ENGLISH
TRAINING FOR MISSION

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TRAINING UNIT 43 (28.50 MINUTES)

Discipleship group, community of faith, spiritual family .....

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Training Unit 43

Discipleship group, community of faith, spiritual family

Structures for networked house churches

Definitions

1. Discipleship group
This is a group of new believers who have been baptized in water and in the Holy Spirit. They are regularly discipled as a group. In the New Testament, these discipleship groups are not yet called a church.

2. Spiritual family, community of faith or house church
When a discipleship group makes a committed decision to live out Acts 2:42-47 together, we call them a spiritual family, a community of faith or a house church. The New Testament calls such a group a "church that meets at their house".
(1. Corinthians 16:19: Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house. Colossians 4:15: Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.) In our everyday lives, we would call this a (nuclear/core) family.

3. House church/networked house church
When a group of 3 to 5 house churches, communities of faith or spiritual families join together and have a leadership (elders and deacons), we call it a networked house church. In our everyday lives, one would call such related groups of core families a clan.

At this point of the sending training, we can see the fruits of our ministry of sending. The fruit is a living, spiritually healthy discipleship group or an official house church that begins to live the twelve core values of a house church.

Positioning – where are we at in this ministry of sending?
We continue to go out and look for persons of peace; the newly formed house church also starts to do this. In this way, several churches will soon be planted in the houses of persons of peace.

Structuring multiple networked house churches

Overview
Amongst evangelical-charismatic Christians, there are three basic types of churches worldwide. (Evangelicals are believers who faithfully hold fast to the Bible, who have experienced a conversion, have been born again and who experience the Holy Spirit in their daily walk with Jesus. There are about 700 million evangelicals worldwide.) The three basic church models are:

One third of these evangelical churches are meeting-oriented or program-oriented churches.

A meeting-oriented or program-oriented church is a church with a church building, with a pastor and a church service on Sunday that forms the center of the church life.

One third of evangelical churches are cell group churches.

Cell group churches are churches with two focus points. One focus is the church service and the church program, just like the meeting-oriented church, and the other is the small groups or cells groups.
The small groups do not see themselves as autonomous spiritual families or house churches. They see themselves as cells in which some spiritual things are practiced. The program is consolidated in these cells and there is fellowship.

One third of evangelical churches are churches that meet in houses or house churches.

A house church means spiritual family or communities of faith in this context. They see themselves as a church that meets in houses.

In the time of the New Testament, all Christians met and worshipped in house churches. Only when Christianity was transformed into the Roman state religion, these house churches were changed into church service-oriented, program-oriented churches.

In the 20th and 21st century we experience a strong trend back to the New Testament church model, so that about one third of evangelical-charismatic believers meet in house churches again. These house churches can also be grouped into three types.

Three types of house churches

1. Independent House Churches are independent and autonomous house churches.
2. Interdependent House Churches are loosely connected to other house churches.
3. Networked House Churches are strongly connected to others and form a clearly structured house church network.

This ministry of sending is about planting networked house churches. There are no exact descriptions in the New Testament about how house churches should be connected to each other, so there is some room to move and different ways to connect these house churches with one another.

A good way to structure connect house churches.

Planting a house church and the preparations for this can be done in different ways.

a) Organically, locally

- I live and work in a place and there I find a person or a house of peace.
- I start to disciple this group and form a house church with them.
- I live the twelve values with this house church according to Acts 2:42-47.
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b) Systematically, mobile

- The Lord calls me to appoint and form a sending team.
- This sending team now looks for persons and houses of peace.
- The team starts to disciple this group and to form a discipleship group with them, training them until they become a real house church that lives out the twelve core values autonomously.
- However, the home of the sending team members is not the newly planted house church, but the team.
- In a sending team, the team is both. It is a team that helps one another to live the commandment to make disciples and at the same time also a mobile church “in the house”, in which we live the twelve values as a team.

I want to show here, how to proceed when we begin the ministry of sending in a systematic and mobile way.
The other, organically-locally form, is almost identical in the approach. That is why the model described here applies to both forms in the ministry of sending.

1. The team

The team is the spiritual family for the sent one. It could be described as a mobile house church. Teams are mobile. Paul and his team were in different places.
The team is and lives out “church in the house” within the team.
The team forms groups of two when they go out (outreach) or when they look for a person of peace.

2. Overview: The team plants a house church and multiplies it to the 4th generation

Step by step

1. As a sending team, we let ourselves BEsent to a harvest field or to an unreached ethnic group.
2. The sending team forms groups of two for the outreach.
3. The teams of two use 100% their strength and time for prayer, searching and finding of a person, group or house of peace.
4. As soon as a person or group has been found and baptized, the team forms a discipleship group and starts to disciple this group. Then we plant a house church.
   For the discipleship process and after the planting of the house church, the team uses 50% of its time and strength for prayer and outreach and about 50% for the discipleship of the group, and for forming and partaking in a house church. As soon as your team has formed two groups, you use 75% of your time and strength for prayer, discipling the group and for starting and participating in house churches. As soon as you have started three groups, you use 90% of your time and strength for discipleship, for founding and participating in a house church.
   For the teams of two, the spiritual home remains the sending team in this phase, although they spend much time with the new groups/house churches.

5.-7. We call the first group the first generation. Then you disciple and train the group that you have formed yourselves, so as to multiply it to the 4th generation. We can witness this multiplication up to the 4th generation in the whole world. If we manage to multiply a movement of house churches to the 4th generation, then it will not stagnate and will continue to multiply itself.

3. The team forms small networks of spiritual families consisting of 3 to 5 house churches

These groups or small house church networks are inwardly connected with each other through:

- Relationships: since all groups know the same people or have been started and formed by the same people. They are related to one another, they have the same DNA and are of the same spiritual “bloodline”.
- The same values
- The same traditions: same church culture, same songs, same style of serving the Lord’s Supper or living as a house church, etc.

A complete, autonomous house church consists of 3 to 5 spiritual families or 3 to 5 churches that meet in homes, according to the model of the “networked house church”.
A spiritual family (church that meets in houses) consists of 5 to 12 members. If they grow beyond 12 members, we divide them into two new families. When 5 spiritual families have been started, there are about 60 members in total. Since this number is manageable, the leaders (elders) can still know everyone personally. These sizes have proven to be useful.

A networked house church consists of 3 to 5 spiritual families and develops a leadership culture with deacons and elders. →More about this in the next lesson.

As soon as there are more than five spiritual families in a networked house church, we form new ones by starting 2, 3, 4, … new networked house churches that remain connected with one another. Events such as prayer evenings and celebrations can be organized together.

By forming a networked house church into two or more new networked house churches, it is possible to continually grow and multiply in a healthy way.

Summary

- Finding persons of peace and baptizing the groups, forms spiritual families.
- Connecting 3 to 5 spiritual families and developing leadership, forms a networked house church.

- Multiplying networked house churches, creates a healthy movement that can continue to grow structurally until the Kingdom of God has reached a whole ethnic group.
- Make disciples of WHOLE ethnic groups. Once this goal is reached, we aim at the big goal: make disciples of ALL nations.

Part II: Application

a) Someone from the group summarizes this teaching in his own words. If anything is missing, the others can add to the summary.

b) Group discussion

c) Write down personal insights from the teaching

d) Share with the group who exactly you want to train in this lesson

e) Each group presents what they learned and the specific goals they want to pursue now: (outreach/group meeting).

Part III: Outreach

Prayer (4 hours/week), going (4 hours/week), discipleship (4 hours/week), community of faith (3 hours/week).

1. PRAYING:

   A) Prayer walk with a partner or the team for 2 hours every week ❑

   B) Pray 1 hour for your disciples before every discipleship meeting ❑

   C) Pray 1 hour before every community meeting ❑

2. GO: to the unreached you have a heart for ❑
3. Look for persons of peace ❑
4. PREACH: the gospel of the Kingdom of God ❑

5. EXPLAINING: the way of salvation ❑
6. Evangelistic Bible studies with interested people ❑
7. Share your personal testimony with five other people ❑
8. Call to repentance and to follow Jesus ❑
9. FAITH, REPENTANCE, BAPTISM AND RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT ❑
10. Pray for sick people during an outreach ❑
11. Raise a dead person if you are led to do so ❑
12. Seek to hear God's voice and the guidance of the Holy Spirit ❑
13. Pray for the 200 million persecuted Christians in the world, pray for your "persecutors" and bless those who are cursing you ❑
14. Continue to teach all 16 lessons to the discipleship group and coach them in it ❑
15. Discuss with your disciples how to network 3 to 5 spiritual families with the goal of forming a networked house church. ❑

    With template of multiplication in our hearts we want to train our spiritual families, so that a networked house church with 3 to 5 spiritual families can be founded.

BEsent is a training - without practice it is almost useless!