christian leaders were introduced to different evangelical denominations or studied at different evangelical seminaries in the United States that were not connected solely with the CMA, it became easier for lay leaders and future pastors to see Protestant Christianity from a broader view. They saw that for Vietnamese, Christianity did not have to be equated with just one evangelical denomination, the CMA, and they have since ventured out to plant churches under different evangelical denominations.<sup>1</sup>

The first two Vietnamese Bible study groups were planted in the late eighties in Portland, Oregon, and in Reseda, California under the auspices of the Baptist General

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<sup>1</sup> Phiet Luu, interview by author, April 28, 2011.

Conference. In August 1997, the first national ConvergeViet conference was held in Portland, Oregon, with the participation of more than ten ConvergeViet churches. Five pastors were elected to be on the national executive board for the Vietnamese Baptist General Conference, now known as ConvergeViet Ministries. Two years later, in August 1999, the second national ConvergeViet conference was convened in San Diego, California, and the National Executive Board of ConvergeViet Ministries recorded the existence of nineteen ConvergeViet churches.<sup>2</sup>

However, the National Executive Board entered a period of reassessment from 2000-2004 because of difficulties that had arisen due to the physical distances separating the five executive board members, a lack of clear leadership structure, an increased workload in local churches in the United States and the need to support a new ministry opening in Vietnam in 1996. This period required that the board members take time to reflect in order to reorganize and think through effective ways to serve the national board and local churches in the United States, as well as the new ministry in Vietnam while taking into account the limited number of Vietnamese support staff.

ConvergeViet churches have experienced fifteen years of ministry under the ConvergeViet Ministries national conference as well as benefitting from a broader perspective from a team of leaders. As a result, they have progressed from their beginnings as prayer gatherings and Bible studies at a few Christians' homes to being a body of over one thousand members in 2010. Several pastoral retreats were also organized to help refresh ConvergeViet pastors who are currently in positions of service.

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<sup>2</sup>*Chua Vinh Quang, 65.*

As a result, from 2005 till today, there has clearly been significant, positive growth in most ConvergeViet churches. Financial contributions of local churches to the ConvergeViet Ministries are increasing every year, and numbers of converts and baptisms are also increasing.

### **Culture and the Gospel**

In the midst of a Western culture characterized by the philosophy of “*Gott ist tot*”(also known as “the death of God”),<sup>3</sup> the ConvergeViet Ministries leadership team is encouraged to see growth in some measure in ConvergeViet churches, as well as in churches of many different ethnicities in several evangelical denominations in the United States. This atheistic, existential “death of God” philosophy was developed in the nineteenth century by philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and still lingers in the United States, having been spread widely in major parts of America’s academic arena.<sup>4</sup>

However, God builds His Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Mt 16:18). For this reason, the ConvergeViet Ministries leadership team and pastors have

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Audi, ed., *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), s.v. “Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm,” by Richard Schacht. “What Nietzsche called ‘the death of God’ was both a *cultural event*—the waning and impending demise of the ‘Christian moral’ interpretation of life and the world—and also a *philosophical development*: the abandonment of anything like the God-hypothesis (all demise-divine absolutes included).” (Italics mine.)

<sup>4</sup> Quentin Smith, “The Metaphilosophy of Naturalism,” *Philo* 4, no. 2 (2001): 6. Referring to “the death of God,” declared by Friedrich Nietzsche in the nineteenth century, Quentin Smith, a prominent atheist philosopher laments that “God is not ‘dead’ in academia; he returned to life in the late 1960s and is now alive and well in his last academic stronghold, philosophy departments.” Smith reached this conclusion after discovering that according to William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland, “the truth of the Christian worldview with philosophically sophisticated arguments” had been presented and published “in the finest scholarly journals and professional societies.” *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 3.

decided to move forward, continuing to reach out and present the gospel to Vietnamese in the United States.

To reach out to other people living in the Vietnamese American community, Vietnamese Christians simply cannot avoid engaging with the culture. When discussing the way to be a faithful Christian and do the works of a faithful Christian, James says that Christian faith without action is dead faith (Jas 2:17). To engage in acts of faith, a Christian has to engage with fellow human beings in their social context and seek to understand their culture, reasoning, beliefs, and values in order to present the coherence and validity of the Christian faith in a compelling way.

Vietnamese culture is performance-oriented culture in which “doing” usually precedes “being.” That is to say, Vietnamese people often focus on action or “doing” first; for example, to show honor to his parents, a son should worship them after they die. If the son does not do this action, other people will condemn him for lacking filial piety. Thus actions define a person’s character. So ConvergeViet leaders need to understand their own culture without losing the salt and light of their Christian identity (Mt 5:13-16) in a multicultural world. In addition, they must understand the religious pluralism that exists in the United States.

In terms of culture, it must be noted that Western missionaries or Western Christian workers who worked in Vietnam and elsewhere engaged in dedicated acts of learning the indigenous language, cultures, beliefs, and values, of socializing with the local population, and of cultivating relationships with the people. These acts were done without any intention to establish forcefully a sense of superiority of Western civilization



or European colonialism. In engaging with the local inhabitants, these missionaries were very patient and humble before receiving or seizing opportunities to present the gospel and telling people about their faith in God. They considered God's example: He Himself had stepped into the stream of time to enter into a human culture and perform His wonderful work on the cross because one of His essences is love (Jn 1:12, 3:16, 1 Jn 4:7).

When Vietnamese Protestants think about Western engagement with the Vietnamese culture, they cannot but mention the linguistic work of Alexandre de Rhodes, who is called *A-Lịch-Son Đắc-Lộ* in Vietnamese. De Rhodes dedicated his life to serving God as a Jesuit priest. He arrived in Vietnam in 1620 as a missionary, soon after a Jesuit mission had been established in Hanoi in 1615. Before this time, the Vietnamese used a writing system, called *chữ Nôm* ("ancient Vietnamese script"). This system was composed of Chinese characters together with a few indigenously created characters. It was very difficult for the common people to use because one had to learn Chinese words first, then ancient Vietnamese. Consequently, few people knew this kind of writing.

However, after de Rhodes invented the Romanized form of writing called *Quốc Ngữ Việt Nam* ("Vietnamese national language"), the Vietnamese were grateful to him. The new Vietnamese national written language provided nineteenth-century Protestant Christian missionaries in Vietnam with a much shorter path to learning to write in Vietnamese, allowing them to oversee the translation of the Bible into Vietnamese, which was completed in 1925. Although de Rhodes was in Vietnam for only ten years, thousands of local Vietnamese had a good opportunity to observe him. They discovered

that his “doing” did not precede his “being” but was deeply rooted in and flowed from his faithful “being” a dedicated servant of God.

In observing de Rhodes’s and other missionaries’ work of engaging with the indigenous culture, one sees the aspects of “being” and “doing” in their lives and work. Christians demonstrate love for God and for doing good works to impact the culture around them, and this love grows from having faith to rely on the good, wise, and powerful God, who has promised His followers that the One “who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:6). John Piper expresses this in another way: “A life of obedience ‘springs out necessary’ from a true and lively faith. Good works are ‘the fruits of Faith.’ Justifying faith is not merely alongside good works, but it is also the agency employed by the grace of God to give rise to good works. Thus good works are the evidence of authentic faith.”<sup>5</sup>

Today, Vietnamese culture in the United States is a mixture of past, present, and future. Vietnamese have experienced the past of living through the Vietnam War. They are grateful for their present refugee status as they take advantage of opportunities to obtain higher education for themselves and their children, to have good jobs, to establish businesses of many kinds, to buy houses, and so forth. It is no surprise, then, that the Vietnamese culture, as well as other Asian cultures in the United States, is performance-oriented, such that “doing” usually precedes “being.” Freedom, assimilation, education, employment, and business are all important, decisive factors used in this country to attract immigrants and to help them adapt to the new culture. Immigrants are drawn

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<sup>5</sup> John Piper, *The Purifying Power of Living by Faith in Future Grace* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Press, 1995), 24.

because of their new country's political validity, its immigrant-friendly policies, its powerful economy, and its perceived superiority.

These factors can be rooted in opportunity, nurtured by perseverance, and sustained by the free realization of desires, educational progress, and material reward as well as by financial greed. Blaise Pascal, the famous French philosopher, mathematician, physicist, and theologian,<sup>6</sup> observed that these factors can distract people from discovering and acknowledging the real, massive spiritual needs they have in life.<sup>7</sup> They can also block people's realization of the divine purpose of existence because their sense of security and contentment based on the richness of a material world contributes to a poverty in the spiritual dimension that is entirely a human creation. In his book about Pascal's *Pensées* for modern humanity, Peter Kreeft agrees that these factors can lead immigrants to indifference in spiritual matters.<sup>8</sup>

The distraction and indifference are not limited only to immigrants, for in today's society, one can easily observe the prideful world of wealth and prosperity portrayed in the Scriptures. Christ told the parable about the foolishness of the rich man in Luke 12:16-21. Referring to the Sermon on the Mount, Peter Kreeft observes, "Even the rich and powerful need diversion—especially they—which proves that even they—especially

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<sup>6</sup> Audi, *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, s.v. "Pascal, Blaise," by Daniel Fouke. According to Fouke, Pascal is a "French philosopher known for his brilliance as a mathematician, physicist, inventor, theologian, polemicist and French prose stylist. . . . Pascal's philosophical contributions are found throughout his work, but primarily in his *Pensées* (1670). . . . The influence of *Pensées* on religious thought and later existentialism has been profound because of their extraordinary insight, passion and depth."

<sup>7</sup> James M. Houston, ed., *The Mind on Fire: An Anthology of the Writing of Blaise Pascal* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1989), 95-109.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Kreeft, *Christianity for Modern Pagans: Pascal's Pensées* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 167-206.

they—are unhappy. ‘Blessed are the poor [in spirit]’ (Mt 5:3) is not only good morality, it is also good psychology.”<sup>9</sup> To alter the course of the vanities of temporal existence of “here and now under the sun” which Ecclesiastes speaks of (1:2-3), one must engage “the re-orientation of one’s life”<sup>10</sup> in order to differentiate the real significance between momentary felt need and massive spiritual need in life.

Because they forget God’s perspective that human beings were created in God’s image, most Vietnamese Christians, especially Vietnamese immigrants, focus on earning more money and neglect the spiritual life. To begin the re-orientation of a Christian’s life in a performance culture, the ConvergeViet Ministries leadership team will hold a seminar for ConvergeViet pastors to explain to them the attitude of a performance culture and how to put values in the right order: that is, “being” is prior to “doing.”

### **Culture and Fulfillment**

Successful immigrants in the United States may fill their hearts with the happiness of enjoying their present situation in this free country and the opportunity to have education and wealth, but these enjoyments are short-lived. As Pascal pointed out, “All

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 178. Kreeft, a theistic philosopher, uses the term “psychology” which is certainly unlike “Dr. Phil’s” psychology and life strategies aired quite frequently on television shows. A psychologist examines a human being in terms of the inner workings of the individuals. However, taking into account mind-body dualism, the inner workings of a person is not limited to behaviorism, environment and human physiology. Psychology, when it reaches its depth of mind-body dualism, should be a study that reaches beyond human physiology since “psyche” is a Greek term which means “soul, mind, life”—an immaterial entity. Humans’ behavior and happiness are based on a belief that caring for material wealth more than a for human soul. However, not knowing the true worth of a human soul is not good for the wellbeing of a body and mind, as well as soul.

<sup>10</sup> James Houston, *The Heart’s Desire: A Guide to Personal Fulfillment* (Oxford: Lion Publishing, 1992), 20.

men seek happiness. There are no exceptions. . . . Yet all men complain. . . . A test which has gone on so long, without pause or change, really ought to convince us that we are incapable of attaining the good by our own efforts. . . . This infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite object.”<sup>11</sup>

When the empty self becomes a poor site for finding meaning, there is “a growing sense of depression, despair, and meaninglessness in our culture,” says Moreland.<sup>12</sup> Myles Munroe—an international teacher, speaker, lecturer, evangelist, advisor and founder of Bahamas Faith Ministries International—tells the story of a seventy-six year-old man who attempted suicide by wading into deep ocean. A young man struggled against the waves to save him. “Why didn’t you let me die? Your good deed is the curse of my existence,” said the older man.<sup>13</sup> He was a successful man named Mr. Cambridge, and he had millions of dollars worth of investments, good mansions and a happy family with well-educated children.

The young man, Wilson, wondered at Mr. Cambridge’s attempt to end his own life. Mr. Cambridge confessed, “What was it all for? Is this all there is? What did I gain? I have everything and yet nothing. Everyone thinks I am a success but I am a failure. I

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<sup>11</sup> Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, no. 148, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer (New York: Penguin Books, 1966), 74-75. *Pensées* (literally, “thoughts”) was indeed a name given posthumously to Pascal’s fragments of writing, which he had been preparing for an *Apology for the Christian Religion*, which was never completed before he died at the age of thirty-nine.

<sup>12</sup> Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle*, 104.

<sup>13</sup> Myles Munroe, *The Pursuit of Purpose*, (Shippensburg, PA.: Destiny Image, 1999), i.

have given and receive nothing. . . . Still I am empty, depressed, frustrated and sad. My life has no meaning. Unlike my bank accounts, which are well filled, I am unfulfilled.”<sup>14</sup>

It is no wonder Augustine confessed, “You [God] have made us for yourself. . . . Our heart is restless until it rests in thee.”<sup>15</sup> Our heart was created for an object much deeper and more valuable than “consumer goods, experiences, politicians, romantic partners and empathetic therapist . . . and [the empty self] embodies the absences [of these] as a chronic, undifferentiated hunger.”<sup>16</sup>

A temporal existence in the “here and now” is an earthbound life, for no human being can ever be really happy for long by using objects of the material world to fulfill the yearning and longing of the heart and soul. Thus human beings need to know how God “is mindful of them” and “cares for them” in order that this infinite abyss be filled only with an infinite object—God. People wonder how they can fill fill the emptiness inside them. At the wedding at Cana in John 2:1-11, when the wine ran out, the joy died out; only when Jesus turned water into wine, was everybody at the wedding happy again.

According to John Piper in *God’s Passion for His Glory*, for Christians, “the really pressing issue in the culture transformation is culture penetration.”<sup>17</sup> Knowing the locus of an impact point for culture penetration is an effective tool in ministry.

Vietnamese people as a whole do not care about culture or abstract things. As Piper says,

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., ii.

<sup>15</sup> Augustine, *Confessions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3.

<sup>16</sup> Philip Cushman, “Why the Empty Self,” *American Psychologist* 45 (May 1990): 600.

<sup>17</sup> John Piper, *God’s Passion for His Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 101.

“The culture is but creation and real needs.”<sup>18</sup> Most Vietnamese people are farmers; a folksong shows their care about creation: “Looking at the sky, the earth, the cloud/  
Looking at the rain, the wind, the day and the night/ Hoping that the feet will be hard, and the stone will be soft/ Hoping that the sky will be still and the sea will be calm/ In order that the harvest will be fine, and the farmers will be full.”<sup>19</sup>

The Vietnamese do not know that the cosmos was created by God, but if they think deeply, they will agree with Job and David, who both wondered why God was interested in human beings and both asked the same question: “What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention” (Jb 7:17), and “What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?” (Ps 8:4)

In Psalm 139:14, David declares, “I praise you [Lord] because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.” In addition, Genesis 1:26 states, “God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness . . .’” How can we contemplate the greatness of God’s images? God made human beings in three parts, spirit, soul and body; that was the order and function. As Pastor B.H. Clendennen, an international speaker, author, radio and television speaker and founder of School of Christ, says, “Man, preeminently, was a spiritual being. Being a spirit, God

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>19</sup> Vietnamese folk song: *Trong trời, trong đất trong mây/ Trong mưa, trong gió, trong ngày trong đêm/ Trong cho chan cung đã mem/ Trời yên, biển lặng, mọi yên tam long.* (Translated into English by Tuyet Kieu.)

fellowshipped with man in the cool of the evening. Every evening God walked and talked with man (Genesis 3:8).”<sup>20</sup>

Most Vietnamese immigrants, like many other groups of immigrants in the United States, want to live a life full of material conveniences such as comfortable houses, secure jobs, successful businesses and plentiful sums of money they can spend in traveling and retirement. They also want to live a long life with no grief and pass away in peace. However, in reality they encounter certain crises that shake their security, worldview, or existential well-being.<sup>21</sup> However, at those times, unless they address the uncertainties, impermanence, suffering and futility of life in a material world and consider the reality of a spiritual dimension, they eagerly continue on the same path. They will strive to make great progress as their life’s main priority, seeking to be successful in accordance with the opportunities of freedom, education, diligence, and prosperity in this country.

Striving to conform to the notion of progress in this temporal existence, these Vietnamese Americans are always in a great enthusiastic hurry. In his book *The Divine Conspiracy*, Dallas Willard, a professor in the School of Philosophy at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, compares such people with “travelers on a cruise ship carried along by a strong undercurrent of opportunities, a powerful wind of

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<sup>20</sup> B.H. Clendennen, *The Cure for Unbelief* (Beaumont, TX: Voice of Victory Temple, 1996), 2.

<sup>21</sup> Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (Ann Arbor, MI: Yale University Press, 1993), 44-55. In his book, Rambo indicates that there are several stages that lead to religious conversion. Crisis is one of them. Crises may be cultural, economical, geological, legal, marital, physiological, political, psychological, religious, or social. The contours of a crisis, which consist of intensity, duration, scope, source, and old/new type, are also critical factors for people searching for and embracing a religious conversation.



integration, and noticeable waves of progress. Yet the real need of an eternity in the heart is rarely being pondered by these travelers. Most of those on the cruise happily believe that ‘they are being carried somewhere,’ perhaps they have almost reached the paradise of eternity on earth. In reality, they are nowhere near the destination of renovated hearts and redeemed souls.”<sup>22</sup>

### **Resistance to Change**

Not only do Vietnamese immigrants tend to seek happiness in the material world, they have a tendency to resist change even if, for example, they are managers or visionary leaders who have to do the right thing. In response to this situation, ConvergeViet Ministries sees an urgent need to educate Vietnamese Christians to understand this tendency and to lead them to make internal changes in their Christian worldview and their understanding of life in the kingdom of God, rather than continuing to maintain a heart equipped with the “gospel of sin management,” as Willard terms it.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, there is a need for renewal among ConvergeViet pastors so they can be models of living in the heart and leading their congregations from the heart. The task of modeling may also require ConvergeViet pastors to make changes in the ways in which they have done ministry in the past.

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<sup>22</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (San Francisco: Harper, 1998), 8.

<sup>23</sup> Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 35-42. “When we examine the broad spectrum of Christian proclamation and practice . . . on the right wing of theology is forgiveness of the individual sins. On the left it is removal of social or structural evils. The current gospel then becomes a ‘gospel of sin management.’ Transformation of life and character is *no* part of the redemptive message. Moment-to-moment human reality in its depths is not the arena of faith and eternal living.” 41.

The ways business corporations and business cultures facilitate changes can provide helpful examples. Business processes can be applied in different settings, such as changing a culture or doing ministry. John P. Kotter, a prominent professor of leadership and frequent speaker at top management meetings, lists eight points in facilitating change. The organization must first break out of the status quo by creating a sense of urgency; second, create a powerful guiding coalition; third, develop a vision and strategy; fourth, communicate the vision; fifth, get people on board; sixth, create short-term wins; seventh, use successes to produce more change; and, eighth, anchor the change in the culture of the organization.<sup>24</sup>

According to Kotter, a new vision of tomorrow comes out of a sense of urgency in the present. Without a sense of urgency, new initiatives “sink in a sea of complacency.” In his view, “By far the biggest mistake people make when trying to change organizations is to plunge ahead without establishing a high enough sense of urgency in fellow managers and employees. This error is fatal because transformations always fail to achieve their objectives when complacency levels are high.”<sup>25</sup> When change is necessary, it needs to proceed no matter the cost.

In ConvergeViet Ministries, change begins by examining what is happening in the ConvergeViet pastor’s life, in the church’s life, or in the ways its ministries are being carried out. However, it seems that the churches in ConvergeViet Ministries have not caught the sense of urgency for personal change and new vision as the parent

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<sup>24</sup> John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 21.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

denomination Converge Worldwide has. God is inviting ConvergeViet pastors lead their own lives, of course with God's grace and truth, rather than simply reacting to what life brings them. Truly, the way ConvergeViet pastors lead themselves shapes the way they will lead others.

### **Changes in Western Culture**

Before Vietnamese American Christian leaders rush out to implement changes in ministry dealing with heart and mind, they must have a good understanding of shifts in American culture. Today Western people proclaim with despair an "absence of meaning" and a "bare existence."<sup>26</sup> One's perception of an empty self should bring about a powerful awareness of nothingness within one's soul. Thus, regardless of the kind of changes Christian leaders are trying to make in the midst of such culture shifts, they simply cannot leave out hope. Stephen Evans argues that "to understand hope, we must distinguish despair as a way of life and despair as a moment of life."<sup>27</sup>

Only the firm embrace of the Christian worldview can lead humankind out of despair, whether despair is a way or a moment of life because Jesus is "the way, the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6): the way that leads us to God (Jn 14:7); the truth that sets us free from despair (Jn 8:32), death (Jn 12:25), and sin (Jn 1:29); and the life that brings us into eternity (Ex 3:14; Jn 12:25; Rv 1:18) to enjoy and worship God. Without Him, sooner or later a person will grapple with the proposition that Bertrand Russell stated so starkly:

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<sup>26</sup> C. Stephen Evans, *Existentialism: The Philosophy of Despair and the Quest for Hope* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1984), 45-46.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving. . . . His origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms. . . . All the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system. . . . Only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.<sup>28</sup>

If humankind's historical moorings will be someday buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins, then one needs to ponder the prophetic story of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9, written more than two thousand years before Russell was born. As Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien say in *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, "The account of the tower of Babel concludes on a note of profound despair with humankind utterly unable to fulfill its God-given destiny."<sup>29</sup> If the soul's habitation can only be safely built upon the scaffolding of the truths envisioned by Russell, then the famous humanist saying "Man is the measure of all things"<sup>30</sup> does not provide a valid answer to humankind's persistent fear of and profound despair over being extinguished in "the vast death of the solar system."

In observing the human predicament, William Craig reminds Christians to appreciate Pascal's wisdom:

The Christian religion, he claims, teaches two truths: that there is a God whom men are capable of knowing, and that there is an element of corruption in men that renders them unworthy of God. Knowledge of God without knowledge of man's

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<sup>28</sup> Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957), 107.

<sup>29</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 28.

<sup>30</sup> Audi, *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, s.v. "Sophists," by Harry A. Ide. According to Ide, "[Protagoras of Abdera's] 'truth' . . . begins with his most famous claim: 'Humans are the measure of all things—of things that are, that they are, of things that are not, that they are not.' That is, there is no objective truth; the world is for each person as it appears to that person."

wretchedness begets pride, and knowledge of man's wretchedness without knowledge of God begets despair, but knowledge of Jesus Christ furnishes man knowledge of both simultaneously.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, human beings' knowledge of God and of their own wretchedness is "the paradox of greatness and wretchedness," in Kreeft's words.<sup>32</sup>

Change should not be made just for the sake of exchanging the view of one humanist for that of another humanist, in the way a person can be in love with the idea of love rather than with a worthy lover. Whether or not ConvergeViet pastors and leaders need to change their ways of doing ministry to engage redemptively with culture, they must never change in living out and defending the Christian faith in a world of religious pluralism, postmodernism, tolerance, technological advancement, natural disasters, financial crises, and political changes.

### **Active Engagement toward Growth at This Point in History**

The development of ConvergeViet leaders opens possibilities for them to live actively in God's kingdom and to engage in kingdom expansion in the face of change in Western culture as well as resistance to change in the Vietnamese community. The future direction of ConvergeViet Ministries should rest on the renewed hearts and transformed minds of its leaders, at both national and local levels. Having taken on the mentality of ownership, ConvergeViet pastors should lead their churches into believing that heartfelt change will bring positive effect to the ministries in which they are called to serve.

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<sup>31</sup> William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith, Christian Truth and Apologetics* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 52.

<sup>32</sup> Kreeft, *Christianity for Modern Pagans*, 46-72.

The ConvergeViet church members should also know that they have the right to expect their ConvergeViet Ministries leaders and pastors to have a clear vision for their churches in the immediate future, which involves intentionally growing to be more Christlike, making disciples, and reaching the lost. If the ConvergeViet Ministries leadership team desires growth and the local leadership team desires growth, then the movement will see growth. For ConvergeViet churches, Rick Warren's words are difficult but true: "Lack of growth usually indicates an unhealthy situation, possibly a disease."<sup>33</sup>

ConvergeViet Ministries is now at a crucial point in its history for the following reasons. First, thirty-seven years after of the fall of Saigon, the second generation of Vietnamese Christians living in the United States has emerged. Second, ministry for second-generation Vietnamese within the first-generation churches has not been well developed yet. Consequently, many second-generation Vietnamese have attended or been actively involved in American evangelical churches or other Asian churches that have services in English. Therefore, ConvergeViet Ministries needs to have a strategy to change the situation for the better. Inasmuch as a church needs to go through transition to align itself to the plan that God has for it, ConvergeViet Ministries also needs such a transition. Whether leading to a promised land of purpose-driven churches, or winning lost souls to the loving care of the Lord Jesus Christ, ConvergeViet Ministries must give its full attention to the process and carefully plan out steps of action.

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<sup>33</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 16.

In ConvergeViet Ministries' fifteen years of history, the past five have seemed stagnant with a little growth in both church plants and baptisms. Additionally, in 2005 ConvergeViet pastors were experiencing near-exhaustion. ConvergeViet's SWOT ministry analysis discussed in the previous chapter indicates that ConvergeViet Ministries churches are in need of improvement and growth in their spiritual journey. Thus, the hard question is what should ConvergeViet Ministries leaders do to foster more quality growth in their churches' spiritual journeys?

As previously stated, ConvergeViet churches have been unproductive when pastors led in unsuitable ways, motivated by inappropriate fears, power struggles, unreasonable self-expectations, or unrealistic dreams. The various reasons that ConvergeViet churches are weak or unfruitful may be different in each local church; however, the main reasons are lack of clear leadership structure, a strong prayer network, and strategic partnership with their districts in the parent denomination. In general, a leader's personal health and the church's health benefit each other; however, the degree of benefit also depends on the gifts and uniqueness each leader brings that are most suitable for the unique needs of his or her local church.

### **Leading the Church into Change**

Currently, ConvergeViet Ministries oversees about thirty pastors. Cultivating a growing, deepening, intimate relationship with Christ and submitting to His leadership must be the foundation for these thirty Vietnamese Christian leaders to lead their lives well. Each life must be re-empowered by Christ so that pastor, in turn, can re-empower

the lives of others. The foundational understanding of leading oneself before leading others is crucial for all Vietnamese Christian leaders. The most critical component for achieving church health rests squarely on the willingness of the Vietnamese pastors to achieve personal, spiritual, and emotional health. Their challenge is to develop their character every day in order to become more Christ-like in every aspect of their lives. As Walling says in the *Focus Living Retreat Workbook*, “Personal change precedes corporate change.”<sup>34</sup> It is important to explore what causes resistance to change, why change is so difficult in ConvergeViet pastors’ lives, and whether ConvergeViet Ministries can be a change agent.

Any development needs time, however. The Bible correctly teaches that a person’s development is a process fueled by the Holy Spirit and nourished by God’s Word, and it also requires intentional, human, “working out” participation for the task of advancing His kingdom (Rom 12:1-2, Phil 2:12-13, 1 Jn 2:17). Just as intentional leadership development involves people personally thirsting and yearning to be filled with the Holy Spirit and nurtured by God’s Word (2 Pt 3:19), the leadership development in ConvergeViet Churches should follow this process. ConvergeViet leaders should be courageous and resilient in taking on this self-development journey and in learning from Christ’s example so that, at the end of their process, they will become more Christ-like and, through them, the mission of God on earth will be accomplished.

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<sup>34</sup> Terry Walling, *Focus Living Retreat Workbook* (Saint Charles, MO: Church Resource Ministries, 2001), 7.



Healthy ConvergeViet church leaders will lead in powerful ways when they realize that being healthy is not about perfectionism but is rather about the spiritual maturity and emotional stability that will allow them to conduct their lives with intention and grace under the lordship of Christ. When ConvergeViet Ministries allows time to be a key factor in bringing the movement to health, it is doing itself a great service. Incorporating time into the development process is the best way to live. Peter Wagner points out that gifted leaders are those who can “generate a confidence that they know where they are going and what the next step is to get there.”<sup>35</sup> With no exception, good Vietnamese leaders should also know where they are heading and how to get there in a timely manner.

### **A Strategy for Raising and Multiplying Leaders in ConvergeViet Ministries in the United States**

Developing a strategy for raising and multiplying leaders of ConvergeViet ministries in the United States is a challenging issue. It is apparent that ConvergeViet pastors have been doing some of the work that they should have delegated to their Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters. ConvergeViet church people frequently observe the busyness of their leaders and may consider the situation a normal phenomenon.

ConvergeViet pastors should let people in their churches share some of their load because other people are generally quite capable of doing what the church needs and will

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<sup>35</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1979), 162.

do it well. In addition, ConvergeViet pastors make too many decisions for their people; thus, the people tend to wait for the pastors' instructions. Consequently, ConvergeViet pastors need to return the ministry to their people so that they, too, will have ownership of it and be more responsible for the work.

Equipping ConvergeViet Christian brothers and sisters and returning the ministry to them will cost ConvergeViet pastors at least three things. First, it will cost them time. ConvergeViet pastors will have to spend much valuable time with their people, especially the lay leaders, to equip them for the tasks of ministry. ConvergeViet pastors must also give the lay people resources; in particular they must train people for the ministry.

Second, ConvergeViet pastors must be prepared to give away some of the ministries they treasure and feel they can do well. Because the Church is the body of Christ and the demands of ministry are many, ConvergeViet pastors should share ministry tasks with other members in their church. ConvergeViet pastors cannot do all the ministries alone. They need to value the importance and benefit of a teamwork approach. Jesus entrusted some of the ministry work to His disciples. Some ConvergeViet pastors admit that although shared ministry should make the church grow and flourish, it may also be painful if one day the ConvergeViet pastors realize that lay people can do certain jobs without them. It may seem that, even without the pastor's involvement, the lay leaders can still do well. Though the pastors know this is the right direction to take, they may fear that their importance in the Vietnamese community will be diminished.

Third, by returning the ministry to the Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters, pastors may have to face criticism from some members in their congregations. These

members may think that the pastors are not being faithful to the ministry when asking other people to do the work they had formerly done. This kind of misunderstanding will cause some difficulties for pastors, and it may even create some turmoil in their ministries. Thus the ConvergeViet pastors need to be prepared to take such criticism gracefully.

Equipping ConvergeViet leaders pay the price for change if they are to return the ministry to God's people. The price might be high, but for the sake of the kingdom of God, the pastors should be willing to experience short-term pain for long-term gain in ministry. Peter Wagner defines an equipper as "a leader who actively sets goals for a congregation according to the will of God, obtains goal ownership from the people, and sees that each member is properly motivated and equipped to do his or her part in accomplishing the goals."<sup>36</sup>

Through effective coaching and mentoring relationships, ConvergeViet pastors will have the opportunity to multiply their ministry to the second and third generation for God's glory (2 Tm 2:2). They should play the role of coaches so they can develop a strong Vietnamese team in the Vietnamese ministries. Only when coaching is practiced well in ConvergeViet Ministries, can a ConvergeViet leader invite others to follow his or her lead. The ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team desires to see the organization moving up to the next level of establishing strong leadership development through a coaching system.

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<sup>36</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Leading Your Church to Growth* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1984), 79.

In this second chapter, the need for the greater focus on leadership development for ConvergeViet churches in the U.S has been stressed. To address this need, a strategy of raising and multiplying more godly leaders in ConvergeViet Ministries in the United States has been proposed. In chapter 3, theological perspectives on living and leading from the heart will be presented, followed by theological perspectives on spiritual formation and growth. The discussion will conclude with a model of leadership development and leadership multiplication based on the life of Jesus Christ.

PART TWO

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

## CHAPTER 3

### THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

In *Spiritual Leadership*, Oswald Sander says, “To aspire to be in a leadership position is an honorable desire”<sup>1</sup> (1 Tm 3:1). However, an honorable desire can never be a safeguard against the danger of the blind leading the blind, for the leader must have proper training (Mt 15:13-14, Lk 6:39). Jesus clearly taught His disciples that “a pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher” (Lk 6:39-40). Therefore, leadership training or development is part of God’s will for His pupils, especially for those who desire to advance to a leadership position through a proper process. In both the Old and New Testaments, God developed His people to grow and live as His chosen ones.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994), 13.

## **Theological Perspectives on Living in the Heart and Leading from the Heart**

### **Watchfulness over One's Heart**

Living in the heart and leading from the heart characterize a lifetime journey to learn and embrace the concept that what people do flows from and reveals what they are. Additionally, “what [they] do . . . flows *into* what they help to construct themselves.”<sup>2</sup> They seize opportunities to participate in creative work in order to fulfill a primary human need. Wytchereley says that when people live in and lead from the heart, they spend a lifetime studying and giving themselves to respond to human needs. Wytchereley also reminds learners and readers that “certainly no study of humanity and its corporate and individual responsibility to God can be pursued without understanding the human heart.”<sup>3</sup> In fact, a purpose and quality of life requires sensible and responsible human beings to “watch over [their] heart[s]” (Prv 4:23).

Creating an earth-bounded paradise to make a name for oneself is not unique to this present culture. The people of Babel constructed their skyscraper tower with bricks and bitumen (Gn 11:1-9) to make a name for their achievements in the era of antiquity. As Kreeft notes, Babel has reminded humankind that “our work will reflect what we make ourselves into.”<sup>4</sup> From a physiological perspective, it is clear that, for example, gluttonous feasting on a diet high in saturated fats and LDL cholesterol eventually flows into the heart, a vital, bodily blood-pumping organ. In the long term, that heart will be

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Kreeft, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Heaven* (Ft. Collins, CO: Ignatius Press, 1990), 51

<sup>3</sup> Gareth Wytchereley, “I Will Give You a New Heart: The Nature and Function of the Human Heart” (Th.M. thesis, Biola University, 1992), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Kreeft, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Heaven*, 51.

subjected to the past, present, and future decisions of the person who has the detrimental habit of consuming food harmful to it, the body that houses it, and eventually the whole person. A habit of gluttony left unchecked eventually makes a person susceptible to mental illness or an uncontrollable lust for certain foods as a way of life.

From a spiritual perspective, Gareth Wytchereley states that “the heart [of a soul] is so closely related to the direction of life that the term ‘heart’ is itself used to mean a sense of direction or a knowledge of which way to go.”<sup>5</sup> As King Solomon, one of the world’s wisest men instructed, “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life” (Prv 4:23). Kreeft also says that in addition to constructing one’s self, “what one does is also an opportunity to participate in creative work to fulfill a primary human need.”<sup>6</sup> Besides having a sense of eternity in one’s heart (Eccl 3:11), one also needs to see there is a creative work one must do as a bearer of God’s image. Indeed, human beings have the capacity to develop relationships and relate to others. As D. A. Carson notes:

The least that “image of God” language suggests, in addition to human personhood, is that human beings are not simply hairless apes with cranial capacities slightly larger than those of other primates, but that we are accorded an astonishing dignity . . . that there is implanted within us a profound capacity for knowing God intimately, however much we have suppressed and distorted that capacity; that we have a hunger for creative things—not, of course, *ex nihilo*, but in art, building, expression, thought, joy of discovery, science, technology; [and] that we have a capacity for personal relations with other persons.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Wytchereley, “I Will Give You a New Heart,” 60-61; Houston, *The Heart’s Desire*, 20.

<sup>6</sup> Kreeft, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Heaven*, 51.

<sup>7</sup> D.A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 205.



## The Heart as the Image of God

God “has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart” (1 Sm 13:14),<sup>8</sup> a man with a heart aligned with His own. The heart is the operating center that builds people’s character, directs decisions, and corrects lifestyles. In his perspective on the heart, Millard Erickson states that “man *qua* [as] man has a nature that includes the whole of what constitutes personality or selfhood: intelligence, will and emotions.”<sup>9</sup> Wise leaders will invest valuable things into their hearts. To see the fruit of Jesus’ heart, Christians can look at the picture of His being and life as recorded in the Gospels—what he did, what he said, and how he responded to the many people and circumstances he faced.

According to Scripture, the part of human selfhood that has the capacity to think, choose, and feel is the heart. Neil T. Anderson and Robert L. Saucy state that the heart is the most important aspect of human life because we are created in the image of God.<sup>10</sup> In God and being conformed to His beauty, we “live, move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). God has designed the human heart and knows the beliefs of every heart.

Thus, a human being’s “identity must be sought in relation to God.”<sup>11</sup> People should not be taught, devalued, and treated as a mere physical substance.<sup>12</sup> Christian leaders who intend to nurture their hearts should then seek to practice what they know to

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<sup>8</sup> NASB.

<sup>9</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1985), 514.

<sup>10</sup> Neil T. Anderson and Robert L. Saucy, *The Common Made Holy, Being Conformed to the Image of God* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1997), 79

<sup>11</sup> Robert L. Saucy, “Theology of Human Nature,” in *Christian Perspectives on Being Human: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. J.P. Moreland and David M. Ciochi (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 30.

<sup>12</sup> J. P. Moreland and Scott B. Rae, *Body and Soul: Human Nature and the Crisis in Ethics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 231-262.

be right and proper in the sight of God. Paul gave this description of heart nurture to the Philippian believers: “The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace shall be with you” (Phil 4:9). The apostle knew that a decision to simply practice the right kind of living would have a desirable effect on the maturity and fruitfulness of the human heart. J. P. Moreland once more confirms that the human heart as well as individual rights “are important, and for the Christian, they are grounded in the image of God.”<sup>13</sup>

To guard the heart’s treasure diligently, it is crucial that Christians study in depth the dual nature of human beings as depicted in the Bible—that is, body and soul.<sup>14</sup> To love God with all of one’s mind, learning about the loving Creator is essential (Jn 1:1-4, 12-13; 15:1-5; Prv 4:23).<sup>15</sup> The cognitive, volitional, or emotional aspects of human being are mentioned in many occurrences in which the specific term “heart”—rather than “brain”—is used, occurring 851 times in the Bible.<sup>16</sup> The word “heart” clearly refers to a vital bodily organ, but in Scripture, the term is primarily used for the center of the human person. Saucy states that if the soul represents the whole person, the heart is the center of the soul.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1997), 38. Moreland contrasts a Christian’s heart and human rights “grounded in the image of God,” as opposed to being grounded in the state, a human invention.

<sup>14</sup> John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Vancouver, Canada: Regent College Publishing, 1989), 121-146.

<sup>15</sup> Moreland, *Love Your God*, 85-103.

<sup>16</sup> Wytchereley, “I Will Give You a New Heart,” 29-38.

<sup>17</sup> Saucy, “Theology of Human Nature,” 34.

## Idolatry

The heart can, unfortunately, become a dumping place for all the trash with which humans are surrounded in life. ConvergeViet leaders should, as Solomon said, “watch over [their] heart with diligence” (Prv 4:23a) because the natural heart is deceitful—to itself, to others, and to God. From the viewpoint of naturalism and postmodernism there is no such thing as “nonempirical knowledge and [an] objective immaterial world,” yet Scripture reveals that there is in fact an immaterial world which “no eye has seen, no ear heard, and no mind has conceived” (1 Cor 2:9).

Whenever human souls remove the anchor rooted in God to sail freely on the seas of earthly life, they can easily worship idols such as dull, lifeless physical objects which have no physiological senses. But this attachment has fatal consequences. As one psalmist sternly declared, “All who trust idols become *like* them” (Ps 115:8, emphasis added). Once a human being has lost his or her true nature, that nature can become anything—including what is base and vile. Thus, the human heart easily becomes a polluted deposit, which one ignores at one’s peril. According to Houston in *The Heart’s Desire*, “Idolatry has a real effects . . . because of the besoiling effect [of idols] upon their worshippers . . . [and they] bring their worshippers to contact with demonic power.”<sup>18</sup>

William D. Mounce gives the origin of the word “idol” as “*gillûlîm*”—things that are “as worthless as dung. . . . Ezekiel uses *gillûlîm* 39 times in his attack on Judah’s

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<sup>18</sup> Houston, *The Heart’s Desire*, 44.

idolatry.”<sup>19</sup> For example, God says to Ezekiel, “Son of man, these men have taken their *idols* into their hearts, and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces, Should I indeed let myself be consumed by them?” (Ez 14:3, emphasis added) According to Mounce, in their hearts, Adam and Eve idolized themselves to such a high degree that they thought that they, the mere creations of God, could “be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gn 3:5) apart from Him. Ever since they tasted the forbidden fruit, their offspring have struggled with idolatries of self, the world, and demonic powers.

It is no wonder that the first of the Ten Commandments prohibited the worship of false gods (Ex 20:3-4), for idolatrous worship destroys its worshippers and love for idolatry destroys lovers of idolatry.<sup>20</sup> A pure heart for God is not idolatrous heart (Ps 24:4); it cannot have a double mind (Jas 4:8) or divided love. Human double mindedness and divided love for God do not spring from a wholesome heart that purely loves God for who He is. Only the pure in heart shall see God (Mt 5:8).

### The Heart and Sin

One central lesson taught repeatedly in the Old Testament is that humankind in its sinful nature will drift away from and rebel against the Creator because “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick, who can understand it?” (Jer 17:9 [ESV]) The natural heart is filled with pride and turns away from God. The author of Ecclesiastes

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<sup>19</sup> William D. Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 349.

<sup>20</sup> Cornelius Plantinga Jr., *The Way It's Not Supposed to Be*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 46.

simply observes that “the hearts of the sons of men are full evil, and insanity is in their heart, throughout their lives. Afterwards, they go to the dead” (Eccl 9:3b). Experiencing the fatal peril of sinful human nature (Gn 3:1-13), French philosopher Blaise Pascal perceptively observed, “As a man has lost his true nature, anything can become his nature. Likewise, since the good is lost, anything can be adopted as what he deems good.”<sup>21</sup>

“What is man?” was discussed in chapter 2, for a person is much deeper than a mere physical existential being. Psalm 8:4 asks not who, but “*What* is man that you are mindful of him?” (emphasis added). Human beings will reap a destiny of death as the consequence of their sinful nature (Gn 3:1-13; Rom 6:23), which is directed by their deceitful hearts. How can a desperately sick “mission control center” of human life, on its own, comprehend goodness and then consciously adopt what is good and enjoy it wisely while despising evil? Being of a sinful nature, humans can now only adopt one of three options. The first is living in fear and despair from licking a desperately sick, heartfelt wound. The second is entrenching themselves deeper into a rotten grave of self-reliance. The third is yearning for a much grander rescue from One who is outside of the self and of all humankind.

Recognizing the depth of his sinful heart (Ps 51:1-4), David cried out to God “Create in me a clean heart, Oh Lord” (Ps 51:10) so that he would be raised up to God’s standard. He had a clear vision of a successful renovation of his evil heart. Ezekiel also echoes David in his own well-known metaphor for salvation: “I will give you a new

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<sup>21</sup> Blaise Pascal, *Pensée*, no. 301, edited by Louis Lafuma, translated by John Warrington (New York: Everyman’s Library, 1963), 82.

heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh” (Ez 36:26).

### Devaluation of the Image of God

According to Carson, because God made human beings in His image God, individuals have a “valued dignity.”<sup>22</sup> Moreland agrees, stating that for the Christian, “individual rights are important ... They are grounded in the image of God, not in the state.”<sup>23</sup> However, Russell warns that if human beings believe that they are only the result of accidental arrangement of atoms, they will devalue their God-given dignity.<sup>24</sup>

Observing the culture of a nation, Isaiah, the Old Testament prophet, declared more than twenty-one centuries ago, “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter” (Is 5:20). Observing today’s society, Willard agrees, saying that while there are currently “fine advances in scientific knowledge, the proud product of human thought, they tell us nothing about the inner life of human beings.”<sup>25</sup>

F. LaGard Smith has sternly warned that, if human existence is due to mere chance rather than being a creation of God in His image, basic human rights are

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<sup>22</sup> Carson, *The Gagging of God*, 205.

<sup>23</sup> Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, 38.

<sup>24</sup> Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian*, 107.

<sup>25</sup> Willard, Dallas. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 17.

jeopardized.<sup>26</sup> That is to say, human rights cannot be established firmly and defended triumphantly on the basis of a mere chance of existence since the randomness of chance will be logically treated or regarded as arbitrary. A devaluation of the image of God can also lead to the devaluation of human life inside the womb. Such a devaluation can eventually create a legal door to deny the unborn baby the astounding right to live a life endowed by the Creator. Smith points readers to Winifred Egan's lament: "What irony that a society confronted with plastic bags filled with the remains of aborted babies should be more concerned about the problem of recycling the plastic."<sup>27</sup>

That human beings' identity is rooted in God is no small topic to be ignored or sneered at. Indeed, in Hosea 4:16, God says, "My people are *destroyed* for lack of knowledge" (Italics mine).<sup>28</sup> A proper understanding of God's image provides a proper way to love, value, and treat fellow human beings and their individual rights as they should be treated.

### Nurturing the Heart and Obedience

Even though watching over the heart is a Christian's duty, it is never an easy task as Dallas Willard points out: "The greatest need of collective humanity is renovation of

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<sup>26</sup> F. LaGard Smith, *When Choice Becomes God* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1990), 97.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Smith, *When Choice Becomes God*, 81.

<sup>28</sup> See also Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, 41-82. In the section, "Sketching a Biblical Portrait of the Life of the Mind," Moreland calls on Christians to care for the soul and the mind over both spiritual and intellectual dimensions.

our heart.”<sup>29</sup> Jesus taught and promised His students about the end result of the renovation of the heart using these words: “Blessed are the pure in heart because they shall see God” (Mt 5:8). The heart is the being and source of *summum bonum*—the greatest good. With a right heart, Christians can see with clarity the way God wants them to live their lives, lead others, and be caretakers of His many creations. Willard also writes, “We live from our heart.”<sup>30</sup> Therefore, a leader’s life and quality of leadership should also be located in and come from the heart.

The foremost prescription for nurturing the heart is found in the longest of the psalms, Psalm 119, and expresses a right response of the person to God’s perfect word. The psalmist writes, “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Ps 119:11). In keeping with the power of a contented heart, it is fitting that the secret of an obedient life is the word of God treasured in the heart. The psalmist says further, “I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word” (vv 15-16). The psalmist delights in God’s word, meditates on what God has said, and treasures these words in the heart in order to lead an obedient life before God.

God’s children are also changed for the good by the practice of obedience. Wytchereley emphasizes practice in religious belief, because practice will create obedience of the heart.<sup>31</sup> In the Garden of Eden, Adam revealed a divided heart as well as

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<sup>29</sup> Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 14.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>31</sup> Wytchereley, “I Will Give You a New Heart,” 117.



love affair with his own egocentric self, evil, and Satan when he acted in disobedience to God's command (Gn 2:15).<sup>32</sup> Disobedience to God's command is unfaithfulness to Him—a key understanding of sin which leads to the death of the soul as in Roman 6:23.

The growth of the heart corresponds to the renewing of the mind in Romans 12:2. It is like the growth of a tree; it is not an instant process. Paul Meier, in his study of meditation and emotional and spiritual health, found that “on the average, it takes about three years of daily Scripture meditation to bring about enough change in a person's thought patterns and beliefs to produce statistically superior mental health and happiness.”<sup>33</sup> Meier also says that the mental health and happiness is “the fruit of the Spirit.”<sup>34</sup>

### Loving God

True human identity as the image of God must be sought in relation to the personal Creator God, who is love (1 Jn 4:7). Thus, the best way to relate to God and others by God's grace and truth (Jn 1:12) is to know God. Peter Kreeft says “We must therefore love God and love what God loves,”<sup>35</sup> with our soul, the totality of our person, our heart, the inner operating center of our soul, and our mind, which Saucy calls “the

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<sup>32</sup> That is, actions God's creature takes to fulfill the self's desire to “be like God and [know] good and evil” (Gn 3:5) apart from God.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Meier, “Spiritual and Mental Health in the Balance,” in *Renewing Your Mind in a Secular World*, ed. John D. Woodbridge (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 27-28.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>35</sup> Peter Kreeft, *The God Who Loves You* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1988), 6.

thinking aspect of the heart.”<sup>36</sup>

It is no wonder that Jesus said, “And 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 [commandment] is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment great than these” (Mk 12:30-31). As Saucy comments, it is “the heart of man that God considers in His evaluation of man and not the outward appearance (1 Sm 16:7).”<sup>37</sup> Since God alone is good (Mk 10:18) and human beings were created in God’s image, the true value of a person’s soul is rooted and anchored in God. Its value will ultimately depend not on what, but whom the person loves above all other things (Mk 8:36).

### Loving Neighbor and Enemy

Since God alone is wise (Rom 11:33) and good (Mk 10:18), therefore, it is wise and good for Christians to love God, love whom He loves, and love what God commanded His followers to do. In loving those whom God loves, Christians are required to love their neighbors, the bearers of God’s image, in order to fulfill the second greatest commandment as instructed by Jesus (Mt 22:34-40, Lk 10:27). Loving one’s neighbor as oneself is also to be extended to those who do not treat one well, or even act as an enemy.

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<sup>36</sup> Saucy, “Theology of Human Nature,” 34, 36.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 35.

John Calvin provided an understanding of love: “It is we remember not to consider men’s evil intention but to look upon the image of God in them, which cancel and effaces their transgressions, and with its beauty and dignity allures us to love and embrace them.”<sup>38</sup> Saucy writes that human beings, as the bearers of God’s image, are created “good” and “of great worth.”<sup>39</sup> As humans are created in God’s image (Gn 1:26), Christians’ unchurched neighbors also bear His image. Kreeft also says the quality of dedicated love for God among the bearers of His image is not a blind love but is of “the highest accuracy”<sup>40</sup> because God’s love is never blind (1 Jn 4:7). For “what can separate us from the love of God in Christ?” (Rom 8:27-31)

Based on the result of the first Adam’s life, which was lived in and from his heart while in the Garden of Eden, the prognosis for humankind does not look good. What kind of life was lived in and from Adam’s heart? Adam navigated his deepest point of contact with God away from God’s life map for him and steered instead toward Satan’s deadly invitation. Adam did not honor God’s word (Gn 2:16), but rather allowed Satan’s falsehood to reside in Eve’s heart and then Adam’s own heart. A life which embraced great evil desire and egocentricity grew and flowed from Adam’s double mind and divided heart to such an extent that he helped, coached, served, and loved Eve—his only

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<sup>38</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press; 1960), 3.7.6.

<sup>39</sup> Saucy, “Theology of Human Nature,” 159-160.

<sup>40</sup> Peter Kreeft, *Heaven: The Heart’s Deepest Longing*, expanded ed.(San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 37.

and closest neighbor—to move away from God’s life map and to disobey God. Adam then joined her quickly in this fatal adventure.

The second Adam, Jesus, has shown a life lived in and from the heart at its deepest by faithfully demonstrating that there is no greater journey in life than the journey of loving God (Jn 19:30) with all of one’s heart, no greater love than the love stronger than death<sup>41</sup> (Sg 8:6, Mt 25:45-46, Rom 8:31-37). When Christians study who Jesus is and what he does while endeavoring to guard their hearts, what should the content of their hearts be? Kreeft gives those of his readers who care deeply for their hearts some good advice:

What then is the end? What do you want? . . . Jesus come to us with an answer, but he must first test us with this question: What do you want? It means “Are your questions the questions to my answer?” . . . Our hearts are too small for him. He gives us more than we want and he wants us to want more than we want so we can want what he gives us.<sup>42</sup>

Jesus said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Lk 6:45). To be an effective leader, one should accumulate the knowledge and experience of spirituality as well as being trained in leadership development so that one can love, coach and serve others out of the abundance of one’s heart.

### **Theological Perspectives on Spiritual Formation and Growth**

Spiritual formation and growth are about the process and progress of being more Christ-like in a divine-human partnership with God. Dallas Willard writes of spiritual

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<sup>41</sup> Peter Kreeft, *Love Is Stronger Than Death* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 2.

<sup>42</sup> Kreeft, *Heaven*, 47.

formation: “It is a process that happens to everyone and all saints are the outcome of spiritual formation. Their spirits or hearts have been formed.”<sup>43</sup> Spiritual formation seeks to let God make us be like Him (Col 1:26-27; Gal 4:19), for “God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts” (Gal 4:6).<sup>44</sup> If we Christians are faithfully engaged in the obedient act of surrendering our lives to Him and relying on Him to shape us from within, then “Christ is formed in us” (Gal. 4:19). It is “Christ in us, the hope of glory” (Col 1:27).

Spiritual formation is about change. ConvergeViet Christians are in the process of internal transformation, changing to be like Christ. Some of the changes can be seen immediately, and some others take longer, but change will bring maturity to their lives. It is God’s will for them to grow in Him every day (2 Pt 3:18). God is the one who enables and brings about both growth and change in their lives.

Even though spiritual formation is not a biblical term, it describes the work of the Holy Spirit. There is no spiritual formation if there is no activity of the Holy Spirit. As Paul Pettit explains, “Spiritual formation is a mysterious outworking of both God’s initiative and involvement over time and a concerted response or action plan by the individual believer who fully understands that growth graciously proceeds from God.”<sup>45</sup>

An internal transformational change also requires a full participation of ConvergeViet Ministries church leaders and members. ConvergeViet believers cannot

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<sup>43</sup> Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 19.

<sup>44</sup> NASB.

<sup>45</sup> Paul Pettit, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008), 23.

effectively pursue healthy growing Christian lives of a cannot be pursued effectively individualistically or in social isolation. The healthy growing activities of the first Christian community consisted of studying God’s word, fellowshiping, breaking bread, and praying together as recorded in Acts 2:41-47. Although no Christian should be an island, in actuality, Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters nowadays often do not have a close sense of Christian community. The obstacle that often prevents building an authentic Christian community is individualism. However, God wants ConvergeViet believers to connect both with Him and with others (Mk 12:28-29; Acts 2:42-47).

The body of Christ is an essential element of spiritual formation. However, it is very difficult for Vietnamese to work together in a group. So the more Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters connect with each other, the stronger the Vietnamese Christian community will be. ConvergeViet Christian brothers and sisters need one another in order to be conformed to the image of Christ. Scripture focuses on humans experiencing community with God and with one another. Genesis 1:26-31 mentions that God created human beings for community. As Klaus Issler says, “To know God more fully cannot be accomplished without the larger community of believers.”<sup>46</sup> Spiritual formation refers to everything God brings to ConvergeViet believers to mature them in their feelings, desires, attitudes, and their whole heart. It is the will of God that ConvergeViet believers should be sanctified every moment of their lives, and their sanctification is one of His major concerns (1 Thes 4:4; 2 Tm 2:11-14; Gal 5:2- 6:10).

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<sup>46</sup> Klaus Issler, *Wasting Time with God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 26.

Spiritual formation also requires ConvergeViet believers to intentionally establish sacred spaces and times for God to bring about life change.<sup>47</sup> It is helpful for all believers, including Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters, to regularly meet together for prayer, confession, or accountability. If all Vietnamese church pastors and church leaders work to bring their flocks to a higher level of spiritual formation, their efforts will necessarily involve both internal “heart work” and external “mouth work” as Jesus said in Luke 6:45b.<sup>48</sup> In order to create a healthy environment for spiritual formation, Pettit asks those who engage in this process four accountability questions: “First, have you done anything today you shouldn’t have done? Second, have you said anything today you shouldn’t have said? Third, have you seen anything today you shouldn’t have looked at? Fourth, have you not done/said anything today you should have done/said?”<sup>49</sup>

Spiritual formation is a process of Christian growth. According to Robert E. Logan, “The church is structured so that no matter where a growing Christian is on the spectrum of leadership development, there is a place for them, and they are challenged to take the next step in their own spiritual growth and development.”<sup>50</sup> Spiritual formation relates to the process of increasing Christ-likeness in a divine-human partnership with God in the life of the person who is filled with the Holy Spirit: “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>48</sup> “For out of the overflow of his heart, his mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45).

<sup>49</sup> Pettit, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation*, 84.

<sup>50</sup> Robert E. Logan, “Raising and Multiplying Leaders in Your Ministry” (OD725 course outline, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2005), 1.4.

firstborn among many brothers” (Rom 8:29). The sentiments expressed in Romans 8:29 are a fitting conclusion to the examination of spiritual formation:

He handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher to train Christ’s followers in skilled servant work, working within Christ’s body, the church, until we’re all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God’s Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ (Eph 4: 11-13).<sup>51</sup>

### **Theological Perspectives on Jesus Christ as a Model of Leadership Development for ConvergeViet Ministries**

Jesus Christ is the ultimate leader of and model for ConvergeViet Christian leaders’ development. God raised Him up, and He was committed to God. Jesus has a clear vision of God’s will for ConvergeViet people, and a clear understanding of the steps to be taken to initiate leadership development among ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders. Jesus is able to get ConvergeViet people to follow the mind of God.

Before Jesus’ birth, Israel’s heritage of Hebrew politics, military exploits, economics, and religion had already gone through a dark period of four hundred years. In “the fullness of time” (Gal 4:4) when “*Logos* became flesh dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14), Israel’s standing in its surrounding areas as God’s chosen people had already declined significantly. Israel had a well-known history as a small, scattered, and fractured nation in contrast to the might of the Roman Empire.

In fact, according to Pastor Phiet Luu, “The world’s moral culture at that particular time was not much different than it is in our present time in the sense that

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<sup>51</sup> Eugene Peterson, *The Message//Remix: The Bible in Contemporary Language*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2003), 2127.



people were not greatly interested in wisdom, character, virtue, or anything as deep as the rescue and renovation of the soul.”<sup>52</sup> However, these things were taught and preached by man whom people lamented publicly, saying, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (Jn 1:46) Thus, the culture of that time was hardly interested in the arrival of any man from Nazareth who was said to have come in the fullness of time.

Jesus, in His being and doing, sought to fulfill all righteousness when He went to John the Baptist to be baptized. When Jesus came up from the water, the heavens were opened and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. Suddenly, a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mt 3:16-17). God indeed raised His Son up as a leader in the fullness of time, and Jesus committed His life to His Father and obeyed His ways even unto death on the cross (Phil 2:5-11).

After Jesus had experienced the temptations of the devil (Mt 4:1-15, Mk 1:12-13, Lk 4:1-12), He returned in the power of the Spirit. His mission was to come into the world to die on the cross to save the lost. Through His death, atonement for the sins of humankind was made, and through His resurrection, He gained victory over sin and death (Jn 3:16-17; 20:9).

Jesus wants ConvergeViet people to be His real disciples just like the twelve

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<sup>52</sup> Phiet Luu, interview by author, April 28, 2011. Pastor Luu, an alumnus of the Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, reflected on the chapter “Renovation of the Soul” in Moreland’s *Kingdom Triangle*, 141-164. I am indebted to Pastor Luu for pointing out the insightful works of several Talbot faculty members and graduates on the topics of the heart and mind, soul renovation, spiritual formation as well as leading Christian philosophers’ understanding of the Christian worldview, postmodernism, and naturalism.

ordinary men He chose originally (Lk 6:1). His short period in a public ministry is a perfect model for leadership. For Jesus Christ's leadership has turned the world upside down, or better yet, right side up, with the rightness of light overcoming darkness (Jn 1:5) and the rightness of goodness triumphing over evil (Rom 12:17-21). Jesus knew in advance that by His work, God's kingdom and will in the earthly realm—God's footstool—would ultimately be established and aligned with God's perfect will in the heavenly realm—God's throne. Jesus demonstrated this understanding when He instructed His followers to pray the Lord's Prayer (Mt 5:33, 6:9-13).

One of the possible discoveries for Jesus' disciples when they were instructed to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" while "the whole creation [was groaning] and [suffering] the pains of childbirth together" (Rom 8:22-23) was the cosmic shift in their perspectives of the scope of Jesus' perfect leadership. His leadership was not simply a local phenomenon; it was and is applicable to the whole creation. That Jesus simply began with raising up twelve ordinary men and then expanded that impact into cosmic proportions is so extraordinary that it can only be described as the perfect leadership model. Jesus Christ's church was founded by Him. Therefore, ConvergeViet church pastors and lay leaders need to grow in Christ every day so they can progressively conform to the will of God to lead His churches in ConvergeViet Ministries.

Chapter 3 has provided theological perspectives on living in and leading from the heart, and then has presented theological perspectives on spiritual formation and growth. It also has detailed a basic biblical and theological understanding of leadership development in the unity and wholeness of being and doing in the life of the ultimate

leader, Jesus Christ. Chapter 4 will address the importance of leadership multiplication, and a foundation and model for the multiplication of spiritual leaders will be laid.

## CHAPTER 4

### THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES FOR LEADERSHIP MULTIPLICATION

Jesus called all believers “to go and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:18-20), which means, as Logan states, “starting not just a few more churches, but many more, even exponentially more.”<sup>1</sup> ConvergeViet Christians believe that Jesus gave this command to all churches today, including their own churches in the United States. Chapter 4 begins with the biblical perspectives on leadership multiplication in Genesis 1 and John 15. It also deals with the multiplication lessons in the early church. The last part of this chapter will present a model developed by ConvergeViet Ministries, which will be applied to the need for multiplying leaders in ConvergeViet churches.

#### **Biblical Perspectives on Leadership Multiplication**

Often, Jesus spoke of fruit as the evidence that someone is indeed one of His disciples. In John 15:8, He says clearly, “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.” At one point, to demonstrate how He felt about fruitfulness, He cursed a fig tree because there was no fruit on it; it shriveled and

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<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Logan, *Be Fruitful and Multiply* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart, 2006), 190.

died. He told a parable about a fig tree that did not bear fruit. It was given a brief reprieve before it would be dug up as worthless (Luke 13:6-9). There is no doubt that Jesus was and still is looking for fruitfulness in His disciples.

In the New Testament, bearing fruit is natural to who one is or what one does. It was not unusual for Jesus to refer to actual fruit, such as grapes or figs, as in Luke 13:6: “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any.” Luke describes a child is the fruit of the womb: “Blessed is the child you will bear” (Lk 1:42). Good deeds are also called fruit: “Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire” (Lk 3:8-14), and in Galatians, godly characteristics are termed “fruit of the Spirit” as well: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal 5:22-23).

In Matthew 7:16, Jesus asked the crowd who listened to Him, “Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles?” In other words, each kind will produce “according to [its kind]” (Gn 1:12). The basic principle of multiplication is to yield a product of the same kind; for example, a leader will produce another leader, and a small group will produce another small group. The vision for ConvergeViet churches is the multiplication of leaders. In order to multiply godly leaders in ConvergeViet Ministries, all pastors in ConvergeViet churches need to learn some lessons about sowing and reaping from the Parable of the Sower that Jesus taught in Mark 4:2-20.

First of all, a sower is one who brings seeds to scatter in the field with the intention that the seeds will grow and produce fruit. In the same way, ConvergeViet people should

go out and talk about the good news to the world so that “whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mk 16:16). There are different kinds of soil in the field, and not all of the seeds will grow up healthy and able to bear good fruit: “Some fell along the path. . . . Some fell on rocky places. . . . Other seed fell among thorns. . . . Still other seed fell on good soil” (vv 4-8). However, just because some seeds go astray, the sowers should not stop sowing, for they will reap nothing at all if they are too lazy to go out.

Therefore, ConvergeViet churches need to encourage lay leaders to go out and seek other potential leaders that they can build up. For the soil that produces will multiply; the sower will reap more than what was sown “and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown” (v. 20). If the lay leaders of ConvergeViet Ministries are eager to multiply themselves, there is great potential for the development of leadership. However, the sower must believe that what was sown will produce fruit. In developing leadership, the ConvergeViet lay leaders need to trust in God that what they have done will produce good results, and more leaders will be raised up.

### Leadership Multiplication in Genesis 1

In Genesis 1:27-28, God commanded the first man and woman to multiply: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” After the flood in Genesis 9:1, God again commanded Noah and his family, the only human beings left on the earth, to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” So

the world, composed of grass, vegetables, trees, fish, birds, insects, animals, and human beings, has existed until today in accordance with the principle of multiplying. In short, God loves multiplication, each kind recreating its own kind: “God blessed them and said, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth’ . . . ‘Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.’ And it was so” (Gn 1:22-24).

God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. The Bible says that “God saw that it was good” (Gn 1:24-25). Just as at the beginning, when God intended that all the living creatures He had made multiply “each according to its kind,” so today God still wants His ConvergeViet churches to multiply so that many Vietnamese people can be saved. In this way, ConvergeViet Christians can produce more Christians by sharing the good news, and ConvergeViet small groups can produce other small groups by bringing in more new converts—thus the kingdom of God will be enlarged.

### Leadership Multiplication in the New Testament

The ministry of Jesus Christ fulfilled His Father’s will: “For God so loved the world that He sent His begotten Son” (Jn 3:16). He was sent from the Father (Jn 1:14; 1 Jn 4:9-11) and in turn told His disciples, “As the Father has sent me, so send I you” (Jn 20:21). The last instruction that Jesus gave to His disciples was the Great Commission:

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19). Jesus has also called ConvergeViet people to be His true followers, and He wants them to be fishers of people as Peter and the other disciples came to be (Lk 5:10).

Even though Jesus spent time with the crowds, He spent most of the time with His disciples, focusing on leadership development training. He trained His disciples by “show-how” training. As Logan puts it, “I do, you watch. I do, you help. You do, I help. You do, I watch. You do, somebody else watches.”<sup>2</sup> In following the example of Jesus, ConvergeViet churches must learn that they have to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit in order to raise up godly leaders to serve the kingdom of God if they want to fulfill the command in Acts 1:8: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

When Jesus said in John 15:5, “Apart from me you can do nothing,” He meant that a fruitful, abundant spiritual life is rooted in Him alone. Jesus is the vine; the branch must continue to draw life from the vine to support it for the fruit to reach maturity. Fruit does not appear all at once. First there is the flower or blossom; then a tiny fruit appears and develops to maturity.

Andrew Murray points out that the parable teaches Christians “the completeness of the union. So close is the union between the vine and the branches that each is nothing

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<sup>2</sup> Logan, *Be Fruitful and Multiply*, 112.



without the other, that each is wholly and only for the other.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, without the vine, the branch can do nothing; without the branch, the vine can also do nothing, for all the vine possesses belongs to the branches, and all the branch possesses belongs to the vine. Jesus taught His disciples how to be fruitful so that their joy might be full (Jn 15:11). There is great joy in gaining the results God desires. Jesus said, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last” (Jn 15:16).

We Vietnamese believers praise God that the good news of Jesus Christ came to Vietnam one hundred years ago and that there are now nearly 2 million Vietnamese Christians all over the world who believe and trust in God. However, compared to the 85 million people who do not know about the good news, the Christian population in Vietnam is still small. To respond to this urgent need, the ConvergeViet churches’ goal is not only to bear fruit, but to help others do the same.

From John 15:1-10, ConvergeViet churches can draw some lessons of great potential from the vine and branches. The first lesson is given in verse 1: “I am the true vine” (v. 1). Jesus is the true Vine, which is the indispensable source for ConvergeViet churches. If they stay connected to Him, they will naturally have the potential to bear fruit. In addition, Jesus says, “My Father is the gardener” (v. 1). Therefore, God the Father owns ConvergeViet people and cares for them.

However, God cuts off every branch of the vine that is not fruitful as well as pruning those that are to increase their fruitfulness (v. 2). Thus God removes anything

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew Murray, *Abide in Christ* (London, UK: Lakeland, 1972), 28-29.

that hinders the usefulness of His disciples. In this way, He trims ConvergeViet people's weaknesses. Jesus emphasizes that just as the branches of a vine must be connected with the vine to bear fruit, so His followers must also "remain in me, as I also remain in you. . . . Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me" (v.4). ConvergeViet churches do not bear fruit by themselves, but only as they keep in contact with the Vine; this is the task of partnership. Yet Jesus further states, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (v.7). Consequently, because of Jesus' promise, ConvergeViet people can know that, if they let His word abide in them, He will do what they ask.

Jesus desires His people to demonstrate that they are His disciples by bearing much fruit to bring glory to God . Therefore, when ConvergeViet churches bring more people to Christ, they will glorify God according to His purpose (v. 8). Verse 10 reads, "If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in His love" (v. 10). One condition for ConvergeViet people is to "keep God's commands" so they can remain in His love.

Each ConvergeViet church has to be encouraged and challenged to bear good fruit by raising up and multiplying more disciples, leaders, and congregations to enlarge God's kingdom among the Vietnamese people. As Robert E. Logan comments:

The purpose of raising and multiplying leaders is to raise up leaders *for* the harvest and *from* the harvest through a more effective and reproducible process of leadership development within local churches, resulting in church multiplication. We must raise up leaders not only for the harvest, but also from the harvest and starting in the harvest itself, leadership systems seek to bring people to the fullest possible extent of what God has uniquely gifted them to become.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Logan, "Raising and Multiplying Leaders," 1.4.

ConvergeViet Ministries will follow Jesus' heart and His teaching. As Jesus Christ felt compassion for lost people (Mt 9:36), He started with people from the harvest (Mt 4:18-22; 9:9), and then He gave his followers an effective model (Mt 4:23; 9:35-36). Jesus also trained leaders through on-the-job ministry assignments (Mt 10:1-16), He sent them out to make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:18-20), and He finally released the multiplication of disciples and churches everywhere as the book of Acts describes.

According to the pen of Luke in Acts 13, the gospel was spread to the Gentiles by the making of new disciples and by multiplication. Paul did not just share the gospel and then leave new converts unattended. He formed a body of believers to which the new converts could be attached. He planted local churches. Luke described the cyclical pattern that Paul followed in each city where he planted the gospel.

Initially, Paul trained workers, as Acts 13:1-4 relates. Barnabas and Paul were at the church of Antioch as teachers. Then they obeyed the Holy Spirit and brought the gospel to the Gentiles. While on mission trips, Paul trained Silas (Acts 15:40) and Timothy (Acts 16:3). Likewise, the ConvergeViet Ministries' local churches are responsible for preparing, sending, supporting, and cooperating with those God has set apart for the work. Once the workers were trained, Paul communicated with the religious leaders and shared the gospel message with the individuals and groups as in Acts 13: 14-16. ConvergeViet pastors can follow Paul's example by contacting more Vietnamese people and building good relationships with non-believers so they can share the gospel message with the non-believers they know.

Through sharing the gospel, Paul converted the hearers. For example, in Acts 16:14-15 when Paul came to the Philippi and preached the gospel to a group of people who sat on the river bank, one woman converted: “One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home.” Then Paul told the jailer in Philippi to believe in the Lord Jesus, in order to be saved along with his household (Acts 16:31). The effective communication of the Good News resulted in conversion.

Likewise, when ConvergeViet people share the gospel, many people will have a chance to hear it, to accept the message of salvation, and to repent of their sins. Once the hearers of the gospel had converted to Christianity, Paul gathered believers. After receptive people believed in Jesus, Paul did not leave without taking care of them. Rather, he gathered them and continued to build them up in the local church as described in Acts 13:43. ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders can also visit new believers, build them up, and in time, send them out to the mission field.

In short, Christ is the head of the Church. The multiplication of the Church is a global strategy directed by the Lord of the harvest. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, ConvergeViet pastors can learn Jesus’ and Paul’s process of multiplying the church as well as training and multiplying church leaders so that many Vietnamese will come to Jesus and enlarge the kingdom of God in this generation. The passion of leadership

development and leadership multiplication flows out of God's vision for the harvest and His compassion for people without Christ.<sup>5</sup>

### **Developing a Leadership Multiplication Model for ConvergeViet Ministries**

Effective ConvergeViet Ministries pastors or lay leaders are not only continuous learners themselves, they must also be continuous teachers and builders of others. For example, in 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul says that Timothy will teach what he had learned from Paul to other people; in turn these people will teach others. Effective ConvergeViet pastors have a responsibility to teach what they have learned to others so that many ConvergeViet people will continue to learn and many new generations of ConvergeViet leaders will be raised up and multiplied.

Making their churches grow requires well mobilized, empowered, and multiplied ConvergeViet lay leaders to share their faith with both their acquaintances and strangers. Since the major responsibility of ConvergeViet pastors is to lead the flock of God, they can only devote a small amount of time to doing outreach work. Therefore, the primary responsibility for leading others to Christ falls upon the shoulders of the ConvergeViet laity although training and equipping them to win souls is still the job of the pastor.

According to 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, every Christian in ConvergeViet Ministries has been given the responsibility to witness for Christ, and each believer needs to be trained to share the good news with others. Although not all are given the gift of evangelism, all believers should know how to share their faith whenever the opportunity

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<sup>5</sup> Logan, "Raising and Multiplying Leaders," 1.3.

arises. Jesus also told His followers that they were His witnesses: “And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning” (John 15:27). As J. Terry Young says, “Not every Christian is called to teach a Sunday school class or preach from the pulpit, but there is no evidence that any Christian is excused from the task of serving as a personal witness.”<sup>6</sup>

Individual Christians in ConvergeViet Ministries should adopt personal witnessing as the primary purpose of their lives. If they make this commitment, they will seek and find opportunities for leading lost and spiritually ignorant people to put their faith in Jesus Christ and personally experience salvation through Him. However, Christians will win others only when it is their purpose to win them. Seldom, if ever, will they win the lost by accident. Jesus never intended that His kingdom be spread by accident. He sent His followers out with a purpose.<sup>7</sup>

Although no one would deny the importance of evangelism and all ConvergeViet Christians are given the task of sharing their faith with others, the majority of church people are not active enough in doing evangelistic work. In particular, many ConvergeViet church members can be included in Dann Spader and Gary Mayes’ critique of contemporary churches. These church members have “lost sight of our calling to be an intentionally aggressive redemptive agency” and the “efforts designed to reach the lost have become the special activities of a few hard-core types instead of the norm for all.

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<sup>6</sup> J. Terry Young, *The Church—Alive and Growing!* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1978), 151.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Evangelistic activity has become a special endeavor, perhaps for a special season, but not standard operating procedure.”<sup>8</sup>

One may question why so many ConvergeViet Christians do not get involved in the evangelistic endeavor and do not even believe that God can use them to lead their non-Christian friends to Christ. The reason is that some of these people mistakenly think that personal evangelism is something that only highly-trained pastors or lay leaders can do. In addition, some church members are afraid of failure. Still others are too shy to share the gospel with their friends. Many ConvergeViet Christians do not even know how to talk about salvation through Christ.

Before encouraging Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters to be involved in sharing their faith with others and motivating them to do so, ConvergeViet church leaders should first help them to get rid of these misconceptions and obstacles. As mentioned before in this section, personal evangelism is every believer’s business because the Lord commanded all of His followers to be His witnesses. He also promised to use them as “fishers of people” to lead others to Him.

As Spader and Mayers urge, “Since we are called to share the greatest news in human history, we should view evangelism with a positive attitude, not feeling guilt-ridden; it should be joy-filled, not burdensome.”<sup>9</sup> After getting rid of these misconceptions, the ConvergeViet church leaders must proceed to provide Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters with good training. The leaders should not just tell them

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<sup>8</sup> Dann Spader and Gary Mayes, *Growing a Healthy Church* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 152.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

what to do but also show them how to do it. In order to train the disciples effectively, Jesus had to be a model to them. Jesus' method was the supreme example of teaching people to do evangelism. He honored the request "teach us how." He devoted Himself to training His disciples for three solid years while He was doing His earthly ministry.

Jesus is the best example of a master trainer there is. In *A New Look at Church Growth*, Floyd G. Bartel explains, "For those years [Jesus] modeled what a Spirit-led ministry is. The Twelve He had chosen were given many opportunities to learn by doing. He took them aside to reflect with them about their experience. They learned much from Him because of the interaction of the group."<sup>10</sup>

Jesus' ultimate aim was to teach and provide a model for His people—including ConvergeViet Christians—to follow in order to become like Him. Jesus developed His disciples by spending time with them and showing them how to be vibrant followers of God. Jesus taught His followers by letting them live life with Him and watch Him in different situations, by teaching them key principles, and by exercising God's truth with authority. In Luke 10, the seventy-two people who had been sent out learned so much about Jesus and His authority that they returned saying, "Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name" (Lk 10:17). Jesus laid out a model that shows ConvergeViet Christians how to create a growing environment so that they can grow both numerically and experientially.

Like Jesus, each ConvergeViet pastor should be a model to ministry trainees. For example, in Chicago, Pastor Phu Pham had a group of two trainees, each of whom

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<sup>10</sup> Floyd G. Bartel, *A New Look at Church Growth* (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1979), 142.



learned how to do personal evangelism by watching and practicing with their trainer. The trainees gradually gained the confidence to share the gospel on their own.<sup>11</sup> As a result, through this method, Pastor Pham's church now has around fifty members.

To have effective evangelism, on-the-job-training is crucial because evangelism is not just a matter of knowledge or skill, but also of following a model, a method which has become increasingly important in leadership training. As previously mentioned, Robert Logan points out the show-how model: I do, you watch. I do, you help. You do, I help. You do, I watch. You do, someone else watches.<sup>12</sup> The ConvergeViet people will learn much more when they watch others use this method than they will by just listening to instruction. According to John Maxwell, "The number one motivational principle in the world is: People do what people see . . . [and] be a model that others can follow."<sup>13</sup> The speed at which the ConvergeViet pastors give instruction determines the speed at which their members learn in the church. ConvergeViet church members will never go farther than their pastors.

Only when the ConvergeViet lay leadership is well in place can these lay leaders invite others to follow their lead. ConvergeViet lay leaders who empower their people should conduct their lives in such a way as to compel others to follow their inspirational example and become equipped. They understand the principle that ConvergeViet people

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<sup>11</sup> Phu Pham, interview by author, San Diego, CA, March 16, 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Logan, "Be Fruitful and Multiply," 89.

<sup>13</sup> John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader within You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993), 132.

learn leadership through the ways they are led. In other words, ConvergeViet people watch their lay leaders to discover what is truly important. As Robert Quinn observes:

Empowering leaders are the only ones who can induce real change. They can forcefully communicate at a level beyond telling. By having the courage to change themselves, they model the behavior they are asking of others. This message, based in integrity, is incredibly powerful. It builds trust and helps others confront the risk of empowering themselves.<sup>14</sup>

ConvergeViet Ministries would like to adapt the evangelism model “Evangelism Explosion,”<sup>15</sup> which is biblically sound, practically achievable, and culturally friendly. This model was developed by Dr. James Kennedy, senior pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. It is used worldwide by many churches and is one of the best modeling methods for personal evangelism to reach out to non-believers. Therefore, this model will be used to train and to equip Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters for personal witnessing so ConvergeViet Ministries can raise up more leaders from new Christians.

Through this curriculum, Vietnamese Christians will learn many aspects of sharing the gospel, such as how to ask questions, how to present the gospel message in a limited time, how to lead the hearer to make a commitment to Christ, how to do immediate follow-up, as well as long term follow-up, how to handle hard questions and objections, and many other techniques. The learner has to memorize numerous Scripture verses as well as the whole presentation of the gospel.

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<sup>14</sup> Robert E. Quinn, *Deep Change* (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1996), 34-35.

<sup>15</sup> James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1986), 11-12.

After training, the ConvergeViet lay leaders should be able to share the gospel with ease and confidence. However, when presenting the outline of the gospel, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team can rewrite some sections in order to make them more acceptable to the Vietnamese culture, based on the reality of the Vietnamese context in the United States. For example, the first diagnostic questions in the original text reads, “Have you come to a place in your spiritual life where you know for certain that if you were to die today you would go to heaven?” The clause “if you were to die today” is quite offensive to a prospective convert in the Vietnamese culture. Vietnamese people consider it a misfortune to hear the word “die,” especially when the word is directed at them.

For example, when Pastor Tuyet Kieu was sharing the gospel using the Evangelism Explosion plan, she told the hearer about an incident she had experienced. In 2003, Pastor Kieu nearly died in a car accident, but God saved her. She told the hearer that, if she had died, she would have gone to heaven, because she believed in God. She then asked the hearer, “What about you? What if something like this happens to you? Nobody knows the future. It’s better to prepare ahead of time for our future in this life, so that we will have a good place in heaven after we leave this earth.”<sup>16</sup>

With the presentation of personal story like this, the hearer will realize that death is a natural phenomenon, and both the witness and the hearer can agree that everyone’s life will come to an end. The hearer will not feel that he or she is “put on the spot.” Though the revised diagnostic question is expanded, the effect of discerning whether the hearer has the assurance of salvation is the same or even better.

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<sup>16</sup> Tuyet Kieu, interview by author, El Monte, CA, July 30, 2012.

The ConvergeViet Leadership Team and ConvergeViet local pastors should plan to offer the Evangelism Explosion training course at least twice a year to their congregations. Training more people to share their faith through the Evangelism Explosion course will expand the kingdom of God beyond the gathered church, for people should not just keep their faith to themselves; they should also share and live their faith in their workplaces. Through the ministry of personal evangelism, many unchurched people will be brought into the gathered church and gradually be assimilated. To be used by God in evangelism is the greatest joy of the Christian life, and nothing else in all the earth compares to it. As 2 Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” Therefore, the goal of evangelism is to accomplish God’s desire.

In order to effectively evangelize Vietnamese non-believers in the United States, several issues should be discussed during the evangelism training. The first is that ConvergeViet pastors need to make the training for personal evangelism culturally relevant. ConvergeViet pastors must learn to exegete the Vietnamese culture to discover needs and outlooks which will indicate what would be good news for Vietnamese non-believers. Each ConvergeViet church should be able to communicate with other People Group Ministries in Converge Worldwide, such as the Filipino ministry and the Latino ministry, to learn methods to reach non-believers effectively.

ConvergeViet pastors then need to mobilize Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters in their churches to reap the harvest. The harvest of the Vietnamese non-believers is huge, but the Christian workers are few, just as Jesus said in Matthew 9:37-39: “The

harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” ConvergeViet leaders who have already experienced the harvest need to develop other people who have great compassion for winning people for Christ, encouraging them to use their spiritual gifts to reach out to the lost.

When new believers come into God’s family, ConvergeViet pastors need to invest time to train these newcomers in the ways that will make them into great leaders who also know to train other leaders. ConvergeViet pastors should also help the people in their congregations develop a personal action plan for evangelism. They may establish small groups in order to provide places where people can find encouragement for evangelism and can bring those who they reach out to.

ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders can also develop outreach-oriented ministries. A thorough evaluation of existing ministries will help ConvergeViet Ministries determine their effectiveness and discuss the need for new ministries. Existing ministries can be re-purposed to become more evangelistic. ConvergeViet church leaders can brainstorm about culturally appropriate ways to reach new people so that before the seed is sown, the soil has been cultivated.

In addition, ConvergeViet church leaders need to assimilate newcomers into the life of the church. Assimilation is the process of helping newcomers become active, on-going participants in the life of a congregation. Usually, first impressions are lasting. Therefore, ConvergeViet Christian brothers and sisters can help newcomers build friendships, and facilitate the involvement of newcomers in groups or ministries.

Finally, ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders should establish new Christians in loving obedience. Once people choose to follow Jesus, they must be grounded in Scripture and the basic tenets of the faith. The discipleship method ConvergeViet Ministries chooses should be reproducible. ConvergeViet small group leaders must not assume that Christians will automatically know how to disciple a new convert. ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders will have to train church members and give them resources. Discipling new Christians will also include reaching their social and work-related networks for Christ and laying a foundation for leadership training.

For Christians, fulfilling their mission of evangelism on earth is an essential part of living for God's glory. The mission of evangelism is a continuation of Jesus' mission on earth. Jesus calls his followers not only to come to Him, but to go for Him, as He directs in the Great Commission. Jesus gave this mandatory commission to every one of His followers, not to pastors and missionaries alone. Jesus' words are not the "Great Suggestion." As Rick Warren emphasizes, "To ignore [the commission] would be disobedience."<sup>17</sup> As long as there are Vietnamese people in the world who do not know Christ, Vietnamese churches have a mandate to reach out to them, bring them to Christ, and keep them growing as Jesus commanded.

Concerning themselves with the work of evangelism is essential for Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters because they must obey Jesus' command. Making disciples of the nations is the life of the church. Jesus built up each of his disciples until together

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<sup>17</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 282-283.

they could spread the good news of salvation to the world. The more the disciples followed Jesus, the more clearly they understood his purpose.

Today, many methods, systems, formulas, and “laws” for church work are being promoted, but the Church’s one essential concern is how to lead non-believers to Christ. The only answer is “personal testimony,” as William C. Martin wrote: “First of all is the personal testimony. The effective form is to visit non-believers at their homes and talk about Jesus with them.”<sup>18</sup>

Many ConvergeViet churches recognize the importance of personal testimony, and they want to share such testimonies with non-believers. They do not succeed, however, because most church members think that the task of personal testimony belongs to pastors or church workers alone. Some think that giving testimonies is their pastor’s job because they pay the pastor to do ministry. Moreover, many pastors think that their members do not have the capability and biblical knowledge to win lost souls for Christ, so they do not encourage Christians in their church to approach non-believers.

The fear that church members are incapable of winning souls is incorrect because the power of the Holy Spirit will manifest itself in those who believe in Him. God can use the fool to shame the wise, and Church history has proved that many intellectuals have accepted Christ through humble, illiterate persons. ConvergeViet pastors must always emphasize the way the power of the Holy Spirit works through personal testimony, As Michael Green says, “In this period we have to depend on the Holy Spirit in this sharing of the Gospel and lead us to the place that the Holy Spirit, as a very good General, knows

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<sup>18</sup> William C. Martin, *To Fulfill This Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon, n.d.), 48.

that we will get good results, but the Holy Spirit is also the One who moves the heart of the listeners.”<sup>19</sup>

ConvergeViet churches have believed for fifteen years that evangelism is largely the function of the evangelism committee. If one serves in Christian education, in youth ministries, on the finance committee, or on the worship team, then one does not need to do evangelism. More than any other attitude ConvergeViet church leaders may possess, that thinking has to change. Evangelism must be seen as a central thread running through every facet of a congregation’s life. However, ConvergeViet churches think of evangelism as a skill that only people experienced in church can master. Consequently, they believe that raising up leaders from the harvest, requires Christians to learn the right words, the least offensive approaches, and the most astute answers to the most confounding questions. As a result, they frighten themselves out of any notion that each believer is responsible for evangelism.

What is needed is a new approach. The task of evangelism is to show the love of Jesus by serving people. ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders must do a better job of teaching their people the importance of loving Jesus by serving others throughout their lives. That is evangelism at its simplest and at its best. However, there remains an important role for a team of leaders who are gifted in the task and challenge of outreach. ConvergeViet Ministries should have a team of gifted people in Vietnamese congregations whose sole focus is understanding the needs of the non-believers in Vietnamese American communities. I pray that ConvergeViet congregations can increase

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<sup>19</sup> Michael Green, *Evangelism Now and Then* (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House., 1979), 198.



their evangelism work not only for the purpose of leading more Vietnamese non-believers to Christ, but also in order to train these new believers to be great leaders themselves, who in turn will raise up and multiply more godly leaders for God's kingdom.

In chapter 4, the importance of spiritual leadership multiplication has been addressed and a biblical foundation for it has been laid out. In addition, a leadership multiplication model for ConvergeViet Ministries has been developed. In chapter 5, a strategy will be proposed for raising up and multiplying leaders in ConvergeViet churches. In addition, a coaching model will be proposed in order to establish long-term change for ConvergeViet Ministries in the United States.

PART THREE  
STRATEGY

## CHAPTER 5

### DEVELOPING STRATEGIES FOR RAISING AND MULTIPLYING GODLY LEADERS FOR CONVERGEVIET MINISTRIES—U.S.

In John 15:8, Jesus taught His disciples, “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” In obedience to Jesus’ words, ConvergeViet Ministries will create a system that can serve, create an environment for growth, and at the same time enable duplication. In the previous chapters, the central problem in ConvergeViet Ministries has been identified, the cultural dynamics have been explored, biblical principles of leadership development have been presented, and a model of leadership multiplication has been established.

This chapter will present a strategy for raising and multiplying leaders for ConvergeViet Ministries by examining ways to identify potential leaders through understanding and discovering their spiritual gifts. Subsequent discussion will address the ways in which the ConvergeViet Ministries National Leadership Team can mobilize and coach ConvergeViet pastors. At the same time the Leadership Team can help the local church lay leaders learn how to adapt Robert Logan’s Coaching Questions and Model for Long-term Change for their own use.

In order that ConvergeViet leaders can be released to achieve their full, God-given potential, a strategy of raising and multiplying godly leaders must be established using a gift-oriented ministry to discover spiritual gifts. This strategy focuses on the theme “All Vietnamese Christians as Ministers.” ConvergeViet pastors are to be equippers who train and prepare the church people to do ministry, rather than being the ones who do ministry themselves as they are perceived to be. Discovering their spiritual gifts will enable Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters to be whatever God wants them to be and to do whatever God wants them to do. As Logan says, “Starting in the harvest itself, church leadership systems seek to bring people to the fullest possible extent of what God has uniquely gifted them to become.”<sup>1</sup>

## **Releasing ConvergeViet Leaders to Achieve Their Full Potential**

### Understanding God-given Gifts

The first priority in equipping ConvergeViet believers for the ministry of the church is to help them discover their God-given gifts and how to utilize these gifts for His service. Many of these believers do not participate in the ministry of the church, not because they do not want to, but because they do not know how. Some of them do not even know they are gifted to do ministry. Thus, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team must train these brothers and sisters to discover their spiritual gifts so they can turn to the ministries God calls them to.

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<sup>1</sup> Logan, “Raising and Multiplying Leaders,” 1.4.

In the God-given gifts training, Vietnamese American Christian brothers and sisters must be convinced with scriptural evidence to accept the following propositions. First, every born-again Christian is gifted by God, and he or she is accountable for this gift. The Bible clearly states that the Holy Spirit has given every Christian at least one, and possibly more, spiritual gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-26, Paul compares the Church with a human body in which all organs are important and each has to function well. If a certain organ does not function, the whole body will be affected. In the same way, every believer has a vital part to perform in the body of Christ. The gift(s) given to him or her is uniquely valuable in the place it is needed. No one can take it away or replace it with another one. As such, all the believers in ConvergeViet Ministries are accountable for the health of their bodies. If they abuse them—for example through smoking, drinking, or using drugs—their neglect will make their bodies sick.

Moreover, a spiritual gift is given to be practiced for the sake of the body of Christ. It is not to be held onto as a possession but should be exercised in the context of unity and humility. ConvergeViet Christians need to know that the body of Christ demonstrates both unity and diversity, and therefore, each gift must be exercised with the others in harmony and humility. Christians should not show jealousy over another's gifts or boast about their own gifts, for all gifts are given by God "according to our measurement" (Rom 12:3). It is only by faith that ConvergeViet Christians can recognize their particular gifts. No one has the merit to receive such gifts.

In addition, believers are to discover their God-given spiritual gifts in order to glorify God and to edify the body of Christ. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is always

seeking to exalt, glorify, and testify for the Lord Jesus, the Head of the Church. (Eph 4:12; 1 Pt 4:10, 11). In edifying the body of Christ, ConvergeViet believers should know their God-given gifts so that their service can be more effective and more joyous. When these believers know their spiritual gifts, they can also avoid misusing or misplacing them.

The types of God-given gifts mentioned in the Bible (Eph 4:11, Rom 12:3-8, 1 Cor 12:8-10) should be expounded to the ConvergeViet people, together with other gifts, such as music and visitation, which are not included in the biblical lists. ConvergeViet Ministries people can learn more about spiritual gifts by consulting the Bible. Romans 12 mentions spiritual gifts such as prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, and mercy. The spiritual gifts found in 1 Corinthians 12 (not including those already listed in Romans 12) are wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, discernment of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues, apostleship, helps, administration, evangelism, and pastoring. Other gifts which have been recognized include celibacy (1 Cor 7:7), martyrdom (1 Cor 13:3), hospitality (1 Pt 4:9), missionary service (Gal 1:16), voluntary poverty (1 Cor 13:3), intercession (Jas 5:14-16), and exorcism (Mt 10:1).

### Discovering God-given Gifts

In *Your Church Can Grow*, Peter Wagner challenges pastors to discover the gifts among their members and learn how to use those gifts to make their churches grow.

Wagner also suggests using five steps to unveil one's God-given gifts: first, explore the

possibilities; second, experiment with exercising different gifts; third, examine your feelings, fourth, evaluate your effectiveness; fifth, expect confirmation from the church body.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, after helping Vietnamese American Christian brothers and sisters understand the theory of God-given spiritual gifts, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team must help them identify their gifts and find practical ways in which to use them.

There is no official formula for discovering one's spiritual gifts. However, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team has developed seven steps from Wagner's five steps to help Christians in ConvergeViet Ministries to identify and use spiritual gifts. First, ConvergeViet Christians must have faith and confidence to believe that they are gifted. The apostle Paul wrote, "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor 12:7). The apostle Peter agreed with the apostle Paul, saying, "As each one has received a spiritual gift, employ it in serving one another" (1 Pt 4:10). By faith, ConvergeViet Christians can believe that they are gifted and thank God for giving them their gifts. They can be encouraged to continue their exploration so that they may identify the spiritual gifts the Lord has granted them to serve Him in the body of Christ.

Second, ConvergeViet Christians should also ask God in prayer to show them the spiritual gift He has given, being sure that the motives and attitude of prayer are correct without reflecting curiosity and pride. The Lord delights to answer His followers' prayers because He wants them to know their gifts. Sometimes the gifts may remain hidden from certain believers even though they pray earnestly. It may be that their motive is incorrect. As James said, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that

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<sup>2</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow* (Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1976), 74.

you may spend it on your pleasures” (Jas 4:3). The reason Christians should want to know their God-given spiritual gifts must be made clear to ConvergeViet believers. These gifts should not be used to compete with others, to elevate oneself, to broadcast one’s accomplishments, to cultivate admiration, or worse still, to satisfy curiosity. On the contrary, the believer must become committed to developing and use these gifts solely to serve God and build up His body.

After praying, ConvergeViet Christians should list those God-given gifts that they may have and ask the following questions: What gifts do I have? Why do I think so? Do I have any experience in these areas? Do I have interest in these areas? The Christian brothers and sisters may review the list of gifts in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4 to decide which will be their strengths.

Third, the ConvergeViet Christians may discover God-given spiritual gifts based on their interests in certain areas. They should consider what activities are enjoyable and what ministries tend to produce a sense of fulfillment. If a person is drawn toward a certain area of service or has an urge or desire to do a certain ministry, probably that person is gifted in that area of ministry.

Fourth, ConvergeViet Christians should be involved in actual service so God may show them which types of work are suitable for them or which are not. When one first devotes oneself to some kind of service, the Holy Spirit will gradually unveil a certain gift. If ConvergeViet Christians do not expose themselves to any Christian service, it will be difficult to determine if they possess the gift for that particular service.



Thus, in the fifth step, a ConvergeViet believer may take on new responsibilities so that God can show whether there is gifting in that new task or not. A new responsibility will always uncover a new gift because, when one is willing to accept new responsibilities, God will reveal those gifts that were previously hidden.

In the sixth step, one's gift may be recognized by others. Recognition by others can be a clear way to discover a spiritual gift. ConvergeViet believers should be aware of those areas in which they are frequently asked to serve. Invitation to ministry is an affirmation that other members of the body recognize that the ConvergeViet believer is gifted in that particular area.

It can be helpful to ask others to comment on one's abilities and identify one's past areas of ministry that were successful. One possibility is to ask other believers who know one well to help identify one's gifts. Also, it is wise for believers to seek the counsel of mature ConvergeViet Christians who are knowledgeable in the area of God-given spiritual gifts and have had a chance to observe the believers in question in their work in various ministries. People who have the gifts of wisdom and/or discernment would be particularly helpful in determining the areas of one's giftedness. Since gifts are exercised within the body of Christ, they should be recognized and endorsed by the members of the body.

The seventh step is for ConvergeViet Christians to exercise the gifts that they believe they have been given. Just to discover the spiritual gifts is not good enough unless they are put to use. To exercise these gifts is the sole purpose of unveiling them. ConvergeViet believers can develop the knowledge needed to discover spiritual gifts by

attending the spiritual training programs provided by the ConvergeViet Leadership Team, but gifts can only be developed through use.

The ConvergeViet trainees should be given a checklist that contains questionnaires about spiritual gifts. The written material may prompt them to get some ideas of the gifts that God has given them. The ConvergeViet trainees will then be arranged in small groups of five or six who know each other well so that they may share the results of the questionnaires and confirm each other's gifts.

### Using God-given Spiritual Gifts

After helping Christian brothers and sisters in their churches to discover their God-given spiritual gifts, ConvergeViet local church leaders should help these Christians put their gifts to use wherever appropriate. It is a mistake to hold a spiritual gifts training “as if were just another pleasant and spiritual exercise.”<sup>3</sup> To help the members of ConvergeViet local churches exercise their gifts, church leaders need to let them know the opportunities for service that are available. Leaders should provide an inventory of service opportunities before the training and distribute an information sheet to participants at the end.

The responsibility of the committee, then, is to match up the ConvergeViet people who desire to use their spiritual gifts to serve the Lord with the right kind of ministry and tasks according to the service opportunities listed. The qualifications required for certain ministries, such as training and the amount of time needed for the job, should also be

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<sup>3</sup> Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts*, 255.

specified on the inventory sheet. Of course, when assigning jobs to prospective lay ministers, the job description should be explained and discussed with the candidates.

*Natural Church Development* by Christian A. Schwarz has helped ConvergeViet Ministries in developing and using “Gift-Oriented Ministries.”<sup>4</sup> To Schwarz, “Natural Church Development aims to release the potential that God already put into your church.”<sup>5</sup> Since spiritual gifts are an important key in the growth of ConvergeViet churches, lay leaders need to know how to develop and to use such “Gift-Oriented Ministries” through Natural Church Development (NCD) Resources. During their workshops, ConvergeViet congregations will learn from Natural Church Development about the six biotic principles that Schwarz presents: “interdependence,” “multiplication,” “energy transformation,” “multi-usage,” “symbiosis,” and “functionality.” By “biotic principles,” Schwarz means principles that constitute a rediscovery of the law of life (Greek, *bios*). The goal is to let God’s growth flourish instead of wasting energy on human-made programs.<sup>6</sup> The following are explanations of the biotic principles in Natural Church Development’s “Gift-Oriented Ministries.”<sup>7</sup>

The first principle is interdependence, which means that individual parts are integrated into a whole system, which is more important than the parts themselves. Thus, ConvergeViet Christians have to depend on each other when using the gift of evangelism

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<sup>4</sup> Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development* (Emmelsbuell, Germany: ChurchSmart Resources), 24.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 64-82.

or participating in unified evangelism efforts. For example, a church's evangelism small group can invite a worship/music small group to help them hold an evangelistic event during the *Tet* holiday.

The second principle is multiplication. In this sense, just as the true fruit of an apple tree is not an apple but another tree, the true fruit of a small group is not a new Christian, but another small group. ConvergeViet Ministries has the responsibility to mobilize new Christians to reach out to their network of friends, family, and co-workers to share the gospel. The church leaders also need to investigate their local community to ensure that the bridging events they hold are relevant to community members.

The third principle, energy transformation, means that “existing forces and energies—even hostile energies—are turned in the desired direction through minute steering energies.”<sup>8</sup> The ConvergeViet church leaders need to train their members to use every opportunity, even bad situations, to develop effective strategies to empower others for outreach.

The fourth principle, multi-usage, refers to the fact that there is no “waste” in nature. For example, in the growth cycle of a tree, the leaves that fall turn into humus and provide nutrition to support the further growth of the tree.<sup>9</sup> Based on this principle, ConvergeViet church leaders will ask their members how they can contribute to the ministry growth cycle. They have to learn from Jesus' model: He trained His disciples by requiring them to imitate him in ministering to people. This method of on-the-job training

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 73.

both meets specific needs and introduces Christ in a wholesome way through outreach events.

For example, in evangelism ministry, when a Christian (Mr. A) brings another person to Christ (Mr. B), Mr. A will teach Mr. B basic Bible lessons. While Mr. B studies the basic Bible lessons, he may in turn bring his friend (Mr. C) to Christ. In this case, instead of the pastor or Mr. A teaching Mr. C the Bible lessons, Mr. B will teach Mr. C Bible Lesson One, or the lesson that Mr. B. has just learned. In this way, the pastor and Mr. A will save energy and time, though Mr. A will keep track of what Mr. B is teaching Mr. C. ConvergeViet Ministries will develop this model to multiply leaders.

The fifth principle is symbiosis. According to Webster, symbiosis is “the intimate living together of dissimilar organisms in a mutually beneficial relationship.”<sup>10</sup>

ConvergeViet Ministries needs to know different methods of evangelism that can be practiced in its churches, such as evangelism crusades, weekly evangelism or personal sharing of the gospel. In addition, the ConvergeViet churches need to encourage the interplay of widely diverse gifts and personality types, all benefiting one another, such as organizing evangelism with praying for the sick or giving food to the homeless with sharing the gospel.

The sixth principle is functionality or evaluation. “All living things in God’s creation are characterized by the ability to bear fruit.”<sup>11</sup> Fruit is visible: we are able to

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 76.

check on the quality of an organism (or church) by examining its fruit. So ConvergeViet churches need to have systems of evaluation for evangelistic actions.

Combining principles from Peter Wagner and Christian Schwarz, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team intends to carry out five approaches to release giftedness in ConvergeViet people in their contexts. Approach One is to develop networks of leaders to help guide people into an appropriate ministry. For example, Rev. Le, Director for Multiplication in the ConvergeViet Ministries National Leadership Team, with the help of his leadership colleagues will develop a network of leaders of evangelism small groups in ConvergeViet Ministries' eighteen churches.

The second approach will be used to help people discern and develop their gifts. Rev. Le will also hold a seminar to help ConvergeViet Ministries pastors and lay leaders identify those who are good in communication so they can develop their gift in outreach ministries and learn to boldly testify to non-believers. Rev. Le will also use a third approach, using small groups to mobilize people for ministry. He will encourage small group leaders to help their group members to invite their relatives and friends to the small group meetings to hear the gospel. So all members in the small group will have the opportunity to bring non-Christians to Christ.

For the fourth approach, applying a gift mobilization process, the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team will seek a pastor with abilities in gift mobilization to join the team. This leader can visit and apply the mobilization process in the ConvergeViet Ministries' seventeen churches. For example, in May 2012, I invited the Reverend Hoang Truong to accompany me on a visit to a church in Denver, Colorado. At the spiritual

revival meeting, when the participants shared their testimonies about what God had done in their lives, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team was able to recognize their gifts and pray for them. The church was greatly encouraged and has set a date for the next spiritual rally. During the revival meeting, the church made a commitment to hold a unified group prayer meeting every Saturday morning.<sup>12</sup>

The fifth approach, evaluation, will be carried out at the ConvergeViet Ministries' yearly national conference, where the Leadership Team will evaluate the effectiveness of the mobilization of its pastors and lay leaders in evangelism. ConvergeViet church leaders should understand that the Holy Spirit sovereignly gives to all Christians spiritual gift(s) for the building up of God's kingdom. Therefore, as leaders, they have the responsibility to help believers discover, develop, and exercise their gifts in appropriate ministries so that the body of Christ "grows and builds itself up in love" (Eph 4:16).

ConvergeViet members will be most effective when they use their spiritual gifts and abilities in the area of their heart's desire and in a way that best expresses their personalities and experiences. The better the fit, the more successful they will be. Whatever gifts they have been given can be enlarged and developed through practice. For instance, no one receives the gift of teaching fully developed. With study, feedback, and practice, though, a "good" teacher can become a better teacher, and, with time, grow to be a master teacher.

In short, identifying one's God-given gifts and learning to use them to their fullest capacity is simply good stewardship. According to Rick Warren, "Studies have revealed

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<sup>12</sup> Truong et al., *ConvergeViet Ministries Report*, 9.

that the average person possesses from five hundred to seven hundred different skills and abilities.”<sup>13</sup> Nurturing and fully activating the God-given spiritual gifts lying within the people of a ConvergeViet congregation may be the most important actions ConvergeViet church leaders can take. As ConvergeViet Ministries’ outreach and evangelism efforts bear fruit and as its mission statement is fully implemented in the life and actions of the people and ministries of its congregations, helping Converge people identify and claim their God-given spiritual gifts will be more important than ever.

Utilizing these God-given gifts will enable them to lead more non-believers to Christ, which will in turn necessitate even more exhaustive efforts to help people discover their God-given gifts. This cyclical process is a sign of health. It all depends on how ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders encourage and let their people use their gifts. That is how ConvergeViet churches grow and how its ministries stay vital.

If all the members of ConvergeViet Ministries started discovering their God-given spiritual gifts, a problem would arise: there would not be enough ministries in the ConvergeViet churches to absorb those who wanted to minister. Having that kind of “problem” in ConvergeViet congregations would be a wonderful thing. The next section of this chapter will explain how to carry on this strategy effectively and will also present ways to mobilize coaching training for ConvergeViet church leaders.

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<sup>13</sup> Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, 242.



## Mobilizing Coaching Training for ConvergeViet Leaders

Figure 1 below illustrates the mobilization process for training ConvergeViet church lay leaders. The starting point is the “train” box. From here, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team will train these lay leaders to follow the steps described above. When ConvergeViet lay leaders have mastered those principles in their personal lives, the Leadership Team will encourage these lay leaders to start engaging in teaching and training more key leaders in their congregations. By doing that, they will be already in the “pilot” box. Once the key leaders have mastered the skills, they will pilot these skills to their close circles of key contacts. Our first group of leaders then will enter the “retrain” box to get them to the next level. Then the leaders will start to train the next round of key leaders and the cycle will repeat itself. During this process of training to raise up and multiply leaders, ConvergeViet Ministries will use a coaching system, which will mobilize coaching training for ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders.

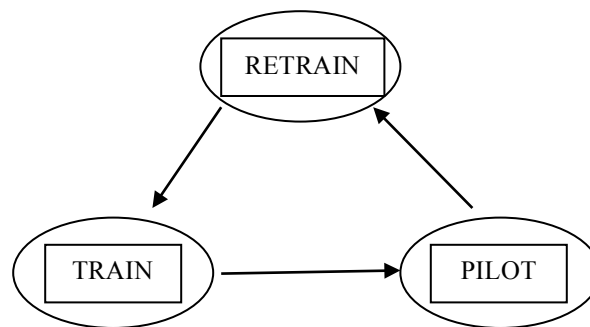


Figure 1. Mobilization diagram

ConvergeViet pastors need coaching because leaders do not achieve clarity alone. Too often, ConvergeViet pastors forget that the role of a leader is not to do all the work alone. Ephesians 4 explains that the role of church leaders is to prepare for works of service so that the body of Christ can grow and build itself up in love as each part does its work (Eph 4:11). The role of the ConvergeViet pastor is to equip, as exemplified in the life of Barnabas. Originally named Joseph, Barnabas was one of Paul's closest companions, traveling with him on missionary journeys. Translated literally, Barnabas means "son of encouragement." Acts 11:23-24 says this of Barnabas: "When he arrived (in Antioch) and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord." Good coaching is about being called alongside to encourage, prepare, equip, and help others succeed. Barnabas' coaching of Paul is a biblical model.

ConvergeViet pastors can help our Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters by listening well and asking good questions. The role of a coach in ConvergeViet Ministries is to be a help to Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters so they can find out what ministry looks like for them. Coaching can help these Christian brothers and sisters to discover who God made them to be and delight in the unique mission God has called them to accomplish. The coach can then help them figure out ways to do it.

Coaching can enable ConvergeViet pastors to grow personally and to help others succeed. If ConvergeViet pastors can hear God's voice and tap into the unique persons God has created them to be, they will be better able to come alongside those they pastor. Coaching is best when pastors come alongside and help individuals to listen to the Holy Spirit for

themselves. As ConvergeViet people discover for themselves what God wants them to do, they will have a greater chance to realize their full potential. Coaches cannot play the role of the Holy Spirit, but they can help others to listen to God's voice.

When ConvergeViet coaches practice patience and good listening skills, they will find that their people often lay out great, workable answers completely on their own. However, instead of waiting for people to discover solutions by themselves, many coaches fall prey to a common temptation of setting forth their own solutions. Coaches are not answer givers; they do not need to possess all the right answers, nor should they tell people what to do. Coaches need to know how to help people find their own solutions. Coaching is about helping people think for themselves within the context of their relationship. Good listening skills form the heart of a good coaching relationship: they provide relational support, draw out the ConvergeViet people's best thinking, help them sort through their options, and encourage them as they make their own decisions.

Once a friend simply took time to listen to me and helped me sort things out in my own mind until I could come to my own positive conclusion. It was a pleasant experience performed in a gracious way. In the same manner, ConvergeViet pastors should learn how to ask powerful questions in order to be good coaches. Among other things, listening skills are essential and helpful. ConvergeViet pastors should always be sensitive to the Holy Spirit of God because He may lead them to go in unusual and new directions.

In contrast with such a beautiful biblical process is the cultural backlash that is often found in the attitudes of ConvergeViet local leaders who are ineffective in ministry. They rarely want to receive feedback from Vietnamese Christian believers. Often, they have a tendency to

measure themselves against other leaders around them. The other leaders become the point of reference. In the end, these ineffective do not fulfill their potential. Yet to be the best leaders they can be, they must enlist the help of others.

Good coaches will help ConvergeViet church leaders evaluate their performances against their own potential, and can help these leaders measure their performance against their own strengths instead of against someone else's. Coaches will know what these leaders are capable of and when to push them to their limits. Therefore, receiving feedback from our ConvergeViet brothers and sisters is an effective strategy for improving performance in ConvergeViet Ministries. In other words, self-evaluation is helpful, but evaluation from others is essential.

The ConvergeViet Ministries National Leadership Team realizes that coaching can therefore help the ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders take steps that move them toward greater personal development and the completion of the work God has given them to do. Coaching will also help the ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders to realize their personal calling and hear the profound words "it is finished." It should be their joyful aim to finish well the work of God has given them to do.

Even though coaching is generally not a foreign concept among ConvergeViet pastors, it is simply not a high priority in ConvergeViet churches. After a long period of inefficiency, these pastors have now learned that they cannot do it all by themselves. They need all the support and encouragement they can get from other professionals and God's gifted people in ministry.

While writing up this DMin project, I participated with other ConvergeViet pastors in a process of coaching and practicing whose outcome was very encouraging. For example, Pastor Huong Nguyen, who leads the ConvergeViet church in Sacramento, is eager to win more people to Christ through evangelism. Since Pastor Nguyen experienced the coaching process, his church has grown and its finances have increased to the point that the church can now stand on its own feet.<sup>14</sup> As ConvergeViet pastors respond to the need for coaching in their lives, they will begin to recognize the same need within their people. Many opportunities exist for ConvergeViet pastors to grow their people through interpersonal, coaching relationships of accountability as they model God's life-changing truths.

Recognizing this need, George Barna includes the role of a coach in his list of functional competencies for a Christian leader in the twenty-first century. In their coaching role, pastors will develop their people to reach their full potential and build them into a team which has a shared purpose and complementary gifts.<sup>15</sup> Through coaching training, ConvergeViet pastors will prepare and equip ConvergeViet Christian brothers and sisters for various eventualities so that they can respond to unforeseen challenges and needs whenever these may arise. Expecting or being able to cope with challenges allows God's people to be flexible and creative as they adapt their gifts and skills to the presenting situation. Effective ConvergeViet pastors should learn to rely on coaching to develop confidence in their people as they fulfill their missional callings and build credibility with the un-churched.

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<sup>14</sup> Huong Nguyen, interview by author, Sacramento, CA, March 26, 2011.

<sup>15</sup> George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1998), 113.

## **Adapting Logan and Carlton’s Coaching Questions and Model for Long-term Change**

God-centered coaching has the power to change ConvergeViet Ministries and also to multiply Vietnamese disciples, ministries, and churches. Robert E. Logan and Sherilyn Carlton’s coaching method combines a strong spiritual foundation, relational capacity, and strategic skills that will enrich ConvergeViet Ministries in the years to come. ConvergeViet Ministries would like to adapt this coaching model for its long-term change and growth. Following are the five steps based on Logan and Carlton’s method that will be used to bring effective coaching into ConvergeViet churches in the United States.<sup>16</sup>

### Steps to Effective Coaching

Step One is “Relating.” Both ConvergeViet national leaders and local church leaders should be able to establish coaching relationships and agendas with each other. Core coaching is a relationship which has qualities like trust, connection, support, and understanding. The relationship is what gives power to coaching. If ConvergeViet leaders skip over building a solid relational foundation in their hurry to become more accomplished, the strategy of raising and multiplying leaders for ConvergeViet Ministries will backfire. Although there are many ingredients to a successful coaching partnership, the most important one by far is listening. After listening, asking good questions is the

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<sup>16</sup> Robert E. Logan and Sherilyn Carlton, with Tara Miller, *Coaching 101* (Saint Charles, MO: Church Resource Ministries, 2008), 31-118.

second most important skill for building strong coaching relationships among the ConvergeViet national and local leaders. Powerful questions can help the leaders feel valued, which in turn will help build trust.<sup>17</sup>

Step Two is “Reflection.” ConvergeViet Ministries should be able to discover and explore key issues in the strategies of raising and multiplying leaders for its ministries in the United States. For ConvergeViet church leaders, the central task of the reflection stage should be to gain perspective. These leaders need a good, accurate picture of where their leadership team is now, where it has been, and where it wants to go. Key steps in reflecting well include celebrating ConvergeViet Ministries’ progress, clarifying direction and values, and acknowledging and understanding ConvergeViet Ministries’ obstacles.

Reflecting well is crucial; it helps the ConvergeViet Ministries leaders identify priorities and understand the reality of the situation. Once these leaders have decided what is really important and then cleared obstacles, they should reaffirm the ConvergeViet Ministries’ direction. As they reflect, they can ask, given the priorities and obstacles, what the issues are that need to be addressed and where the focus needs to be. The biggest temptation during the reflecting phase is to jump forward to the next steps before taking adequate time to evaluate what has already taken place.

So in turn, a ConvergeViet coach’s role is to guide lay people through the process of exploring key issues, developing a better understanding of the current situation, and recognizing areas most in need of change. During this critical stage, questions are one of

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<sup>17</sup> See Appendix F for questions used in the “Relating” step.

the ConvergeViet coach's most powerful tools. In fact, questions are the only effective way to help these Vietnamese people reflect on where they are and what issues need to be addressed.<sup>18</sup>

Step Three is "Refocusing." ConvergeViet national and local leaders should be able to determine priorities and action steps. After gaining a general sense of direction in the reflecting stage, the leaders can now move on to giving ConvergeViet Ministries' vision some definition and specificity. It is time to create a strategy and come up with concrete steps that can take them where they really want to go. Refocusing acts as the bridge between having good intentions and actually realizing those intentions. ConvergeViet leaders should be able to refocus in order to confirm the group's destination, direction, and priorities. Refocusing also translates these goals into concrete steps that will help ConvergeViet ministries move forward.

To refocus well, the ConvergeViet leaders need to keep shifting their eyes back and forth between the big picture of ConvergeViet Ministries' vision and the steps for individual church leaders along the way. However, there are some barriers to successful refocusing. One barrier is the belief that planning is too constricting, when planning actually provides and promote freedom. An example of planning is budgeting—ConvergeViet leaders should budget their time and money in order to have more of both. Another barrier is the fear of failure. ConvergeViet leaders may think, "If I set goals and then do not meet them, I am a failure." However, if they allow fear of failure to stop their efforts before they begin, they will end their lives wondering what more they could have

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<sup>18</sup> See Appendix F for questions used in the "Reflection" step.



done. A third obstacle is negative self-talk—the small internal voices that say, “You are not smart enough to do that,” or “What will they think of you if you fail?” Strongholds like these keep ConvergeViet leaders from taking the risk of stepping out and making positive changes.

Therefore, in the refocusing step, the ConvergeViet national and local leaders must decide what they will do. The most important thing is to be specific. Often, the major reason Vietnamese people do not accomplish their goals is because they have only general intentions and their vision has not been translated into concrete action steps. For example, small-group leaders may want to multiply their groups, but if they do not set dates or contact new leaders, the chances of spontaneous multiplication are small.<sup>19</sup>

Step Four is “Using Resources.” The ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team should be able to provide support and encouragement to each other and to the local church leaders. Using resources effectively is more than just an add-on; it can make the difference between people reaching their goals or not reaching them. Resourcing means applying the right tool at the right time. Finding resources can often be challenging. The ConvergeViet Leadership Team and pastors are living in the information age: books, seminars, tapes, and websites abound. However, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team and pastors really need coaches whose role is to help them think through creative options for finding what they need. Creativity and adaptability can play critical roles in finding needed resources.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See Appendix F for questions used in the “Refocusing” step.

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix F for questions used in the “Using Resources” step.

Step Five is “Reviewing the Process.” ConvergeViet leaders should be able to evaluate, celebrate and revise plans. In Vietnamese culture, most people tend to get too focused on the problems and on what is not working. Instead, ConvergeViet national and local leaders should encourage each other to start putting plans into practice by reminding themselves of what is working. Very often, ConvergeViet leaders’ plans and goals are not all-or-nothing propositions. Some areas may be working while others are not, but none of them seem to be complete successes or failures.

Starting with an eye toward the positive will help ConvergeViet leaders gain more momentum and realize that progress is being made. Whether plans are going well or poorly, lessons can be learned. Without taking the time during the review stage to ponder and consider them, those lessons can slip by unnoticed.<sup>21</sup>

In order to have a powerful coaching relationship, according to Logan and Carlton, the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team and pastors need to follow certain guidelines.<sup>22</sup> Chapter 5 has covered strategies for enabling ConvergeViet national leaders to examine ways to identify and maximize the full, God-given potential in the lives of the Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters in ConvergeViet Ministries. However, ConvergeViet churches are still relying on American churches’ resources, which is a sign of unhealthy dependency. Therefore, chapter 6 will focus on how a sense of ownership in ConvergeViet leaders’ lives can be created and how creating and

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<sup>21</sup> See Appendix F for questions used in the “Reviewing the Process” step.

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix E for coaching guidelines.

incorporating ownership can bring transformation to ConvergeViet churches in the United States.

## CHAPTER 6

### CREATING OWNERSHIP OF RAISING AND MULTIPLYING LEADERS IN CONVERGEVIET MINISTRIES–U.S.

The Vietnamese have a saying, “Everybody’s business is nobody’s business” (*Cha chung khong ai khoc*),<sup>1</sup> which means that nobody takes responsibility for a work that everybody shares. In Vietnamese tradition, if someone is asked to take responsibility for any task, that person will do it completely; if, however, people are asked to take joint responsibility, nothing good results. Therefore, based on this cultural characteristic, ConvergeViet Leadership Team should make sure to give clear responsibility to specific individuals so that they will accomplish their tasks.

However, Vietnamese culture has aspects that are different from American culture which make it difficult for people to take on responsibility. From childhood, Americans learn about independence or self-reliance from their parents and from their school. They learn the words of Emerson about self-reliance: “Let a man then know his worth, and keep things under his feet. Let him not peep or steal, or skulk up and down with the air of

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<sup>1</sup>Lieu Chan Dang and Ke Kha Le, *Vietnamese–English Dictionary* (Hanoi, Vietnam: Nha Xuat Ban Khoa hoc Xa hoi, 1989), 112.

a charity-boy, a bastard, or an interloper, in the world which exists for him.”<sup>2</sup> In contrast, another Vietnamese maxim says, “When young, one relies on one’s father, then when old, one relies on one’s children” (*Tre cay cha, gia cay con* ).<sup>3</sup> When Vietnamese enter the United States, they bring with them this spirit. For example, when a small group of Vietnamese Christians starts a mission in the United States, generally speaking, an American church or denomination sponsors them, helps them to pay their pastor’s salary, provides a place for worship, and helps them in whatever way is needed. After a long time, ten or more years, Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters should have become independent, but they do not want to leave the American mother church. Similarly, ConvergeViet Ministries has to deal with some signs of unhealthy dependency in its churches.

### **Signs of Unhealthy Dependency**

First, the ConvergeViet Ministries churches ought to be healthy, indigenous churches that can use their local resources to raise at least a significant amount of the funds they need, but Vietnamese American believers seem to be prevented from learning to give sacrificially. It is unhealthy when these believers fail to give consistently to sustain the ministry of their Vietnamese American local churches because they are counting on funds provided by their Converge Worldwide parent denomination.

Second, ConvergeViet churches allow American donors to shape ConvergeViet

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<sup>2</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self-Reliance,” The New York Times Company, 4, [http://grammar.about.com/od/60essays/a/selfreliannessay\\_4.htm](http://grammar.about.com/od/60essays/a/selfreliannessay_4.htm) (accessed August 10, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Dang and Le, *Vietnamese – English Dictionary*, 112.

Ministries goals and objectives in order to preserve their financial help. Thus, ConvergeViet Ministries' goal-setting and decision-making are unduly influenced by their American funding sources.

Third, ConvergeViet churches ought to look after the needs of their own pastors. They are unhealthy when they leave it up to Converge Worldwide to provide health insurance and retirement care for their pastors. Therefore, in order to avoid these unhealthy signs of dependency, the ConvergeViet National Leadership Team should look for some new keys that can bring more success to ConvergeViet churches in the United States.

### **Keys for a Successful Ministry**

In 2005, the Vietnamese Initiative (or Vietnamese Baptist General Conference-U.S.) met at a revival conference in Portland, Oregon. There its first National Leadership Team was formed with a focus on leadership development, church planting and church mobilization. On this occasion, the National Leadership Team also told Converge Worldwide that ConvergeViet Ministries would depend on God and walk by faith in running the affairs of its churches and ministries. However, if God moved Converge Worldwide to give the National Leadership Team a hand in coaching or providing resources to develop ConvergeViet's ministries, they would be glad to receive it.<sup>4</sup>

When people know how to take responsibility in a task, they will be free to decide what they think is right. That task then belongs to the responsible person, who does not

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<sup>4</sup> *Chua Vinh Quang*, 65.

depend on others' opinions. In order to help ConvergeViet pastors and lay leaders understand more about ownership, it is helpful to look at some definitions of ownership. First, according to "Wordnet," Princeton University's English language lexical database, ownership is "the relation of an owner to the thing possessed; possession with the right to transfer possession to others." It is also defined as "the act of having and controlling property," and "the state or fact of being an owner."<sup>5</sup> Second, according to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, ownership is "the state or right of being an owner."<sup>6</sup> So ownership can be described in terms of someone who wishes to possess something—a piece of land or a house. The person finally makes the decision to spend every cent and goes out to buy it. That person then becomes the owner of the property. No one can trespass on this property, which is owned by the individual.

To raise and multiply godly leaders effectively, ConvergeViet church leaders should invest their lives into ConvergeViet Ministries and take ownership of it, and they should be willing to live with this ownership mentality every day. The ConvergeViet Ministries National Leadership Team believes that there are at least ten essentials based on the word of God that God wants both themselves as national leaders and the ConvergeViet pastors to demonstrate as they take ownership of raising and multiplying godly leaders for enlarging His kingdom.

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<sup>5</sup> Princeton University, "Wordnet: A Lexical Database for English," <http://wordnet.princeton.edu>.

<sup>6</sup> *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 830.

## **Essentials for Building Ownership**

The first essential is based on Jeremiah 17:7: “Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in Him.” The ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team believes that God wants ConvergeViet Ministries to fully rely on Him rather than on human organizations. When ConvergeViet lay church leaders take ownership of evangelism, reaching out to non-believers or taking care of the body of Christ, God will provide the resources to meet all their needs.

The key for ConvergeViet Ministries’ success is for the ConvergeViet people to take ownership of growing ConvergeViet Ministries in the United States. Vietnamese American Christian brothers and sisters need to share publicly with other denominations or other ethnic churches the strategies for raising and multiplying godly leaders that ConvergeViet Ministries has developed so that they will learn good lessons from each other. Even as the ConvergeViet Leadership Team and pastors get older, they will become more certain about their ownership and will be able to believe that their ownership is in alignment with the purpose of their lives.

In order to learn effectively about ownership, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team should engage more with other Converge Worldwide intercultural ministries, such as the Latino Ministries or Filipino Ministries, which have successfully assumed ownership of their ministries from the denomination. In doing so, ConvergeViet Ministries can learn about their achievements. In such meetings, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team should write down the questions to ask the Latino or Filipino Ministries leaders regarding ways



to take ownership of the strategy for raising and multiplying godly leaders, especially during the early stages of the ownership journey.

The second essential is based on Mathew 28:18-20, the “Great Commission.” ConvergeViet Ministries believes that churches should actively take ownership of God’s business among Vietnamese non-believers in the United States; that is, churches have to have a strategy for evangelism. When ConvergeViet church leaders activate their faith and carry on God’s commission, Christ will become their wisdom, their method of evangelism, and their protection, as well as their provision. They will experience that Christ is all of their resources and Christ is all in all.

The Heavenly Father has trusted ConvergeViet church leaders to operate His kingdom business. He is training ConvergeViet pastors to be real experts in enlarging His kingdom. ConvergeViet Ministries pastors should be more confident to take on even greater responsibilities to enlarge the Heavenly Father’s business. They will see that if they seize ownership of raising and multiplying godly leaders for His kingdom, their Heavenly Father will be the richest, wisest, and most complete source of joy.

In April 2011, the ConvergeViet Ministries, LEAD (Learn, Encourage, Achieve, Dream) Team Southern California was birthed. LEAD teams are leadership teams developed by Converge Worldwide.<sup>7</sup> The LEAD team is “designed to create an environment where pastors may Learn from one another; Encourage and experience a

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<sup>7</sup> Converge Southwest, “Mobilize Churches,” <http://www.convergesw.org/mobilize-churches/training-networks> (accessed August 12, 2012). “A LEAD Team is a gathering of relationally and missionally committed leaders from a geographical region or affinity group. Teams meet together regularly to build meaningful relationships, focus on spiritual growth, and work together to see mission accomplished through multiplying (planting) new churches, and nurturing church health.”

greater camaraderie; Achieve Kingdom impact through mutual efforts and to prayerfully; Dream collaboratively as the Bride of Christ.”<sup>8</sup> The ConvergeViet LEAD team is composed of ConvergeViet pastors and at present is coordinated by Rev. Le. These meetings help the pastors greatly in praying for each other’s needs, learning new knowledge, encouraging one another, and sharing new visions.

The third essential is based on Luke 1:53: “He has filled the hungry with good things.” The ConvergeViet Ministries church leaders know their ministry’s capacity for financial growth and what they can achieve by faith. The ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team members must be models themselves in growing every day. Successful people who accomplish great things are the ones who have a strong spirit of ownership. They see and own a vision that may be impossible for others who hear about that vision to believe.

When the ConvergeViet Ministries local pastors meet together, they also learn about how to encourage the believers in their church to give abundantly. In general, Vietnamese people often bring flowers or money when they go to worship at Buddhist or Caodai temples, and they give generously to build temples. When they believe in Jesus Christ, however, they go to church with empty hands or bring just a little money to put in the offering box. They think that the church is very rich because its parent denomination has already given it a lot of money. Therefore, ConvergeViet pastors should preach and teach new believers about the blessings of offering and faithful tithing.

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<sup>8</sup> ConvergeViet Ministries National Leadership Team, “LEAD Team Vietnamese Initiative,” Converge Southwest, <http://www.convergesw.org/events/lead-team-vietnamese-initiative-0> (accessed May 12, 2011).

In addition, the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team would like to hold a “Generous Church Summit” and invite the Reverend Scott Ridout, Director of Generosity for Converge Worldwide, to talk about the blessing of giving abundantly.<sup>9</sup> When returning to their church, the pastors can share what they have learned to encourage their members. As the denomination itself says, “You don't find prayerful churches without prayerful leadership teams. You don't find evangelistic churches without evangelistic leadership. In the same way, you don't find generous churches without generous leaders.”<sup>10</sup>

The fourth essential is based on 2 Timothy 4:2: “Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage —with great patience and careful instruction,” and on 2 Timothy 2:2: “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.” The ConvergeViet Ministries churches must have a strong desire to plan and carry out the strategy of ownership in training and multiplying lay leaders.

When checking the abilities of persons who go out to win people for Christ, ConvergeViet leaders must be required to take a hard look at themselves. Both national and local church leaders will need to honestly assess their strengths with the DiSC profile system by John Geier, which focuses on the traits "Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Compliance" (D-i-S-C). A person with a Dominance trait assumes authority,

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<sup>9</sup> Converge Worldwide, “Converge Missional Generosity,” <http://www.convergegenerosity.com/get-started> (accessed July 30, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Converge Worldwide, “Converge Missional Generosity: FAQs,” <http://www.convergegenerosity.com/faqs> (accessed August 2, 2012).

managing troubles or solving problems. A person with the Influence trait can make a favorable impression, generating enthusiasm and participating in a group. A person with the Steadfastness trait performs in a consistent, predictable manner or is a good listener. A person with the Compliance trait concentrates on key details, checks for accuracy, or uses a systematic approach to the situation or activities.<sup>11</sup>

The ConvergeViet Ministries pastors will sit together in small groups of three and use the DiSC test<sup>12</sup> to discover their dominant trait and find their strength. The ConvergeViet national leaders will do the same separately. After both sets of leaders finish the test, the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team will know the strengths of their own team members as well as the strength of the other pastors who have taken the DiSC test, and they can understand both their own colleagues and the local pastors better.

Moreover, when ConvergeViet pastors meet together, they should not assess only their personal strengths, but also where they currently fall short. The ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team may use questions from John C Maxwell's *My Dream Map* to examine each other in the team as well as examining the other pastors in the ConvergeViet Ministries.<sup>13</sup>

Three months after the pastors answer the questionnaire, the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team will meet with each pastor to review the questions and then

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<sup>11</sup> John G. Geier, *DiSC: Personal Profile System* (Minneapolis: Inscape Publishing, 2001), 7.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 2. In 28 groups of words, each person chooses one word which characterizes him other most and one which characterizes him or her least. For example, in word group 1, there are four words: enthusiastic, daring, diplomatic, satisfied. Person A might choose "enthusiastic" (most) and "diplomatic" (least).

<sup>13</sup> John C. Maxwell, *My Dream Map* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 52. See Appendix G for questions adapted from Maxwell.

will ask the pastor to explain his or her answers. If the ConvergeViet Leadership Team members need more clarification about some of the answers the pastor has given, they may ask follow-up questions. However, ConvergeViet pastors do not defend themselves or give excuses for their past actions. Otherwise, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team may not get honest feedback. The big problem in many Vietnamese church leaders' lives is listening and hearing. Whenever anyone mentions something critical about the attitudes of a Vietnamese church leader, that leader often reacts strongly and quickly attacks the one who spoke out of a real desire to help the leader to improve. The point is to listen more and learn how to improve.

The fifth essential is based on 1 Corinthians 3:6: "He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." The ConvergeViet Leadership Team needs to focus on teamwork. The Vietnamese American church leaders should make connections with specific people to form a potential ministry team; that is to say, a ministry team must have the right people in it. The Leadership Team should also work at transferring the vision by sharing the strategy of taking ownership with their Vietnamese brothers and sisters clearly and creatively. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team should be able to recruit people with complementary skills to help ConvergeViet Ministries accomplish its mission and goal.

The sixth essential is based on Luke 14:26: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple." The ConvergeViet Ministries church leaders

must understand the cost of following Jesus and serving him well. Obeying Christ's commission is a must for the success of any kingdom builder. The ConvergeViet Ministries church leaders should think out all the costs of doing ministry and be willing to accept these costs. At the same time, though, they should completely trust in God's guidance and protection and totally rely on Christ as in Proverbs 3: 5-6 and John 15:5.

ConvergeViet church leaders should look for the positive aspect of any dark situation. They should consider every environment, every social context, as a mission field and every situation as an opportunity for evangelism to advance God's kingdom among the Vietnamese people. For example, when starting a new church or a new ministry, many pastors will have to hold two jobs, or their wives or children will have to go to work to provide for the family. When they live by faith, they will have many testimonies about how God provided abundantly not only for the support of their families, but also for the support of ConvergeViet Ministries.

The seventh essential is based on Mark 3:13-14: "Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach." The ConvergeViet Ministries church leaders must believe that they should be always in balance between "being" (personal growth) and "doing" (ministry action or ministry contribution). Too much emphasis on personal growth can allow the team to get spiritually sluggish and fat. Too much emphasis on ministry contribution leads to

burnout.<sup>14</sup> As Walling maintains, “Effective believers always maintain a learning posture throughout their entire lives. They never stop learning, whether informally (reading, personal growth, projects, personal research), non-formally (workshops, seminars, conferences), or sometimes through formal training (continuing education, degree programs).”<sup>15</sup> However, ConvergeViet Ministries church leaders also need to be aware that frequently pastors drop out of ministry because they are burned out. Therefore, the ConvergeViet pastors should continuously pay attention to their spiritual growth as well as to their ministry contributions.

The ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team and local pastors recently held a retreat for pastors’ families in order to have fellowship and share one another’s burdens. From February 28 to March 2, 2012 the Second Pastoral Retreat (with families) was held at Lake Retreat in Oregon. At this meeting, twelve pastors had a wonderful time sharing their ministry experiences and praying for one another. At least four pastors from four churches (Aloha, Chicago, Reseda and San Diego) have already confirmed their willingness to send their monthly church mission fund to the General Mission Fund of ConvergeViet Ministries.<sup>16</sup>

The eighth essential is based on Acts 20:24: “However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.” The only aim the

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<sup>14</sup> Steven L. Ogne and Thomas P. Nebel, *Empowering Leaders through Coaching* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart, 1995), 1-2.

<sup>15</sup> Terry Walling, *Mentoring Workbook* (Saint Charles, MO: Church Resource Ministries, 2001), 4.

<sup>16</sup> Truong et al., *ConvergeViet Ministries Report*, 8.

ConvergeViet Leadership Team and pastors will focus on is to complete the task of testifying about the good news of God's grace. In the words of the ConvergeViet Ministries report of 2010-2012, "The only question that has reappeared in the mind and heart of pastors in ConvergeViet Ministries was: Are we ready for this challenge? Yes, we have been and will be ready for as long as the Lord wants it."<sup>17</sup>

Church leaders and lay people alike praise the Lord that after fifteen years, ConvergeViet Ministries has eighteen churches. A church in Houston, Texas bought a building that it uses for worship, and a church in Oregon bought a piece of land where it plans to build a building for worship. An American church in Iowa gave another ConvergeViet church a building to use for worship. The Vietnamese church is responsible for its maintenance. A ConvergeViet Ministries' pastor in San Diego holds a worship service in one room in his house on Sunday afternoons. Most of the other churches rent places to worship from other American churches, whether on Sunday morning or on Sunday afternoon. In general, the seventeen churches in ConvergeViet Ministries have their own budgets they use to run their church affairs. Some of them can afford to pay the salary of the local pastors and also have some funds reserved for buying a piece of land or buying a building of their own where they can worship God.

The ninth essential is based on Genesis 12:2b: "I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing." The ConvergeViet churches should bring benefits or impart blessings to others, not just to themselves. In their book, *Advancing Leaders*, Walling and Sprague state that "one ultimate contribution is the integration of being and doing in a

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 1.



leader's life. It is the moment when a leader brings all of who they are to what they do."<sup>18</sup>

If the ConvergeViet Ministries church pastors could be examples themselves of taking ownership in building up their churches, the result would serve as a stimulus for change.

The tenth essential is based on Mathew 25:21: "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'" The ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team members should finish their ministries well. Every day they should meditate on the last three profound words spoken by Christ: "It is finished." These words should be their joyful aim—to finish well the work God has given them to do. The heart cry of every genuine believer is to stand at the end and hear Christ say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."<sup>19</sup> For Christ followers, finishing well means that they are more passionate about Christ and His mission when they have fulfilled their life purpose than they were when they began.<sup>20</sup>

To finish the strategy of taking ownership well, ConvergeViet Leadership Team needs to help the local churches to plan how to budget their funds. The executive board of the church needs to report publicly what the church has received from the believers and what they have spent in a month. First, they must have a plan to give a percentage of the total income to support their pastor. If they do not have enough money to pay the whole salary of the pastor, they should pay a portion such as allowance for housing,

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<sup>18</sup> Terry Walling and Brad Sprague, *Advancing Leaders* (Saint Charles, MO: Church Resource Ministries, 2008), 13.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Terry Walling, *Stuck* (Saint Charles, MO: Church Resource Ministries, 2008), xiii.

health insurance, travel expenses, or entertaining guests. Second, the board must have a plan to pay for renting the place to worship every week; then they must have a plan to buy a place of their own. Third, the church must have a fund for an evangelism team, which will voluntarily join the lay leaders and pastor in going out to share the gospel. After each outreach activity they should have dinner together to have fellowship and to review their experiences.

When the church income increases, the lay leadership must draw up a new budget according to the church's needs. However, the first priority must be to pay the pastor's salary, so that he or she can serve the Lord full time. ConvergeViet church leaders should be faithful to the calling God has placed upon their lives. Moreover, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team believes that since God is the one who started the ministry, He is also the one who will help the leaders to accomplish His mission well.

In short, taking ownership of raising and multiplying godly leaders for ConvergeViet Ministries in the United States is biblically based. When ConvergeViet leaders serve in ConvergeViet ministries, they should not think that they are serving a human organization, but performing a kingdom ministry. Moreover, God wants ConvergeViet church leaders to trust in Him and to trust in the ConvergeViet Christian brothers and sisters in sharing God's business. The more Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters in the United States know the Heavenly Father's business, the more they will care about it.

Once Vietnamese American believers understand the ConvergeViet Ministries strategies well, they will be empowered, knowing that their actions will be in line with

those strategies. Specifically, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team should make the strategies of raising and multiplying godly leaders for ConvergeViet ministries clear to everyone. Taking ownership of the strategies of raising and multiplying leaders requires ConvergeViet church leaders and Vietnamese Christians to have strong faith and confidence in the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 6 has addressed the issue of creating and incorporating ownership in a ConvergeViet church leader's life; the result of creating and incorporating ownership will be transformation in ConvergeViet churches in the United States. In chapter 7, new ways will be explored to implement the strategies of raising and multiplying godly leaders for ConvergeViet Ministries. The last part of chapter 7 also presents ways to implement the new leadership principles in other recent immigrant churches in the United States.

## CHAPTER 7

### IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES FOR RAISING AND MULTIPLYING LEADERS FOR CONVERGEVIET CHURCHES

The previous chapters have provided a general history, a ministry profile, and a description of the current spiritual leadership of ConvergeViet churches as well as presenting the need for new strategies for raising and multiplying godly leaders for the Vietnamese ministries in the United States. Chapter 7 discusses new ways to implement these strategies through raising and multiplying more small group leaders. It also describes ways to implement the new leadership principles across other recent immigrant churches in the United States.

#### **Implementation of Raising and Multiplying Leaders Strategy through Training Small Group Leaders**

In order to raise and multiply leaders effectively in local ConvergeViet churches, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team must help every member in its ministries to have the same understanding of the importance of small groups, the spiritual foundation of small group leaders, and the training of these leaders to raise up unreached people in the local community. This training is achieved through a three-day leadership training seminar.

Every three months, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team should encourage members in their churches to intentionally set aside three days (perhaps a weekend) for attending a small group training seminar.

Each day of the seminar, the Leadership Team will present one subject. On the first day, the subject presented will be renewal, in order to encourage the ConvergeViet lay leaders to follow God's Ten Commandments. On the second day, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team will begin the actual training of the lay small group leaders by identifying their personal gifts, choosing one functional small group, and equipping the lay leaders with methods for evangelizing. On the third day, lay leaders will worship in the morning, and in the afternoon, they will go out to share the good news in order to bring new people into their small groups. In the evening, everyone will gather in a meeting to celebrate the results of this seminar.

God never intended for His people to be cut off from others. The Holy Spirit birthed a new community of believers in the early church of which Jesus is the Head. Thus, the body of Christ in the ConvergeViet Ministries will stay together, each part interacting with and supporting the others so that the ConvergeViet Church can be the bride of Christ. Jesus never intended the ConvergeViet Church to be an institution, but a living body. The local ConvergeViet churches and their ministries exist as God's chosen vehicles for helping ConvergeViet believers fulfill the Great Commission. God could have redeemed ConvergeViet believers and taken them immediately to heaven, but He did not. He could have redeemed them and then left them alone to reach out to their friends for Christ, but He did not do that either. Instead, He created the ConvergeViet

churches. None of the ConvergeViet church members can accomplish the Great Commission alone; church members need each other in the small groups and in the church so their spiritual lives can be nurtured and together they can raise and multiply more disciples for Christ.

### **The Importance of ConvergeViet Small Groups**

Distancing not only can happen in marriages, it happens in churches as well. ConvergeViet people go to the same church, sit in the same pews, share the same bread and cup, listen to the same messages, and serve on the same committees. Yet there is an emptiness inside many of them. It is quite easy for church members to do things together but not know the person or persons who are sitting in the seat next to them. If these church members become aware of other people's hurts, frustrations, fears, and dreams, the ConvergeViet churches will demonstrate mutual accountability and shine Jesus' light out into the world. Thus the development of small groups is needed.

The Lord Jesus formed His small group before he started His ministry. The twelve disciples were His group members. After three years of training and working with them, He sent them out to conquer the known world of the Roman Empire with the gospel. Similarly, the ConvergeViet small group is the place where Vietnamese Christians receive training in preparation for witnessing for the Lord. It is said that a friend nearby is better than a relative far away. A believer in the Lord who is close at hand is even more precious. The ConvergeViet small group will allow Vietnamese Christians to practice life in the body, to love one another, and to shoulder together the Great Commission. A small

group is a good path by which to lead the church people into involvement with the church ministries.

The success of a small group does not depend just on the designated leader, but on the whole group. Each member contributes to the group's growth and well-being. Each person can also become a leader because the group helps everyone in it to develop leadership skills. In the ConvergeViet small group, there is opportunity for everyone to discover his or her spiritual gifts. As Paul R. Stevens maintains, "Without doubt, small groups are the single greatest tool we have for developing spiritual gifts."<sup>1</sup> Through ConvergeViet small groups, the needs of the Vietnamese church are made known to individual members who may then exercise their spiritual gifts in meeting these needs.

Today, many Vietnamese Christians who attend ConvergeViet churches are merely spectators. Only a small percentage of them are involved in the church ministry. However, in the churches' small groups, there is always an opportunity for the brothers and sisters to become involved. Small group members know one another well, and everyone can be used by God to minister to the others in the small group. Through God's Spirit, those relationships will transform and empower all the group members, affecting each one's vertical relationship with God as well as every horizontal relationship, whether with immediate or extended family, with friends, in the workplace, or in the neighborhood.

In ConvergeViet local churches, the small group is the most effective way to meet the needs of the growing Vietnamese community. The ConvergeViet small group is the

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<sup>1</sup> Paul R. Stevens, *Liberating the Laity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 62.

avenue through which Vietnamese members have the opportunity to experience community life. Members learn to become close and intimate with one another, interacting and discussing the Bible in a non-threatening manner, and sharing their faith with their unsaved relatives and friends.

The revitalization of the church today requires that two or three gather in the name of Jesus. In those relationships, the very Spirit of Christ will bring hope, transformation, and mission into the world. Jesus gathered His followers into a group that provided support, growth, recovery, prayer, study, and ministry. There are also different small groups that give special help to individuals or families. For example, some small groups go to the hospital to visit and pray for the sick and to share the gospel with patients and their families. Other small groups go to prisons to visit prisoners and bring the good news of hope and forgiveness to them. As the small groups move into the community and grow, the church will be revitalized, and God will be worshipped and glorified.

Dale Galloway says, “No matter how good the preaching is, or the teaching, or the music in a particular church, unless people are brought into some kind of small fellowship group, they will leave a local church within two or three years.”<sup>2</sup> David Cho likewise shares the view that churches founded on personalities and traditions are dying, and that home small groups provide real opportunities for people to find meaningful involvement in the life of their church.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Dale Galloway, *20-20 Vision* (Grand Rapids, MI: Scott Publishing Co., 1986), 16.

<sup>3</sup> David Cho, *Successful Home Small Groups* (Portland, OR: Bridge Publishing Inc., 1981), vi.



Small groups that meet in homes can be readily converted into house fellowships that will pave the way to become house churches. According to Leith Anderson, house churches are most likely lay-led.<sup>4</sup> There are many house churches in ethnic Christian communities in the United States. These house churches have many advantages, one being that they do not require big budgets, as they do not utilize rented facilities and they may be led by a bi-vocational pastor or lay pastor. This starting up of home churches has already happened among the ConvergeViet churches.

To achieve the maximum benefit of a small group in ConvergeViet churches, the group should be kept small. Being small allows people in the group to share their personal needs and concerns comfortably in an intimate fashion. The ConvergeViet Ministries have set the group size at about eight people. When a group grows beyond eight, the small group will be split in two.

To develop more leaders, the ConvergeViet churches in the United States have made a proposal to each local church to raise and multiply lay leaders to be involved in ConvergeViet church ministries. Within this strategy, a ConvergeViet small group is considered to be the best place to provide new leaders opportunities to exercise their potential gifts for ministry. A ConvergeViet small group is the place where Vietnamese lay leaders can be taught and practice what they have learned. A successful small group ministry is, therefore, one of the crucial keys leading ConvergeViet churches to grow.

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<sup>4</sup>Leith Anderson, *A Church for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1992), 57.

## **Renewing the Spiritual Life for ConvergeViet Small Group Leaders**

The purpose of the small group training seminar on the first day, which is commonly Friday, is to renew the spiritual life of the ConvergeViet lay small group leaders through prayer time as instructed in Acts 2:38, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” All ConvergeViet lay leaders should ask God to show what area in their lives need to be cleansed so that they can become clean vessels for His use. There are three training sections in the day.

The first section will held in the morning. After the lay leaders worship God by singing from the hymn book, they will be requested to read from the Bible Acts 1: 4-14, 2:1-11; 2:42. The ConvergeViet pastor who is conducting the seminar will then read the verses and ask everyone to think about them, but the pastor will not give a message. Acts 2:42 mentions that the early believers gathered for prayer, after which the Holy Spirit came upon them. The ConvergeViet pastors and lay small group leaders believe that in the above passages Peter told the disciples in the room with him to repent of their sins and receive forgiveness. Then they also would be filled with the Holy Spirit. So, too, will each seminar ConvergeViet lay leader be led to do.

After that, the lay leaders will be requested to read Exodus 20:1-17, the passage that gives the Ten Commandments. On Friday morning, they will examine their hearts concerning their attitude toward God as stated in the first three commandments. The ConvergeViet ministry team will divide the attendees into groups of two or three men and/or women (husbands, wives, and children will be separated). Then, in each group,

each person will repent and ask God's forgiveness in the areas of life covered by these three commandments. The questions on these commandments will be printed out so that each member in the group can ask them of himself or herself, or one member can ask them of another.

The first commandment calls its readers to have no other gods (vv. 1-3). These are the questions for the ConvergeViet lay leaders: Who is God? What does God expect of each ConvergeViet lay leader? What do the lay leaders think God is saying to them? How have they experienced God in their lives this week? How are the lay leaders responding to His prompting? Do they really know God—do they really trust in God in every situation, or they still depend on their energy, money, talent, and so on? Did the ConvergeViet lay leaders spend time with the Lord this week, completing the Bible reading for the week?

The second commandment calls for worshipers of God to have no idols (vv. 4-6). Questions for trainees include the following: Besides God, do the trainees still have any idols—not only do they have idols in their houses like images of the saints or the Virgin Mary, or Buddha, or images of famous people, but do they idolize even what they like best? How have their actions and words shown others that they love Jesus? What have they held back from God that they need to surrender?

The third commandment requires its hearers not to take the name of the Lord in vain (v. 7). Have the ConvergeViet lay leaders ever used Jesus' name when making a vow or used God's name in an exclamation (for example, "Oh Jesus!" "Oh Heaven!" "Oh

God!”)?) Or do they sometimes blame God for their misfortune or think that He is unfair to them?

The second section will take place on Friday afternoon. The lay leaders will be asked to read Exodus 20:8-12,14: the fourth, fifth, and seventh commandments. The fourth commandment relates to the church gathering to worship God and serve one another. The fifth and the seventh relate to family.

The fourth commandment calls for observing the Sabbath (vv. 8-11). Do the ConvergeViet lay leaders go to church regularly and engage actively in the church activities? Do they tithe faithfully, and do they eagerly share with nonbelievers about their faith? Have they given a verbal testimony this week confessing the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ?

The fifth commandment is to honor one’s father and mother (v.12). How have the ConvergeViet lay leaders been respectful to their parents and the adults around them this week? Do they respect and love their parents with their hearts and forgive their parents when their parents have hurt them, whether in words or actions? Do the trainees take care of their parents when they are old and lonely and encourage them when they are depressed? In addition, if the ConvergeViet lay leaders have children, do they love their children and take care of them properly? Do they ever use curse words or scold them?

Because the seventh commandment relates to the family, particularly to relations between husband and wife, it is placed in this group (v.14). In their family lives, do the ConvergeViet lay leaders really love their spouses, respect them, and take care of them? Do they encourage their spouses when they are depressed? Do they hate their spouses or

use words or actions intended to hurt them? Have the lay leaders been in a compromising situation with a member of the opposite sex any time this past week, or have they been exposed to sexually explicit material? Have they given priority time to their families?

The third section will be held on Friday evening. The ConvergeViet lay leaders will be requested to read Exodus 20:13, 15-17. The remaining four commandments relate to their relationships with others which cause harm to the body, names, and assets.

The sixth commandment is “Do not murder” (v. 13). Are the ConvergeViet lay leaders ever so angry with others that they want to kill the others by their words, or even by actions? Have any of the female lay leaders ever had an abortion? Would they ever intend to discard the baby in their wombs, especially in times of financial difficulty? How have the ConvergeViet lay leaders loved others even when they did not feel like it? Have they continued to remain angry toward others?

The eighth commandment is “Do not steal” (v. 15). In what ways have the lay leaders taken anything that does not belong to them this week? Do they faithfully spend their time on Sundays going to church to worship God, or do they use that time for their entertainment or shopping or for other purposes? Do they steal the tithe, which belongs to God? Have they lacked any integrity in their financial dealings?

The ninth commandment is “Do not give false testimony” (v. 16). Do the lay leaders often tell lies to protect their honor, status, families, or jobs or for other reasons? Do they often tell white lies (unimportant lies, especially those told to be tactful or polite) to earn favor from other people? Have they ever damaged other people by their words,

either behind their back or face-to-face? In what ways have they not told the truth this week?

The tenth commandment is “Do not covet” (v. 17) Have the lay leaders secretly wished for another’s misfortune so that they might excel? In what ways have they been angry or frustrated this week because they did not get something that they wanted or did not get their way?

After repenting and receiving forgiveness, all the ConvergeViet lay leaders will be able to claim the promise of Jesus in receiving the Holy Spirit. In a Holy Spirit-filled church, Jesus Christ is the leader, and all the activities of the church are under His guidance. The church is indeed a wonderful community when it is under the power of the Holy Spirit: many hurt people are healed, many sinful lives are changed, and many people under the oppression of Satan are set free. As a result, all ConvergeViet churches will be filled with joy and many people will be drawn to Jesus Christ.

### **Training ConvergeViet Small Group Leaders**

The process of training takes place on the second day, normally Saturday. In the Saturday morning training session, the ConvergeViet ministry team will give a presentation on the role and functions of an effective ConvergeViet small group leader. The potential small group leaders are to expose themselves to the concepts of small groups in order to see themselves as small group leaders and learn ways to lead small groups.

To begin with, a teaching is given on the concept of small groups. According to Acts 2:41-47, there were two kinds of gatherings in the early church: one at the temple or synagogue and the other in people's homes. The Bible says that the believers met together daily in homes to break bread and to have fellowship. That is the form of a small group gathering. The meeting of small groups is not just for personal spiritual growth, but also for service. The nature of the group is to enable each one in the group to help the others build up the body of Christ and serve His Church, His people, and His world.

Following the small group teaching, the trainees are taught to see themselves as group leaders. A well-trained ConvergeViet small group leader is the key to the spiritual, social, and numerical growth of the ConvergeViet churches. The burdens of leading, teaching, discipling, pastoring, and evangelizing are borne by small group leaders. Such a leader needs to be equipped to fulfill these tasks; thus quality training is pivotal to the success of the small group in the ConvergeViet churches. A proper plan for leadership development must be implemented if the small group ministry is to succeed.

After learning about the role of small group leaders, ConvergeViet lay leaders are instructed in ways to lead a small group. A ConvergeViet small group leader should not be a lecturer who monopolizes the group's time by talking all the time. On the other hand, he or she should not be just another group member who does not take any responsibility for the growth of the group. Instead, small group leaders are to be most concerned about the spiritual lives of their group members, praying for them in order to bring each small group member to have a personal relationship with God.

Small group leaders must also create an environment to help group members be receptive to the Spirit's movement. The leaders who want efficient group meetings that disseminates a lot of information will spend most of their time learning facilitation skills and studying commentaries. On the other hand, small group leaders who want their small groups to be places where spiritual growth happens will spend most of their time in prayer.

In addition, small group leaders should be familiar with three types of functions: task, maintenance, and personal functions. Through task functions, the small group leader helps the group members to focus on their goals. Through maintenance functions, the ConvergeViet small group leader encourages members of the group to maintain their activities and contribute their gifts and abilities for the development of the group. Through personal functions, the small group leader helps other members in the group pay attention to each other and share one another's burdens so that they can resolve conflicts and prevent bad behavior.

In the Saturday afternoon training section, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team will give a presentation on identifying the gifts and abilities of small group leaders. During the three-hour training session in the afternoon, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team will present the "SHAPE model of Pastor Rick Warren."<sup>5</sup> According to Warren, "There are no 'little people' in the body of Christ, and there are no 'insignificant' ministries. Every ministry is important" (1 Cor 12:18-22).<sup>6</sup> So Warren created a method

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<sup>5</sup>Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 369-374. See details in Appendix C.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.



for releasing in people their God-given potential using the acronym SHAPE. SHAPE contains five elements: S—spiritual gifts; H—heart; A—abilities; P—Personality; and E—experience. However, this method is only a theory; a person needs to go through real-life experiences of hardship in order to know exactly his or her true capacity for the gift that God has given.

First, in learning about spiritual gifts, ConvergeViet members are requested to read carefully 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 8, and Ephesians and then identify the spiritual gift they have. Second, the Bible uses the term “heart” to represent the center of human motivation, desires, interests, and inclinations. Thus, the heart determines the words people say or the things they do as in Matthew 12:34: “For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.”

Abilities are the natural talents that people were born with. Some people have a natural ability with words; others are naturally good with numbers. The ConvergeViet ministry team will try to help members know the areas in which they have natural talents, the careers they like best, and the hobbies they like.

Taking a person’s personality into account is also crucial. It is obvious that God does not use a cookie cutter to create people. He loves variety: He made introverts and extroverts, those who love routine and those who love variety, “thinkers” and “feelers.” He also made people who work best when given an individual assignment, and those who work better with a team.

Experiences are valuable. God never wastes an experience. Roman 8:28 reminds the lay leaders, “We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love

Him, who have been called according to His purpose.” According to Warren, Saddleback Church, which he founded and pastors, helps people consider five areas of experience that will influence the kind of ministry they are best shaped for: educational experiences, vocational experiences, spiritual experiences, ministry experiences, and painful experiences.<sup>7</sup>

After introducing the SHAPE acronym, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team will prepare a questionnaire about spiritual gifts, heart, abilities, personality, and experience, so that each trainee can identify his or her own SHAPE. For example, possible questions related to “H for Heart” are the following: First, what will be reflected in your heart (Mt 12:34, “For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks”)? The second question is why do you feel that your behavior is pleasing to God (Ps 37:4, “Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart”)?

Similar questions can be asked in relation to “P for Personality”: Are you an introvert (one who looks within, introspects), or an extrovert (one who is marked by an interest in others or concerned primarily with external reality)? Are you a thinker (one who thinks, especially and chiefly, in a particular manner, as a close thinker; a deep thinker; a coherent thinker), or a feeler (one who works best when given an individual, specific assignment according to his or her personality)?

After the discussion, lay leaders will pray to ask the Holy Spirit to show them what the problems in their lives are, then they will repent so they can be able to serve God effectively. Subsequently, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team will call all the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 375.

trainees to form groups according to their gifts and experiences, such as a praying group for those who have a gift of praying and having their prayers answered; a fishing group for those who are bold in witnessing to nonbelievers; an art group for those who love music, poems, and painting; and a loving care group for those who have experience in consoling the hurt, depressed, or chronically ill.

At the end of Saturday afternoon, the lay leaders will learn how to conduct their first small group meeting. The ConvergeViet Leadership Team will continue to explain to the lay leaders that there are four types of small groups which are mentioned in the outline of small group leaders' training workshop: a nurture group, a support group, an evangelistic group, and a mission group. ConvergeViet local churches will begin by setting up a nurture group. The other types of groups will follow when the need arises. If the local church has many small groups, the structure of small group ministry as follows: First, there is a person in charge of the small group ministry, a coordinator. Second, there is also a small group ministry committee composed of a representative of each type of group (if each type has more than three groups).

The procedure for the first small group meeting is outlined as follows: The meeting starts with a short opening prayer by the small group leader. Next is singing and inspiration, during which the group sings a few songs. Then the leader says a few words of welcome, helping each one to feel a sense of belonging in the group. Next, everyone in the group introduces himself or herself and shares with the group two questions: Why did the person join the small group and what are his or her expectations from joining the group?

The main part of the small group meeting is discussion. The leader may ask one of the group members to read Acts 2:41-47. Then the leader shares with the group about the community life of the early Christians. A devotional time focused on the leader's sharing follows, which lasts for about twenty minutes. Next, the leader presents for discussion a list of topics of future meetings, which was created by the small group ministry committee. The group decides on the time and place of the meeting, and the meeting is adjourned. Not every small group meeting has the same content, but the meeting should begin and close on time. The length of time for the group meeting set by the small group ministry committee is one and one-half hours.

In the Saturday evening training section, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team will present ways to win lost souls for Christ. The first thing the trainees have to do is to befriend those who have problems. As James Kennedy points out, "Every human being is the center of a network of relationships—family, relatives, friends, fellow workers, and neighbors. God desires to use our relationships as bridges to reach those close to us, so that they may be brought into His forever family. Most Christians can trace their spiritual roots to either a relative or a friend. That is because the Gospel is shared by someone the prospect trusts rather than by a stranger."<sup>8</sup>

Thus, the ConvergeViet lay leaders have to pray to ask God to show them creative ways to become involved with unbelieving friends, relatives, and neighbors. The best way to do this is to find a need and meet it. Finding and healing hurts are important because "people around us are like a pendulum, constantly moving back and forth

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<sup>8</sup> James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1996), 20-23.

between times of crisis and calm, responsiveness and resistance. Those who have recently experienced a high degree of change in their lives are generally more receptive to the Gospel.”<sup>9</sup> In Mark 10:8, when Jesus sent His disciples out, He told them, “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.” As Warren observes:

Notice the total emphasis on felt needs and hurts. When you are in pain, either physically or emotionally, you aren’t interested in the meaning of Greek or Hebrew words. You just want to get well. Jesus always ministered to people’s needs and hurts. When a leper came to Jesus, Jesus didn’t launch into a long discourse on the cleansing law of Leviticus. He just healed the man! When He encountered the sick, the demon-possessed, or the disturbed, he dealt with them at their point of pain. He didn’t say, “I’m sorry that doesn’t fit my preaching schedule.”<sup>10</sup>

At the end of the Saturday evening training section, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team will share with the trainees methods of sharing the good news. At the beginning of this training, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team will pray to ask God to show everyone in the room what methods to apply in each special case. At that moment, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team will suggest the four main methods of evangelism described below.

The first evangelism method, “The Four Spiritual Laws” was developed by Campus Crusade for Christ. Consequently, is often fitting when sharing the gospel with students. However, ConvergeViet Ministries believers can use the revised booklet “Four

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>10</sup> Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 198.

Things You Need to Know,”<sup>11</sup> with illustrations to fit the Vietnamese situation.

The second evangelism method is the “Roman Road.”<sup>12</sup> ConvergeViet Ministries believers can use the five verses in Romans to show the hearers their sin status and the way to salvation. The first verse on the “Roman Road” to salvation is Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” The second verse, Romans 6:23a, teaches about the consequences of sin: “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The third verse, Romans 5:8 declares, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Jesus Christ died for us—Jesus’ death paid for the price of our sins. Jesus’ resurrection proves that God accepted Jesus’ death as the payment for our sins.

The fourth verse, Romans 10:9, states that “if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Because of Jesus’ death on our behalf, all we have to do is believe in Him, trusting His death as the payment for our sins—and we will be saved. The fifth verse, Romans 10:13 says it again, “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins and rescue us from eternal death. Salvation, the forgiveness of sins, is available to all who will trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

The third evangelism method is the “Evangelism Explosion” by James Kennedy. This method of evangelism was presented in detail in chapter 5; the trainees can use this

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<sup>11</sup> Bill Bright, “Four Spiritual Laws”(Vietnamese), <http://www.4laws.com/laws/vietnamese/> (accessed August 15, 2012). See Appendix B.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix C.

outline of the gospel presentation.<sup>13</sup> The fourth evangelism method is the “Marketplace Chapter of the FGBMFI (Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International).” The goal of this method is to share the message of Christ in a non-threatening, non-religious setting every week.

In Nicaragua, believers have adapted the FGBMFI pattern to great success. The small group leader opens by welcoming everyone to the fellowship chapter meeting. He or she then extends a special welcome to first-time guests and announces that their meals are paid for to show them appreciation for accepting the invitation. After this, first-time guests are invited to introduce themselves, giving their name, occupation or profession, and name of the one who invited them. When the introductions are finished, members are called on to share the vision or purpose of the fellowship. Announcements are then given (next meeting, next seminar or conference).

At this point, the main speaker is introduced to give a testimony and call people to salvation through prayer. Following the testimony, prayer cards and envelopes are distributed for all attendees to write prayer requests (envelopes for offerings help fund chapter operations), after which the prayer cards and envelopes are collected. People are reminded not to write their names on the envelopes, as the written prayer requests are to be anonymous. After someone prays over the requests, the cards and envelopes are destroyed. Finally, the meeting closes with an invitation for those wanting special prayer to remain afterward.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 1-12.

<sup>14</sup> Dan Sander, *Chapter Strategies from around the World* (Irvine, CA: FGBMFI, 2010), 7.

The most important part of this method is the giving of testimonies. Revelation 12:11 says, “They overcame by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” The FGBMFI small group members’ testimonies are accounts of what has happened to them. For ConvergeViet lay leaders, basic points of an effective testimony are what the lay leader trainee’s life was like before receiving Jesus Christ, how the trainee was introduced to Jesus Christ, why the trainee felt the need to trust his or her life to Jesus Christ, what steps the trainee took to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and how Jesus Christ has changed his or her life for the better. This change includes the role the Holy Spirit plays in the lay leader’s life today, any miraculous things God has done, how the new life with God has impacted relationships (marriages, family, friends, co-workers), and how God has impacted his or her business.

The Saturday ConvergeViet training session will end with a special time for prayer. All of the ConvergeViet lay leaders should pray fervently to ask the Holy Spirit to teach them to know what method to use in evangelizing the lost because each method has its strong points and weak points. Trainees should totally rely on the power and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but they can be flexible in using some part of one method while adding a part of another according to the Holy Spirit’s special guidance in each case. The lay leaders will gather for a worship service on Sunday morning, and on Sunday afternoon, they will go out to witness and bring new people into their own small groups. On Sunday evening, the trainees will have dinner together to celebrate the results of that day.



## **Implementation of Evangelistic Strategies in the Vietnamese Religious Context**

When sharing the gospel with Vietnamese people who live by the standards of Confucianism, ConvergeViet Ministries believers and lay leaders can tell them that it is impossible for people to live up to what Confucius taught. In line with the “Roman Road,” the ConvergeViet believers can bring up what Paul says in Romans 7:18-19: “For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.” After this introduction, the believers can also use the Four Spiritual Laws to explain the gospel to the Confucian hearers.

The Four Spiritual Laws is also a good method for ConvergeViet Ministries believers to use when sharing the gospel with Vietnamese people who worship their ancestors. The ConvergeViet Ministries church members should affirm the strengths of ancestor worship that can be carried over to Christianity. Ancestor worship demonstrates that Vietnamese people are drawn to worshipping God and that they pay honor to their ancestors. Showing respect and gratitude to one’s predecessors is a good attitude to have. However, the church members can point out to the ancestor worshippers that one can only trace one’s ancestors back four to seven generations. In the Bible, however, Luke 3:38 says that “Adam was the son of God.”<sup>15</sup> Adam was the first man that God created

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<sup>15</sup> KJV.

(Gn 1:27). Therefore, if we want to worship our ancestors, the right One to worship is God, who is the Father of all.

When sharing the gospel with the people who believe in Taoism, the ConvergeViet Ministries pastors and believers can tell them that God is the One who created the world and everything in it, including the stars and sun. He knows everything about our lives. If we give our lives to Him to protect and provide for us, we will be safe.

One positive characteristic of Buddhists is their generosity in giving offerings. Wealthy believers sometimes give money to Buddhist temples or build temples themselves, then invite monks or nuns to care for them. The ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team and pastors want to encourage this generous spirit in former Buddhist believers to give abundantly to the kingdom of God.

When the ConvergeViet Ministries pastors and believers share the gospel with Caodai believers, they can emphasize the strong points of Caodai beliefs, such as showing respect to great famous men and having open minds toward other faiths. But in their gospel presentation, the pastors and believers who are sharing their faith should emphasize to the hearer the salvation that Christ offers. For example, my sister is married to a young man whose mother is a Caodai believer. Because of the family relationship she shared with this woman, my mother was able to share the gospel with her. After a long time of communicating, the woman understood her needs, and accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Savior. Now she is a good Christian and brings others to Christ.

## **Introduction of Leadership Development Models to Immigrant Churches in the United States**

Today, all famous Christian leaders across the world's various cultural groups have learned Jesus Christ's model and His biblical principles of leadership well. Authentic leadership must reflect authentic discipleship, and authentic discipleship then produces a regiment of effective leaders united by a teamwork spirit. It is clear that Jesus' vision of His kingdom does not stop at the successful making of a disciple. It passes beyond boundaries to selfless movements. As such, a process for creating leaders is vitally indispensable. McNeal has correctly observed that "leaders who have an appropriate view of self (humility), combined with the capacity to help others (service), don't just show up in the nick of time. They are crafted over time. They practice being great."<sup>16</sup> With perseverance, ConvergeViet churches will not only be able to start practicing greatness, but also be confident in duplicating leaders who are capable of producing great leadership.

There is one thing that will certainly never change—Jesus Christ's model and leadership principles. They stand forever. Nowadays, there are many leadership materials, but the best source of leadership teaching today is God Himself. If immigrant church leaders in the United States want to raise and multiply godly leaders effectively for their ministries, they must study the Bible well, the greatest book on leadership ever written. Biblical principles of leadership are the greatest guideline, as well as the best spiritual map, for ConvergeViet ministries. These biblical leadership lessons and

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<sup>16</sup> Reggie McNeal, *Practicing Greatness* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 6.

principles will also be helpful in improving all immigrant church leaders better in the years to come.

In the context of Vietnamese culture, the coaching model can be used to raise and multiply more godly leaders as well as to develop more servant leaders—people who are equipped to take on more responsibility and share the load. Using the example of parenting, as parents coach their children, the children increasingly take on more responsibility, and the parents no longer need to do everything for them. Wise parents know that in the long run, it is much better to guide children toward independence. Not only will they learn to perform practical tasks for themselves, but they will gain self-confidence. They are empowered when a parent communicates, “You can do it. I’ll be here if you need help, but I don’t need to step in and take over. I believe you can handle it.”

Moving toward independence and empowerment is an essential part of the Christian maturation process. Coaching provides solid, proven principles that can be adapted to fit cross-cultural situations in all ministries. Whenever any Christian people group invests in developing coaching methods for its own people, the leaders’ ministry workload will decrease, and they will have more chances to enlarge God’s kingdom.

In order to help other immigrant churches and people groups from different denominations in the United States to establish plans for training more leaders, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team would like to make contact and partner with them. The purpose would be to share with them ConvergeViet Ministries’ vision and strategies for raising and multiplying godly leaders to advance God’s kingdom. The ConvergeViet

leadership team will eventually be able to establish or host these “Raising and Multiplying Godly Leaders” training seminars for pastors and leaders, both within and outside ConvergeViet Ministries, that they might learn, grow, and fellowship together as one community of Christ’s disciples.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Contemporary Christian leaders across the world have thoroughly studied Jesus Christ's model of authentic leadership and the biblical principles it is based on. Authentic leadership results in authentic discipleship, which then generates a regiment of effective leaders united by a team spirit. Clearly, Jesus' vision of his kingdom does not end with the successful making of a disciple but passes beyond individual parameters to incorporate selfless movements. Consequently, a reliable leader-making process is indispensable in every church.

Raising and multiplying leaders successfully fulfills the Great Commission in Mathew 28:18-20, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." This DMin project has been written as a response to Jesus' command. The seven chapters of this project have been divided into three parts. The first part has dealt with the context of ministry profile of ConvergeViet churches in the United States and the need for greater focus on leadership development for ConvergeViet churches. The second part has addressed theological perspectives of leadership development and multiplication. The third part has presented a strategy for raising and multiplying godly leaders, creating ownership of such a strategy and implementing it in ConvergeViet churches in particular, but with application for any church body.

The following is a summary of the outcomes and insights gained. After serving God for many years, the ConvergeViet Leadership Team recognizes that if believers would like to grow and to have a deeply spiritual life they should follow the following conditions: First, they have to have a personal relationship with Jesus and thus have intimacy with God. If they want to understand the word of God accurately, they need to be filled with the Holy Spirit because He will lead His followers into the truth, as John 14:6 states.

Jesus Christ is that truth. When the believers that recognize Jesus is the source of their faith, both individuals and congregations as a whole will have to depend on God as the branches depend upon the vine, and the congregation should exalt Jesus Christ as the chief leader. (He is the Head of the Church, that is, the head of the body). The spirit of commitment to the lordship of Jesus Christ should proceed from a Christian as an individual to encompass the local church and then the larger organization or denomination. Thus the Body of Christ will grow beautifully.

Second, sometimes people may have problems with the Lord and their brothers and sisters. At that time, ConvergeViet Ministries pastors and lay leaders need to be broken and recognize their own weaknesses before the Lord. After receiving forgiveness, they themselves need to be restored in their spiritual life by believing that God has brought them back to the right position with Him. The Church is the body, sometimes experiencing failures, dryness, and fruitlessness. Then, the congregation's worship and service to the Lord can become formulaic and automatic. In those situations, leaders and church members alike should repent. Repentance is a consciousness of one's sinful status

and need for the Lord's forgiveness, as 2 Chronicles 7:14 states. As the human body sometimes has diseases that need to be healed, so does the church need to be restored to health. As Christians, we should recognize our present spiritual status and desire to have a healthy body and a life that brings more fruit, joy and peace. Then we should pray with all our heart so that God will fulfill His promise that "you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jer 29:13).

Third, the church needs to return its rectified state according to the standard of God. Thus, we believers need to be renewed. From this point, we should hunger for and seek the move of the Holy Spirit in the Church; that is, we need a revival. The problems in the Church will be solved when it is revived. Even if problems arise, when the church is revived, the Holy Spirit will be the leader and will be in control, so these problems can be solved easily. At present, churches at both local and national levels in every country desperately need revival because their spiritual state has become degraded, and they have lost power, grace, love, and holiness. The world now despises the Church, instead of the Church exercising a good influence on the world. Today, with the decline of morality, unbelief has entered the Church.

The problems in society today are found even in the Church. If the Church wants society to be good, the Church should be good first. The Lord wants His children—His servants—to desire a large revival so that the Holy Spirit can wipe out all the dirty things which hinder His power. Instead of trying our best to preach and work, we Christians have to acknowledge our powerless because our efforts are not bringing about the



appropriate result. We must recognize our impotent status and wholeheartedly desire a revival, praying for a visitation of the Holy Spirit to save our Church and the lost world.

Prayer is the secret to achieving revival; thus, we should learn the spirit of praying from the early Church. The early Christians needed and waited for the power of the Holy Spirit. “After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly” (Acts 4:31). By the fullness of the Holy Spirit, Peter brought 3,000 people into the church through one sermon. These people were convicted of their sins, and they asked what they had to do to be saved (Acts 2:37). Then holiness and love sprang up from the revival.

Fourth, the division of the Church into denominations has cut the body of Jesus Christ into many pieces. This situation cannot be continue because, according to Ephesians, “There is one body and one Spirit” (4:4) and “Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior” (5:23). Denominations only develop their own individual kingdoms, which engenders pride. Instead of gathering together to build up the Father’s kingdom, denominations criticize each other. The spirit of God’s kingdom is seldom learned, understood, or practiced in the Church. Today, few seminaries or Bible schools have programs that emphasize studying and teaching specifically about the kingdom, so pastors have little knowledge of this subject. When Jesus Christ was on this earth, most of His teachings emphasized the kingdom of God. Unfortunately, Christians today disregard this message.

In short, if the Church develops a deep awareness of its powerlessness in bringing forth fruit for God and obeys God by calling on Him as Jeremiah 33:3 urges,<sup>17</sup> then surely God will do great things for His people. If any individual, family or church has problems, the ones who are ministering to them should not try to impose a formulaic answer or force a course of action upon them, but listen to their problems and recognize their real grievances so that the ministers and those being ministered to jointly acknowledge their impotence in solving the problems. Then they can humble themselves and ask the Holy Spirit to help them and save them. It is a wonderful thing that when people ask the Holy Spirit to come, their burdens are lifted, joy and peace return, they feel encouraged, and they love each other more and more.

In addition to identifying the characteristics of a deep spiritual life, the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership team has explored next steps, implications, and plans for the future of the Church and its ministry. To carry out what the Holy Spirit has shown us in raising and multiplying leaders, the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team initiates a five-stage process.

In the preparation phase, the members of the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team begin to ask God to remind us of ConvergeViet churches that we are already familiar with where we can assess the spiritual status. We can pray for the members of these churches concretely as we learn about their needs and identify people who seem receptive to our goal of revival. We then ask them to join us in prayer groups as we prepare to introduce the message of revival in the church. We often make contact with

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<sup>17</sup> “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”

pastors in the targeted area, calling them to gather to pray and ask God to reveal the present status of their spiritual lives and the way to address their weaknesses so that the fullness of the Holy Spirit will be restored in their lives. When the pastors respond, their congregations will respond as well. Sometimes the pastor does not respond at first, but if the pastor is the first one who responds, then the congregation will be influenced.

Once the ConvergeViet Leadership Team has laid the groundwork, team members contact the target church directly. We ask the church to set aside a special time for prayer. We share our message, showing them that their faith has become degraded, that they have lost their first love and become lukewarm, and that they have stopped reading the word of God and let the world come into their hearts. Then we make an appointment to come to this church where we stay for at least three days. We often come to places where there are earnest people who love to learn.

After arranging a suitable visitation time, the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team comes to the church. When leadership team arrives, we give strong messages, full of the power of the Holy Spirit. We summon the people with the call in James, “Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (Jas 4:8). Only the Holy Spirit can convict them of their sins so that they will return to God because no one but the Holy Spirit can bring people to the right place that God has designed for them.

Sometimes some churches do not respond to this call or are slow to respond. Sins may hinder the church members from receiving the Holy Spirit’s action. In that case, people with the gift of intercession pray for them and encourage them to repent. When

the prayer team prays earnestly with warm love, the Holy Spirit will help them overcome the obstacles to revival in the church. A revival is like a stove which needs to be fed constantly with chips of wood to keep the fire burning. Prayer, learning the word of God, and witnessing the gospel to others are the secrets to attaining the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

When the revival comes, the Leadership Team will train the church to establish small groups, witness the gospel, follow up with new converts, and teach the Bible. Based on our previous experiences, when we came to various churches—for example in Denver and Sacramento—to preach and pray with them, both we and the congregations received blessings. Not only were the congregations joyful and encouraged, our own spirits were lifted and strengthened in building up these churches. During our short stay, besides training the church people, we encourage them go out and encourage other brothers and sisters in turn. In the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team, those who are anointed by the Holy Spirit to preach are encouraged to create a plan to visit and preach in the newly revived church at least three times a year.

After the revival takes place, the Leadership Team follows up and counsels the leaders by telephone. We cannot stay with the church any longer, so we establish a prayer line and counsel the leaders. In each church, God has already prepared those who have gifts of building up the church and who have a vision for a healthy church. However, these potential leaders need to be further equipped through the lay leadership training program of Converge Worldwide.

In the final phase, the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team trains leaders to multiply more leaders through the local LEAD Team program which emphasizes the four factors of learning together, encouraging one another, achieving together, and dreaming together. The LEAD Team program will meet once every two months to help the pastors or lay leaders to master the methods of sharing burdens together and to unite in fulfilling the aims of the local ConvergeViet church. This program also asks the pastors who attended the training seminar to share their training materials with the lay leaders in their churches so that the lay leaders in turn can help others. As National Director of ConvergeViet Ministries, I join the other pastors in the ConvergeViet Leadership Team in praying that God will help us to carry out this strategy with a spirit of mutual encouragement and burden-sharing.

Introducing the ConvergeViet Leadership Development Model to other immigrant churches in the United States also has implications for the larger Christian community. Jesus Christ's model and leadership principles will never change. If immigrant church leaders in the United States want to raise and multiply godly leaders effectively for their ministries, they must thoroughly study the Bible, the greatest book on leadership ever written. Biblical principles of leadership are the greatest guideline, as well as the best spiritual map for ConvergeViet Ministries, and these biblical leadership lessons and principles will also be helpful in improving the leadership in any immigrant church in the years to come.

In ConvergeViet churches, the coaching model will be used to raise and multiply more godly, servant leaders—people who are equipped to take on more responsibility and share

the load with the pastors. Moving toward independence and empowerment is an essential part of the Christian maturation process. The solid, proven principles that form the basis of coaching are not only applicable in Vietnamese churches, but they can also be adapted to fit cross-cultural situations in all ministries. Developing coaching methods in any ethnic people group ministry will allow the leaders' workload to decrease, and will increase the opportunities to enlarge God's kingdom.

The ConvergeViet Leadership Team would like to partner with other immigrant churches and ethnic people group ministries in the United States to help them in establishing leadership training programs. The Leadership Team can then share with them ConvergeViet Ministries' vision and strategies for raising and multiplying godly leaders to advance God's kingdom. The Leadership Team plans to host training seminars to teach these methods to pastors and lay leaders not only within ConvergeViet Ministries but in outside groups as well. Through these seminars, the church leaders can learn, grow, and fellowship together as one community of Christ's disciples. The following processes will be discussed in the training seminar:

First, the attendees will be taught to clean their "earthen vessels" or spiritual lives. The Bible provides many examples of cleansing one's life, especially in the Old Testament. For example, 2 Chronicles 29 relates the purification of Israel under King Hezekiah. At the beginning of his reign, Hezekiah told the Levites to clean their hearts and sanctify the house of the Lord by removing unclean things from the temple. The priests obeyed the king's words and cleansed the temple. As a result, as 2 Chronicles 30:25 relates, the king, priests, all the people of Judah, and other people rejoiced together.

Learning from this example, the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team can help the pastors and church leaders in the seminar—and thus by extension their congregations—to seek the Lord and cleanse their inner lives. They can bring all their uncleanness to the cross and receive forgiveness from Jesus Christ. Then they will manifest the love of Jesus both to their brothers and sisters in Christ and to non-believers so that they will be drawn to the Lord, following the command in 1 Peter 1:22, “Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.”

After the church leaders cleanse their hearts, the seminar will teach them about prayer. They will attend a prayer meeting in which they will learn how to pray. They will be taught about the power of prayer, the blessings of prayer, how to pray for the sick, and how to cast out demons through prayer. When churches understand the importance of prayer, they will realize that they cannot live without it. Prayer is the key to their success.

Third, church leaders will learn how to establish small groups. In some churches, the pastor presides over everything and falls into depression as a result. To overcome this problem, the church should be divided into small groups. If the church is very small, it can still begin with at least two groups with three to five members each. The purpose of a small group is to provide a place where all the group members know each other well and where they can pray for and encourage each other. Additionally, the small group can provide a warm atmosphere where non-believers can come to receive prayer for their needs. At the same time, the non-believers can also study the Bible and come to Christ.

Thus, the small group can be a place where new Christians are built up, as well as a place where established church members can learn and grow.

Fourth, the attendees will be taught how to train leaders themselves. According to the ConvergeViet strategy, the church leaders will be trained, then they will apply what they have learned in their own ministry contexts. For example, a small group leader can train his or her friend in the group to be a group coordinator. When the group grows rapidly until it exceeds fifteen persons, it should divide into two, and the coordinator will be the leader of the second group.

Fifth, the Coverge Viet Leadership Team will establish coaching relationships and prayer lines with the pastors who are attending the seminar so that all are united in one vision and strategy of enlarging God's kingdom. According to our experience in the past, when we organized the mentoring seminar with Dr. Walling, the attendees from other denominations were very happy to learn new things from him. But afterwards we did not contact or and continue to follow up with them, and their passion faded. Therefore, in organizing the training seminar with other people groups or other denominations we would establish the prayer line, especially with those who are eager to pray, to pray for urgent needs of many people.

The ConvergeViet Ministries and pastors believe that when we are united in praying, God will answer our prayer, and we also believe that "nothing is impossible with God" (Lk 1:37) and we "can do all this through him who give [us] strength" (Phil 4:13). I have been grateful to God for having called me to do this work since I was my mother's womb, and I can say in unison with Paul that "By the grace of God I am what I am, and



his grace to me was not without effect” (1 Cor 15:10a). In the formation of this DMin project, along with me, are the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team and local pastors who have believed in it and are cooperating with me in applying the vision God gave me to raise and multiply leaders to enlarge His kingdom. May the glory be to God, our beloved Father, and to Jesus Christ, who loves us and brought us to the position of His children, and to the Holy Spirit, the “Lord of the harvest [who sends] out workers into his harvest field” (Mt 9:38).

APPENDIX A

**ConvergeViet Church Directory**

	<b>Church Name and City</b>	<b>Pastor's Name</b>	<b>State</b>
1	Hope Baptist, Portland	Rev. Thai Quoc Nguyen	Oregon
2	Faith Baptist, Portland	Rev. Thai Hoang Nguyen	Oregon
3	Vietnamese Church, Oakland	Rev. Nghiem H. Loc	California
4	Sacramento Baptist, Sacramento	Rev. Huong Nguyen	California
5	Reseda Baptist, Reseda	Pastor Phuc Trieu	California
6	Garden Grove Baptist, Garden Grove	Pastor Son Thanh Tran	California
7	San Gabriel Baptist, Rosemead	Mr. Phong Tran (Church Secretary)	California
8	Mighty Grace Baptist, San Diego	Rev. Nhan D. Nguyen	California
9	Houston Baptist, Houston	Rev. Minh C. Nguyen	Texas
10	New Life Baptist, Denver	Pastor Han Tran	Colorado
11	Hope Evangelical, Davenport	Rev. Phu H. Pham	Iowa
12	Faith Community, Chicago	Rev. Phu H. Pham	Illinois
13	Worcester Baptist, Worcester	Rev. Ha T. Canh	Massachusetts
14	Aloha Baptist, Aloha	Rev. Duc M. Huynh	Oregon
15	Jesus Christ Baptist, Portland	Rev. Duc M. Nguyen	Oregon
16	Grace Baptist Church, Portland	Rev. Thach P. Ma	Oregon
17	Vietnamese Baptist, Washington DC	Pastor Nhan Thien Phan	Virginia
18	Mira Mesa Church, San Diego	Pastor The V. Le (New Church Plant)	California

## APPENDIX B

### **Evangelism Methods**

#### Roman Road

A. Evangelist Mathew Gordon uses major verses in Romans to show the way to salvation.<sup>1</sup>

Romans 3:10

“As it is written, ‘There is none righteous, no, not one.’”

Romans 3:23

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 5:8

“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 10:9-14

“<sup>9</sup> That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

<sup>10</sup> For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

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<sup>1</sup>Matthew Gordon, “Matthew Gordon’s Website,” <http://evangelistmatthewgordon.weebly.com/roman-road-to-salvation.html> (accessed July 28, 2012).

B. Dr. David Jeremiah also uses the Roman Road to present the way to salvation:<sup>2</sup>

“Walking Down the ‘Roman Road’ to Salvation . . .”

- Because of our sin, we are separated from God.  
“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23).
- The penalty for our sin is death.  
“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6:23).
- The penalty for our sin was paid by Jesus Christ!  
“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8).
- If we repent of our sin, then confess and trust Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we will be saved from our sin.  
“For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom 10:13).  
“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom 10:9,10).

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. David Jeremiah Broadcast Ministry, “Turning Point,” [http://www.davidjeremiah.org/site/about/becoming\\_a\\_christian.aspx](http://www.davidjeremiah.org/site/about/becoming_a_christian.aspx) (accessed July 28 , 2012).

The Four Spiritual Laws  
by Bill Bright  
(in Vietnamese with Illustrations<sup>3</sup>)

God made the sun, moon, stars and the earth. God made the animals, the trees, mountains, fish, birds and all the living creatures. God made man, loved him, and gave him everything he needed to have a happy life. Man disobeyed God and did what he wanted to do instead of what God wanted him to do.

After man went away from God, he forgot God and began to worship things like stones, trees and evil spirits. Also, without God's help, man had to work very hard to earn his living.

**LAW ONE:  
GOD'S LOVE**

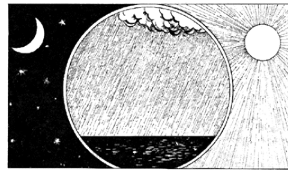
*"God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son (Jesus Christ) that everyone who believes in Him should not die but have eternal life."* John 3:16

**GOD'S PLAN**

Jesus said, *"I came that you can have life, life in all its fullness"* (the best kind of life).

John 10:10

Why is it that most people are not living this full, best life?



Đức Chúa Trời đã dựng nên mặt trời, mặt trăng, các ngôi sao và quả đất.



Đức Chúa Trời đã dựng nên các thú vật, cây cối, núi đồi, cá, chim và mọi sinh vật khác.



Đức Chúa Trời cũng đã dựng nên loài người. Đức Chúa Trời yêu cầu loài người và ban cho họ mọi điều cần thiết để họ sống một cuộc đời vui tươi.



Thế nhưng loài người đã không vâng lời Đức Chúa Trời. Thay vào đó, họ đã quay lưng và đi theo ý muốn riêng, không chịu làm theo điều Đức Chúa Trời truyền dạy.



Loài người đã phải làm việc vất vả để sống còn. Không có sự giúp đỡ của Chúa, loài người thường xuyên đối diện với sự thất vọng, buồn chán.



Tình thương của Đức Chúa Trời

"Vì Đức Chúa Trời yêu thương thế gian, đến nỗi đã ban Con Một của Ngài, hầu cho hễ ai tin Con ấy không bị hư mất mà được sự sống đời đời"  
Giăng 3 : 16

<sup>3</sup> Bill Bright, "The Four Spiritual Laws," <http://www.fourspiritualaws.com/laws/vietnamese/14.html> (accessed August 12, 2012).

BECAUSE...

## LAW TWO

But God still loved man and sent His messengers to tell them the good news of His love and forgiveness.

### Do you know the four things God wants you to know?

1. God *LOVES* you and offers a wonderful *PLAN* for your life.

2. Man is *SINFUL*. He does things that are wrong and this keeps him a long way from God. He cannot know and enjoy God's love and plan for his life.

### MAN IS SINFUL

"All men have sinned." (They are not living the way God wants them to live.) *Romans 3:23*

Man was created to be the friend of God, but because he wanted to please himself, man chose to go his own way without God. His friendship with God was spoiled. This going our own way means doing things that God does not want us to do or taking no interest in God. This is what the Bible calls sin.

### MAN IS KEPT A LONG WAY FROM GOD.

"The payment for sin is death." *Romans 6:23*. This death is more than just our body dying—it means spiritual death—being kept a long way from God and not having any friendship with Him. God is holy and good while man is sinful. The difference between God and man is so great it is like



#### Kế hoạch của Đức Chúa Trời

Chúa Cứu Thế Giêsu đã phán : "Ta đã đến để cho nhân loại được sự sống và được sự sống dư dật" (nghĩa là được sự sống sung mãn và đầy ý nghĩa).

Giăng 10 : 10b

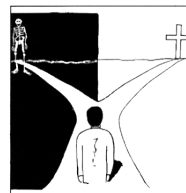
Tại sao nhiều người vẫn chưa kinh nghiệm được sự sống dư dật, sung mãn ?



#### Loài người tội lỗi

Mọi người đều đã phạm tội (Họ không vâng theo ý muốn của Đức Chúa Trời).

Roma 3 : 23a



Loài người được dựng nên để tương giao với Đức Chúa Trời. Nhưng vì sự không vâng lời, loài người đã chọn con đường theo ý riêng và sự tương giao với Đức Chúa Trời đã bị đổ vỡ. Sự không vâng lời này được Kinh Thánh gọi là tội lỗi.



#### Loài người bị phân cách với Đức Chúa Trời

Tiền công của tội lỗi là sự chết. *Roma 6 : 23*

Sự chết này không chỉ bao gồm sự chết thuộc thể (thân xác) nhưng cũng bao gồm cả sự chết thuộc linh nghĩa là tâm linh con người bị phân cách với Đức Chúa Trời.

a great, deep valley keeping them a long way from each other. Man is always trying to reach God and find the full, best life by doing things himself, such as trying to be good, obeying the laws of the land and being kind to others. But man can never reach God by his own effort.

### HE DIED IN OUR PLACE

*“But God has shown how much He loves us; it was while we were still sinners that Jesus Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8*

On the cross He took the punishment for our sins.

### HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD

*“Jesus Christ died for our sins.... He was buried....He was raised to life on the third day just as He told His followers He would be....He appeared to Peter and then to all the twelve disciples. Then He appeared to more than five hundred of His followers at one time.” I Corinthians 15:3-6*

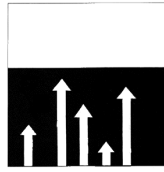
*3. Jesus Christ is the ONLY way God has given for man to get rid of his sin. Through Him you can know and enjoy God’s love and plan for your life.*

### HE IS THE ONLY WAY

*Jesus Christ said: “I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Life. No man goes to God except by me.” John 14:6*

God put a bridge over the great

Đức Chúa Trời là Đấng Thánh khiết trong khi loài người thì tội lỗi. Vì thế, một vực sâu thâm thẳm phân cách loài người với Đức Chúa Trời. Loài người luôn luôn cố gắng để vượt lên cung Đức Chúa Trời và sự sống ở đất qua những nỗ lực riêng như vâng theo luật pháp và làm lành cho người khác. Nhưng điều đó không đủ.



Sau khi từ bỏ Đức Chúa Trời, loài người đã quên mất Đức Chúa Trời và bắt đầu thờ lạy những hình tượng như đá, cây, các tà linh và những vật khác.

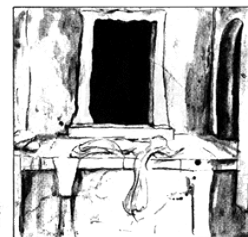


Chúa Giêsu đã chết cho chúng ta. Trong khi chúng ta còn là người có tội, thì Đấng Cứu Thế vì chúng ta chịu chết. Đây là tình yêu Đức Chúa Trời bày tỏ tình yêu của Ngài cho chúng ta.



Chúa Giêsu Cơ Đốc đã chịu chết trên thập tự giá để gánh chịu hình phạt thế cho chúng ta.  
**Chúa Giêsu đã sống lại từ kẻ chết**  
 Chúa Cơ Đốc đã chịu chết vì tội chúng ta...  
 Ngài đã được chôn...

Đến ngày thứ ba Ngài đã từ kẻ chết sống lại theo như lời Ngài đã báo trước với các môn đồ của Ngài...



deep valley that keeps us away from Him when He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place.

It is not enough to know these three things...

*4. We must ACCEPT Jesus Christ as our own personal Savior and Lord. Then we can know and enjoy God's love and plan for our lives.*

### **WE MUST ACCEPT JESUS CHRIST**

*"Some however did accept Him; so He gave them the right to become God's children." John 1:12*

### **WE ACCEPT JESUS CHRIST THROUGH FAITH**

*"It is by God's grace that you have been saved, through faith (that is, trusting Him). It is not through your own effort. It is God's gift." Ephesians 2:8*

### **WE ACCEPT JESUS CHRIST BY PERSONAL INVITATION**

*Jesus Christ said, "Listen, I stand at the door (of your life) and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him (your life)." Revelations 3:20*

To accept Jesus Christ means to choose to go God's way instead of our own way, to trust Christ to come into our lives, to forgive our sins and make us what He wants us to be. It is not enough to agree in our minds that what God wants is true or to have special feelings of being happy or sad when we think about these things.

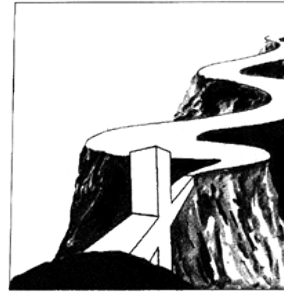
#### **Chúa Giê-xu là con đường duy nhất**

Chúa Cứu Thế Giê-xu đáp rằng: "Ta là Đường đi, Chân lý và Sự sống. Chẳng bởi Ta thì không ai được đến cùng Cha"

Giăng 14 : 6

Đức Chúa Trời đã bắt một nhịp cầu xuyên qua vực sâu phân cách chúng ta với Ngài bằng cách sai Con Ngài là Chúa Cứu Thế Giê-xu, chịu chết trên thập tự giá thế tội cho chúng ta.

*Biết được ba điều này vẫn chưa đủ...*



#### **Chúng ta phải tiếp nhận Chúa Giê-xu Cơ Đốc**

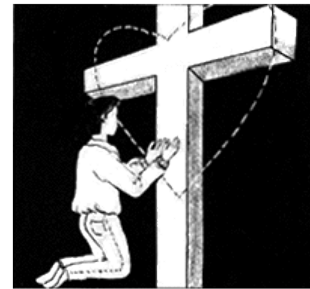
Hễ ai đã tin nhận Ngài thì Ngài ban cho quyền phép trở nên con cái Đức Chúa Trời.

Giăng 1 : 12

#### **Chúng ta tiếp nhận Chúa bằng đức tin**

Chúng ta được cứu nhờ ân phúc Đức Chúa Trời do đức tin nơi Chúa Cứu Thế Giê-xu. Sự cứu rỗi là tặng phẩm của Đức Chúa Trời chứ không do chúng ta tự tạo, không phải là kết quả của công đức chúng ta.

Ephêsô 2 : 8



#### **Chúng ta tiếp nhận Chúa bằng cách đích thân mời Ngài ngự vào lòng**

Chúa Cứu Thế phán "Này ta đứng ngoài cửa (của đời sống bạn) mà gõ. Nếu ai nghe tiếng Ta và mở cửa cho, thì Ta sẽ vào cùng người ấy..."

Khải Huyền 3 : 20

Tiếp nhận Chúa có nghĩa là chọn làm theo ý muốn Chúa chứ không theo ý riêng mình, tin cậy Chúa Giê-xu sẽ ngự vào đời sống chúng ta để tha tội chúng ta và khiến chúng ta trở nên con người Chúa muốn. Chỉ lấy đầu óc lý trí cho rằng những gì Đức Chúa Trời phán là thật thì vẫn chưa đủ. Hoặc có một kinh nghiệm cảm xúc cũng vẫn chưa đủ.





**THESE TWO CIRCLES  
SHOW TWO KINDS OF  
LIVES: SELF OR ME IN  
CONTROL**

I am the boss; I do the things I want to do; Christ is outside my life.

**CHRIST IS IN CONTROL**

Christ is the boss; I do what He wants me to do; I have a life that is satisfying; I am a friend of God.  
**Which kind of life do you have now?**

**Which kind of life do you want to have?**

**YOU CAN ACCEPT CHRIST  
RIGHTNOW THROUGH A  
PRAYER OF FAITH.**

(Prayer is talking with God.)

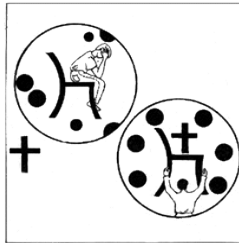
God knows what you want to say and if you truly mean it. This is the prayer you can use:  
“Lord Jesus, I need you. I open the door of my life and accept you as my Savior and Lord. Thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of my life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be. Amen.”

**Is this prayer what you would like to say to God? If it is, would you like to pray this prayer right now?**

**DID YOU ASK CHRIST INTO  
YOUR LIFE?**

If you did, these things happened to you:

1. Christ came into your life (Rev 3:30, Col 1:27).
2. Your sins were forgiven (Col 1:14).
3. You became a child of God (Jn



Hai vòng tròn này bày tỏ hai hạng đời sống

Đời sống do Bản Ngã làm chủ

Tôi tự làm chủ đời tôi.  
Tôi làm những gì tôi thích  
Chúa Giê-xu ở bên ngoài đời sống tôi.  
Đời sống do Chúa Cứu Thế làm chủ

Đấng Cứu Thế làm chủ đời tôi.  
Tôi làm theo những gì Chúa dạy.  
Tôi trở thành người bạn của Chúa.

Hiện giờ vòng tròn nào đang tượng trưng cho đời sống bạn ?  
Bạn muốn vòng tròn nào tượng trưng cho đời sống bạn ?

Sau đây là cách hướng dẫn bạn tiếp nhận Chúa ngự vào đời sống của bạn.

**Bạn có thể lấy đức tin tiếp nhận Chúa Cứu thế ngay bây giờ bằng sự cầu nguyện**

(Cầu nguyện là hầu chuyện với Đức Chúa Trời).



Đức Chúa Trời biết rõ lòng bạn. Nếu bạn thành thật mong muốn,

Sau đây là lời cầu nguyện đề nghị bạn có thể dùng :

Kính lạy Chúa Giê-xu,  
con cần đến Ngài. Con xin mở cửa đời sống con và tiếp nhận Ngài làm Cứu Chúa và Chúa của con.  
Con tạ ơn Chúa vì Ngài đã chịu chết trên thập tự giá để đền tội cho con và ban cho con sự sống đời đời. Xin hãy khiến con trở nên con người Chúa muốn.  
Amen.

Lời cầu nguyện trên đây có bày tỏ nguyện vọng của lòng bạn không ?

Nếu có, ngay bây giờ xin bạn hãy lặp lại lời cầu nguyện này.

- 1:12).
4. You have eternal life (Jn 5:24).
  5. You began the new life for which God made you (Jn 10:10).

**NOW YOU SHOULD:**

Go to a church where Jesus Christ is truly worshipped and where God's word (the Bible) is taught. Read God's word daily or find someone who will read it to you.

Bạn đã cầu xin Chúa Cứu Thế ngự vào đời sống của bạn chưa? Nếu có rồi, thì sau đây là những việc đã xảy ra cho bạn:

1. Đấng Cứu Thế đã ngự vào đời sống bạn. (Khải Huyền 3 : 20 ; Cô-lô-sê 1 : 27)
2. Tội lỗi của bạn đã được tha (Cô-lô-sê 1 : 14)
3. Bạn đã trở nên con cái của Đức Chúa Trời (Giăng 1 : 12)
4. Bạn đang có sự sống đời đời (Giăng 5 : 24)
5. Bạn đã bắt đầu một đời sống mới theo như kế hoạch của Đức Chúa Trời (Giăng 10 : 10)



Bây giờ, bạn phải:

- Tham dự nhóm họp tại một nhà thờ gần nhà bạn là nơi Danh Chúa Giê-xu Cơ Đốc được tôn vinh và Lời của Đức Chúa Trời (Kinh Thánh) được rao giảng.
- Đọc Kinh Thánh hằng ngày hoặc nhờ người khác đọc cho bạn nghe.



## Evangelism Explosion

### Original Outline of the Gospel Presentation<sup>4</sup>

- I. THE INTRODUCTION
  - A. Their secular life
  - B. Their church background
  - C. Our church (their impression)
  - D. Testimony, church and/or personal
  - E. Two diagnostic questions:
    - 1. Have you come to a place in your spiritual life where you know for certain that if you were to die today you would go to heaven, or is that something you would say you're still working on?
    - 2. Suppose that you were to die today and stand before God and He were to say to you, "Why should I let you into my heaven?" What would you say?
- II. THE GOSPEL
  - A. Grace
    - 1. Heaven is a free gift
    - 2. It is not earned or deserved
  - B. Man
    - 1. Is a sinner
    - 2. Cannot save himself
  - C. God
    - 1. Is merciful—therefore doesn't want to punish us
    - 2. Is just – therefore must punish sin
  - D. Christ
    - 1. Who He is—the infinite God-Man
    - 2. What He did—He died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay the penalty for our sins and to purchase a place in heaven for us, which He offers as a gift.
  - E. Faith
    - 1. What it is not—mere intellectual assent or mere temporal faith
    - 2. What it is—trusting in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life.
- III. THE COMMITMENT
  - A. Transition: "Does this make sense to you?"
  - B. Commitment: "Would you like to receive the gift of eternal life?"
  - C. Clarification: "Let me clarify it..."
  - D. Prayer
  - E. Assurance

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<sup>4</sup> Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 31-32.

#### IV. THE IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-UP

A. *Partners in Growing* booklet

B. The means of growth

1. Bible

2. Prayer

3. Worship

4. Fellowship

5. Witness

C. Appointment for church.

## Outline of the Gospel Presentation as a Vietnamese Poem

*Dan bai gom co bon phan  
Moi phan giang giai can phan ro rang*

*Thu nhat la phan MO DANG  
Hoi tham suc khoe, ban dang lam gi?  
Khong can phai hoi chi li,  
Di vao chi tiet, co khi mat gio.  
Ke den hoi tham niem tin  
Do xem nguoi ban tam linh the nao.  
Noi qua on phuoc doi dao  
Ma Chua tuon do tran vao nam nay.  
Xin phep hoi ban mot cau:  
"Doi sau ban se noi dau di ve,  
Ban da biet chac moi be,  
Hay ban tim hieu van de ngay sau?"  
Toi tin noi o doi doi,  
Thien Chua sam san cho nguoi Ngai yeu (1  
John 5:13)*

*Xin phep hoi cau thu hai,  
"Neu Chua dua ban den noi cua Ngai,  
Rang, 'Sao con duoc vao day',  
Thi ban se dap duoc ngay khong nao?"  
Theo nhu ban da trinh bay  
Toi xin loan bao tin vui nhat doi.*

*Phan Hai noi ve TIN VUI  
Thien dang qua tang Chua Troi ban cho  
(Romans 6:23b)  
Chang phai cong duc, au lo  
Ngay ngay, thang thang, luyen tu suot doi  
(Ephesians 2:8,9)  
Tai sao nguoi chang duoc vao?  
Chi vi toi loi, Troi-nguoi cach ngan  
Moi ngay chi ba toi thoi  
Mot nam da pham ca ngan toi du  
Con Chua la Dang xot thuong  
Chang muon nguoi phai vao duong hu  
vong  
Nhưng Ngai la Đàng công bình  
Nghiêm túc xét xử tội tình thang tay  
(Exodus 34:7b)*

The outline is composed of four parts,  
Each part has its own clear explanation.

The first is the INTRODUCTION  
Asking about health, daily life, and  
work...  
But not in detail,  
Because it will take a lot of time.  
Next, talk about belief,  
To investigate the person's spiritual life.  
Then talk about the blessings  
That God has just given in this year.  
After this, ask for permission to ask a  
personal question:  
"Where will you go in next life?  
Do you know for sure or are you still  
looking for the answer?"  
As for me, I believe in God who prepares  
everlasting life for me ( 1 Jn 5:13).  
Allow me to ask you the second question:  
"Suppose that God allows you to go to  
heaven,  
Then He asks you, 'Why are you here?'  
What will you tell Him right away?"  
Depending on what you say,  
I would like to tell you very good tidings

The second part is the GOOD NEWS.  
Heaven is a gift that God gives to  
mankind (Rom 6:23b).  
We need not use our own efforts  
Or do good works day and night  
(Eph 2:8, 9).  
But why can man not enter?  
Because of sin, God and man are  
separated.  
If you commit three sins a day,  
In one year, you will commit more than a  
thousand sins.  
But God loves you so much that  
He doesn't want anyone to go to eternal  
death.  
However, He is a just God,  
"He does not leave the guilty unpunished"  
(Ex 34:7b).

*Tinh thuong Ngai tinh sao day  
Sai con Mot xuong, lam nguoi tran gian  
(John 1:1,14)  
Toi ac nhan the Ngai mang (Isaiah 53:6)  
Tren thap tu gia kho hinh don dau  
Con nguoi hay chay den mau  
Nhin nhan Dang da chet thay cho minh.  
Tin bang ly tri: chang tin  
Vi ma qui cung tin noi Chua Troi (James  
2:19)  
Tin that: pho thac ai oi  
Giao toi cho Chua, de minh tay khong.*

*Phan Ba: TIN CHUA TAI SINH  
An nan nhìn nhận tội mình gay ra  
Cau xin on Chua thu tha ,  
Chan thanh tiep ruoc Gie-su vao long  
(Revelation 3:20)  
Tu nay cuoc song thong dong,  
Chac chan duoc cuu, lam con của Ngai  
Biet ro minh song doi doi  
Tuong lai bao dam tren troi voi Cha.*

*Phan Bon la CHAM SOC NGAY  
Hoan nghen ban den cung Ngai hom nay.  
Chung ta anh em voi nhau.  
Cung ky vao giay, nho ngay khai sinh  
Nam buoc tang truong thuoc linh:  
Cau nguyen, suy gam loi Kinh hang ngay  
Chua nhat tap hop tai day  
Cung tho phuong Chua, suot ngay hoan ca.  
Ke den ban hay noi ra  
An dien Chua cuu, thu tha toi tinh  
Cho moi nguoi trong gia dinh  
Ban be, hang xom của mình gan xa.  
De ho cung vao nha Cha,  
Cung nhau huong phuc chan hoa niem  
vui.*

Pastor Tuyet Kieu

How can He solve this problem?  
He solved it in the person of Jesus Christ,  
Who came to this world to become a man  
(Jn 1:1, 14).  
Jesus came to bear the sins of the world  
(Is53:6)  
On His body on the cross.  
Let man hurry to Him  
To recognize the One who died for his  
sins.  
Faith is not merely intellectual assent (Jas  
2:19);  
True faith is trusting Jesus Christ alone.  
Give your sins to Jesus Christ, and your  
hands will be emptied

The third part: COMMITMENT TO  
JESUS, BORN AGAIN  
When you repent of your sins,  
You pray to ask Jesus to forgive your sin.  
Invite Him to come your heart (Rev 3:20);  
You will be free from sin.  
From now on, you can know for sure that  
you are saved, and you are a child of God.  
You know that you have eternal life  
To live with God forever.

The fourth part is FOLLOWING UP right  
away.  
We welcome you to come to Jesus;  
We are brothers and sisters.  
Please sign your name on this spiritual  
birth certificate,  
And you will learn five steps to help you  
spiritually:  
Pray, read and ponder the Word of God,  
Worship God in the church, fellowship  
with Other Christians and share your  
testimony  
With your friends, relatives and neighbors  
So that they will go with you to God's  
house  
To enjoy everlasting life.

## APPENDIX C

### SHAPE Questionnaire

The following is a summary of Pastor Rick Warren's SHAPE model for identifying spiritual gifts in his book *The Purpose Driven Life*. This is a general questionnaire to help church leaders identify special gifts and talents of a new disciple. However, each person has to ask God to lead him or her to make a personal decision to join a ministry in the church.

#### Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor 12; Rom 8; Eph 4).

Read carefully the following Scriptures and identify the spiritual gifts you have.

##### A. 1 Corinthians 12: 8-10

1. The message of wisdom
2. The message of knowledge
3. Faith
4. Gifts of healing
5. Miraculous powers
6. Prophecy
7. Distinguishing between spirits
8. Speaking in different kinds of tongues
9. The interpretation of tongues

##### B. Romans 12:6-8

1. "If it is a prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith."
2. "If it is serving, let him serve."
3. "If it is teaching, let him teach."
4. "If it is encouraging, let him encourage."
5. "If it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously."
6. "If it is leadership, let him govern diligently."
7. "If it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."

##### C. Ephesians 4: 11

1. Apostles
2. Prophets
3. Evangelists
4. Pastors and teachers

## Heart

“The Bible uses the term heart to represent the center of your motivation, desires, interests, and inclinations. Your heart determines why you say the things you do.”<sup>5</sup>

1. Does what you say reflect what is in your heart? (Mt 12:34: “For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.”)
2. Why do you feel the way you do? (Ps 37:4: “Delight yourself in the LORD and He will give you the desires of your heart.”)
3. Why do you act the way you do? (Prv 4:23: “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”)
4. What is your motive in serving God? (1 Sm 12:20: “‘Do not be afraid,’ Samuel replied. ‘You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart.’”)

## Abilities

“Abilities are the natural talents that you were born with. Some people have a natural ability with words. . . . Some people are naturally good with numbers: They think mathematically and can’t understand why you don’t understand calculus!”<sup>6</sup>

1. What are the areas in which you have natural talents?  
(Ex 31:2-5: “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship.”)
2. What career do you like best?  
(Dt 8:18: “But remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms His covenant, which He swore to your forefathers, as it is today.”)
3. What hobby do you like?  
(1 Cor 12:5: “There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.”) Some examples are decorating, planning, entertaining, repairing, drawing, even cooking.

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<sup>5</sup> Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, 237.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.



## Personality

“It’s obvious that God does not use a cookie cutter to create people. He loves variety. He made introverts and extroverts. He made people who love routine and those who love variety. He made some people ‘thinkers’ and others ‘feelers.’ He made people who work best when given an individual assignment, and some who work better with a team.”<sup>7</sup>

1. Are you an introvert? (To look within; to introspect.)
2. Are you an extrovert? (A person who is extroverted; a person who is marked by an interest in others or concerned primarily with external reality. Contrasted with introvert.)
3. Are you thinker? (One who thinks; especially and chiefly, one who thinks in a particular manner; as a close thinker; a deep thinker; a coherent thinker.)
4. Are you feeler? (One who feels.)
5. Do you work best when on individual assignment?
6. Do you work better with a team?

## Experiences

“God never wastes an experience. Roman 8:28 reminds us, ‘We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.’”<sup>8</sup>

According to Pastor Warren, Saddleback Church helps people consider five areas of experience that will influence the kind of ministry they are best shaped for.

1. Educational experiences: What were your favorite subjects in school?
2. Vocational experiences: What jobs have you enjoyed and achieved results in while you are working?
3. Spiritual experiences: What have been the meaningful or decisive times with God in your life?

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 246.

4. Ministry experiences: How have you served God in the past?
5. Painful experiences: What problems, hurts and trials have you learnt from?

## APPENDIX D

### **SWOT Matrix**

The Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) Matrix is an important matching tool that helps managers develop four types of strategies. SWOT was developed by Fred R. David in *Strategic Management, Concepts and Cases*.

1. SO (Strengths-Opportunities) Strategies  
SO Strategies use a firm internal strengths to take advantage of external opportunities.
2. WO (Weaknesses-Opportunities) Strategies  
WO Strategies aim at improving internal weaknesses by taking advantage of external opportunities.
3. ST (Strengths-Threats) Strategies  
ST Strategies use a firm strengths to avoid or reduce the impact of external threats.
4. WT (Weaknesses-Threats) Strategies  
WT Strategies are defensive tactics directed at reducing internal weakness and avoiding external threats.

## APPENDIX E

### Questions for “Six Steps to Effective Coaching”<sup>9</sup>

#### Step One: Relating

1. How is [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team] doing right now?
2. Where is [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team] now?
3. How can prayer partners pray for [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team]?
4. What does [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team] want to address?
5. How can [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team] work together?

#### Step Two: Reflecting

1. What can [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team] celebrate?
2. What is the really important thing for [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team] right now?
3. What obstacles are [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team] facing?
4. Where does [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team] want to go?
5. How committed is [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team]?

#### Step Three: Refocusing

1. What does [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team] want to accomplish?
2. What are possible ways to get there?
3. Which path will [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team] choose?

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<sup>9</sup> All questions are adapted from Logan and Carlton, *Coaching 101*, 119.

4. What will [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team] do?
5. How will [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team] measure its progress?

#### Step Four: Using Resources

1. What resources will [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team] need to accomplish its goals (for example, people, finances, and knowledge)?
2. What resources do [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team] already have?
3. What resources are missing in [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team]?
4. Where will [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team] find the resources they need?
5. What can others [Vietnamese pastors and lay Christians] do to support [the ConvergeViet Ministries Leadership Team]?

## APPENDIX F

### **Coaching Guidelines<sup>10</sup>**

1. Establish clear expectations to maintain a healthy coaching relationship.
2. Hold regularly scheduled meetings to ensure accomplishing whatever needs to be done.
3. Regarding the meetings, boundaries need to be clarified: when [the ConvergeViet Leadership Team and church leaders] will meet, where, for how long, and what they will do during those meetings.
4. Accountability is essential to the coaching relationship. Coaching is most effective when specific measurable goals are set.
5. Maintain confidentiality. The specifics of confidentiality should be clarified at the beginning of the coaching relationship.
6. Define roles. As the ConvergeViet Leadership Team works to set realistic expectations for a coaching relationship, it must be remembered that the person being coached does the work. If people do not do the work themselves, they will not learn; if a ConvergeViet pastor or lay leader always has someone there to supply all the answers, the team members will never learn and improve.
7. Use online coaching tools. When the ConvergeViet Leadership Team members use online coaching tools to prepare in advance, they know they are dealing with the issues that are the most significant to those they are coaching.
8. Manage conflict. Coaching relationships are made up of people, and people will have conflicts. To remain effective and focused, the coaching relationship must be kept free of life encumbrances.

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<sup>10</sup> Guidelines are adapted from Logan and Carlton, *Coaching 101*, pp. 95-109.

## APPENDIX G

### **ConvergeViet Leadership Assessment Questions<sup>11</sup>**

1. What are the greatest strengths in [the Vietnamese Christian leader's] life? (Name at least three.)
2. In what areas has [the ConvergeViet leader] been most productive?
3. What skill or talent makes [the ConvergeViet leader] unique in his or her ability to achieve success, either personally or professionally?
4. What are [the ConvergeViet leader's] greatest weaknesses? (Name three.)
5. Could those weaknesses derail [the ConvergeViet leader's] career or personal life?
6. What one piece of advice would be helpful for [the ConvergeViet leader] to achieve [his or her ownership of raising and multiplying godly leaders]?

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<sup>11</sup> Questions are adapted from Maxwell, *My Dream Map*, 52.

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