

## About the Authors



### Laurence Singlehurst

A regular speaker at major events, such as Spring Harvest, and cell conferences worldwide, Laurence has also worked with numerous churches in the UK. However, his particular passion is equipping churches to reach their communities, with an emphasis on network evangelism, which is empowered by cell church structures.

Laurence dropped out of school in the early 1970s, and while travelling the world he was confronted with the love of Christ through members of the Jesus People movement, who subsequently led him to the Lord.

He is the author of *Evangelism Toolkit*, *Sowing Reaping Keeping*, *Loving the Lost* and *Beyond the Clouds*.



### Liz West

Liz West works with Cell UK Network Church which has been in cells for over ten years. The opportunity to plant cell church has given her experience in leading and supervising cell groups through all the stages of cell life.

Leading a group of local church members through the process of changing values and structures has equipped her to help other leaders through written resources, conferences and consultations.

# Cell Planting

## Putting the 'Go' back into Church

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# CellUK Magazine

Helping you discover working principles from cell churches throughout the UK and world-wide.

With its combination of inspiring articles and practical ideas for cell leaders, cell supervisors and church leaders, it is an invaluable tool for anyone involved in cell-based church life.



## KEY AREAS COVERED:

- ✓ Cell leading
- ✓ Youth cells
- ✓ Stories of churches transitioning
- ✓ Student cells
- ✓ Children's cells

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## Other Resources



### **Sowing Reaping Keeping**

*by Laurence Singlehurst*

The Christian gospel is the best story ever told. Yet many of those who hear it perceive it as a threat. Laurence Singlehurst believes that much of the threat would be removed if Christians would respect and understand the people they are approaching. This short, crisp and often humorous book is full of seeds of wisdom for those who long to make permanent disciples for Jesus. Discover the reasons why evangelism may have been difficult in the past and learn new ideas to help you share your faith in a relevant way.



### **12.5 Steps to Spiritual Health**

*by Howard Astin*

This is a powerful course for new Christians and mature believers alike, designed to clear the rubbish out of our lives and help us grow towards spiritual maturity. Howard takes us through each of the steps and gives instructions at the end of each chapter to enable us to move forward and deal with the issues that will surface. Our promise is freedom in Christ. 12.5 Steps to Spiritual Health is a valuable tool to help us make this promise a reality.



### **Journey Guides**

The journey guide is a review tool to help us understand where we are on our Christian journey. A Journey Guide for Growing Christians and A Journey Guide for New Believers are invaluable as people grow in their faith and move towards leadership. They are laid out in an easy to use format and are designed to be reviewed with a sponsor.

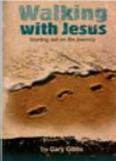
## Other Resources



### Walking Together

by Liz West and Trevor Withers

This booklet looks at lessons we can learn from the way Jesus worked with His disciples and how the Early church understood discipleship. It outlines ways that we can both become and make effective disciples in our 21st century culture, using current metaphors and hands-on material. It is focused on one-to-one relationships that need to be in place for good spiritual formation to occur.



### Walking with Jesus

by Gary Gibbs

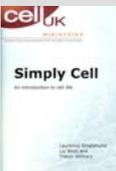
Designed for new Christians, each section is packed with principles by which to live. The interactive style not only helps to apply the ideas, but also gives energy and confidence to use them. This book will help the reader more clearly define God's plan for their life.



### 4Life

by Mark Powley with contributions from Liz West and Trevor Withers

4Life is an introduction to a different way of living, as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Like all the best journeys this book will leave you changed by the time you finish. It's written with spaces for you to record your reactions as you go through it. 4Life has been developed for new Christians or anyone seeking to refresh their faith and go deeper with God. It is full of honesty, passion and humour, and seeks to give a solid foundation for practical Christian living in the worldwide church of God.



### Simply Cell

by Laurence Singlehurst, Liz West and Trevor Withers

What it stays on the cover is what this book is about. It explains cell in a dynamic yet simple way. Suitable for anyone about to join a cell whether they are from Alpha or existing church members who are new to cell. This booklet will also encourage long-term cell people.

# Introduction

## Putting the 'Go' back into church

There has always been a challenge for the followers of Jesus to find ways of responding to the final command he gave to his disciples - to go into the entire world and make disciples. In the recent past the church turned the 'go' into something that specialised people did. Missionaries were sent out to various people groups, usually abroad and church leaders had the responsibility at home. However it seems to me that the Holy Spirit, through different ways and at different times, seeks to bring the 'go' back to the whole church, not only challenging leaders and special missionary types, but seeking to make the 'go' relevant to everybody.

In the discipleship model that Jesus used with his own disciples, he sent them out in pairs to find people of 'peace' who were open to them and their message. He wanted all his disciples to be involved and gave them clear guide lines (Luke 10:1-12). They were to 'go' and look for people they could relate to, who were open to them and perhaps to their message. Having found these people Jesus instructed his disciples to stay with them, healing their sick – which we might describe as meeting their needs both practically and supernaturally. Then was the time for speaking, sharing the good news.

A picture that Jesus used when speaking to his disciples about the way he wanted them to live and be involved in the 'go' was about being yeast in the flour when making bread (Luke 13:21). This was how he described the kingdom of God. We want people to encounter God. How can we be that yeast, making a difference, which enables people to hear and experience the gospel?

In the last few years the Holy Spirit seems to have been leading us

to this new (at least new to us) understanding that everybody needs to be involved in the 'go'. In our time, the most relevant way of doing this seems to be for us to build relationships with a network of friends, developing communities and taking the love of Christ with us. We seek to be involved with people, loving them unconditionally, regardless of whether they respond or not and yet to seek their spiritual welfare.

This challenge for us to 'go' is also relevant in the places where we work. Every Christian is to consider themselves as one who brings 'salt and light' (Matthew 5:13 -15) to their workplace. We are to take Christian values to work and live them out year in, year out, in a way which challenges the culture of the day. This is to be a lifestyle which can be extremely costly and sacrificial and yet fantastically beneficial.

We saw in the 1990s a new emphasis to 'go' in terms of church planting. This certainly seemed to release a great deal of energy into the body of Christ in this country and around the world. It drew people who felt they wanted to take on the challenge of church leadership. We want to honour all that has been achieved and that is still happening. With this idea of planting new cell groups we might be starting from a different place on the map, but the destination could be the same.

Jesus called his disciples his friends, not his servants (John 15:15). As friends of God we have the privilege of knowing the father's business. We can also be the relational link between God and others. We can be in a place to hear from God and then act on what he is saying, both as individuals and as communities. The challenge for us is to hear and then to 'go' to create transformational communities that will impact our society and culture in such a way that we can say 'the kingdom of God is near'.

As we have developed this idea of cell planting we have felt strongly that one of the gaps you see in churches is young adults, the

**project POSTCODE Nottingham**

*Come, let us rebuild the city*

**Sample data**

Project Postcode is a city wide collaboration in which a network of small groups are mobilised to pray for the postcode neighbourhoods in which they live. The vision is to work and pray for a day when Nottingham becomes known for its good qualities, its positive spirit and Godly values.

*Information for postcode area*

**N G 5 8 F U**

**N G 5 8 F U**

Here is a list of all of the people who live in your postcode neighbourhood, harvested from the 2007 electoral roll.

[BARBARA A ALDERSON](#) 10 BAKER AVENUE ARNOLD ..  
[TRAVIS J ALDERSON](#) 10 BAKER AVENUE ARNOLD ..  
[DANIEL SLACK](#) 106 BAKER AVENUE ARNOLD ..  
[JENNIFER SLACK](#) 106 BAKER AVENUE ARNOLD ..  
[KEITH MILLER](#) 108 BAKER AVENUE ARNOLD ..  
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[NICHOLAS P HYDE](#) 12 BAKER AVENUE ARNOLD ..  
[JEFFREY S TOMLE](#) 18 BAKER AVENUE ARNOLD ..  
[MARIE TOMLE](#) 18 BAKER AVENUE ARNOLD ..  
[ROSALIND HANCOCK](#) 2 BAKER AVENUE ARNOLD ..  
[GILLIAN WHITE](#) 20 BAKER AVENUE ARNOLD ..  
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[SUSAN I FISHER](#) 26 BAKER AVENUE ARNOLD ..  
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[MARGARET A NEWTON](#) 30 BAKER AVENUE ARNOLD ..  
[JAMES P SHELTON](#) 32 BAKER AVENUE ARNOLD ..

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[DONALD S CURRIE](#) 40 BAKER AVENUE ARNOLD ..  
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**sample data**

Whilst it's vitally important to pray for your postcode neighbourhood don't forget to pray for the different people networks in which you are involved: your family friends, work colleagues, fellow students for example.

# Appendix 3

## Project Postcode

Some examples of material being used by Arnold Army, Nottingham for their Project postcode, more information can be found on the website [www.projectpostcode.org](http://www.projectpostcode.org).

**3 types of small group cell**

**1 praying cells**

A Praying Cell is a group of people who meet together in each other's homes for the purposes of edification and evangelism. This cell moves from house to house and so covers more than one postcode. In its ongoing prayer ministry it prays for people in each of the postcodes it visits.

Every cell is a praying cell

**2 planting cells**

A Planting Cell is a group of people who meet together in one cell member's home for edification and evangelism on a regular basis. This is with a view to focusing prayers on that one area. In supporting that cell member's influence in the area they hope to plant new cells in adjoining postcodes

Some cells are planting cells

**3 pioneering cells**

A Pioneering Cell is a group of people who move into a different geographical area to be with people who are not currently represented in their church. This is with a view to meeting there regularly for edification and evangelism and committing time, energy and resources to the people living there.

Some cells members form pioneering cells

20-30 year olds. We believe that one of the dynamics of the cell planting idea is to give some of our young adults a challenge to go and plant a cell amongst their friends. This idea is exciting for two reasons:

- ✓ *Judith Harris*, a well known Sociologist, puts a fantastic argument forward that peers reach peers - in fact most of us influence people a few years older and few years younger as we understand their language and culture. Therefore, there are less barriers to cross in helping them see the reality of Jesus and the Christian message.
- ✓ *The maturity question*. Over many years Youth With a Mission (YWAM) has released hundreds of young people into significant responsibility. It has seen that maturity is important but also that responsibility empowers young people to be mature. So, for example, when a young immature leader is given responsibility they pray more and read the Bible more.

Take a risk and empower some young, maybe less mature, 20-30 year olds who love Jesus and empower them to cell plant.

# Chapter 1

## The Idea of Cell Planting

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### What is cell planting?

It is the purpose of this booklet to suggest an innovative way to ‘go’, by planting new cell groups. This ‘go’ is for all of us and enables everyone to make a contribution. It allows ‘go’ to new groups of people and new geographical areas. It creates rhythms of life which enable us to do what God is asking of us. Because it involves us all, it provides a means of ‘go’ that does not say ‘leave your work’. This way enables many more to be involved as a result. It is something that can become part of your life as it is now. For the sake of this booklet we will call this ‘cell planting’.

Let us define what we are talking about:

*A cell plant is a new cell group which has been grown by a cell planting team reaching out through relationship to those in a geographical area or through their relational networks, often around a common interest.*

There seem to be as many ways of planting cell groups as there are people to plant them. This way of ‘going’ is highly adaptable because it depends on the relationships or potential relationships of the Christians involved. It responds to the needs of an area or of a group of people. It can be involved with different age groups, interest groups, geographical groups or a mixture of all these. However there needs to be a recognisable DNA in these groups which will result in future groups experiencing the same health as they multiply out. Cell DNA is about loving God, loving one another and loving others as the three strands of the DNA. The groups work from the specific values that are behind the cell idea. Described briefly these values are that Jesus is at the centre of all we do and that church is a community of believers where every member contributes, every member is maturing and everyone is involved in loving those outside the church.

definition of ‘disciple’.

Read Ephesians 4:17 – 5:21. From this very long passage work together to see what the attributes of a disciple of Jesus are. You could divide up the group into 2s and 3s and allocate different parts of the passage. You could then take a sheet of paper and draw a person in the middle (a stick man would do) and write around this person all these attributes the groups have discovered.

Encourage one another by asking the group to share where they have seen themselves grow in these things.

Refer back to the Welcome question to see what has helped you grow as a Christian. What would be helpful to put in place now to enable cell members to mature as disciples?

### Witness

How will you as a cell group help others to join your community and grow in their Christian lives?

## 10. The way ahead

### Welcome

What has God been speaking to you about the cell plant? What is exciting you about it and what is daunting you?

### Word and Witness

Goal: The purpose of this session is to unearth the expectations of the group around cell planting and to face together the challenges that are coming up.

Commitment of individuals – what is each cell member committing to? Encourage the group to talk openly and honestly about the task ahead and encourage them to make a commitment to their specific contribution.

You could use Proverbs 3:5-6 as the basis of a time of commitment as a group and personally, laying hands on one another as an act of commissioning as in Acts 13:3. Finish by praying for this new venture and the people you are hoping to reach.

## 8. Quality relationships

### Welcome

Describe someone who has helped you along the way. How were they able to do that?

### Word

Goal: to encourage quality relationships able to withstand the challenges of cell planting and to reach out in love

Read 1 Corinthians 13 (in your chosen version) and James 1: 19-27

What do you discover from these verses and others that you might know about how we should treat one another?

Create an agreement together that you will:

- Forgive one another readily
- Seek to help and support one another
- Find ways to communicate with one another
- Keep confidentiality and speak positively about each other
- anything else you want to add

Break into twos. What do you find particularly difficult in relationships? What is your next step forward? Spend time praying for each other.

### Witness

How are you doing in loving your neighbour? Have a time of feedback and stories in order to follow on from session 5. Keep praying for these people. You are aiming for this to become a way of life.

## 9. Discipling new believers

### Welcome

What has helped you to grow as a Christian?

### Word

Goal: Hopefully you will be seeing people become Christians through the cell plant. Now is a good time to stop and reflect on the things that help people to grow as disciples.

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? Work together to create a

Several churches have been pioneering the planting of new cell groups as a means to reach either a geographical area or a group of people who have something in common which enables us to relate to them together, for example an age group or a group gathered around an interest. The idea is developing and we are learning from each other. We want to share this experience and wisdom in order to encourage the growth of this way of 'going'. We want to challenge cell leaders and cell churches to be more effective in planting new cells that are connected to their church. Our aim is to share the thinking and some of the practices of cell planting.

Cell planting gives people encouragement to go and experiment and explore. This may feel unusual and not a little uncomfortable. We need to approach this free from the idea that we have to get it right. Releasing people to go can be messy. Creating a safe environment for them to do this means developing a culture where it is good to try even if sometimes that means risking failure. Jesus took this risk with his disciples, sending them out with a strategy, but into new experiences (Luke 10: 1-12). He was not phased when they were out of their depth with a problem that had come up (Mark 9:14-29).

These cell plants have as their objective to grow from the planting team of at least three, to eight or 10 people. Jesus sent out the disciples in teams of two. These teams went out and came back to him. We are seeing that the team needs to have a minimum of three people who can create a community into which others can be invited. Bill Beckham has encouraged the thought that community begins with three as a reflection of the community in the Trinity. The dynamic is different when it is based on building a new community amongst a group of people or in a locality. This community grow a normal, functioning cell, which holds to the values of cell and have the DNA we have talked about. The existing planters continue as cell leaders until they have trained up a new leader or move on to plant another cell group. Or they could then take a well earned rest! We would imagine that this process could take between one and three years, but would depend on the cell planting vision and the level of relationship already in place.

In the past, churches who have planted new churches have thought in terms of finance, how much will it cost. They have needed to give away leadership to the new situation. One obvious advantage of cell planting is that there is less cost involved than in church planting, because the team of

planters are not full time. With cell planting the costs for the church are in terms of supporting the new initiative through relationship and time. The church has a responsibility to provide support for the plant. The cells in their turn relate to the church for worship, youth and children's work and training. Because cell planting has a very clear and focussed goal it is something that we believe will excite people and enable them to reach a goal that is achievable.

So what are some of the compelling benefits of cell planting?

- ✔ **It costs nothing.** We are empowering two people already in our congregations and in cells to go and plant a new cell amongst their friends or a geographic area and obviously they continue on with their jobs or whatever they are involved in.
- ✔ **Its empowering.** It gives people a sense that they can respond to the word of God they have, they might feel a burden for their friends or their geographical area and we are releasing them and empowering them in that dream.
- ✔ **Its flexible.** We can do one cell plant or two to three depending on our resources. It can be a geographical or people focused cell.
- ✔ **Success is quite obtainable.** We have learnt in the past from church planting that reaching the first ten is the easiest part of this strategy; therefore, all you ever do is the easiest bit! Two to three people seeking to grow a cell to ten, job done.
- ✔ **It releases a new level of leader.** In our churches we have people who could very easily look after 10 people but they don't have the skills or the maturity to be church planters, say, looking after 80 to 90 people. They are not good at leading public meetings, they are not bible or worship teachers but they are relational and ready to take a risk. So we empower and give responsibility to a group of people who perhaps have been an underused resource in the past.
- ✔ **It creates a greater sense of mission.** Hopefully we are already empowering every church member to reach out but there is something quite exciting and risky about praying for two people and launching

How would you help someone who is struggling to pray? Take the rest of the time available to talk through the difficulties around prayer and encourage people to set a realistic goal for developing their prayer life individually and with the cell group.

### **Witness**

Catch up on how cell members have 'loved their neighbours' during the week. Spend this time praying together for the future cell plant in whatever way your group finds most encouraging

## **7. Unity and Encouragement**

### **Welcome**

What or who has been a source of encouragement to you lately? Say why this encouraged you

### **Word**

Goal: to establish unity of purpose for those who are cell planting and those who are sending them out.

Bible verses: John 17: 20 – 23, Hebrews 10:23 -25

Read Jesus' unanswered prayer for all believers. Why has this prayer not been answered? Create a list of those things which build unity and another list of those things which break unity.

Why was unity so important to Jesus?

Revisit the reasons why you are cell planting to ensure that everyone is on board with the vision and plans.

Where are the danger points for us as a group which might threaten our unity as we plant a new cell group? How can we guard against this?

Encouragement: Read Hebrews 10:23-25 and spend some time encouraging one another by thinking of all those things you have going for you as you cell plant. You could do this on a regular basis.

### **Witness**

Pray for those who you want to reach through the cell plant. Lift them to God and ask him for his strategy to reach them.

community? Add these thoughts to your sheet. Remember our motivation is love and our means in through the gifts God has given us.

## 5. Sacrificial love

### Welcome

What one thing especially makes you feel loved? What one thing especially makes you feel unloved?

### Word

Goal: To highlight the need for our sacrificial love for one another and for those we are trying to reach.

Read 1 John 3:16 – 24.

If Jesus' love for us required his ultimate sacrifice, in what ways are we able to follow his example? Look at this passage in the light of the cell members lives. What does 'laying down our lives' mean to us today?

Look at those things which work against us, for example our culture of 'being happy', needing to give up our rights, the busyness of life, keeping a balance so we don't burn out.

Ask people to suggest the specific next step for them as they seek to grow in this area and pray for them.

### Witness

How are you going to 'love your neighbour' this week? Become accountable to one another in doing something specific

## 6. Prayer

### Welcome

What encouraging answers to prayer have you seen recently?

### Word

Goal: To establish prayer as a foundation of the cell plant. Encourage everyone to see the importance of prayer in everything we do and face the difficulties that they have when they come to pray.

Bible verse: 1 Tim 2:1

Where should be the place of prayer in our lives? Why is prayer so important?

What has been your experience of prayer on your own and in a group?

them into this new project and we as a church can get behind them as in the next two years they seek to establish this group.

## Questions for reflection

- 1 What would it be like for us to 'go', to be yeast which leavens the dough?
- 2 How can you make a difference which enables people to hear and experience the gospel?

# Chapter 2

## Catalysts that enable cell group planting

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We want to highlight the discoveries churches have made which have contributed to their effective cell plants. There do seem to be emerging some helpful principles.

### The right people

Planting a new cell group depends for its success on finding the right people to join the cell planting team. We will say more about this in the next chapter, but these people need to have a sense of being affirmed by God for this task. They also need to be people who can make relationships easily. The whole strategy depends on relationship and creating a community others want to join.

### A commitment to love and serve

Although this is a task, cell planting needs to be motivated by a love for people and a desire to build relationships in order to share the treasure they have found in knowing God. They begin and continue with the hope that some will begin a journey to Christ.

### Solid experience

The cell planting team need to have experience of leading a cell group, understanding the principles and practice of cell. They need to enjoy cell life with all its ups and downs and to understand the dynamic of working together from a loving, outward looking community.

### Clear understanding

The team need not only to understand cell principles, but also to have knowledge and experience of relational based evangelism. Planting a cell group depends on being able to build relational bridges which will enable sharing of the gospel.

### Word

Goal: to discover what cell members think community is like in the real world that they live in, in order to establish realistic expectations of the way this cell community is going to operate through the cell planting stage.

Read: Ephesians 4:1-6

What do these verses show us about the way we should relate to one another?

What do we find hard about this and how can we develop our community life together?

What is a realistic view of community for us as we go forward to planting a new cell group?

### Witness

Read: John 13.35

If loving one another is our 'secret weapon' in enabling others to see Jesus more clearly, how can we use the community of the cell group to draw others in so they can see this love that we have for one another?

Think about: what resources you have amongst you that you can share with others. Create an ideas list which you can come back to later when you are thinking about how you will make contact with new people.

## 4. Loving the lost

### Welcome

If you haven't done this before, share how you became a Christian or share stories of how others have drawn closer to Jesus through something you have done.

### Word and Witness

Goal: to study the passage in Luke 10: 1-12 as Jesus strategy for outreach

Read Luke 10: 1-12 together.

What steps did Jesus suggest to the disciples as he sent them out? Write these on a large sheet of paper leaving spaces between each step.

How have we experienced these steps in the past? Make notes under each step on your large sheet of paper

What do we need to do now to see this strategy working out in our cell

How do I see these values at work in my own life and in the life of our cell?

### **Witness**

Remind the group of the vision for the Cell group:

To love God, to love each other and to love the lost from Matt 22: 34-40.

In twos: what stops me loving the lost more? Pray for God's help to overcome these things.

## **2. Everyone making their contribution**

### **Welcome**

Working from the assumption that we have all been given gifts by God to use in his service, how have you used your gifts this week? What has been the outcome?

### **Word**

Goal: To encourage everyone to make their contribution to the cell plant with confidence

Read: 1 Corinthians 14:26

Affirm one another in the contribution you have seen each other make to the cell group by sitting each person in turn in the 'hot seat'. Take time to tell them what others have seen them contribute and then pray for them to enable them to be bolder and more effective in using these gifts.

### **Witness**

If we are to use our gifts in loving the lost, in twos answer the following questions and then pray for each other.

What holds us back from making that contribution?

What is our next step?

## **3. Creating community**

### **Welcome**

What has been your experience of being part of a community? Think of your family, work place, friendship group, church.

## **A clear objective**

We would say the clear objective of the cell plant should be to grow a cell group of 10 people who are part of a homogeneous group through a common interest or who live in a geographical area. A specific objective needs to be worked out with the team.

### **Clear connection**

The planting team needs to have a clear connection with the group who have been identified for planting amongst.

### **Cells grow from a project**

There needs to be some context for relationship, a common interest, a network of friendships or a neighbourhood.

## **Connection to the whole church**

The value system and purpose of the new cell group is in place because it is a part of a cell church so cell plants need to keep connected to the whole church. There is more reason for them to flourish when they have continued support from leaders, joining in with cell leaders meetings and ongoing training. The church can pray for them and encourage them.

### **Support from the congregation**

Connection through ongoing attendance at the congregational meetings is helpful for worship and teaching as well as for the children and youth work, although Children and young people may well be involved in the cell plant as well.

### **Good support – Cell and Small Group Coach**

An essential ingredient of this particular form of planting is that each new group has a coach who is the connection between the new group and the corporate, the mother church. This coach obviously needs to be someone who has some experience in cell and hopefully being missional and reaching out. It is envisioned that this coach would meet with the cell small group planters on perhaps a six weekly basis and there are a number of aspects to this role.

### *Encouragement*

There is no doubt that planting anything new will take a lot of sacrifice and time and energy on the part of the two people involved and therefore to have somebody who is there just to care for them, to ask “how are you doing?”, to pray with them will be a major encouragement and when you are encouraged you have more strength and energy.

### *Problem solving*

As the cell plant develops it will have problems, there will be questions that need thinking about, what is the appropriate way of reaching my community or the group of people we are focusing on? What are the best kinds of events to introduce the Christian message to them?

### *Quality of the forming group*

As people join the new cell, be they lost Christians that are found or new converts, an actual cell will begin to emerge and it is important, as with all cells, that the three strands of DNA, loving God, loving one another and loving the lost world (being missional) is at the heart of the forming cell.

The two planters will use whatever structure is appropriate for their group, they might decide the 4Ws of Welcome, Worship, Word and Witness will work, they might decide the 3Ps would be good, standing for Presence, Pressure and Purpose. They might decide they don't want a structure at all but intuitively keep to the DNA. Here the coach makes sure that what is created is in fact a cell and not a bible study or home group so that when this group reaches ten and it becomes a proper cell, no longer a cell plant, it will now multiply in the way that most cells hopefully do.

So the appointment of the right coach is an essential part of the strategy and without these coaches this new idea will be weaker. It also means that the people chosen to plant the new cell as we have mentioned earlier don't have to be fantastically mature they need to be very strong in terms of their missional dynamic but the coach from behind the scenes can bring in the Christian maturity if and when it is necessary.

## Appendix 2

### Ten Cell Outlines for preparing a group to plant a cell

Having decided that your cell group wants to plant a new group, you could use the following outlines to help prepare the group for the changes ahead.

#### 1. Establish the values

##### **Welcome**

What has happened in the last few weeks which has encouraged you in your relationship with God?

##### **Word**

Goal: Revisiting the foundations of cell group will make sure that what is planted will have the right DNA – loving God, loving one another, loving the lost.

- a. If someone wanted to know what a cell group was all about, what would you say to them? Write the answers that people give on a large sheet of paper so that you can build a picture of what a cell group is.
- b. Read: Acts 2:42 – 47

What was important to these early Christians? Use this passage to remind people of the values of cell – and to check that they know what a ‘value’ is.

##### **Cell Church Values**

- Jesus at the centre
- Community
- Every member growing
- Every member in ministry
- Every member reaching out

others. Starting one Sunday morning a month, Café Church has attracted a large number of de-churched people who were disillusioned with conventional church. Now meeting twice a month, Café Church is about to invite some of the thirty to forty regular attendees in to midweek small groups to continue their spiritual journeying together.

### **Walkout**

What could be easier? A group of Christians who enjoy walking invite their friends to this river cell. After welcome comes the word, when a short reflection is given. This forms the basis for natural conversations to take place during the walk. Their motto is “to walk in friendship with one another and with God”. At the end of the walk everyone receives a verse from scripture on a laminated card which is based on the reflection and encourages people to take what they have been thinking about with them into their week. As some of the members of walkout are also in lake cells, new friends naturally become part of that cells ‘oikos’, and relationship deepen as walkout members are invited to cell socials.

### **Supervision and Support**

Lake and River cell leaders share the same support structure of cell mentors and Area Pastors. However whilst lake cell leaders will come together mostly as a group for training and support, river leaders tend to meet on a one to one basis with a mentor or Area Pastor to ensure that the river cell develops in a way that is right for its missional focus but within the overall values of the wider church. Both lake and river leaders come together several times a year to share their stories, pray for each other and to maintain the vision and unity of the wider church.

### **Growth?**

Starting from a baseline of 45 cell groups in 2005, in 2008 we have 42 lake cells and 16 river cells, a total of 58 lake and river cells. Our mission is to build 100 lake and river cells by 2012. So far so good, but still much for us to learn as we continue to work out what it means to be a Lake and River Church.

*Mark Cockayne is Vicar of St Mark's Church, Haydock*

### **Questions for discussion**

1. As you read this, what challenges and what encourages you as you approach the idea of cell planting?
2. Spend a few minutes in quiet asking God what he is saying to you about cell planting.
3. What factors need to be in place before you consider cell planting?

# Chapter 3

## Who will plant?

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### What kinds of people make good Cell Planters?

You would do well to look for a number of characteristics when choosing the team to plant a new cell group. Firstly, we need people who have a **sense of calling**. Passion is vital. When we try to do anything that is difficult we need energy and energy comes from having a sense that this is what you are called to do. This sense of calling will come to people in many different ways; a definitive spiritual encounter in which God speaks to them; a desire that has grown in their hearts. We find this in the examples that we have given. There are some people who have a tremendous passion for where they live. They just want to see a greater expression of God's love and God's kingdom in that place. Others are drawn to a group of people. Some are drawn to the poorest and neediest and others to the rich and the mightiest or to sporting people or young adults. Whatever the group, we are looking for that sense of calling, that sense of passion that a person might have.

Secondly, we are looking for a level of **Christian character**. It is possible to find someone who has a sense of destiny but they are just not ready in terms of their own character and walk with God. We would see that taking the risk of encouraging young people to take leadership is a good thing provided the checks and balances are in place. Of course people do not have to be perfect to do the will of God, none of us are, just ready for the challenge.

This is particularly so when it comes to coping with failure. As this new cell begins its life there are bound to be struggles. Some of the ideas they try will not work and so this team needs to be people who have a measure of perseverance inside themselves. Their identity should not be so wrapped up in this idea that there would be a crisis if it did not work out as anticipated.

### New Creations

The missional focus for new creations is the lonely and bereaved. Around forty people come together every week to enjoy their hobby of card making. To start with, each week the God input was the opening prayers and a "God thought" which provided the theme for card making. Out of this has evolved two river cells who meet an hour before the craft group. Starting with Cell UK's 4Life group notes, these cells have matured, and one cell plans to multiply shortly.

### TANGO

With the name Together As Neighbours Giving Out, twelve church members set out to help people in the community struggling with issues of poverty, addiction, homelessness and depression. Now it has 40 volunteers who are a mix of church members and community volunteers who provide a café for people on low income, cheap clothes, toys and household goods, and recycled furniture at low cost. Two river cell groups now meet each week, one for men the other for women. Both cells are a mix of church members and community volunteers.

### River Force

Birthered in the workplace, Riverforce started with the recognition that Police Officers with highly pressurised jobs were spending so much time in the work environment that they were finding it difficult to attend church. With the permission of the Chief Superintendent, one of St Mark's church members has started two river cells, one which meets at Police Headquarters another in a local police station. Here Christian police officers, many of whom had stopped attending church, now meet regularly to support and pray for each other, to reach out to their colleagues and to work out how to live out their Christian values in the work place.

### Riverbank Café Church

This is a more traditional method of cell planting. Starting from a lake cell with a heart for the community where they live, the cell members would often take part in various art, craft and photography activities in a local community hall.

This led to the idea of gathering these hobbies and church together in a form of Café church. Coffee, tea, Sunday papers and art work come together as people meet to chat and explore their journey of faith with

Parish church and are linked to the teaching given at our Sunday services. They meet midweek to apply the teaching into their lives. Starting from the centre they then move out in mission and evangelism to those who do not regularly attend church.

### **River Cells (or cluster cells)**

The starting point for a river cell is its missional focus. Here we aim to cluster people around a shared interest, passion or place such as a school or in the work place to ask ourselves what church might look like in that particular setting. We currently have river cells linked to craft groups, in a local primary school, in the work place and linked to “alternative worship” services such as Café Church and Dream. It is the missional focus, not the size which defines a river cell, and numbers can vary from conventional cell size to much larger depending on the stage of development of the river cell.

### **Different but the same**

Although lake cells and river cells may be different in different places, they still share the same DNA, expressed through the 5 core cell church values.

Lake cells continue to follow the pattern of 4 W’s for their meetings, whilst river cells seek to apply cell values in a less structured way using **UP** –word+worship **IN** –fellowship + discipleship **OUT** –mission and outreach in different ways according to their missional context.

### **Some examples of River Cells in action:-**

#### **Famlegh First**

Here a small group of church members have clustered around a local primary school where the team leader works. Based around the familiar school concept of “circle time” children and adults come together once a month in the school building to do church together. Around fifty people regularly attend, and two midweek cells are now linked. One group is made up of leaders who meet to do cell together and their OUT is planning the Sunday gatherings. The second cell is a mix of the original church members and new members to Famlegh First. Here cell members strengthen their friendship and look at how God can help them in their family life and parenting.

Thirdly, there is a need for **leadership**. This person will need to have a measure of leadership. They will have to be able to think through how they are going to reach the particular sphere and area they are concerned about. There will need to be a level of **motivation** which will enable the job to be done.

Fourthly, if a leader is required who will be able to establish the direction and can plan and organise, there also needs someone who can create community and draw new people in. We call these people **super-networkers**. There is a feel good factor around them which attracts others. They have big hearts, time for people and a welcome which makes others feel at home. They are able to sustain a larger number of relationships than many of us can manage from their local area or their social network. They also positively enjoy the turbulence that is caused with people joining them. Without this capacity in at least one of the team, and preferably in all, they will not really be able to plant a cell which depends on a network of relationships.

Planting a cell group could happen through a project, but more than likely through getting to know people. These will need to be people who feel quite confident to have a large group of friends, are able to maintain that number of relationships and are confident in seeing them develop on a spiritual journey. We can all make a few relationships but in cell planting we are looking for those special people who just have a greater capacity for friendship and relationships.

We are definitely looking for people with a capacity for relationships. Hospitality is a vital part. A number of years ago, Laurence Singlehurst was asked by a local church to speak on evangelism. He spent the first hour speaking on hospitality and was questioned by the church leader as to why he had done this. His reply was that hospitality is the new evangelism. By preference these cell planters, whether they are working through a network of relationships or geographically, need to be people who open up their homes and give their time freely.

### **Talent Spotting**

One of the areas that perhaps church leaders need to develop is a capacity to talent spot. We are asking God to give us eyes to see the right kind of

people who might make great cell planters and we are not to be put off by the outside. Some of these people who would make great cell planters might not be obvious, but we can learn what Samuel learnt. When he was asked to choose a new king, he looked at the sons of Jesse, each more fabulous and more king-like than the one before. Samuel said to himself, “surely I am looking at the Lord’s anointed?”, but God spoke to Samuel, telling him not to look on the outside, but to look to those hidden qualities (1Samuel 16: 1-13).

Good leaders talent spot and talent is often hidden by character weakness. We need to take our courage in our hands and wherever possible, without losing wisdom, release people by giving them an opportunity to plant a cell group. We can put in place as safe an environment as possible, where there is a coach and people praying.

If the church leaders propose this idea of a cell plant they can move forward in either of two ways. They can open up the possibility to anybody who is interested in planting a new cell group or the leaders can go to the individuals and suggest to them that this is something that they might like to do. There needs to be a pathway which will establish leadership in the church. The stepping stones for leadership development are already within the cell model and there are opportunities for practice within the cell meeting that can develop a new cell leader. For example, there is the apprentice model working within cells where the existing leader mentors a new leader as part of their cell life together.

Cell leader training is available together with the ongoing support of cell leaders through coaching and the cell leaders meetings. There are also equipping materials which help one another to grow as disciples (see The Equipping Track opposite). If this pathway is in place we have seen that it is possible to move from a situation where there may not be enough leaders to lead existing cell groups to a place where pioneer leaders are available to cell plant.

# Appendix 1

## Pioneering a new future in the Lake and River Church

St Mark’s Church Haydock has been a cell based church for over 10 years now, and we are as firmly committed to the principles of cell church as the day we started. Cell groups remain the foundation and basic building block of church life at St Mark’s.

In 2005 we had 45 cell groups, but in common with many cell churches we were finding that cell multiplications were slowing down, and the value which most cells struggled to put into practise was every member reaching out. We were in danger of stalling.

### **Lake and River Vision**

As we continued to seek God’s heart for the way forward a very clear vision started to emerge. We call it the Lake and River Church.

The Lake is everything which is centred around St Mark’s as a renewed and vibrant Parish church. As well as offering a full range of worship services, we also provide an extensive range of community services where people of all ages can connect with God.

As in Ezekiel’s vision, the river flows out of the church far beyond its doors seeking to bring new life wherever it flows. Here we are planting new forms of church that can connect in fresh ways with people in various networks, from work places to schools and hobby based groups. To use the popular phrase, these are our “Fresh Expressions “of church.

### **Lake and River Cells**

As St Mark’s develops as a Lake and River church two different sorts of cell groups are emerging.

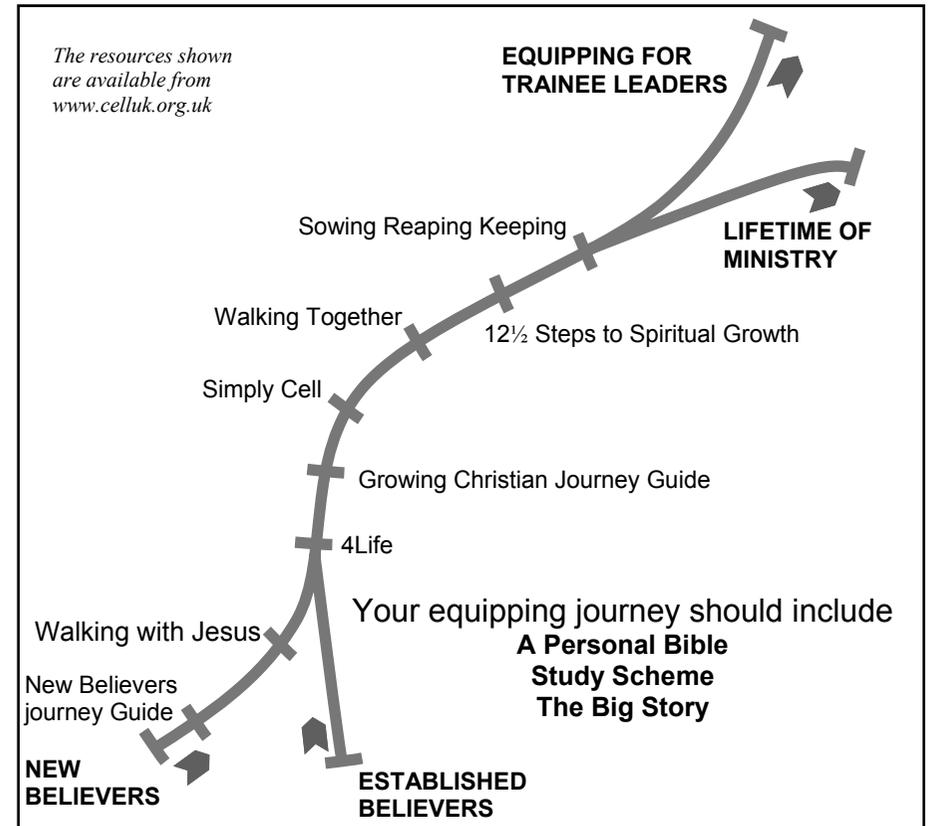
### **Lake Cells (or core Cells)**

These are a continuation of our existing cell groups which start at the

- Get a door into the community;
- Leave with a community of faith established behind him.

Now Jesus is the Son of God and manages this all in the space of an afternoon! For us it will take considerably longer, but this does give us a clear framework to follow and reinforces that cell planting is a thoroughly biblical endeavour.

## The Equipping Track



The team are commissioned for the task by the whole church. It is so important that the whole church takes a level of ownership of this new initiative. It is good to foster the idea that this is something 'we' are all doing, even if there is a team actually on the ground. There should be a common understanding about the principle of cell planting and updates knowledge about the specific cell plant. The team should feel that support as they face the challenges. There is such a need for ongoing prayer to enable the new to be sustained. All the cells should be encouraged to join in praying. The church can have ownership of the cell plant and can celebrate the successes and share the difficulties.

One of the areas where we want to put the ‘go’ back is to give a challenge to our young adults. In church it is often hard to be given responsibility and the threshold is very high. Others have seen that you can take young adults who have perhaps very little maturity, who perhaps don’t live as dynamic a Christian life as they could, and give them a little responsibility. You may discover that the forgotten tool of discipleship is responsibility. Giving a young person who has passion and enthusiasm but is sometimes a little unwise or not quite as spiritual as we might like, a challenge like this may be risky. However, with the right coach, this challenge could mean that suddenly they are praying more, their Christianity begins to make sense to them, they realise they are examples and therefore they deal with the areas of their own lives that perhaps need dealing with. The good thing about using the 18-30 year olds is they still, in most cases, have huge relational networks; they know everyone, they have a lot of energy and through the coaching support network we can focus and help to bring to maturity these young people while they are doing a task.

### Questions for Reflection

1. What are the stepping stones that create a pathway for developing leadership in your church?
2. What are the next steps for you in developing your gifts? How would you like to be developed and who would be involved in that?

plant them. After the 72 have returned from their mission field experience, Jesus gathers them together to listen to their successes and failures. He then uses this as an opportunity both to celebrate what God has been doing, and also to review their mistakes and help them learn from their experience – pointing out to them where their priorities still need further aligning with their Kingdom values. Accountability that derives from giving testimony to what God is doing and what the challenges have been, is a central part of the life of any successful mission initiative. Without it the opportunity to affirm, encourage, challenge and learn from experience is greatly reduced. There is also increased potential for burn out, complacency and isolation. But with a strong accountability value in place there is every chance of producing both mature cell plants and mature disciples to lead them.

### Other Examples

We have looked in detail at how the vision for cell planting is based on values and strategy that Jesus established in the sending of the 72. However, there are plenty of other examples we could also consider throughout both the Old and the New Testaments. Two particular passages it would be good to explore are the account of Paul, Silas and Timothy in Corinth (Acts 18), and the life of Nehemiah. In both cases you see a small visionary unit being sent by God, gathering a small team; calling people back to God and then building community through a united purpose. This is the essence of what cell planting is all about.

However, for our strongest biblical example we of course look to Jesus – the most effective cell planter! We often look at Jesus gathering the 12 disciples as the perfect model for cell building, and certainly we must continue to reflect on this as we plant and build new missionary cells... but as an example specifically of cell planting, read through Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4). Here we find the same process in place as he later describes when sending the 72:

- Go out in your small unit (for Jesus it is him alone, but as we have already seen he sends the 72 out in pairs);
- Find a person of peace;
- Build relationship;
- Set the values;

## How?

In terms of the actual process of planting Jesus gives us several pointers that we can take and apply. In particular these relate to three aspects of cell planting:

- 1 **Strategy:** This is not so much about the structure as about the values. And this is not to replace the five cell values but to underpin them with three planting values:
  - Lightweight & low maintenance... Jesus instructs his followers to take no purse or bag on the journey. These might be seen today as the structure that holds what we are carrying – the resulting cell. At this early stage of planting there is no need to be bound or limited by structures that could become burdensome. Much better to travel light – free of set meeting times and models, and all the energy and time they entail.
  - Incarnational... There is a commitment needed for the Kingdom community to be birthed in the people and of the people. Jesus did this when he chose to leave his “heavenly culture” and be incarnated into our “earthly culture” in order to reach humankind. We need to do the same – showing commitment to those we serve by living with them and “not moving from house to house.”
  - 2-way relationship... It is important that we don’t plant a cell out of the belief that it is only us who have something they need. Jesus here describes a 2-way relationship, where those he appoints are ready to be served as well as to serve. It is as our people of peace serve us that their hearts are opened to receive, and so we must accept their hospitality and look for the opportunities to serve them by loving them through shared life and shared gospel.
- 2 **Training:** Jesus takes the time to instruct and guide those he sends. And as we will note in the next point, this is an ongoing process. Jesus continues the review and training process after they have returned. It is essential that people are not sent without all the equipping we can give them.
- 3 **Accountability & testimony:** We have already touched on this when looking at what cell plants are, and it is just as relevant for how we

# Chapter 4

## Where to plant?

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### Emerging models of planting cell groups

We are seeing various ways of planting cell groups which broadly fall around three ideas:

- 1 A geographical group
- 2 A people group
- 3 A network cell group

### A geographical group

Choosing to plant a cell group on a geographic basis enables growth into an area of the town or village or close geography where you have no expression of church and you’d like to see something happen. It is helpful to do this around someone in your church who lives in the area. By building around somebody who already lives in an area you hopefully have a pool of relationships and goodwill that the planting group can begin with. It is obviously easier to plant a cell around an existing person, but this person doesn’t necessarily have to be the leader.

Planting into a completely new area where no one from your church already lives is a much longer term project. We have seen that in order to do this at least one household from your church need to move into the area and begin to pioneer relationships. This is a challenge in a different league and requires a clear mandate to do so.

See examples of geographical groups on page 22.

### **Example 1**

The Salvation Army Nottingham Arnold Church has picked up this challenge. They have been inspired by the story of Nehemiah who had a vision for the restoration of his city (Jerusalem) when he saw the state it was in. Nehemiah mobilised groups of people in their networks and neighbourhoods to rebuild the city. It is their vision to see Nottingham known for its good qualities, its positive spirit and for rebuilding with Godly values.

They have created Project Postcode. Each postcode area represents between 10 and 30 individual households. Their vision is to form cell groups with members who live in each postcode. They are beginning with those areas where groups already meet. These groups commit to pray regularly for their postcode areas represented by the cell group. They believe that through regular faithful prayer the spiritual climate will be changed and that as they pray specifically for those in their postcode areas opportunities for service and ministry will begin to emerge. These groups are resourced by giving them a list of all who live in their postcode. They are given specific examples for prayer in the neighbourhood and regular newsletters with updates of how the network is developing and what is happening in the areas covered. Through mapping all this they can see where the areas are that are not covered in Nottingham and also which areas need their special attention. See Appendix 3 on page 54.

### **Example 2**

This example of a geographical cell plant is from a Baptist Chapel in a rural area, based in a village of 1000 people. They have identified five villages around them where there have been chapels historically, but where there is very little in terms of church going on now. Their vision is to equip and train some of the people from these villages who are already in cell groups made up of people from across the area. These trained people will form a cell planting team commissioned to plant a cell in their village. That cell would then be connected to the Baptist Chapel as far as its corporate church life is concerned. They would also receive support and care from the church.

spoken of... pioneers who know Jesus is sending them into the mission field. And here we need to strip ourselves of our inherited Christendom understanding of the words *apostle* and *mission*. Being an apostle does not mean being an exalted leader – here we have 72 “all and sundry” followers of Christ whose authority comes not from who they are, but who Jesus is; And the mission field will not usually be overseas. It may occasionally be, but we all have a mission field we are called to and for most of us it is the world we already find ourselves drawn into.

- 3 **They see the harvest field:** On another occasion Jesus says “Do you not say ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35). Here Jesus gathers those he has appointed and instructs them to pray for workers for the harvest field. His very next word is “Go!” The 72 were expected to allow a prayerful burden for the mission field they saw to rise up within them, and then to be the answer to their own prayer. Cell planters need to be equally aware of there being a mission field they have a burden for, and to be ready to be sent themselves.
- 4 **They are disciples:** This may seem an obvious point, but there is more to it than they are followers of Jesus. A true disciple is one whose whole life is based on what they have learnt from their master. Jesus’ disciples had watched Jesus loving the lost, healing the sick, casting out demons, challenging unbelief, and they were expected to do the same. The most powerful witness came out of the integrity and power of lives that demonstrated what they had learnt from Jesus.

### **Where?**

The 72 were only given one guideline as to where they were to go – they were sent “to every town and place he (Jesus) was about to go.” And so the crucial question for cell planters today becomes, “Where has Jesus told you he is about to go?” There may be any number of ways this question is answered – it could be through a prayerful burden, or a strategic observation (an un-churched housing estate, for example), or even a prophetic revelation. It needn’t be a geographic place – often cells will plant into networks or specific age ranges as well. The key is, do the planters have the vision of where Jesus is about to go, so that they can go ahead of him to prepare the way?

ing with celebration as a community cell, or through coaching and accountability in network cells – Jesus expects his disciples to return to him and bring news of what has happened. The power of their testimony blesses Jesus, who in turn brings a revelation of some of what is happening in the heavenly realms as a result... imagine the powerful encouragement of hearing others sharing testimonies that resembled your own – the awareness of God’s impact and advancing Kingdom. But it is more than about testimony – it is also about accountability. We see elsewhere times when the disciples came back to Jesus to report failure as well as success – this relationship to Jesus and to the rest of the church is also about sharing best practice and learning from mistakes. And it is also about the body being fully aware of what is happening across the rest of the body – so often we try and build skeletons to hold the body of Christ together, when in fact the model Jesus gave us is that of a nervous system, where the church exists to open the channels of support and communication.

## Who?

We are told very little about who the 72 were. To me there is an inescapable significance to this – that it is not about the skills, experience or leadership qualities of those that went. We cannot judge by our own measures who is “good enough” to be sent out. That being said, there are some discernable characteristics of the 72 that come out in this account, which we can use to check against ourselves and others as we explore a call to cell planting:

- 1 ***They are appointed:*** It is essential that we can recognise a sense of Jesus calling them to the task. At this stage it isn’t about having a coherent vision (we’ll get to that shortly), but rather it’s about having a burden to plant based primarily on knowing Jesus is asking you to do it. It is significant that this is the first mark mentioned in this passage, because it takes the responsibility for success out of the planter’s hands. It isn’t about us and what we can do, but about Jesus and what he wants to do. He does the appointing, and it is his promise to be with those he appoints “to the very ends of the age” (Matthew 28:20).
- 2 ***They are apostolic:*** First Jesus appoints the 72, then he sends them. The word apostle means “sent one” and when people in the church talk about the need to recover the apostolic ministry this is what is being

## A relational group

The other approach of course is also relational, but is about reaching out to a homogeneous group of people, those with a common interest or age group for example. It requires a cell planting team to have a passion for a particular group which they can become a part of and plant a cell group especially for these people. This cell will be connected to the corporate life of a particular church. It begins by looking at the relationships that church members already have, seeing their networks and asking if one of these networks would be suitable to plant a cell in. This relational network could have a number of different shapes to it. It could be an existing event that somebody is involved in through sport or music for example. It could be where people work locally and have the possibility of planting a cell in their workplace.

Another way of approaching this is to work out what expertise is available in your church and see if, by offering this skill, a relational group can be created. We have seen examples of this around parenting skills, a marriage course and debt counselling, but offering practical help can also be a route in. Releasing the creativity of your church to enable this to happen is the outworking of the cell value of every member contributing their gift and experience.

In both these examples, geographic and people group cell plants, the fruit of the cell plant would be connected to the ‘big wing’ church that is already in existence. This means that those who supervisor the cell plant are part of the central church. There would be a hope that those who join this new cell would become members of the central church as well so that they experience and contribute to church in the big and the small. We call these cell plants ‘community’ cell groups.

## Network Cell Groups

However, there is another possibility which is being developed by St Marks Church, Haydock. You can find a full and inspiring description of what is happening at this church in Appendix 1. They have developed the idea of community cells and network cells. The cell groups we have described above are examples of community cell groups, which relate to the church for the corporate or ‘big wing’ activities. Network cells enable

growth in a different way. A network cell is one which is planted in the workplace. When this cell is fully functioning it is highly unlikely that the cell members will relate back to the church for celebration and worship. Cell members hopefully will find an expression of 'big wing' church where they live.

In this example, a number of cell groups have formed in the police force. These cell groups do not relate to the church around a Sunday celebration, but through the supervision or coaching support of the cell planter. The cell supervisor will occasionally turn up at the cell meeting itself. This network approach has a great deal to offer in the emergent and creative expressions of church that are forming around the country.

This opens up some interesting issues and for some this would not be a journey you want to go down. For others this would be an exciting journey but it does have issues that need thinking about. In the simplest term these new converts in this new cell supported by your church member, will grow in faith and hopefully find their own local corporate expression of church where they live which probably is the easiest scenario. The more difficult scenario is that you end up planting something around this fresh expression of church.

### Questions for discussion

1. As you consider cell planting which of these different ways of planting a cell would you consider?
2. How could you begin to see this working out?

Jesus sending out the seventy-two. Here are a few of the ways that we can see Jesus communicating the same vision to his disciples as we are now hearing him again communicate to the church today. They are organised to correspond with how Laurence Singlehurst first laid out the cell planting idea.

### The Idea

**Teams of 2 are sent out:** Jesus was in favour of small teams. He never sent one – even two were sent to fetch a donkey! But he was ready to send people out in teams of two... in fact he was so committed to the strategy that he did it first with his 12 disciples, and then repeated it with the sending of the 72. Small teams carry with them several strategic advantages:

- They are flexible;
- They can discern God's guidance easier without being slowed up through debate;
- They can be more readily accepted by communities as they don't seek to dominate but to serve;
- They are small enough to relate relationally (we'll come to this in a moment), but large enough to be safe.

It is still a risky business, though. Jesus recognised this – teams of 2 are like lambs among wolves – a position of vulnerability in a world capable of devouring them... and yet it is precisely this vulnerability that gives the team strength – it speaks volumes to the communities they enter. It forces the team to trust to God's protection and guidance. This vulnerability is further enhanced by the lightweight nature of their travel – no money, no possessions... going in the need of being taken in.

**Relational:** Jesus makes it very clear that this form of sending small teams is about communicating the Kingdom through the relationships you build. Find the people of peace, stay with them, pray for and with them, let them see the healing power of Christ, come only with one message – that the Kingdom of God is near you... God wants to draw close. Jesus saw that it was through these relationships that communities would be built.

**Accountable:** In the same way that cell plants and cell planters need to continue to relate to the corporate expression of church – be that by engag-

# Chapter 8

## Cell planting reflections - Luke Chapter 10

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by Freddy Hedley

*After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The Kingdom of God is near you'"... the seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." **Luke 10:1-17***

When Laurence Singlehurst first spoke about Cell Planting at a cell leaders consultation he started by talking about how God rarely uses telephone wires to communicate His ideas for the church. More often he uses loudspeakers, meaning that many people across the church find themselves having the same ideas at the same time. In the same way, it is so often true that there is no such thing as a new idea, and that we can find Jesus expressing all the "new" moves of God when he walked the earth 2000 years ago. Cell Planting is no exception. There are a number of examples, not just in the life of Jesus, but also in the Old Testament, through to the ministry of Paul where we can see small teams being sent out to prepare the ground and build community. Perhaps the clearest example, though, is

# Chapter 5

## Supporting a cell plant

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**A crucial ingredient**

Cell groups and leaders need supporting. What applies to all cell groups needs to be so for cell plants. This crucial ingredient in this idea of cell planting is that we build into our model a framework of support. This means that not only are the cell groups connected to some corporate wing expression of church, but they would be connected to an individual who coaches and supports them on a regular basis. This would include support and help during the planting process as well as regular meetings and visits to the cell when it has formed. The coach will endeavour to make sure that the challenge of reaching out to their community or stepping into a network continues and that the experience of cell planting proves to be a positively challenging experience.

**Be prepared to resource**

One of the best ways that we can support these people is to begin by creating a culture where this kind of entrepreneurial activity can take place. We want to create environments where church members can dream dreams, have visions which the leadership of the church encourage and support and help to make a reality. We need to work with our insecurities which would tell us that we are not up to the task or that God would never want to use us. The environment we want to create is an environment that is strong enough for people to take the courage in their hands and say, "I'd like to do this".

The kind of initiative that we are talking about is one that must be resourced; they will need prayer, encouragement, and ongoing training. They will need to feel that they are a part of something bigger. It is helpful for them to still feel involved on Sunday in the life of the church. One of the distinctives the Cell movement brings to this idea of cell planting is the

dynamic of the small and big wings of church. Both are key concepts of 'church' and support one another. Whether your cell plant is community based or network based, it would be good to think of how it relates to the big wing, the worship and celebration, and also the intentionality, training, support and encouragement.

In the best case scenario, these new cell plants have attached to them a cell supervisor or coach who meets with them regularly, for encouragement, prayer, trouble shooting, resourcing and whatever is necessary. In a community based cell plant it would be expected that the cell planters would come to church as normal. They could even be a part of another cell if they wanted to be, although this might take away from the time and energy they have to plant the new one.

This model obviously is clearer with a community based cell. With a network based cell, supervision might be more complicated. In other words, you may have an individual planting a cell in their workplace which is 50 miles away from the local church which would call for creative solutions to enable encouragement and support to take place.

### **How the church can support the cell planting process**

1. Creating the culture of every member in ministry, taking risks and loving our neighbours, being salt and light at work and in our communities.
2. If you are a leader create freedom for individuals to explore and express who God is asking them to be. Encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own contributions to the 'going'.
3. Commission the team so that the project is owned by the whole church and that the whole church commits to prayer and support.
4. Create training and support for the planting team.
5. Run events by the whole church that could be useful to the cell plant.
6. Find other resources that might be needed by the cell planting team.
7. Find ways that the whole church can celebrate success and give space for stories

we mean that individuals will increasingly be living from the same values as we see that Jesus has. There will be an understanding of the process of discipleship through all its complexities. There will be encouragement to grow through taking personal responsibility to learn; through one on one mentoring relationships and through being part of the loving open community of the cell group. There is hope that these small communities will see transformation on an individual level as well as within their communities.

# Chapter 7

## What is success?

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Success is about creating groups that continue to grow and multiply or plant new groups. Success in the kingdom is being the yeast in the dough. It's about multiplying what we have through being thoroughly ourselves, who God has made us to be. It is about making a difference as we work together in community. If the cell group we are planting is true to itself, to the original DNA, it will want to grow and plant new cells. We want to celebrate success and one mark of success is when the cell group reaches critical mass by which we mean growth to about 8 or 9 people. When this new community has formed with the original DNA it has some kind of stability and future growth is possible.

Adding cell group through planting will strengthen the corporate wing of the church. In a network based cell, people who have a connection through work might all come from different areas and there will not be such a clear relationship to a congregation in the context of worship. Hopefully part of the discipleship of the members of this new cell will be to encourage them to connect to church in the big and the small where they live.

In conclusion then, cell planting gives the church a very dynamic model of growth. It is a model that releases those who have the entrepreneurial gifts that make them ideal for this kind of task. It develops and uses the gifts of those who have this kind of calling. It gives the church a very clear way to break into new geographical areas and new homogenous groupings.

Over the next few years, as we put this model into place, we will find a new energy for expansion. It will also give us a clear way to contain that expansion in multiplying cell groups and a lot of very fulfilled church members who can use the gifts that they have through this particular idea.

Within the model there is scope for discipleship of individuals, both those who are new to the group and those who have walked the journey. By this

# Chapter 6

## How to cell plant?

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Our hope and dream coming out of this is that there will be many creative expressions of cell planting up and down the country. We hope for these many expressions of cell planting to be unified behind a common desire and purpose which is to see transformational communities reaching out beyond the church. What we share here is our thoughts in the hope that they will kick start your thinking process. Planting a new cell requires creativity and exploration. Each situations will need its own unique pathway and we do not want to restrict this process by creating a 'to do' list of cell planting.

### Preparing a cell group for planting

Once the planting team has been identified how can they be prepared for planting? There are some important factors that are helpfully in place at the beginning of this project. The vital component and central to the whole idea is that community is created amongst this team. In this Christians are often going counter culture where we find in many areas that community is actually breaking down through geographical mobility and the independence of busy people.

It is helpful if this team can share a similar rhythm of life which will enable relationships to deepen. They can share a prayer rhythm and spiritual disciples, such as prayer walking or half nights of prayer. They can eat together often and begin to build friendships together.

In all this they will develop a value system which will motivate their choices. Hopefully these values will become explicit and owned by all. These values will influence those who come to know Jesus and join the cell group from the beginning of their journey so it is important to work these out together at the start.

They can set the pattern for cell meetings. Eventually it will be to these meetings that new people are invited. They might decide not to do a regular 4Ws meeting each week, but intersperse them with evenings of prayer, social times and times to socialize with others outside the group.

They can work out together what they have to offer those outside the cell group. This comes from the principle which was laid down by God to Abraham (Genesis 12:2-3). God promised to bless Abraham and his descendants so that they in turn would bless all the nations. On a micro scale we have been blessed by God with learning, experience, gifts and talents which we can share with others. We are 'blessed to be a blessing'. An interesting extension of this is when we discover that those we are seeking to reach also have a 'blessing' to offer. Working together with non Christians on a project where all are contributing equally is a very helpful way to develop relationships and see people become Christians.

Enough time needs to be taken for these things to be in place. It can be tempting to rush on without this stage of development. It can also be tempting to stay in the stage for too long and not to get on with the next phase.

### **A strategy for making relationships**

When we think about cell planting we are basically taking what we already know about 'relational process evangelism' (see Sowing, Reaping, Keeping, by Laurence Singlehurst). Then we focus our experience into the context of the cell plant, be that network or geographically based.

#### **Make relationships**

In simple terms what we have learnt is that everything begins with love. We are looking for people with big hearts to become our cell planters and we are looking for people who understand a relational process. The most important aspect to understand as a first principle is that all relationships are built through the context of something else. The people starting this cell plant will hopefully have existing relationship with people they already know, either through their neighbourhood or in the context of the workplace or the club. It might be that they do not have enough relationships, which would require them to get involved in other aspects of their community life in order to develop more contacts. These relationships

8. Joining the cell meeting and beginning to be discipled

### **For discussion and reflection**

Create some silence for you to ask God to speak to you about the way forward.

Can you imagine yourself in a cell planting team? How are you going to create close community within this team?

As a team, which people group could you see yourself relating to most naturally?

What would be your contribution to the team?

How would you see the cell growing?

In what ways have you been 'blessed to be a blessing'?

Read Luke 10:1-12 and answer these questions:

1. Who are your people of peace?
2. How can you develop your relationship with them?
3. How can you include your cell planting team in this relationship?
4. What are their felt needs?
5. How will these people most easily receive the gospel?

going into cell planting with trainee leaders in place you are equipping the next cell plant with leaders who have valuable experience already. They support the cell planters and in this way are being prepared to plant themselves. The original cell planter could become their coach for this next round of planting.

## Steps to cell planting

Although every situation is unique these steps are an outline for those people who like strategy. For others, the process will grow organically as the situations unfold. Sometimes when pioneering a new cell it can be more effective to respond to opportunities as they come up, rather than a pre-planned strategic approach.

1. Identify the cell planting team: those who are called and have passion for the task, with a level of Christian character and leadership gifting and experience, and an ability to make relationships. Prepare this team for planting.
2. Identify the people group:
  - in a geographical area where at least one of the team lives
  - a group of people in the community contacted through a common interest; through offering a skill; through a network of relationships
  - a group of people in the work place who possible would be at some distance from the church
3. Pray at every stage
4. Develop relationships: through social events and seeking to meet needs, looking for opportunities to spend time one on one with those who respond to you.
5. Developing content: use all possible creativity to find ways of developing relationships which might lead to discussion about spiritual things
6. Introduction to Christianity – alpha, essence, testimony, story telling
7. Opportunity for people to respond – alpha weekend, Christmas or Easter event

that have been formed will now develop slowly through the ‘sowing, reaping, keeping’ process. This process begins with the first step, which is to help people understand that God is good and that Christians are good people to be with.

## Identify felt needs

Building relationships around people’s felt needs is another way forward. Having highlighted a community or a network that you want to plant in, it would be good to discover the needs of this group. Sometimes needs are quite obvious, sometimes they are more subtle. One simple example of this was of a lady who was very keen on creativity, on sewing, wondered if there might be other people who felt the same as she did. She thought that she would love to be in a group meeting every now and then where they could sew together. She made an advert saying who she was and put it through the doors of the two or three streets around her house to see if anyone was interested in a sewing circle that would meet in her house once a fortnight. She suggested a date and to her surprise she had over ten ladies turn up. Another lady realised that there were lots of young mums in her area who would be keen to get together to share their experiences of bringing up children and she created an informal group meeting in her house relating to the needs of this particular group.

The needs that we might find could be recreational needs, friendship needs, social needs or in some cases real physical needs. There is a great deal of loneliness and relational pain in our society. It is a huge need for which love is a great healer. As we build relationships and through those relationships care for people regardless of whether they respond or join a cell or not, we will have brought a little healing into these communities.

## Be in touch with people

The goal is for the planting team to be actively in touch with maybe 15 to 30 people. All they are seeking to do in these relationships is let people know that God is good and that they are ok. It is about friendship and about love. Hopefully people learn in a natural way that these people are Christians and hopefully they will find that they are not stereotypical but good people and they get to like them. Obviously, during this time the cell planters are meeting together once a week and praying for the relationships they are developing. This becomes the embryo cell group who dream about the empty chairs around them being filled. They believe that God

loves the people that they are praying for and wants to enter into a relationship with them.

### **Who is open to God?**

The second part of the process is discovering who out of these contacts are open to knowing something more about God. Create opportunities where Christians can be witnesses to their friends, either on a group level or individually. All this means is giving Christians a chance to talk in an informal way about the difference knowing God makes to their lives. They could share answers to pray and the wisdom they have received or any number of ways that God has impacted their lives. This needs tremendous sensitivity and in no way a need to overwhelm a friend with too much said too soon.

It might be 5 or 6 out of the 30 show some interest in what has been shared, probably not any more. These people need to be given an opportunity to learn more about what it means to be a Christian. There are a multitude of resources that could be used at this point and the cell planters need prayerfully to consider creative ways to move forwards around the needs and interests of the people they are connected to. There have been many resources used for example, the HTB Marriage Course, a parenting course, an invitation to an outreach event at their church over Christmas. If it is a sports-based group, they could find a well known sports celebrity who has faith to visit with them and speak about the relevance of Christianity to their work. There are many more creative ideas for this stage of the outreach. (There are resources available to help with this, for example Rob Bell's Nooma DVDs or the Journey DVDs).

If the first phase of the cell plant is just about building relationships, the second phase is about doing a number of creative things that give people an understanding of what Christianity is about. During these processes they are not asking people to become Christians, they are just telling people what it means to become a Christian and awakening spiritual hunger.

### **Create opportunities for response**

The third stage is to create opportunities for people to respond to the love of God. Many have found that some kind of cell based Alpha where the Alpha is done in the context of these relationships, has been helpful. It is

preferable for this to happen in the home of one or two of the cell planting team. Sometimes these new friends could join in with an Alpha run from the main church with the cell planting team hosting a small group. From this hopefully the new cell is born and keeps on meeting. This is the moment when in a sense the job of planting a cell group has happened.

Other larger events run by the church are also giving opportunity for this response, especially around Christmas and Easter. This is one very tangible way that the whole church can support the work of the cell plant.

It is possible that not only will the planting team win people who are not Christians in the way described, but there is also a good possibility that in these 30 or so people who they get to know are some lost Christians. There are now a lot of people who have had some Christian experience but have become disillusioned or disappointed with church. These people can be invited to the cell plant at whatever point is suitable. It is possible to see how this cell, after a 2 or 3 year process, could become 8 to 10 people and the job of cell planting done, with an ongoing mandate to continue to reach out and see people become Christians and transform their communities.

### **Ongoing discipleship**

We are asked by Jesus to make disciples not just converts. The process of discipleship will probably begin before the individual has made a decision to respond to the love God has for them. They will have begun to learn the ways of God and who he is just by being a part of the community of the cell group, even before they are conscious that they are learning. This process will need to be clarified and worked out with them, but will need to involve times where they meet one on one with a more mature Christian, as well as growing through being part of the cell group and well as their own prayer and reading.

It is helpful to have places to refer the neediest people who will require help and support outside the group. Cell plants are not as robust to cope with the most needy as perhaps a more established cell would be.

### **Future growth**

It is always good to have an eye to the future. There are within this process of planting a new cell group opportunities to develop more leaders. By