

## Lesson 3

# CELL CHURCH

### INTRODUCTION

Purposes of study:

- To give a Biblical appreciation of the New Testament church, using it as a model for our church planting effort.
- To offer suggestions on how cell churches are structured and managed.

### LESSON OUTLINE

- I. INTRODUCTION
  - A. God has shaped us to live in community
  - B. The Trinity
  - C. The Family
  - D. The Structure of Israel
  - E. The Structure of the Disciples
  
- II. THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH
  - A. A true community with one accord
  - B. What did they do?
  - C. What did Satan do?
  
- III. THE PLACE OF OIKONOMOS AND OIKODOMEIO IN CHURCH LIFE
  - A. The Church is the Oikos of Faith
  - B. Those within the Oikos are to serve one another as Oikonomos People
  - C. Those within the Oikos are to encourage one another as Oikonomos People
  - D. The Primary Task of believers in the Oikos is to be channels of Grace
  - E. *"Body Life Evangelism"* can now occur
  
- IV. PRINCIPLES OF THE CELL CHURCH
  - A. Prerequisites of a Cell Church
  - B. Understanding the Cell Church Structure
  - C. Cells operate by New Rules
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- V. PRINCIPLES ASPECTS OF THE CELL
  - A. Cell Agenda
  - B. Purposes of *'Welcome'* (Ice Breakers) in cell meetings
  - C. Purposes of *'Worship'* in the cell meeting
  - D. Celebrating the Lord's Supper
  - E. Purposes of *'Works'* in the cell meeting

- F. Purposes of 'Word' in the cell meeting
- G. Cell time allocation
- VI. EVANGELISM IN THE CELL GROUP
  - A. Is there a Map that I can follow?
  - B. What is the Strategy?
  - C. Am I equipped for the task?
- VII. CELL PLANTING
  - A. What is Cell Planting?
  - B. Why Cell Planting? (Establishing new communities)
  - C. How do we plant a cell?
- VIII. EQUIPPING IN THE CELL CHURCH
  - A. Changing to experiential learning for value change
  - B. Equipping Concept Framework
- IX. CELL CHURCH LEADERSHIP
  - A. The Pastoral Ministry of a Cell Church
  - B. The Leadership Prerequisites

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. *God has shaped us to live in community*

The primary assignment in a cell group church is to develop “*Basic Christian Communities*.” Community can occur most completely only in small groups, a cell group, numbering less than fifteen people. Essential elements of community include interpersonal commitments and a sense of belonging. Community takes place where there is a shared life, allowing common goals and commitments to develop between all of its members. God has shaped us to live in community.

Community is:

1. Life in association with others.
2. People who become responsible to others.
3. People who become responsible for one another.

### B. *The Trinity*

1. Why a Trinity?
  - a) If God were ONE person, there could be **POWER**
  - b) If God were TWO persons, there could be **LOVE**
  - c) God is THREE within the Trinity, there is now **COMMUNITY**.
2. Importance of Community
  - a) The highest ‘*Life Form*’ in the universe has chosen to live in COMMUNITY. This should clearly speak to us about its importance.
  - b) It also shows us that COMMUNITY begins with **THREE**.

Note: The only time in all of eternity when the Godhead did not live in community was when our sins broke that fellowship.

- c) The conflict of the ages: Satan's determination to thwart God's plan for man to live in community.

Satan destroyed all the potential relationships which might have existed in Eden: God to man, man to wife, brother to brother - all destroyed.

### C. *The Family*

1. A couple and baby makes THREE
  - a) God so designed the family that it would always create COMMUNITY. In each family, there would be responsibility and accountability between the family members.
  - b) Satan's response: The murder of Abel by Cain: destruction of the first family: "*Am I my brother's keeper?*" (**Gen 4:9**)

#### **Oikos: The extended family**

- (i) In the New Testament, there is an important word: "*oikos.*" It refers to a "*household,*" and "*extended family.*"
  - (ii) All over the world, the "*oikos*" is a vital part of life for each person. These are the "*primary people*" in each of our lives.
  - (iii) Satan's response: build your significance upon achievements, not relationships.
- c) Note the lineage of Cain in **Genesis 4**:
 

Cain's significance: built a city	<b>(v.17)</b>
Jabal's significance: livestock	<b>(v.20)</b>
Jubal's significance: musician	<b>(v.21)</b>
Tubal-Cain's significance: forged tools	<b>(v.22)</b>
Lamech: a crazed murderer of two	<b>(v.23)</b>
  - d) Thus, we see that Satan's "*kingdoms of this world*" are always built on **dividing** people, and offering them "*splendour!*"
  - e) Then, a new lineage: Back to Adam and Eve, based on Community (**v.25**). "*At that time men began to call on the name of the Lord*" (**v.26**)

f) For seven generations, we know nothing about the achievements of this new blood line. All we are told is how long each man lived. When we are living in community with God, every year is precious.

g) Contrasted to his insane cousin Lamech, **Gen 5:24** tells us Enoch, who “*walked with God 300 years...then he was no more, because God took him away.*”

What a difference! Enoch’s significance was not in what he did or did not do, but in his entering into communal fellowship with his heavenly Father.

h) The lesson of the two genealogies shows us the gulf between those who chose God and lives in COMMUNITY with Him and one another, and those who sought self-aggrandisement and personal power.

#### D. *The Structure of Israel*

##### 1. Connecting the Oikoses

a) God commanded Moses to form the structure of the nation around **tens, fifties, hundreds** and **thousands**.

b) These were God’s numbers, selected because they represent the way oikoses interconnected.

c) The basic building block of life is the “*oikos*,” the “*household*,” which averages **10** people.

##### 2. Clusters of Oikoses

a) Oikoses formed communities of fifties. These clusters of *five* oikoses were to be supervised by one person.

b) The next cluster was to be by “*hundreds*” (**plural**). We may understand this to be about **200-250** persons, thus once again assigning a cluster of four or five communities to one supervisor.

c) Finally, these clusters of “*hundreds*” were to be formed into groups of “*thousands*”, the final size for structuring the people of Israel.

- d) With a conservative estimate of:
  - i) **1.5 million** Israelites, this would mean there were **150,000** cells (or oikoses)
  - ii) There were **30,000** clusters of "*fifties*,"
  - iii) **6,000** clusters of "*hundreds*,"
  - iv) And according to (**Exodus 24:9**) **seventy elders** would have been over the "*thousands*."

### E. *The Structure of the Disciples*

1. Community size Jesus chose
  - a) Jesus chose to live in a special community of **12** men. His presence made it a group of 13.
  - b) Evaluations of the largest size a community can become cuts the number off at **15**.
  - c) It's a matter of intimacy between people and of communication lines.
2. Communication lines to consider
  - a) Two people have two communication lines.
  - b) Four people have 12 communication lines. Ten people have 90.  
Fifteen people have 210.  
  
**CL = (N) X (N) - N**  
where **N** is the number of people, and **CL** is communication lines.
  - c) Above 15 persons, there is no longer the opportunity for people to know each other intimately.
  - d) Therefore Jesus chose a community of 12 men to equip.
3. Community within community
  - a) Note that there was a "*subgroup*" of three men among the disciples: Peter, James and John. Among the 12, He chose these three to join Him at special times.
  - b) Within oikoses there are always special relationships which form

between its members. We take advantage of this in cell group life.

- c) Note the “give” and “take” between the disciples, the grasping for positions, the undercutting - it was not an assembly of men totally committed to the Lord. Let us not forget Satan’s attempt to destroy Jesus through the betrayal of Judas, within His own community of disciples.

## II. THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH

### A. *A true community with one accord*

1. The church was born at Calvary. This is the significance of the Lord’s Supper. It is a reminder of the place and the cost of Christ giving birth to His New Body.
2. As Jesus was baptized in the Jordan to launch His public ministry, so the church was baptized in His Spirit at Pentecost to launch its ministry. However, there was one ingredient that had to be present before the tongues of fire could come.
3. They had to become a true community. This took ten days. During this time, 120 people lived without an agenda in an upper room. They were the agenda. They had to become close to one another. For ten days, they reshuffled into subgroups and got to know one another. Finally, they were in one accord, and the church was formed.
4. The first thing they did was to break up into “tens” and went “from house to house.”

### B. *What did they do?*

1. They “**broke bread**” - the Agape Feast, including the Lord’s Supper.
2. They “**fellowshipped**” - to be explained by Paul as the manifestation of Spiritual Gifts to build up one another.
3. They “**prayed**” - constantly communing with the indwelling Christ, who was always in their midst.
4. For instruction and **teaching**, they went to the Temple “to hear the

*Apostles teach."*

**C. What did Satan do?**

1. We see him at work, seeking to destroy this spirit of community from the very beginning of the church.
2. **1 Corinthians** was written about 54-57AD. By then, the cells of the Body of Christ were already being attacked by Satan:
  - a) **1:11** "*... there are quarrels among you ...*"
  - b) **6:8** "*... you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers.*"
  - c) **11:18** "*... when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you ...*"
3. **Hebrews 10:24-25** encourages believers meet.

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

4. The *Edict of Bishops*, which permanently divided the "*clergy*" from the "*laity*" and removed ministry from the Body of Christ. No longer would the people of God become responsible to and for each other.
5. For this reason, the true work of the Holy Spirit is crushed, and the people of God are smothered from true Christian service.



### **III. THE PLACE OF OIKONOMOS AND OIKODOMEIO IN CHURCH LIFE**

#### **A. *The Church is the Oikos of Faith***

1. *"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household (Oikos)..."Ephesians 2:19*
2. *"...you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household (Oikos), which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth."  
1 Timothy 3:15*

#### **B. *Those within the Oikos are to serve one another as Oikonomos People***

1. *"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering (Oikonomos) God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10*
2. *"The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager (Oikonomos), whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?"  
Luke 12:42*

#### **C. *Those within the Oikos are to encourage one another as Oikodomeio People***

1. *"Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification (Oikodomeio)."  
Romans 14:19*
2. *"Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up (Oikodomeio)."  
Romans 15:2*

#### **D. *The Primary Task of believers in the Oikos is to be channels of Grace***

*What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening (Oikodomeio) of the church. 1 Corinthians 14:26*

**E. "Body Life Evangelism" can now occur**

*But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, 'God is really among you.'* **1 Corinthians 14:24-25**

**IV. PRINCIPLES OF THE CELL CHURCH**

**A. Prerequisites of a Cell Church**

1. A Commitment to a clear **vision** and strategy for growth.
2. Reliance on the supernatural work of the **Holy Spirit**.
3. A strong and God-anointed **leader**.

**B. Understanding the Cell Church Structure**

There is a world of difference between a church with cells and a cell church.

1. The cell is the church
  - a) The cell is the open door of the Church
  - b) Nothing competes with the cell
  - c) All resources of the church supports the cells
2. The cell multiplies by evangelism
  - a) The cell is an open group
  - b) Evangelism is the ultimate goal of the cell
  - c) The cell is vision-driven
3. There is close supervision
  - a) There is a network under supervision and leadership

- b) Cells are linked through congregations
- c) Cells celebrate together under one vision

*What it is not:*

*What it is:*

A denial of the need of program

*A strategy for a people-centred & community-based program*

An absence of departments

*A structure with departments that support the system of cells*

Only small groups

*A system of cells, congregation and celebration*

A group of independent houses

*A vision-driven movement of churches consisting of people living in Basic Christian Community*

### **C. Cells operate by New Rules**

1. Learning is done through experiences in the cells
  - Cognitive (know what to do)
  - Psychomotor (know how to do)
  - Value change (convinced why it has to be done)
2. Leaders are chosen and equipped through the cells
  - Cell leaders to reproduce themselves within 12-18 months
3. Every member must be mobilized through the cells
  - Limitations of traditional church model
4. Cells penetrate the community through Body Evangelism
  - Cells release people into the community
5. Cells experience Body Life through the gifts of the Holy Spirit
  - Experiencing God's presence at meetings
  - Anointing not restricted to leadership

6. All functions of the church are integrated within the cell

**D. Cell Group Focus**

1. **Edification**

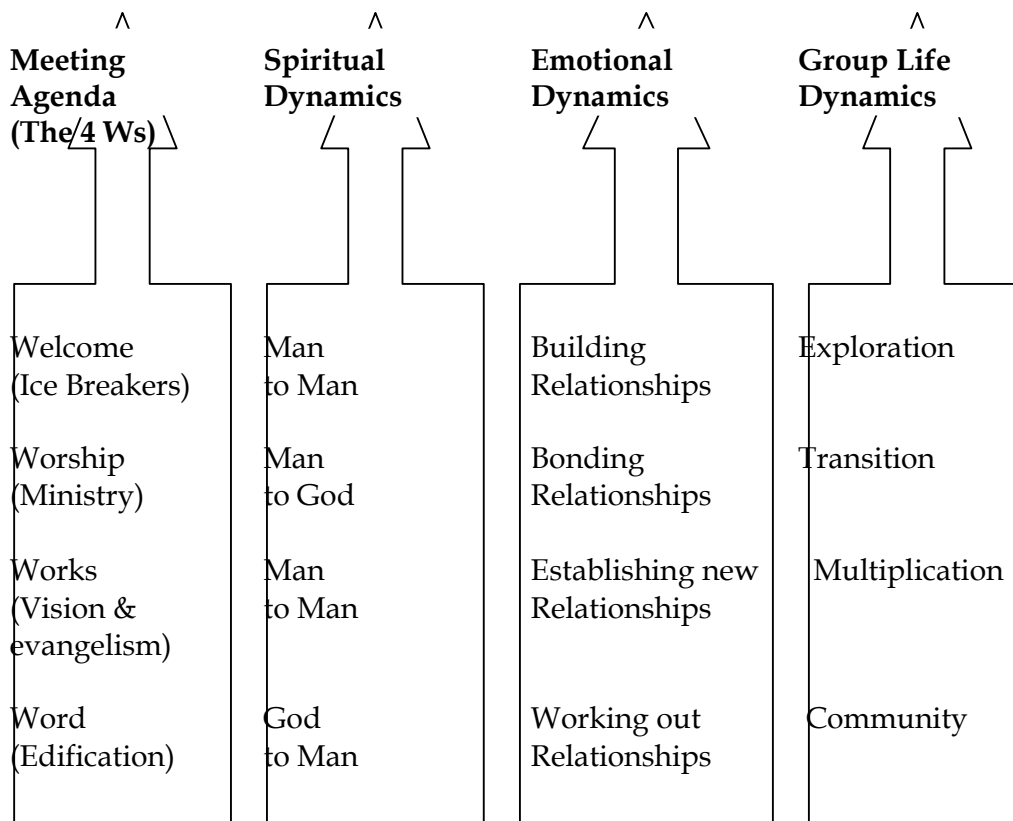
- Cells must minister to one another

2. **Evangelism**

- Cells must multiply by reaching out

**V. PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF THE CELL**

**A. Cell Agenda**



**B. Purposes of 'Welcome' (Ice Breakers) in cell meetings**

1. What are the general purposes or values of having *Welcome (Ice Breakers)* in cell meetings?
  - a) Brings everyone in the cell meeting to a common **focus**
  - b) Bonds man to **man**
  - c) Builds **relationships** - from superficial to deeper interaction
2. There are different types of Ice Breakers serving different functions. Therefore, their effectiveness depends on appropriateness.
3. It is not a game to occupy time

**C. Purposes of Worship in the cell meeting**

1. Vertical Aspect
  - Communication with **God**
2. Horizontal Aspect
  - Communication with **others** in the group
3. Inward Aspect
  - Affected by the **worship** itself

**D. Celebrating the Lord's Supper**

1. Procedures for serving the Lord's Supper during worship time.

The cell leader serves the Lord's Supper during worship time.

  - a) Read a passage of Scripture (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)
  - b) Explain why we celebrate the Lord's Supper and invite believers to participate
  - c) Give thanks for the bread and cup

- d) Serve the bread and cup
- e) Group or pair up the people and let them serve and bless each other with the bread and cup

2. Purposes of celebrating the Lord's Supper

- a) Remembering the Lord's death
- b) Receiving a special blessing from the Lord
- c) Recognizing that we are one body in Christ
- d) Declaring the death of Christ to the world until He comes again

*E. Purposes of 'Works' in the cell meeting*

1. Two purposes

- a) To allow the group to focus on **outsiders**
- b) To hold every member **accountable** for his/her ministry

2. Two components

- a) Share the vision
  - Church vision
  - District & Zone goals and strategies
  - Cell goals - ministry and multiplication
  - Personal vision
- b) Evangelism plans
  - Identifying non-believers in oikos
  - Sharing steps in creating contacts and building relationships with unbelievers
  - Planning activities for people at different levels in the Response Pyramid
  - Praying for unbelievers
  - Equipping cell members for evangelism

**F. Purposes of 'Word' in the cell meeting**

1. To allow God to **speak** to us
2. To facilitate the affective **learning** process for value change
3. To **edify** and minister to one another

**G. Cell time allocation**

- |                          |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome (Ice Breaker) | 10 minutes |
| 2. Worship               | 30 minutes |
| 3. Works                 | 15 minutes |
| 4. Word                  | 30 minutes |

**VI. EVANGELISM IN THE CELL GROUP**

**A. Is there a Map that I can follow?**

If there a basic framework of evangelism that a cell church can follow and work on?

1. There are two classes of unbelievers:

a) **Type A**

They have attended a church meeting before;

They probably already believe in God, accept the Bible, understand that Jesus is the Son of God, and have some awareness of Scripture facts (like the significance of the death of Jesus on the cross.)

They may already have a church membership somewhere, but have been inactive (perhaps for years).

They are searching for something, and have come to our congregation in their search.

They may not have all the “*pieces of the puzzle*” in place as far as Christian knowledge is concerned.

Bible study, and explaining the plan of Salvation, are appropriate activities to share with them.

b) **Type B**

Probably never attended church; have no desire to do so.

They may not believe in God, do not accept the Bible, do not understand Jesus is the Son of God, and have very little awareness of Scripture truths.

They have no active church membership.

They are not searching for the Lord’s purpose for their lives and have no intention of visiting church activities.

They have very few of the “*pieces of the puzzle*” in place as far as Christian knowledge is concerned.

Bible study or discussing the plan of Salvation are not appropriate activities to do with them at the start. There must first be a time of developing relationships – exposing them to the reality of the living Christ in our own lives.

2. People come to Christ through a **process** of change

a) **Awareness**

b) **Receptive**

c) **Believing**

d) **Commitment**

The above is called the “*The Response Pyramid*”

3. People are different, with different needs and expectations

a) Different **approaches**

b) Different **activities**



- c) Different attitudes
- 4. There are more people further down than up
- 5. As a simple guide to a differentiated approach

**B. *What is the Strategy?***

- 1. What are the basic concepts and principles?
  - a) Believes in Body Evangelism (Community Evangelism)
  - b) Committed to Oikos Evangelism (Relationship Evangelism)
  - c) Dedicated to Heart Evangelism (Servant Evangelism)

**C. *Am I equipped for the task?***

- 1. What do we need to do, to equip cell members to be directed outwards?
  - a) In the cell, ALL are ministers
  - b) Type A Evangelism Training
  - c) Spiritual Warfare Training
  - d) Type B Evangelism Training
    - To walk
    - To pray
    - To serve

**VII. CELL PLANTING**

**A. *What is Cell Planting?***

Cell Planting is a deliberate effort to plant a new cell in a specific locality or specific people group where no cell exists.

**B. Why Cell Planting? (Establishing new communities)**


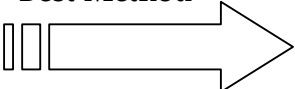
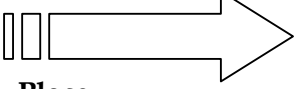
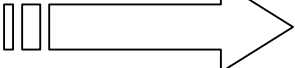
1. Cells do not multiply indefinitely.
2. Biological cells stagnate because they have exhausted the nutrients around them.
3. Some converts cannot be assimilated into existing cells.
4. For explosive growth.
5. Targeting a city cell by cell.

**C. How do we plant a cell?**

1. Supporting a cell planting team.
2. Whole cell plants a new cell.
3. Planting a satellite cell.
  - link-up with Christians from other churches

**VIII. EQUIPPING IN THE CELL CHURCH**

**A. Changing to experiential learning for value change**

	<b>Cognitive</b>	<b>Psychomotor</b>	<b>Affective</b>
<b>Acquires</b> 	Knowledge	Skill	Values
<b>Best Method</b> 	Teaching	Training	Experiencing
<b>Communicator</b> 	Teacher	Coach	Facilitator
<b>Place</b> 	Classroom	Workshop	Community

**B. Equipping Concept Framework**

## 1. Understanding the conceptual framework

*I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father.*

**1 John 2:12-13**

- a) Little children - those who are brand new in the faith or those who act like they are because of personal problems.
- b) Young men - those who are learning to have victory in the Christian life and are ready to share the Gospel.
- c) Spiritual fathers - those who have led others to Christ and are learning to be responsible for these little children.

## 2. Core Curriculum

- a) Inward Journey - Equipping little children to be young men.
  - Spiritual foundation
  - Evangelism
  - Type A/B evangelism
  - Oikos Principle
  - Testimony
  - Sharing gospel message
- b) Outward Journey
  - Spiritual warfare training
  - Exposure in cell
  - Participation in harvest event
- c) Leadership training
  - Cell intern
  - Cross culture missions training
  - Cell leadership

## **IX. CELL CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

### **A. *The Pastoral Ministry of a Cell Church***

1. The pastoral ministry of a cell church requires the following functions:

a) **Shepherd**

*“Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care....” 1 Peter 5:2*

b) **Manager**

*“If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?” 1 Timothy 3:5*

If management problems are not resolved, they have the potential to become spiritual problems.

c) **Leader**

*“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority....” Hebrews 13:17*

Leaders rally the people of God for the purposes of God.

### **B. *The Leadership Prerequisites***

1. The pastor leads by:

a) Developing the vision and strategy

b) Creating the environment for growth

(i) Integrity and **trust**

(ii) Spirituality and **anointing**

(iii) Authority and **servanthood**

(iv) Transparency and **love**

(v) Conformity and **diversity**

(vi) People-centred and **task-oriented**

- (vii) Faith and **risk-taking**
- (viii) Confrontation and **change**
- (ix) Voice and **touch**

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2. Ralph, W Neighbor Jr. *Where do we go from here?* (Touch Publications, Tx, USA, 1990).