negative models

for many of us, the real problem when it comes to being a trainer is that we were never a trainee! We are trying hard to do unto others what wasn’t done to us!

The ministry training culture that is increasingly part of the landscape in evangelical churches today has really only become so in recent years. It is not yet a second generation movement. This means many of those being asked to cut it as trainers never quite had the trainee stage. That makes it hard.

At this point, however, there are a number of things that can help. Peer relationships with others in the same ministry context are critical (a bit more on this later). Hopefully papers like this can prompt ideas. There are a variety of training networks around that are worth plugging into. And in any case, there’s something to be said for the power of negative modeling.

It is possible to work backwards from negative models and learn so much from them!

Imagine the opposite of a good training model. Words like unintentional come to mind. And maintenance. And non-reflective. Isolated, detached and remote could be thrown into the mix as well. How about piecemeal, haphazard, random, disorganised … and passive, inert, reactionary…

All of a sudden you’ve got so much material to work with! Fuelled with a strong sense of the direction you don’t want to be going, you can now take up the Bible and listen with intent to what it’s got to say about ministry! … and to start picking new models that are headed in the right direction…intentional ministry, equipping ministry, training ministry…

read Ephesians 4:11-12

1. What are pastor/teachers meant to be doing?

2. As a result, what are God’s people meant to be doing?

3. As a result, what should be happening in a church?

4. What are the implications for you and your ministry?

In your church context, what will “maturity” typically look like? What will be some concrete expressions of the abstract idea? If your role is to equip/train people to be mature, what is this ‘maturity’? Think hard about this before moving on. The overall goal might be ‘Christ-likeness’. But try to break that down to a few more tangible points. This maturity will be evident through…

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**intentional ministry**

Maturity in Christ isn’t easily measured. It’s about character not just activities. That said, it’s helpful to identify a shape of what maturity will actually look like in your context. Maturity shows itself in certain key ways. And there are also some key ways people grow to further maturity. So it’s good to have a plan. It’s good to have a sense of where you’re taking people...

**connect. grow. serve.**

These MINISTRY PAPERS have been developed with a pathway of Christian maturity in mind: Connect. Grow. Serve. After connecting to God through trusting in Christ, a vital way we can grow is through a growth group and a vital way we can serve is through a ministry team.

So, the mature Christian in our church will live out and grow in their Christlikeness through...

1. being actively involved in a **growth group** = grow
2. being actively involved in a **ministry team** = serve

The table below shows how many objectives are addressed through this simple pathway approach, and how an intentional growth group ministry can not only provide accountability for all relationships in the believer’s life, but also flow on to their involvement in a ministry team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>growth group goal</th>
<th>ministry team goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* a growing relationship with <strong>God</strong>, especially through personal Bible reading and prayer</td>
<td><strong>MINISTRY PAPERS</strong> (e.g.): personal bible reading and prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* growing relationships with <strong>other believers</strong>, especially through the growth group</td>
<td><strong>MINISTRY PAPERS</strong> (e.g.): leading a growth group; joining a growth group encouragement; hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* growing relationships with those in their <strong>family/household</strong>, as servants</td>
<td><strong>MINISTRY PAPERS</strong> (e.g.): marriage preparation Christian households raising kids to follow Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* growing relationships with <strong>unbelievers</strong>, especially through personal evangelism</td>
<td><strong>MINISTRY PAPERS</strong> (e.g.): personal evangelism personal apologetics; cults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* growing relationships with the <strong>whole church</strong> in mission serving in a ministry team</td>
<td><strong>MINISTRY PAPERS</strong> (e.g.): joining a ministry team see next column...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**paths**

The core business of pastors is this: equipping God’s people for works of service. Not simply ministering to others. But enabling the ministry of others. Training, therefore, is not an optional extra for the pastor/teacher but central to our role. And training is not an optional extra for God’s people, but must be provided for all of them.

Unless this training is intentional, however, it probably won’t happen. That means identifying goals, as already discussed. It also means identifying the tangible steps needed for people to travel towards these goals. Everyone’s pathway to maturity will be different. But it’s worth trying to identify what a standard pathway will look like. What steps are involved? What strategies might help people move from one stage to another?

Identifying a standard pathway enables you to identify roughly where someone is at. It also helps identify what their next step might need to be. It’s not always neat, of course. But it’s a starting point for intentional ministry. Referring to the list of MINISTRY PAPERS on the left, hopefully it might be apparent how the various papers are designed to help facilitate the more detailed pathway set out below. The next page will expand on how this can work...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stage</th>
<th>strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christian</strong></td>
<td>personal evangelism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>initial church contact</td>
<td>welcoming team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maintaining contact</td>
<td>hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>getting acquainted</td>
<td>newcomers group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>getting involved</td>
<td>joining/linked to a growth group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>getting equipped</td>
<td>active in growth group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trained for ministry</td>
<td>taken through ministry paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>training others</td>
<td>take others through paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leading growth group</td>
<td>apprentice leader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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teach a man to fish?

We have long ago taken hold of the idea that we need to do more than give a man a fish… we need to teach him to fish. But there’s another step needed when it comes to ministry … we need to teach others to teach others to fish. In 2 Timothy 2 we see Paul teaching Timothy to teach others to teach others…

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Timothy 2:2).

An important underlying principle of these papers is the notion of ‘span of care’. This concerns how many people one person can care for. It’s an especially important concept in the context of the ‘growth groups’ ministry papers. It’s also extremely relevant to becoming a ministry training church. We might call this ‘span of training’ - how many people you can train?

If Ephesians 4 challenges pastors to train everyone, 2 Timothy 2 reminds us that this will mean starting with a few key people, through whom everyone can be trained.

When we think about training we need to think culture not just events, relationships, not just activities.

Too much of our approach to training is event-focussed. We hope that if we can drag enough people along to the training event – it will be an instant fix all, with everyone who attends changed forever! The reality is, however, that while training events have their place, on their own they tend to produce very little lasting impact. The event can act as a useful catalyst. But unless there is an ongoing training relationship for feedback, discussion and prayer, not much will result. Unless there is a genuine sharing of struggles, training is not training! Worse, outside of a relational context, ministry skills are abstracted from personal godliness and theological development… so we’re not training the person.

Remember, the role of the MINISTRY PAPERS is not simply to transfer content, but to establish these trainer/trainee relationships. In this way, the process is as important as the content. The paper forms a ‘contract’ of agreed approach to the ministry, a basis for ongoing reflection, and a springboard to further reading and discussion. It’s the starting point for a ongoing training relationship. This is why the ‘meeting one-to-one’ paper is also vital for all coaches & leaders.

notes:
• training is geared through two main arms: the growth groups arm and the ministries arm.
• the intervening stage of ‘coaches’ is needed if the total number of growth group leaders/ ministry leaders is, say, in double figures (span of training).
• pastors train growth group coaches (who then train growth group leaders e.g. ‘leading as growth group’) and ministry coaches (who then train ministry leaders e.g. ‘youth ministry’).
• growth group leaders not only orientate people to being part of a group (‘joining a growth group’), but have responsibility for training/equipping in the 3rd & 4th areas listed on page 2. They will, therefore, take their group members through the household/family papers & personal evangelism papers (assistant/apprentice leaders will be also be needed!).
Unfortunately, the end of Paul’s letters are at best skated over or at worst ignored altogether. Preached on them lately? They are often dressed up with inspiring Bible sub-headings like “concluding remarks”. Better would be “fellow workers”, “passing the baton” or “thoughts on team ministry”. Where ever Paul did ministry, there were always plenty of these fellow workers alongside him…

Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus (Romans 16:3)
Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ… (Romans 16:9)
Timothy, my fellow worker, sends his greetings to you… (Romans 16:21)
We are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building (1 Corinthians 3:9)
As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you… (2 Corinthians 8:23)
But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger… (Philippians 2:25)
Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God… (Colossians 4:11)
To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker (Philemon 1)

it takes time…

Developing a training culture means investing time in a few people who share your vision for the church & who’ll share it with others, who’ll share it with others… it needs to be the next biggest slab of time in your week, after preparing the Bible Talk. In fact, on a regular basis, when you’re not preaching, it’s also a good idea to devote a whole week just to team development.

Being fellow workers means sharing life and ministry together. Weekly one-to-one meetings are crucial, as well as staff or team meetings. But these need to be merely the platform for team ministry not the sum total of your communication or interaction. As with all relationships quality time happens within quantity time. You can’t always pick the minute in your team when a good idea will blossom, or a good conversation spark. So you need to really give yourself to the team. Out of the quality of these gospel partnerships grows the whole culture of the church. Feed it!

who are your fellow workers?
what are you doing to train them?
what are you doing to train them to train others?
how might a planned approach to training help?