

# A STRATEGY TO ENLARGE THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Using Nine Facets / Nine Keys
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COACHING METHOD

Carl George

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## **A Strategy to Enlarge the Leadership Team**

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### **The Need for Enlarging the Leadership Team**

The need for intentional leadership development in congregations is underscored by a case from my consulting files:

It was a congregation in the Midwest that gave me my first glimpse into the real need for more leaders than came naturally. During a several day field visit to the congregation, the pastor glowingly outlined his dream. He envisioned a church where lay leaders organized home Bible study and support groups that would function as small cells. His enthusiasm was contagious. The Board and the rest of the staff appeared to support his vision. My invitation to assist the church included a request to examine vague intimations of underlying tensions, uneasiness and unrest.

After numerous interviews, a picture emerged that helped me interpret the nature of the problem. The Sunday School organization was severely stressed by a chronic shortage of teachers and aides. The volunteer personnel needed to sustain the level of childcare required by the growing church family were not available to the Sunday School. Some of the Sunday School staff suspected they knew what the problem was: all the candidates for volunteer workers in their Sunday School were being siphoned off by the pastor from the Pastor's Newcomers Classes. Traditionally, each crop of new members were drafted into the Sunday School. With the pastor's excitement about small group ministry, so many of the new members were being deployed as small group leaders that the Sunday School was starving for workers! My investigation confirmed their suspicions.

### **Zero Sum Game**

That congregation was furiously caught up in a classic problem. They were playing a game that I came to recognize as a "Zero Sum" game. The various program leaders were all committed to bidding for the available talent, which was a finite sum. New leaders were in scarce supply. Virtually the only way that church got a new leader was when an experienced leader transferred in from another city or another church. The supply or amount of leaders was a fixed quantity, dependent on factors outside of the program leaders' control -- in this case, the rate of transfer members into the congregation.

Here's how a zero sum game works. The equation is a simple one: [ All Leaders – Sunday School teachers – Small Group leaders = 0 ]. Let's assume the number of available leaders is a fixed number. When the number of leaders assigned to the Sunday School is known, let's say the remaining leaders are available for the Small Group program. If ten leaders are available and six are in the Sunday School program, only four remain for the Small Groups program. If a

fifth Small Group leader is recruited from the ten, then the Sunday School team will have to make do with only five teachers. Your program gets a leader at the expense of my program. That's the basis for the war! The terms of a zero sum game war are "get yours before they get theirs." No wonder so much frustration is experienced.

Back to my Midwest congregation case. The pastor had enough charisma to charm his way with his staff and leaders. That charm did not multiply the actual numbers of leaders available, only to redirect them to his small group project. The fatigue and frustration suffered by the SS team was real and could not be dispelled by charm. But the pastor's popularity meant that the SS program leaders did not feel free to overtly voice their resentment of the Small Groups program, except to wonder if it were the problem. During the focus group and interview stages of the consulting visit, however, their misgivings surfaced and a clear pattern emerged.

What is very clear is that both SS classes and small groups can be social micro-communities. Both can offer support for their constituents. Both require leaders that are willing to act as a pastor toward their groups. Now the differences between classes and groups can be described simply: classes are usually held on-premises with strict start and stop times, whereas groups are often held off-premises and hold meetings that are longer, with more casual start and stop times. Also, classes usually expect to stick to a teaching plan. Groups feel more free to follow the moods and needs of their members present in the meeting.

The resolution of this kind of dilemma is to pursue a strategy of growing more volunteer leaders for all programs. Waiting for new talent to show up in the Pastor's Orientation for New Members is not an adequate strategy for churches that are serious about pursuing growth. More new leaders must be cultivated from within the ranks of the current membership. Making disciples of members who will step up into the leadership team is mandatory.

The task of recruitment of new leaders was often the responsibility of only a very few people in a congregation. For example, the pastoral staff, the SS superintendent, and perhaps the chairperson or members of a nominating committee. The number of leaders needed is so great that these few are simply not numerous enough to solicit the recruits needed. From the vantage point of seeing these leader shortages in churches of all types, I am convinced that ***the only sensible way to assure an adequate supply of new leaders is to find and develop them from within.*** The work force for recruiting and cultivating new leaders is already in place, but largely unrecognized. The best people in your congregation to spot and train new leadership talent are your current crop of active leaders! Mobilize your current leaders to help with this task and you enormously increase your potential for creating new leaders.

## **Strategy to Enlarge the Leadership Team**

The challenge, then, is to find a way to effectively bring your current leaders on board with the strategy to enlarge the leadership team. After several years of experimentation, it is now clear that some very simple methods, consistently used, can break the drought of the leader supply in a congregation.

**The first step** is to gently renegotiate the role of your current leaders to include bringing an *apprentice* alongside as they serve. A new role, that of leader-in-training, needs to be inserted into the alphabet of volunteer workers in your congregation. If you can, envision a church in which every team, group, committee, board and class leader has a place for preparing someone who can learn what they do and be available to replace them in serving. In such a church, every leader would become also a leader-maker! Current leaders could commission the newly emerging talent to take over their jobs while they take a break or launch out to undertake new missions! Or, new talent could be transferred and assigned to other areas of leadership need with various ministry programs. This is the most certain way to break out of the zero sum game -- to develop as many leaders again as you now have.

In virtually every congregation I have studied, most of the work has been done by the tired 10%. These diligent souls work with two and three and four hats apiece, sacrificing much and complaining only a little. One of their complaints is the shortage of laborers. In the same congregations I have detected the presence of another group as large as the tired ones. This second group is an invisible army of potential workers. The invisible are not as assertive as the tired. They stand back and watch for a suitable invitation to help with something that they feel is within their range of ability. One look at the tired and they know that whatever it takes to wear oneself out as the tired do is not within their makeup. Many of these invisible ones are very capable. What they lack is a reasonable pathway of entry into service that assures their success. They learn first by watching, then by doing, while having some experienced person nearby for reassurance. Once solidly enrolled, they serve with distinction and faithfulness. They are all about us, awaiting the challenge and the invitation. They make the zero sum game unnecessary. These potential workers are ripe for invitations and challenges into apprentice roles. They require good examples of how to minister effectively and they need good relational support while they are learning to lead. Once in place, these leaders training as apprentices can become the backbone of tomorrow's volunteer workforce.

*This reinterpretation of the role of your leaders to include apprenticing is the most important step.* Vision casting for this can eventually lead to adopting the practice in most of your groups, teams and classes. But we have learned that this practice, like any new practice, can produce a firestorm of resistance. Therefore I recommend that it be introduced in such a way as to minimize increasing the anxiety, and the resistance, of your current leaders.

**The methodology for inducing change** that I have found to be least anxiety causing has two components: avoiding making premature announcements and coaching leaders individually until they have apprentices in place. In most cases, they can identify probable apprentices within their groups. Where this is not found, they can be assisted to find suitable apprentice talent, which is parachuted in from elsewhere in the congregation. Only after the majority of current leaders have apprentices in place should announcements be made about the presence of apprentice leaders as the standard.

### **Tools to enhance coaching skills**

Working with pastoral staff in churches of various sizes has led me to observe that staff skills differ over a very wide range, when it comes to coaching current leaders to obtain apprentices. Some pastoral staff are very skilled and effective. Others appear to be virtually clueless. Coaching is not native to them and few of the staff have been exposed to training to help them with skill acquisition in coaching. Responding to this apparent deficiency, I began directing my clients to test various instruments to speed the coaching skill acquisition process. We developed, revised and extensively tested two tools that have proven to be very effective. *The first tool is a series of nine commitments*. It has been published in two formats: a video library and a book. These commitments expand the role of group leaders by formally renegotiating what is expected of them under the nine topics, as they are tutored through them. *The other tool, an interview structure for coaching*, also deals with these issues, which include finding and nurturing an apprentice to maturity.

### **Nine Commitments which define the role of a group or class leader**

These are found in my book, “Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership,” which is based on the teaching in my video series: “Nine Facets of an Effective Small Group Leader.”

1. I will be available for debriefing interviews with the church staff.
2. I will recruit my replacement(s) before we begin meeting with the group, and I will help my replacement(s) develop an ability to lead.
3. I will reach out between meetings, cultivating both old and new contacts.
4. I will prepare my mind and heart for our meetings and will include my apprentice(s) in the process.
5. I will conduct meetings that encourage believers and accept seekers.
6. I will bring group members to worship for the church's weekend services.
7. I will serve others with my gifts, knowledge, energy, time and money, conscious that my greatest influence may occur as I set an example.
8. I will make time to build acquaintances with unbelievers, serving them at their points of struggle.
9. I will meet regularly with God in private prayer.

**The tutoring process** for the commitments is guided by a series of video recordings that were designed to be viewed with a pastoral staff member or other coach. Each of the learning sessions are broken up into equal parts of viewing and discussing the material.

**The coaching process** is guided by a structured interview tool of some twenty-eight questions. It is used to establish a quality encounter between group leaders and their coaches that results in affirmation and mutual problem solving.

Information about these tools is available by e-mail request from <carlgeorge@metachurch.com> or by calling 1-909-376-8391.

### **Ten Practical Ways to Support Ministry Leaders**

1. Draw up a wall chart with a circle for each class or group under your supervision. Make each circle of a size that is proportional to its average attendance when the group/class meets. Label it with its class name and teacher/leader name.
2. Mark each circle with a symbol to indicate the presence of apprentice leaders. I use a separate "Xa" to indicate each apprentice leader in a group. This symbol combines the Roman numeral for 10, which is the average size of classes and groups, with the first letter of the word apprentice. Some groups have several apprentices, especially before birthing a new group, so I recognize them by placing several "Xa" symbols in or near their group's circle.
3. Maintain a chart on which each group is listed. (See sample chart below.) Post the date when its teacher or leader was interviewed by a supervisor or coach, using a structured interview questionnaire to ensure thoroughness. Because monthly columns are displayed, you can see at a glance how long ago the most recent interviews were conducted.
4. Summarize and report regularly to church staff and boards your progress in interviewing leaders and placing apprentices.

(A format that clearly shows how to visualize trends in these two measures can be downloaded free from my web site at [www.metachurch.com](http://www.metachurch.com). Take a look at "Tracking Progress of Coaching of Group Leaders.")

5. Use a structured interview format to develop a helping relationship with each leader in a monthly one-on-one appointment. A copy is attached below.

If for any reason it is not still attached you may request a free reproducible sample questionnaire by e-mail from [carlgeorge@metachurch.com](mailto:carlgeorge@metachurch.com). You also may use 1-909-433-2129 to send your request by fax, or instantly download a copy by visiting the author's web site: [www.metachurch.com](http://www.metachurch.com).

6. Use the "3-2-1 training method" (three seats, two interviews, one reflection time)" to produce more skilled coaches. In this method, one seat is for a coach to model an interview with a group leader, who is seat two. The third seat is for a coach-in-training, who will conduct a second interview with a second group leader while being observed by the modeling coach. Reflections on these interviews are then shared by the coach and coach-in-training.
7. Help your leaders reinterpret their roles to include expecting to be coached, and to develop apprentice leaders from within their groups by sharing and keeping in touch between meetings. Excellent tools for this include my book

Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership. In addition to the reading approach, a newly developed method called Tutored Video Instruction (TVI) has been tapped to create the video training library called Nine Facets of Effective Small Group Leaders. It is used as a guest lecturer for viewing by groups of any size. It was designed for use with small clusters of two to five leaders-in-training, which would move through the concepts in five-minute segments.

8. Utilize spiritual gifts identification tools to help prospective class teachers and group leaders discover their special abilities and explore how to apply these abilities in preparing for class and group leadership. (A selection of these tools can be obtained by calling the ICLDE in British Columbia at 1-800-804-0777 who are publishers of the original Houts Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire and the Wesley version of the same.)
9. Set up a liaison with new member classes so that experienced leaders and prospective leaders alike are oriented to your apprentice program as an entry point for their volunteer service as a leader. This is important because apprentices must be parachuted in to all children's and youth classes and the one in five adult groups which are unlikely to find an apprentice arising from within their memberships.
10. Arrange times for coaches and teachers/leaders to huddle together for mutual support and instruction. This can easily be done in breakouts from larger volunteer leader training events, which have classically be dominated by staff lectures, but which would be strengthened by giving equal time to let teacher/leader coaching groups talk-it-over and for sharing the journey.

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### **The 3-2-1 Coaching Method**

The catalytic mechanism for multiplying leaders is a monthly one-on-one interview with each of your group leaders. These interviews create a context for coaching and help keep leaders focused on apprenticing rising leaders.

The main reason why your leaders do not get the coaching they need is found in the shortage of coaches with skills. Even pastors who know how to coach through an interview often do not know how to pass their skills on to volunteers who can become coaches and help them carry the coaching load.

With the method advocated, you can take a two-hour block of time and arrange to use it for a coach-training session, using two actual live interviews to open a coach-training exercise, which is capped with a talk-it-over between the lead coach and the coach-in-training.

We call this method "3-2-1 Coaching." *Three* chairs, *two* interviews, *one* reflection time, all within a two hour time period!

**A Coach Training Method that can work for you!**

**3 chairs + 2 interviews + 1 coach-to-coach reflection**

FIRST 45 MINUTES – INTERVIEW #1

COACH TRAINER — models an interview, using the structured interview questionnaire  
 COACH-IN-TRAINING — observes it  
 GROUP LEADER # 1 — is interviewed

SECOND 45 MINUTES – INTERVIEW #2

COACH TRAINER — observes the interview  
 COACH IN TRAINING — conducts the interview using the same structured interview questionnaire  
 GROUP LEADER # 2 — is interviewed

FINAL 30 MINUTES -- REFLECTION

COACH TRAINER and COACH-IN-TRAINING — affirm & reflect  
 INTERVIEWS WITH LEADERS #1 & #2 ARE RECALLED — progress is celebrated and improvements for “next time” are proposed

**Charting one-on-one interviews from month to month.**

Note the date of each interview in the appropriate cell. You can also record select summary data in the same cell, such as number of active apprentices and attendance. Interviews not conducted within a given month will appear as a blank cell, for easy recognition of a missed opportunity.

Group	Group Leader	Coach	Staff	Month 1	Month 2	Month <i>n</i>
<i>Men-1</i>	<i>Bill Bayer</i>	<i>Todd</i>	<i>Mack</i>	<i>10-12-00</i> <i>2/12</i>	<i>11-9-00</i> <i>2/11</i>	
<i>Teens</i>	<i>Bob Barkley</i>	<i>Todd</i>	<i>Mack</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>11-7-00</i> <i>0/10</i>	

# Structured Interview for Group/Team Leader Debriefing

## Part A. Summary and numerical data for a selected meeting within the month

*About this INTERVIEW: [Note: Coach is to ask questions and make notes about answers.]*

Date interview conducted: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Is this person the usual Coach of this Leader? Y/N

Group/Team Leader being interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

*For starters, let's clearly identify the GROUP or TEAM under your leadership:*

Name of group/team: \_\_\_\_\_

**1** For how many meetings have you led this group, since it organized or multiplied? \_\_\_\_\_

*Let's choose a recent MEETING to focus on for our interview:*

**2** When was your last group/team meeting? (date) \_\_\_\_\_ [Was it held in your home? Y/N]

**3** How many meetings ago did a Coach or Staff member visit your group/team meeting?

0=never \_\_\_\_\_

**4a** How many weeks since your last extended conversation with your coach? 0=never \_\_\_\_\_

**4b** How many weeks since your last meeting with other leaders where reports were taken? 0=never \_\_\_\_\_

[NOTE: In order to keep the focus on ministry to people, you may wish to establish rapport before you gather the remaining numerical data. To establish rapport around ministry issues, skip ahead and use questions 17-28 next, and afterward return to complete these questions!]

*Let's take a quick survey of leadership development prospects:*

**5** How many *apprentices* do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

[ + What did each of them do in the meeting?]

**6** How many of your people are actively involved in *pre-apprentice* assignments? \_\_\_\_\_

*What about those who were PRESENT at your MEETING?*

**7** How many were **present** at the meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

(Do not include children who were provided babysitting.)

**8** For how many children of those **present** were babysitting arrangements provided? \_\_\_\_\_

**9** How many in the meeting were **present** with you in a major worship service the previous week? \_\_\_\_\_

**10** How many seekers/newcomers were **present** in the meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

[Follow up questions that are easy to insert here:

+ What did you do to put them at ease?

+ How well did it work?]

**11** How many of those **present** were guests? \_\_\_\_\_

(Guests = visitors who clearly are not prospects)

*Now, let's talk about the people on your prayer/concerns LIST:*

**12** How many names are on your whole **list**, including regular attenders, occasional attenders and prospects? \_\_\_\_\_

**13** How many on your **list** have not yet attended? \_\_\_\_\_

**14** How many of those on your **list** have made professions of faith within the past year, or since you became the group leader (or multiplied by starting another group)? \_\_\_\_\_

**15** How many on your **list** have been baptized since you became leader or multiplied? \_\_\_\_\_

**16** How many people from your **list** were you in touch with between this meeting we are discussing and the one before? \_\_\_\_\_

(Questions 17-28 continued on page two)

**Part B. (continued) Group/team leader report narratives: revisit these areas each month.**

- 17 What are some good things that have happened to people in your care?
- 18 What are some of the challenges faced by those within your care?
- 19 What unresolved conflicts exist between any member of your group and others? What biblical principles are you following to help resolve it?
- 20 What are your concerns about your ability to minister to them? With what special needs should Pastoral staff help?
- 21 What progress are you seeing in your apprentice? How are you developing him/her?
- 22 What progress are you having in getting people involved in pre-apprentice assignments? With whom are you working and how?
- 23 How are you going about helping your group/team members identify and use their talents and spiritual gifts?
- 24 What Bible study topics and materials are you using and finding helpful? What methods are you using?
- 25 Who among your acquaintances are you approaching to participate in your group/team? How will you do it?
- 26 Into what serving opportunities are you leading your group?
- 27 What areas of your own self-management do you desire to improve?
- 28 What's next for your group?

Follow-up needed: [Prayer requests; Resources required]

(Pray with the Group/Team Leader about their concerns and give thanks and a blessing.)