

*Aim of this session: To understand the importance and pitfalls of training and discipling for leadership in ministry and to prepare the MAP'ers as they prepare to leave MAP behind and continue in ministry in the years ahead.*

[Begin by Praying]

The National Church Life Survey (NCLS) is taken every five years. In 2006 around 400,000 church attenders from over 5000 parishes in 22 denominations took part.

This question appeared last time:

*Which of the following ministries have most influenced your growth in ministry skill? (Mark up to 2)*

- *My current parish*
- *A previous parish*
- *Beach mission*
- *A school based Christian Group (e.g. ISCF, Crusaders)*
- *A University-based Group*
- *A Theological/Bible College*
- *Conferences (e.g. Katoomba Conv)*
- *Another ministry not listed above*
- *Not applicable to me*

Exercise: [ask the group] – which two would you choose?

The result – which was fairly consistent across gender, age, education level, faith identity, marital status, and stage of life are fairly consistent.

- *My current parish – 52%*
- *A previous parish - 28*
- *Beach mission - 6*
- *A school based Christian Group (e.g. ISCF, Crusaders) - 7*
- *A University-based Group - 7*
- *A Theological/Bible College – 5*
- *Conferences (e.g. Katoomba Conv) - 9*
- *Another ministry not listed above - 10*
- *Not applicable to me – 15*

*(NOTE: the respondents could pick more than one option so results don't add to 100%)*

A fairly distinct indicator that it is in the parish that most ministry skills are learnt - highlighting the importance of training in the parish setting. Interestingly when I have done this exercise with Theological students – many of whom did MAP (or the MTS equivalent) – it was the Uni-based group that was highest (parish has never been less than second position).

The apostle Paul teaches us that one of the primary tasks of the minister is to equip the church members for ministry – Ephesians 4:11-13

- *It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

## Training

One problem with ‘training’ is that it is such a general category that it divides people – some are all for it, so totally against it and some are just tired of hearing about it.

There is also a little bit of confusion as to what is meant by the term ‘training’ especially for the local parish. Training fits for the sports club, or the theological college but is not always something that is seen as a key part of what you do at church.

The confusion may have something to do with the different ways you use the word ‘training’. In English, training is usually thought of as a task which aims to increase the level of proficiency of a person. The athlete trains in order to perform better, the professional trains in order to be more effective or efficient.

And when we turn to church, the Christian trains – why?

- To be more proficient at reading their Bible, or welcoming, or evangelizing or Bible study leading?
- Yes but seems to be too narrow. Can training be more than just growing in skills?

The New Testament seems to talk about training a little more broadly:

### 1. Instruction for godliness

Four times in the New Testament the word **gumna,zw** (gumnaze) is used to talk about training.

- Look up these passages: 1 Tim 4:7; Hebrew 5:14.
- Paul uses the word when instructing Timothy and says – ‘have nothing to do with profane myths and old wives talks – *train yourself in godliness*’ (1 Tim 4:7)
- In Hebrews it is used twice (in 5:14) to uphold those who are mature in faith ‘*for the mature, for those whose facilities have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil*’
- It is also used in Hebrews 12 – (which I’ll refer to later) to uphold training in the light of discipline.
- In those cases – rather than talking about skills, training is about *instruction in godliness*.

The other word more often used for training is **paidei,a** (piedeia).

- 1 Tim 3:16 – all scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching for reproof for correction and *for training in righteousness* – again about instruction not in skills but righteousness.

Last the word **swfroni,zw** (sofrvizo) is used (only once in Titus 2:4) to speak of *training* – in the sense that women should teach and advise younger women (when loving their husbands)

- Christian training has something to do with sound doctrine and being instructed for growth in godly life.

### 2. A shared and imitated life

- Further to what is instructed is the manner in which it is instructed.
- It seems abundantly clear throughout the New Testament that what is taught and instructed is done in relationship and those who learn are called to imitate the one instructing.

- Jesus spends a great deal of time with his disciples and instructs in manner and tells them to 'go and do likewise' (Lk 10:37) – and time and time again the disciples are called to follow him.
- Paul (imitated Christ) pours his life into elders of the church he plants and into his brothers like Timothy and Titus – modeling a godly life and calls on them to model good works (in Christ).
  - To Timothy he says '*set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity*' (1 Tim 4:12)
  - To Titus he says '*Show yourself in all respects a model of good works and in your teaching show integrity gravity and sound speech that cannot be censured*' (Titus 2:7-8)
- Christian training is shared relationally and is about imitating Christ – such that the trainer is calling the trainee to adopt not only his instruction but his way of life.

*Illustration:*

17 Again (movie) – Zac Efron as a 37 year old is transformed to his 17 year old self and finds himself at school with his daughter and son. He sets about instructing and modeling how he wished he had lived – like the parent or older brother type figure.

So does the idea of relational modeling for godly instruction mean that training in the New Testament doesn't have anything to do with training courses or growing in ministry skills? No.

- The Bible in the context of sound doctrine and godly living does talk about practical abilities.
- All Christians are called to be able to defend what they believe (1 Peter 3:15).
- Christians are encouraged to '*spur one another on in love and good deeds*' (Heb 10:24).
- Bible leaders are ones who should have abilities to teach (1 Tim 3:2, Tit 1:9, 2 Tim 2:2) and manage (think of the practical gifts given in Rom 12:7-8) and care for his household (1 Tim 3:4)
- Skill and competences are not irrelevant. In fact in leaders they are necessary in communicating the gospel, shepherding a flock and leading a ministry.
- So keeping the gospel first and central, let's consider some *training mistakes*.
- My hope is that this will be helpful as you think about the importance you might place on ministry training in whatever capacity you move on to after MAP.

### Training Mistakes

#### 1. Assuming that people will cross the gap.

- One of the frustrations many pastors seem to have is the reluctance of people in their care to join them in some mission activities – e.g. Door knocking, Bible study leading, walk-up etc. Often the problem has little to do with the persons commitment but in fact has more to do with their expertise – but the gap between actual and desired is too large.

Where they are.

Where the Pastor wants them



- There could be all sorts of reasons why the person won't cross the gap
  - Unrepentant sin
  - Personality
  - But often it is training that helps bridges the gap.

#### 2. Not seeing training as a part of core ministry

- We should not train for the sake of training.

- Training should be part of what we do in ministry of the gospel.
- (As we heard) Paul reminds Timothy that he is to instruct those in his care '*nourishing them on the words of faith and of sound teaching*' (1 Tim 4:6-7) – and as he does that to train himself in godliness.
- Titus is instructed to teach and train older and younger men and women all so the Word of God is not discredited (Titus 2:1-10).
- Hebrews (12) speaks of discipline as that which is painful at first but yields the fruit of righteousness for those who are trained by it (12:11-12)
- Training may often feel inconvenient and impractical especially compared to the many urgent and important things that need to be dealt with – but if it doesn't happen at all a ministry runs the risk of treading water – and ultimately sinking.

**3. Not allowing ministry to occur unless the minister is involved.**

- Another way to express this – insecurity
- It stifles ministry and initiative
- We have to ensure that we hold the reigns but still let the carriage move!
- Fight to serve.

**4. Failure to discriminate!**

- Often pastors of congregations or leaders of large ministry groups have their sights set on the big and immediate picture.
- The most effective and long-term strategy is to discriminate and have your sights set somehow also on the small group – that is the potential leaders and future disciple makers.
- This is the sharp end of training – more specifically it is discipling.
- It is a pattern we see from Jesus with his disciples and Paul with his fellow workers like Timothy, Titus and Silas.
- Effective discipleship will find regular time for a small group of people whom you can pour time and energy into with the intention that they will stand alongside you in ministry and over the long term do the same for others.
- This does not mean ignoring everyone else, but does mean being protective of the time that you do give so that priority is given to those you are intentionally trying to grow – this may be by giving them greater access, building structures into the week that means that you protect the time with those key players, opening your life to them where others may not see.
- This is a core value of MAP. Imagine what would happen if this happened more.

**5. Not planning**

- There are times when formal training is not the key priority – so when is?
- Planning for when the right training should happen is a strategic and protective way to ensure training is not forgotten.
- Plan early,
- Plan over the long term
- Plan with the people you are training in mind.
- Then protect the time and the endeavor.

**6. Misunderstanding about the purpose of delegation**

- Good delegation is often connected with training (especially in a non-profit organization like the church). Asking others to do something that will help them grow in their ability or faith (which may also help you or your church) is a helpful way to bring both delegation and training together.
- If you think that delegation is about giving things to others to make your life easier, then do not be surprised if you are often frustrated with half completed jobs.
- Unlike the secular work-force the majority of people in churches are not paid to be there – they volunteer to do. That by very nature changes the way leaders should delegate.

**7. Failure to recognize that everyone is different and will operate differently.**

- There may be your way to do something – but that does not mean that his way of doing something will not achieve the same outcome. There are different roads to the same goal.

- The means is important but don't be so protective that you stifle energy simply because it is not the way you would do it.
- When someone does do something contrary to your method it does not mean your training is a waste of time.

**8. Expecting that someone else (the church, ES, the diocese, others) will train those in the congregation.**

- If you are the leader – you are the elder charged with the responsibility to shepherd the flock in your care and 1 Peter 5:1-2 charges you with the responsibility to exercise oversight – be that your discipleship group or your bible study or your youth group and in the future your congregation etc.
- You know the people in your care and you as the leader are a gift to your people.
- There should not be anyone who prays more for those in your care and their growth in godliness and ministry than you as their leader.
- As part of that responsibility you need to ensure you are working out how to grow people in their works of service so that they can specifically serve others around them.
- Relying on someone else to do all the training of those in your care gives away a responsibility which is actually yours.

**9. Expecting that you will do all the training of those in your care.**

- In contrast to the point before – monopolizing the training of your people (unless you are an expert at all things) will narrow the opportunity for those you are training.
- Working out how to best use organizations, conferences, training packages, colleges to assist you in the training of your flock will allow you to build a good diet for your people.
- But as said before – don't give all your training away.

**10. Not ending and sending (esp. in regard to discipling).**

- Discipling someone is a great privilege under God.
- You grow in love, knowledge and partnership for a mate or brother/sister in Christ.
- You share your life, emotions, secrets, struggles, joys and hopes.
- It becomes one of the best and heartfelt and real relationships of your week and world.
- But it has to end!
- There is nothing that feels right about ending.
- It will just about kill you to do it!
- But there is something inherently right about ending – because it is about sending (Matt 28:18-20)
- We are in kingdom growing business and we need to take what we have learnt and pass it on to others (2 Tim 2:2).
- It will not mean that the friendship ends.
- It will not mean the ministry ends.
- It will not mean that our party in heaven will not happen.
- It will mean that others will be brought into the ministry and grow and in time be sent.
- It will mean that disciples are created.

### **Developing a Training Plan**

- The yearly planner – when are good times to train?
- The Training setting – The Congregation to the Kingdom
- What do you want in a training plan – Godly Character, Gospel Conviction, Ministry Skills
- Expectations – set the limit and set the expectation

[Ask the group]

1. *For those who have been doing MAP for a year already - Has MAP achieved this goal? How or where has it failed?*
1. *For those just starting – What will you intentionally need to put in place to ensure MAP achieves the training goals you have – not just for you but for those you ministry too?*
2. *What will you do to ensure this year of MAP does not become a distant memory and a forgotten experience (or a waste of time)?*

### ***Final Challenge:***

*Go out and find two or three or four gals/guys to Leadership disciple. And disciple them and in time send them out with the same challenge. And then find another two or three or four gals/guys and do it again, and again, and again....all to the glory of God.*

### 3. Who are you starting with in 2013?

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***And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Phil 1:9-11)***