



Building Christ

A personal, vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ is the foundation for our training. Our leader development process has many dynamic elements, all of which bring the emerging leader to opportunities for true transformation. However, all of our dynamics pale in comparison to our one basic goal: to carefully build upon the foundation of Jesus Christ in the emerging leader's life. Paul states this very clearly:

... each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 3:10-11)

It is this foundation on Jesus, the Cornerstone, which will prepare the emerging leader for his life and ministry. It is upon this very foundation that he will build his own life and ministry. It is important that the foundation be built properly and that it is inspected with care. A faulty foundation will destroy an entire life of ministry! The amount of time spent building emerging leaders must not only teach them how to build their respective ministries, but must teach them how to properly build upon the foundation that is already laid.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

In the book of John, chapter fifteen, Jesus states that apart from him we can do nothing of any eternal value. If this is true, and it is very true, then we must be certain that the work that we are doing is in Jesus Christ. Not merely *for* him, but actually *in* him; in *his* strength, in *his* time, in *his* wisdom. Only the work that is done *in* Christ will have any eternal significance. This reality is a sobering reminder of our continual inward reliance upon the Holy Spirit.

How then does one build this reality in the emerging leader? This question has no easy answer! Ultimately the responsibility for growing and learning is on the emerging leader; however, there are some core disciplines that we implement and enforce to give the emerging leader every opportunity to succeed. It is the multifaceted combination of daily disciplines and the strategic and spontaneous dealings of community life that produce the most valuable opportunities for the emerging leader to turn to God with greater dependency, and deeper humility.

The Word of God is central to our process of building healthy leaders. We incorporate healthy teaching and sound doctrine into our curriculum. Our teachers interact with the participants so that maximum learning can occur. Furthermore, after clearly understanding the Word, the participants are continually challenged to accountability in living out their learning. The close-knit community surrounding the participants serves as an example and a rebuke when necessary. This context creates the opportunity for the participant to know Christ in a deeper way, through integrity of life and knowledge of the Word.

The first ninety minutes of every morning are spent in the Word, worship and prayer. Every Thursday is dedicated to prayer and fasting during which the group will spend an additional ninety minutes seeking God. Many ministry opportunities will challenge and stretch the participant's character and capacities. Our leader development process is designed to be more demanding than what the participant can actually accomplish in his own strength. This will cause the participant to respond in one of two ways:

1. Look to God
2. Burn himself out in his own strength

Ultimately, God is the one building leaders and we are just partnering with him in an intentional nine-month process. God is the one weaving our lives together and making sense of the messes that we've created. He is the one making all things work together for our good. It is therefore essential that all of our leader- building efforts are submitted to his leading and direction.

Prayer must saturate leader development and we believe that it is not only the emerging leader who should pray, but also the community that is involved in building the leader. Therefore, each participant is assigned a personal intercessor who will pray with and for the participant for the entirety of his time with us. The intercessors are from our local community of believers and meet with the participant once a month for prayer and/or to receive prayer requests.