

What will bring Health and Balance to Groups in 2001?

These past three years we have been trying to implement the strategy of the overall church into the small group structure. Its most simplistic form has been to develop the Leader, Apprentice and five purpose champions; one from each base that would give a voice to that purpose in the small group. This would be a leadership engine for the decentralized church and a factory for people development. We have found that this model is better caught than taught, through life on life community.

It is because we believe that the five Biblical purposes driven into the small group have a natural by-product that helps the individuals of the group apply the purposes into their own personal lives (bringing health and balance to both them and the small group), that our strategy is as such.... to lower the span or care of small groups in order to build health and balance in the group and individual attendees.

Why are we pursuing this strategy?...

Basically for two reasons. First, it is where the church is going. As Rick has stated, the church must decentralize in this next era for our church to be effective. Secondly, we have found that when this model is fully implemented, it is self-sustaining. It produces people who are connected in relationships, growing in maturity applying the fundamental truths in C.L.A.S.S. 201, discovering where they should serve the church, sharing their faith in their community or outside communities and surrendering their lives through the model of true worship.

How would we propose to do it?...

Through the building of an infrastructure that not only communicates a reasonable span of care, but also through the modeling of leadership that is developing the people that are under their care by being proactive in making sure the purposes are deep within their heart.

We have found that a fulltime person can care for 100 groups (1000+ people) or that a part-time (10 hours a week) person can care for 25 groups (250+ people). If you do the math in a fully orbbed system, a fulltime person would be an investment around \$85,000 a year (with all benefits). If this person fully developed his families (figuring 500 families at a tithe of \$6,200 a year—being that the aggregate income in South Orange County is \$62,000 a year per family) the total tithe would be 3.1 million dollars. Figuring only a 10% success rate, the return would still be \$310,000 a year (a greater than 3x the investment made). If you figure hiring part-time people, the numbers would be a \$12,500 investment and the 10% success rate would be \$77,500 (6x the investment made). Putting finances aside, the spiritual growth in all five Biblical purposes would still be worth the investment.

What are the benefits?...

- ◆ Leaders are developed from the grass roots
- ◆ The call to decentralize is truly modeled
- ◆ Groups deepen the five Biblical purposes
- ◆ Individuals deepen the five Biblical purposes
- ◆ The tithe is brought into the storehouse
- ◆ Community is brought to a new authentic level
- ◆ The Master Teacher vision can be brought into groups bottom up
- ◆ Thousands will be able to DO their S.H.A.P.E. from the urging of their group members
- ◆ Evangelism will be through the group via the open chair and tracking will be more effective
- ◆ Mobilization will move in unison
- ◆ Baby steps will be available to the audience to show them their path to the army

Where are we at now?...

A peek at our current tally of the sheep shows a lot. Right now we have 506 groups with this break down:

Three year Totals Year End 2000			
Groups	Started	Disbanded	Continuing
Couples	502	185	317
Men	66	19	47
Singles	85	24	61
Women	90	13	77
Young at Heart	4	0	4
Totals	747*	241	506

*At the start of January 1998 we identified 272 existing groups, please see table 1, figure d, for a complete detail. Although much can be brought out from this data, for the sake of this document we will be focusing on the groups we have to date.

Taking each major affinity at a time and comparing it to our proposed staffing above here is what you have:

Affinity	Current Groups	Groups cared for	Groups needing Care	20% growth	Total need	Fulltime gap
Couples	317	200	117	64	181	1.8
Singles	61	61	0	12	12	.1
Men's	47	47	0	10	10	.1
Women's	77	50	27	42	42	.4
Totals	506	358	144	101	245	2.4

Figuring no growth, 144 groups would have no care. Figuring just 20% growth, you can add another 101 groups that would need care. Our goal for the year 2001 is 50% growth, which would be an additional 253 groups that would need care.

What would close the gap?...

Although you can do the math in many ways, figuring no growth and wanting to take the groups deeper in the five Biblical purposes, we would minimally need.... To hire a part-time additional women's Division Leader and either one full-time couples Area Leader and one part-time couples Divisional Leaders OR five part-time Couples Division Leaders. More likely than not, 20% growth is a reasonable estimate and with that an additional hire of four part-time Division Leaders OR one Area Leader would meet the need.

Another thought would be to do no hires and use existing staff to meet the needs. The only concern would be to make sure their S.H.A.P.E. fits the call. Still another thought would be to use volunteers. Again a great vision, it just happens a lot slower. Given what we have, we still need to raise 35 couples Coaches, 8 singles Coaches, 6 Men's Coaches and 15 women's Coaches—all of which will be volunteers. Also considering that 241 groups in the last three years have disbanded with no follow up on the leader or members because of a poor span of care is disheartening.

Minimum Need:

- 1 additional part-time Women's Division Leader
- 1 additional full-time Couples Area Leader
- 1 additional part-time Couples Division Leader

Needed for 20% Growth:

- 4 additional part-time Division Leaders

Care for the flock of God entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. 1 Peter 5:2 (NLT)