

Leadership Training

Acts 19:9-10 9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the **school of one Tyrannus**. And this continued by the space of two years; so that **all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks**.

This is one of the clearest examples of formalized leadership training we have in the New Testament, apparently something different from the ordinary teaching Paul and the pastors would do in their house churches or from house to house. This appears to be what we now would regard as a form of systematic ministerial training. Paul had established a virtual seminary, which we might a bit playfully call “The Siesta Theological Seminary” because many, if not most, of Paul’s disciples would be working people who would be giving up their lunch hours and their siestas to take the training courses.

What would the curriculum have been like in the seminary? Luke seems to suggest a cause and effect relationship between The Siesta Theological Seminary and the fact that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus (v10) before the end of two years. This means that the chief focus of the curriculum was likely to have been evangelism and church planting.

Paul, then, was training and sending out church planters as rapidly as he could. This is not to be seen as a deviation in Paul’s ministry from evangelism to Christian nurture. Paul was not hereby falling into the trap of the “syndrome of church development”, which I have mentioned from time to time. Pastoral care and the nurture of ordinary believers was also occurring in Ephesus, but that would be taking place in the house churches that would have been multiplying in considerable numbers throughout the city during Paul’s two years in Ephesus. Paul’s seminary classes might have admitted some of the ordinary believers as well, but his priority would more likely have been to train the pastoral leaders God had selected and to put special emphasis on church planters.

Modern missionaries should take their direction from Paul’s example. As I am writing this, more people are becoming Christians worldwide than ever before, in geometrically ascending proportions. With the exception of those called to begin work among the 2,500 yet un-reached people groups in today’s world, there is no longer a great need for cross-cultural missionaries to do direct evangelism. It is, in fact, being done in most parts of the world much like evangelism was being done in the first century- excited new believers spread their faith wherever they went. Some reports reveal that up to 35,000 people are being saved every day in China alone. The great missionary challenge in China is not so much evangelism as it is leadership selection and training. Many of the new converts will be weak Christians or drawn back into the world without the vigorous multiplication of churches under trained leadership.

By trained leadership, I do not necessarily mean those who have college and seminary degrees. The number of church planters who have such academic credentials is

minuscule in proportion to the number of new churches being planted each day around the globe. I means doing what Paul was apparently doing in Ephesus, taking gifted believers whoever they might be, with whatever education they might have, providing for them the conceptual and practical tools they need, and sending them out to extend the Kingdom of God. It paid off then and such a training design will pay off now.

taken from Peter Wagoner's book on Acts 19

On mentoring

One of the truths that must be instilled in your future leaders is that the way to become more spiritual is not just to read the Bible and fellowship with other believers. No. The most effective way is to become a father or mother in the Lord. If you are a parent you know this immediately. Remember when you had your first child. You took on the responsibility of another human being. You found that you simply matured almost overnight. Now, you could not just be concerned about yourself. You had to learn how to give as never before. This is also true of those who become spiritual parents. You find that you have to study more because now you have someone who is depending on your teaching. You have to pray more because you must have answers to the never ending questions of the new convert . There also comes a new freshness and excitement to your spiritual experience because you now have a vicarious understanding of the new birth all over again.

taken from Pastor Cho's book More Than Numbers