

Training and Releasing Leaders

Dave Richards

Salt and Light Ministries

Copyright © Salt and Light Ministries 1998

First published 1998
by Salt and Light Ministries

All rights reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior written consent of the publisher.

Unless otherwise indicated Bible quotations are taken from
The Holy Bible, New International Version
© Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society
Used by permission of Hodder and Stoughton Limited

ISBN 1 901075 35 4

Series Editor: Mike Beaumont

Mike is a Bible teacher and is part of an Apostolic Team based in Oxford, UK. He was a writer and sub-editor for The NIV Thematic Study Bible.

Cover design: James Kessell Design (01296 747446)

Contents

Foreword	5
Introduction: Why Don't We See the Obvious?	7
<i>1</i> Success is Successors	10
<i>2</i> Making the Right Choices	14
<i>3</i> Identity Parade: What are We Looking For?	18
<i>4</i> Setting the Agenda ... What is our Aim?	23
<i>5</i> The Training Ground	26
<i>6</i> Recognition at Last! How to Move On	31
<i>7</i> Release: The Trainee Takes on Responsibility	37
<i>8</i> Reflections: Some Key Issues	44
<i>9</i> Conclusion: Identifying, Equipping and Releasing Leaders	52

Foreword

“What is hidden in the roots will be revealed in the shoots.”

This has been one of the lifelong principles by which I have sought to live and build. Experience tells us that what the roots of the plant are like, and what they feed on, determines what sort of fruit grows; where the foundations of a building are shaky, time and disaster will reveal it; where the most simple flaws are not spotted, dreadful disasters can follow – as when a basic defect in the fuel system of the Challenger space craft cost the lives of seven brave astronauts.

So it is with people. What we believe in our hearts will eventually determine how we live, how we build and what we end up with.

This “Roots and Shoots” series is not so much an attempt to define the distinctives of our family of churches, but rather to ensure that all our beliefs and practices are firmly rooted in the Scriptures.

Many people have asked us over the years: “Who are you and what do you believe?” While our structure may appear to be somewhat nebulous, nevertheless the understanding of our common beliefs needs to be clear and unambiguous.

We are a family of churches that believe we are to be “sons of the kingdom” sown into God’s earth. The key that transforms “the word of the kingdom” into “sons of the kingdom” is *understanding* (Matthew 13:23). In the Lord’s first parable of the kingdom (the Sower), the ‘word’ of the kingdom – the seed – when properly received and understood produces fruit. In the second parable of the kingdom (the Weeds), we discover that the fruit has become the seed, and that the seed is “the sons of the kingdom”. The word, bearing fruit, producing seed as sons of the kingdom, planted in the world! That is our prayer for this series of books.

Barney Coombs

Introduction

Why Don't We See the Obvious?

One of my favourite Peanuts cartoons shows Charlie Brown holding up his hands before his friend Lucy saying, “These hands may some day accomplish great things. These are hands which may some day do marvellous works! They may build mighty bridges, or heal the sick, or hit home runs, or write soul-stirring novels! These are hands which may someday change the course of destiny!” Lucy, who always sees things as they are, replies, “They’ve got jelly on them!”

Some of us dream of the future, some of us live in the present. Is it possible not just to dream of the future but to realistically prepare for it right now? Is it possible to recognise the potential, whilst being aware of the present “mess” and start to work with a will to produce the great leaders of our future?

I believe that the “Future Shock” we face is more to do with short-sighted leadership which can only see the jelly on Charlie Brown’s hands, rather than the passion and desire in his heart. Unless the present generation of leadership in the Body of Christ stops seeing the jelly and realises there is gold beneath the surface, then we are doomed to becoming little more than the Civil Service, waiting around to fill dead men’s shoes.

Tell me the Old, Old Story

This morning I was reading the Book of Judges. There is nothing new under the sun. Rotten leadership in Israel reduced the nation to vassal status beneath the jackboots of various warring countries, until God could bear his

people's cries no more and raised up a suitable leader to subdue their enemies. Then for a period of time there was peace in the camp. But did they learn? Of course not, for the book relates in depressing clarity that no one ever seemed to see the obvious, and life continued in the same old circles. Everything died with them; nothing of value was passed on!

To continue our success we have to train successors! They must be trained how to battle. They must be trained how to behave. They must be trained how to rule. They must be trained how to be fruitful and reproduce themselves. Notice I keep saying trained and not taught; we must stick at our task until our successors are found to be doing it themselves as opposed to being able to merely repeat what we have said. **THE GOAL IS FOR THEM TO BECOME WHAT THEY SEE AND HEAR!**

Solomon wrote, "A servant cannot be corrected by mere words; though he understands, he will not respond." (Proverbs 29:19)

Probably this is the real reason most of us are willing to settle for developing our own ministry and not also developing others. It takes time. It requires deep commitment, sacrifice and energy. It means a lifestyle of always thinking about others, constant prayer, potential frustration and, sometimes, discouragement.

Try reading Paul's assessment of Demas when you next have a disappointing disciple (2 Timothy 4:10) or, when you really wish you'd never started, read 2 Tim 4:16: "At my first defence, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them!" Yet the apostle Paul knew no other method than that of training others (2 Timothy 2:1-2).

Not surprisingly Paul got the idea from Jesus, who had received it by revelation in prayer with his Father. What amazes me, knowing where the mandate comes from and recognising it was one of the last great words of Jesus in the Great Commission, is that we consistently fail to do it as we are told to do it. We have to recognise that it was not his 'Great Suggestion' but an actual commission, a commission to, "Go and make disciples of all nations ... " (Matthew 28:19).

Yet we still fail to see the obvious, so how can we set about changing our ways, so that we can move mountains of dirt, even hands full of jelly, and produce the ounces of gold which will make all the difference?

Paul burned with this in his letter to the Colossians. “We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labour, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.” (Col 1:28-29)

A Deep Longing

It is our prayer that as you read this book it will inspire you, as a man or woman of God, to give your strength to recognising, training and releasing others into the wonderful work of the Father. It is our longing that an army of ordinary people would rise up and fulfil their destinies in Christ, rather than sitting and watching others perform.

We were born to serve the purposes of our Father in Heaven on earth. If we are to see both his will and his Kingdom come on earth then we must start to work in his ways. Nothing gave Jesus more joy than being able to tell his Father all he had done with those entrusted to him. In his High Priestly prayer in John 17 we catch a glimpse of the excitement Jesus had in discipling and releasing people into their callings.

Our prayer is that countless men and women will catch this same excitement.

Chapter 1

Success is Successors

There is an old Chinese proverb that has deeply impacted me:

“If you are planting for a year, plant grain. If you are planting for a decade, plant trees. If you are planting for a century, plant people.”

We had better start planting people, or what we are doing now will disappear in a few generations. Not just any men or women, but the right ones; God’s anointed and appointed ones. And we had better start to see them as he sees them and care for them as he does.

Will we be able to give a proper account to him on that day when he asks, “What did you do with what I gave you?” It is scary, isn’t it, and it is meant to get the fear of God into the church, so it endeavours to work as the head of the church did when he was on earth.

Jesus never Dreamt of Leaving without Successors

How much more should we attend to this task, knowing full well it was the Master’s strategy? In Ecclesiastes 2:18-21 Solomon makes a wise observation: “I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them all to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool. Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labour under the sun. *For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it.* This too is meaningless and a great misfortune.” (my italics)

Now, if Solomon had spent less time on accumulation and more on preparation he would have been a happier man!

Over-burdened with wives and concubines, treasures and pleasures, the wisest man was proving incredibly foolish. At the end of his great life who does he hand his kingdom on to, but Rehoboam? Within one chapter of his father's death, Rehoboam had succeeded in splitting the nation in two (2 Chronicles 10) and rebellion became the order of the day.

Maybe we should spend less time trying to impress our visiting Queen of Sheba's and start training our offspring properly! Are we in the habit of trying to impress everyone now or are we trying to invest in our future?

Abraham and his Hunger for a Successor

Abraham saw himself as a failure because he had no offspring (Genesis 15:1-3). He had many trained men of war, but no son to carry on the family lineage. What he did have was a nephew, Lot. Whilst waiting for his promised son from God, Isaac, Abraham got up to all sorts of tricks. He invested too much trust in Lot, who proved nephews are not sons and who grew restless in his Uncle's service. Eventually Lot wanted his own and had the audacity to claim the best. Abraham's dalliance with his wife's maid, in a 'fleshly' effort to help God out with his inheritance problem, resulted in Ishmael and trouble to this very day in the Middle East.

Isaac, when you get him, is Full of Promise

God knew Isaac would be the right one to fulfil his promise to bless the nations through his dad, Abraham. It was a shame Abraham was not as discerning; but then, neither were Eli or Aaron, David or Gideon. In fact history is littered with Kings, Queens and parents who failed to properly train, support and release their offspring.

Right at this moment ask yourself this awkward question. What am I doing with my offspring? Do I see I have a responsibility to train up those in my care – in my family, my workplace, my church – or is it every man for himself?

Sooner or later we must invest all we have laboured for to someone else. Will this produce sorrow for us, or joy?

The Joy of Children

We have three children. Many years ago, when Stephen was small, he asked me, “Dad, when you’re a little old shrunk man, can I have your teeth?” We never did work out why he wanted these infamous molars; and anyway, now he is sixteen, he wants to know when he gets the house! Times have changed, and so have Stephen’s value systems!

But suppose I give him the house? How will he look after it? Will he share it with his two older sisters? Will he repair it, paint it, furnish it and generally maintain it? Can he provide the necessary finances to run it? Does he have a basic understanding of gas and electricity or are we in for fireworks? If I give it to him without training him, I will be leaving his sisters defenceless and vulnerable, something I have never wittingly done in their lives.

It will take time; and most of us don’t want to spend precious time on training. We would rather do it ourselves. It is quicker. However at the end of the day what will you do with what you worked so hard for? The church is littered with former leaders who passed their life’s work on to strangers. How foolish!

Success is producing successors who reproduce our values, theology and practice. Success is not what we *achieve* it is what we *produce*.

A Father’s Evaluation

Some years ago I was speaking at a Father’s Day banquet in Oxfordshire. I called my father to ask him to what he attributed his success as a dad. His response stunned me at the time. “I consider my success as a father to be the lives that you and your sister have reproduced. You are my fruit, the measure of our success as your parents.”

What a way to measure! It immediately affected the way I look at my children and those in my spiritual care, and made me even more determined not to concentrate on my own ministry but to ensure I trained others.

There is nothing to compare with the thrill of watching someone you have trained doing what you once did and knowing that you are now free to go on and help others.

Whenever we have handed on churches to others, we have rejoiced as we saw them develop under skilled and committed younger leadership who would begin to reproduce and release to others what had been now entrusted to them.

But who will we train and release?

Chapter 2

Making the Right Choices

Discerning Things that Differ

Bob Mumford has a great teaching on this subject in which he encourages you, when dealing with deep-seated problems, to look below the surface and ask questions like, “Is this flesh or demons?”, “Is this an attitude problem or is it a deep-seated character flaw?”

The apostle Paul warned Timothy about it when he said, “Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure ... The sins of some men are obvious, reaching the place of judgement ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them.” (1 Timothy 5:22,24) The RSV has a more graphic translation: “the sins of some men are conspicuous, pointing to judgement, but the sins of others appear later.”

This is where we must be wise in our choices of *whom* to select and *how* to select for training. Remember, not everyone who encountered Jesus ended up following him. The demoniac, though amazingly transformed, was told to stay home. The Rich Young Ruler failed to meet the entry requirements. Countless Scribes and Pharisees hung around, always learning but never coming to a knowledge of the truth!

Classic Pitfalls to Avoid

Ambition

Watch for the “Joab’s”. David was once stuck at the city gates of Jerusalem, desperately trying to take the fortress and called out that whoever would smite the inhabitants first would be his commander-in-chief (1 Chronicles 11:4-7). Courage is a vital commodity in leadership; but Joab was also an ambitious man.

His ambition would drive him to murder two other commanders, Abner and Amasa, and ultimately the King’s own son Absalom, whom he killed despite David’s express instructions that the pursuers were to do the young man no harm.

Joab, an ambitious man, spent years in David’s presence and yet did not follow him or even understand his heart. It was a tragedy for Israel and for David. Ambition is not a fruit of the spirit and makes a poor master. A servant heart is a good antidote to an ambitious spirit.

Egalitarianism

Simply stated, this means “I am as good as you are!” It is a modern curse in our society. It is true that we believers are all equal redemptively in the sight of God; but equal *worth* must not be confused with equal *function*. The Parables of the Pounds and the Talents, out of Jesus own mouth, tell us this truth. Jesus said that disciples were not above their teachers and servants not above their masters; it was enough when they were fully taught that they should be like them! (See Matthew 10:24)

Now even on his own team the Master faced this problem. His disciples argued first amongst themselves as to who was the greatest. Then Judas had the audacity to dip his hand into the bowl at the Last Supper at the same time as Jesus – a mark of devoted friendship from the man who was about to betray him! Judas was an unproductive follower. All we can learn from his life is that even in betrayal there is blessing, although not for him. His end was disastrous considering his beginning.

External Impressions

Don't be hasty and don't look on externals as Samuel did with Jesse's sons. (See 1 Samuel:16) Sometimes we can be captivated by gifts, graces and outward appearances. Those boys of Jesse's were large, rugged men of stature. David was small, ruddy and had beautiful eyes. Samuel had to learn that God looks on the heart, not the head or the outward appearance. The heart and David was God's choice.

Many years ago God spoke to me to begin training people. Before this was shared with anyone but my wife, Chris, a young man arrived at our house. He told me God had spoken to him that I should personally disciple him. He was gifted. He was good looking. He had many qualifications and he was single. Now this last attribute was a real blessing as we had several single sisters in the church that we were believing God to receive husbands for!

However something left me feeling uneasy. As the day went on I felt quite disturbed and went to pray. As I did so I became aware of the phrase, "Beware of wolves in sheep's clothing!" Now I felt even worse! When the man returned for my reply to his request, I told him I was unable to disciple him. He pressed me firmly for the reason and so I told him. He went wild, exploding into serious allegations, unkind and abusive words. Shortly afterwards he left.

I don't know how you would feel but I felt bad. It was then the group in the house began to pray and a clear prophetic word came out. It was such a comfort and encouragement in the face of such wildfire. "Discernment is going to be to you like common sense." How I needed to hear that word. The sequel was that the man left for the North of England where he became involved in another work, got one of the sisters pregnant, and caused havoc. It is wise to remember that we are not expected to care for or train everyone, just those to whom God directs us.

Education, Influence, and Nobility

Don't be impressed by strings of letters after people's names. It is good to see from the Scriptures that "not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were influential, not many were of noble birth" (1 Corinthians 1:26). Of course, it is important to note that the Scriptures say, "not many" rather

than “not any”. So we will find some; but not many. And this will not be the criteria that we look for.

It has been my privilege to work with people with multiple degrees and others with little education. All were men of the Spirit – which is the real key! But Scripture cautions us against emphasising human wisdom. Why? Because the more you think you know, the less teachable you are likely to be.

What then must we begin to identify, now we recognise what to avoid?

Chapter 3

Identity Parade: What are We Looking For?

Self-denial

This is a good place for every person desiring to be useful in the Kingdom to begin to practise a life of following.

Jesus first spoke of it in Luke 9:23. “If anyone would come after me, he must *deny himself* and take up his cross daily and follow me.” This is a massive challenge in our consumer society, where advertising screams at us to pamper and indulge ourselves, all the days of our life! We are encouraged to spare ourselves nothing, especially debt! What we can’t pay for today, we can have now on delayed credit. We sit on what we don’t own, drive what remains to be paid for through the rusting years, and live in the Bank or Building Society’s house because we don’t rent! If we find a disciple who can deny themselves, then we know we have really struck gold. Taking up their cross and not avoiding pain, suffering and conflict are further requirements.

“You must be out of your mind,” I hear people saying. We are! Romans 12:1-3 tells us we must find the mind of Christ, have our own mind renewed, and stop being conformed to the world. The great news is that I am finding more and more people willing to do this. Recently in Zimbabwe, we as a team were deeply impressed by young single and married people, willingly living on less than £20 a month, rapidly expanding the Faith Ministries church-planting programme, through their sacrificial self-denial. With great joy they told us of the many coming to Christ and their desire to disciple them. What

gives us even more joy is that many of these workers are graduates of our Bible School in Harare, where Harry Baker and other leaders have poured themselves out in the same spirit of self-denial for years.

Teachability

A good question to ask yourself is, “Can I be *taught* anything?” None of us likes self-opinionated people; we avoid them like the plague. Why? Well it is because you just know they will button-hole you for long periods and have all the answers, usually to questions that you are not asking. The Pharisees knew everything; the Scribes had it all down on paper; but neither group were truly *teachable*, and so not many made it on to Jesus’ team!

If I have learned anything in training up leaders it is that you just don’t even bother trying with someone in this category. At college I had a very amusing friend who knew everything. Unfortunately his examiners did not agree with his self-assessment! One day we went swimming in the new college pool and he set off like the expert he was. We were all doing fancy dives off the springboard, so he launched his very long body off the board along with the rest of us.

It was at this point that I realised his PR (‘public relations’) was better than his ability, and he started to sink, struggle and scream in the deep end. Not knowing at 19 what I know now I dived in to rescue him and the two of us proceeded to almost drown. We were both rescued by wiser friends, who waited until the fight was out of both of us, before coming to our salvation. That is your only hope with the unteachable!

Willing Obedience

Jesus typifies this characteristic. Whatever the Father required, he was there to do it. “Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of salvation for all who obeyed him.” (Hebrews 5:8-9)

What a wonderful statement. And how much easier it is to obey him when we recognise him as the pattern-Son and see his willing obedience to come to earth in the first place. To see his sinless life, his unquestioning

obedience to his Father, his love for the world and his supreme sacrifice in being absolutely willing to die for it.

What amazes me is that he was constantly showing his disciples how to be willingly obedient. “Go fetch the donkey.” “You give them something to eat,” as the 5,000 sat before them. “Peter, go and catch a fish and find the Temple tax in its mouth!” All these incidents were designed to test this ingredient of willing obedience in their lives. Was it there or was it missing?

My wife Chris and I were initially sent by Barney Coombs from Witney to Eastwood, Nottingham, in 1980. The Holy Spirit spoke clearly to us all, and it was confirmed through many sources. Mark and Nesta Mumford came a month later to begin to take the reins of this church. They moved in faith, without having seen the place, buying the home of John and Val Micklefield, who were moving to Oxfordshire.

Chris and I had two small girls and a third child was soon on the way. I was away for nine of the thirteen months we lived there. All of us were seeking to be willingly obedient to God. As I reflect back now and see God’s overwhelming blessings on all six of us involved in those moves, I am grateful for the lessons of willing obedience and for the steadying and trusting hand that Barney showed in sending and supporting all of us during that precarious time.

Within thirteen months, Chris and I were in Basingstoke, and Mark and Nesta began to lead East Midlands Christian Fellowship, which has grown to be a thriving and vibrant church. Since 1981 we have each been involved in the training and development of men and women, helping them to discover their God-given callings; and these three qualities of *self-denial*, *teachability* and *willing obedience* have been foundation stones in our identifying of those we can train.

Of course there are other qualities that we look for too, like faithfulness, endurance, commitment, zeal, discipline, vision, service, hard work, and anointing. This list is not exhaustive and you can probably add many of your own!

Vic and his “Everlasting Message”

One of our fund of stories amongst the Salt and Light Ministries’ Apostolic team is of trips with Vic Gledhill across India and Nepal, and his regular message from Luke 16:10-12 on “the three faithfuls”. This was, and is, foundational ministry. The fact is that “the three faithfuls” are a way of life for us, and you will not get in to leadership in churches that are part of Salt and Light Ministries if you don’t fulfil these criteria.

So what are those “three faithfuls”?

Faithful in little ... faithful in much ... dishonest in little ... dishonest in much.

Faithful in handling worldly wealth ... trusted with true spiritual riches ...

Untrustworthy with someone else’s property ... who will give you property of your own?

You must be faithful in order to prove useful and usable in leadership. If we stuck to these criteria instead of being enamoured with gifted people we might save ourselves some pain.

I love to see gifted people operate in their anointing; but we must never overlook the servant heart qualities that Jesus highlights so obviously to us. Unfortunately, as I said in the introduction, we don’t always see the obvious!

Final Warnings

Be wary of time-wasters – they promise much but deliver little and keep you from working with the really willing. Watch for those who are easily side-tracked, and don’t attempt to take on the idle, unless they will attempt to change. Some folk are very quick starters and just as quickly fizzle out. Even worse are the men-pleasers; give me a Peter any day. The final category I am wary of is the faint-hearted. You can love all of these folk as a Pastor, but unless they willingly try to change you will only be able to shepherd them, not disciple them. They will not have the ability to be a disciple, let alone be suitable for leadership.

Jesus' key parable in Mark 4 tells us we cannot give anything a root which does not have one in itself. I once wrote this after a jolly good try to get something going:

“I kicked it, I led it, I fed it, I cajoled it, I flattered it; ultimately I buried it.”

If it has no root in itself, you will not motivate it. You might pump it up, but it won't grow up!

After all this what are we hoping to help our successors become?

Chapter 4

Setting the Agenda ... What is Our Aim?

A Current Concern

One of the current areas of concern I have for the Body of Christ is its limited vision of what people can aim towards in their calling. Often we are held captive by the thoughts that we should all aim to be elders. Though the Bible says that this is a noble aspiration, only a very small percentage of a church can aspire to this role.

So what do the rest of us do? Well the next port of call is Ephesians 4:11, the “five-fold ministries”. “He gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers ...” We are arrested now by that word ‘some’, implying not all. So, if I don’t qualify here either, then where *do* I work out my training?

1 Corinthians 12:28-31 gives another list of “ministries”, which includes: workers of miracles; those with gifts of healing, helps, and administrations; speakers in different kinds of tongues; as well as apostles, prophets and teachers again. Once more, Paul qualifies this by asking, “Are *all* ... ?”

We can further search the Scriptures and find the nine “gifts of the Spirit” in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 and the “motivational gifts” in Romans 12:3-8 that describe our approach to the issues of life. We can find scattered references to hospitality and celibacy as other gifts. And then we can become so hung up that we miss the bigger picture.

Looking at the Bigger Picture

When our children were young we didn't get them to specialise. We tried to introduce them to the big picture of life. We taught them to have a go at a wide variety of things and to find out what they enjoyed and what they were good at doing. Hannah, our eldest would often end up playing 'school' with her younger brother and sister as her unfortunate pupils. We noticed this trait and out of prayer and observation we encouraged this interest. Last year, she gave a year of her short life to serve the Lord in our Christian school in Basingstoke. She learned so much more in this godly atmosphere under the mentoring of Jane Humphreys, one of our outstanding teachers, than she ever did in her 'bedroom classroom'; but the initial seed had been sown much earlier.

Now she is studying for a teaching degree at college. However this is only part of what she is called to do. Hannah is being trained by us, Jane, and others, to become a "woman of God."

Look Out for Signs Early in their Development

Beckie, our second child, was always fiddling with things. It would drive Chris mad! One day I heard Chris say, "Right Rebecca, that's it! I've had it with your fiddling – you can learn the piano!" That outburst has cost me a lot of money; a piano, music lessons, a flute, three guitars, assorted tambourines and sheet music. However my wife's insight and prophetic vision have released a daughter who writes her own songs, leads worship, and earns money from music lessons to support her work on the Basingstoke Schools' Outreach Team. Last week Beckie saw her first two school-girls come to the Lord.

Watch for the signs and have the courage to follow them! 1 Chronicles 12:32 speaks of "men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do."

Then What Should our Aim Really Be?

I love Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus and for years I have pored over them. In 1 Timothy 6:11 Paul writes this lovely phrase to his special son Timothy. "But you, *man of God* ..." What a powerful image that conjures up! That is what burns in my heart at the moment.

Let's Train Men and Women of God

Yes, I long for apostles and prophets to be released; and yes I, along with many others, am involved in their training; but *this is the seed bed we should be laying first!*

Deep down in my heart I am longing to see men and women who just hunger for God; who hunger for his word, his ways and his will; the Esther's and the Deborah's, the Dorcas and the Martha ministries. I long for the Nathaniel's, men without guile, and the Nathan's who can address kings about their unrighteousness. None of these great leaders of God's people seemed focused on "their ministry", but they were focused on God.

Frozen Assets

When Chris, my wife, began teaching on this theme of 'Frozen Assets', it was a revelation born out of years of seeking to see women released into all God had for them to do. It has been my privilege to see many women getting released into new areas of ministry for the Lord, because of this teaching. Recently I spoke to over 300 women in Nairobi, Kenya, on a follow up to Chris' last visit. They asked me to speak on "Unfreezing the Frozen Assets". It gave me great joy to follow up my wife's ministry and to build upon it, and it gave me even greater joy to hear Persiah Masinde minister two days later to the same women! She had needed much encouragement to speak, and having received that encouragement, she did it!

She discovered that people want to believe in us, that people want us to develop our calling. As the book of Hebrews says, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." (Hebrews 12:1)

No one else can run our race for us, but that great crowd of men and women of God are cheering us on. Don't give up but press on and don't lose heart.

So we need to run the race. But how and what do we train?

Chapter 5

The Training Ground

Training in Character

Above my desk is a superb photograph of my dear friend Adrian Thomas. He is halfway up a mountain in all his climbing gear. Adrian was one of life's rich characters and we spent almost sixteen years working on God's training ground together. We visited other nations, travelled in ministry, shared meals, and shared dreams, many of which will never be realised.

Adrian died of cancer in the summer of 1997. In those last months of his life I watched a man of God and a prophet live his life in a tenacious and Christlike way. Now Adrian was not perfect – ask Gladys, his wife! Many times he and I had sat down and at great depth had confronted weaknesses and flaws in order to grow more like Jesus, but in those last months as his frame grew ever thinner, Adrian grew ever stronger in his character and especially in the fruits of the Spirit.

All the years of his character training blossomed in those last months. What Adrian had learned in a time of peace was now being extracted in time of war.

Never despise discipline; it can be a life-saver up the road. I watched in the hospital as he poured himself out to minister to others, who knew they would soon be leaving this life. Adrian knew he would be too, but to a better place, and so he made the most of every opportunity. I watched him in the hospice as he blessed all who visited or ministered to him. I was with him when he prayed over those closest to him, just before he died.

Adrian met death victoriously. He never wavered or complained. His character grew every day. It was my privilege to preach at his funeral. Our sixteen year old son, Stephen, was one of six young men he had influenced, who carried his coffin. Many people responded to the message of, “Who will stand in the gap?” Adrian and I will never be able to fulfil all our dreams, but no one can ever take away the memories or the things we achieved. Every day I see him not quite having reached the summit on the photograph, but I just know he reached it in Heaven!

The last words Adrian spoke to me were, “You *will* keep running until you hit the tape won’t you?” He loved to run as much as he loved to climb and he was simply saying, “Don’t give up!” I would give anything to have him back. I miss him greatly, as a friend and as a co-labourer; but now I must press on to ensure others will take his place. What about Gladys, his wife? Same character, same depth, same warrior spirit. Soon she will be going with us on the team to Sweden and now she works full-time based in our church centre in Basingstoke.

Our character will reflect our willingness to be trained. Our circumstances will reveal our progress. Adrian and Gladys passed with First-class Honours!

Let God and his servants work on your reliability, faithfulness, conversation, loyalty, integrity, self-discipline, attitude, stewardship, accountability, and the other host of character traits Jesus wants to pour his life into.

Training in Conduct

The way we behave affects where we end up! 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 states, “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were!”

Hell beckons for those whose conduct is unbecoming! We must work really hard to destroy the works of darkness that have such a foothold in people or they will become the Devil’s trip wire in their lives – often

later when they have received a place of prominence. There have been, sadly, far too many illustrations of this amongst leaders in recent years.

Our behaviour can draw others away from or towards Christ. How often we have grieved the Holy Spirit by our thoughtlessness or rashness. I have smarted over the years from the loving rebukes of my wife, my pastor, my brothers and even my children, when my conduct was less than Christlike. We don't always feel blessed by the truth but, as Proverbs 27:6 says, "Wounds from a friend can be trusted but an enemy multiplies kisses." Blessed are you if you have such a friend! It is part of God's super plan to raise us as true sons and daughters. (See Hebrews 12: 5-11)

We need to be aware of what is appropriate and what is inappropriate behaviour. When to speak and when to be silent. What to say and where to say it.

Future usefulness can be affected by our conduct

We can limit our *future* sphere of influence by our refusal to receive correction *now*. Many people refuse correction because they see it as rejection. The wise of heart recognises it is painful, but necessary for our future good. Many times Barney Coombs has been tough on areas of my life and I have gone away licking my wounds. At times it has taken me by surprise, at times I was asking for it by my wrong attitude; but now I can see how important it has been that I learn to come under discipline.

As I sit with national and international leaders, and observe their wisdom and self-discipline, as I travel across nations or sit with Evangelical Alliance and Spring Harvest leaders in the UK, I realise why Barney had to be so tough on me. Luke 12:48 says, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

Now before you get the impression Barney is a hard task-master, I must point out that I voluntarily submitted to his spiritual authority. In short, I got what I asked for! Though some days I wondered what I had done!

Training in Charisma

This is an area we can encourage, motivate and pray into, but we cannot *give* anyone charisma. That is a grace gifting from God alone. What we can do is to recognise the anointing that God has given to individuals and encourage the development of their gifting.

This can be done many ways; locally, nationally and internationally. Take for example the recognition, training and releasing of prophetic ministries.

In Basingstoke, John and Marilyn Denning have for years faithfully been training up the prophetic giftings in the church. Along with the local leaders their job is to spot the emerging prophets and take them on one side for development. This includes both classroom teaching and field work practise. Small groups operate as prophetic teams across the cells and congregations. Now some of the early trainees are training others, some in their teens.

At Salt and Light Ministries national level, I have the privilege of leading a Council with Bryn Franklin, David Oliver, John Denning, and Jonathan Aston, and our role is to gather and encourage prophets together across the UK and other nations.

Whilst the release of the charisma of these ministries is vital, there is continual ongoing work being put in to the character and conduct of these people.

It behoves us to remember that not everyone can be treated the same way. We need different strokes for different folks. What can motivate one person can de-motivate another. Some need the stick and carrot; some need great sensitivity. You have to be smart in recognising how best to approach each individual. Keep your eyes and ears open, watching their response, learning how they work and what they can and can't carry. Watch out for unrelenting disapproval, in looks, 'off the cuff' remarks and long periods of silent communication. Personally I hate this kind of approach, much preferring straight talking – and appreciating encouragement even more!

Four Styles of Handling Those you are Training

1. Some people need constant direction

That is, they need a more ‘hands on’ approach, with structure control and lots of feed-back time. This is particularly so with new believers.

2. Some people need coaching to help them push through the pain barriers

They need help with confrontation, endurance, handling insecurity and losses of confidence. In short they need to be told, “You can do it! I believe in you! And more important, God is with you!”

3. Some people need supporting

They need listening to, praising and room being made for them to develop. Knowing when to move in is an art in terms of timing. They don’t need constant directing and supporting all the time.

4. Some people can be delegated to

They are top performers, competent and committed, and can act and report. You can always adjust things later, and be ready to do that!

Inspecting the Troops

Remember: a good sergeant-major knows that the more he *inspects* his troops, the more he can *expect* from them. The challenge of the check-up keeps them on their toes and draws the best out of them. The same principle works on our training ground too!

Now the training ground is under way, how do we make sure we don’t just stay ‘square bashing’?

Chapter 6

Recognition at Last! How to Move On

Motivation: a Major Key

If you are not a motivator you make a poor leader. Leadership is about inspiring people to achieve things that they would never achieve on their own. Psychologists tell us that most people only ever achieve 15% of their full potential. If this is true it is a national tragedy. *Every good athlete needs a coach.*

We fool ourselves if we believe we will get to our full potential on our own. We just won't do it alone. Top athletes know this and many regularly change coaches in order to reach their goals, or employ specialists to help them with specific weaknesses.

Do you possess the necessary enthusiasm, optimism and zeal to motivate others? Optimism is a vital commodity. Take my garden; do I see the roses or do I see the thistles? Well actually I see both; but I choose to concentrate on the roses because I am aware how depressing it becomes when I get weed conscious.

It is hard to motivate people when you only ever see the weaknesses and the deficiencies. You just become a hard task-master.

To make your workers aware of what you are aiming at with them, makes your task and their sacrifices seem all the more worthwhile. To communicate with them regularly as to their progress or lack of it, only helps them press on to the goal. Many people, who have given up through the

constant discouragement of the Devil, would have survived with closer input from someone who *showed* that they cared rather than *said* that they cared!

How Can we Motivate People?

1. Insist on forward momentum

When we take teams overseas, which comprise of young and old, I always tell them that every one is expected to make forward movement. For some it will be in inches, some in feet, some in yards and others in miles. We insist that no person stands still. I have watched some truly remarkable transformations take place on those trips. I recall people like Debbie Santos (nee Smith) tentatively stepping out on a Zimbabwean team in the mid-eighties. Now she and her Brazilian husband, Elias, run a powerful work amongst the street orphans in Mozambique. I recall young men speaking through an interpreter for the very first time, who now lead growing churches. I recall older folk who thought that their days of usefulness were passing, suddenly finding their place and discovering the gold, silver and precious jewels in their spiritual treasure chests!

2. Stretch them beyond where they would naturally venture

I can remember the look of horror on my wife's face when I told her she was going on Gary Gibbs' team to Bulawayo in Southern Zimbabwe while I was going to lead another team in another part of the country. Now she wasn't unhappy with Gary's leadership, which was excellent; but she knew that, as he was an out and out evangelist, that's what they would be up to! Chris would happily cast out demons all day; but evangelism – no way!

Of course, that is why I sent her with him, so she would be stretched; and she was. She loved it and grew under Gary's careful and inspired leadership. She had encounters down in Bulawayo that she has never forgotten and that have helped her become the woman of God that she is today.

3. Encourage them by fathering not mothering

Don't be over-protective; take chances. When our son Stephen was six, I bought him a Swiss army knife, full of gadgets and blades. His Mum was not very pleased with me, telling me he would cut himself. However it is

every boy's dream to have such a real knife and I told Chris he'd survive, even if he did cut himself! That's the difference between Mums and Dads. Needless to say, when Chris went out shopping he managed to cut himself twice within her trip! He did learn two valuable lessons though. The first was to keep your hands behind the cutting edge. The second was always stay outside when you're bleeding – we don't want to mess up the carpets!

Needless to say Chris was far from pleased on her return and spotted what had gone on straight away. I was amazed at her discernment until she pointed out you don't normally wear gloves in the height of summer!

4. *Rescue them only if necessary*

Letting people 'die' a little and feel the pressure is better than taking it all for them. You must avoid wrapping them in cotton wool. I have watched young people on the streets of Harare dying a thousand deaths and then going on to preach a really good message and even see people come to Christ. We must never forget the Scripture in 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 which concludes, "So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you."

5. *Always review every task that you have allotted*

Ensure that every review contains encouragement, correction, and future direction, and resist letting them revert to past performances. In short, keep calling them up in God. This weekend, whilst travelling to speak at a conference, Chris and I listened to a tape of Gary Bastin's. Gary is the much loved worship leader in Basingstoke and is well-known as one of the worship leaders at the Days of Destiny camp for Salt and Light Ministries. Yet here he was, giving me one of his teaching tapes to review. Gary has been full-time with us for about ten years. I respect him highly, yet he was submitting his message, willing to learn. As it happened, it was an excellent tape and fed us well on our way to give to others.

6. *We are aiming to produce 'someone' in 'everyone'*

We must get to the place where the nature and ministry of Jesus is reproduced within them. If your workers are passionate about Jesus, then this is an easy task.

Leadership is all about taking people into places they would normally not venture and showing them they can not only survive but also overcome!

Recognition: a Major Door

I am so glad that Jesus said he was the door and not the ceiling! This was a major revelation to me as I saw that he was always making room for his disciples, unlike the Pharisees. In John 10:9 Jesus plainly states he is the door through which people can go in and out safely to find pasture.

In Matthew 23:13 he berates the Pharisees who “shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.” The Pharisees were, and still are, those who put ceilings on people!

The Father could not resist breaking into Jesus’ baptism and expressing his recognition of his Son. “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

You can always tell the parents of the winners on Sports Days. They beam from ear to ear as their children receive their rewards. I have been there myself, though sometimes the kids see right through it! I remember one of ours, who shall be nameless, getting The King’s School prize for the most improved pupil. My parental pride bubble was pricked well and truly when the recipient of this dubious honour remarked, “Well, it’s really the most improved behaviour award!” The thing was, we all knew they were correct.

We All Need Recognition from Others

Peter carried the approval of Jesus and needed it after his spectacular disaster at Gethsemane and his ever-worsening performance in the courtyard when he so strongly denied his master. Jesus understood Peter, and his tender confrontation of him on the beach in John 21 shows his patience and his belief in someone into whom he had poured hours of his life. (See John 21:15-19)

Barnabas gave Saul recognition when most others were still afraid of him after his murderous anti-Christian crusades (Acts 9:26-27). Barnabas, when he heard of God’s grace on the church in Antioch, searched for Saul

and brought him to the Antioch saints. What a great encouraging door-opener he was!

Paul himself had to write to the churches in Corinth and Ephesus to encourage them to receive Timothy, and to the Cretans to receive Titus. In fact, when you read Paul's letters it becomes a major feature of his apostolic mantle that he should be found commending so many of his fellow-workers. It is both challenging and moving when you read Romans 16 and see the deep affection in which Paul held people. He was a very relational man. People were important to him, and some of the men and women who worked with him have entered the pages of eternal history and have become role models to millions.

Honour is a Delight to God

There is a lot of honour in the Godhead, and there is a lot of honour amongst the angels and the twenty-four elders around the throne. The Father gave honour to Jesus at his Ascension and the Son will return all rule and power to the Father when all things finally rest beneath his feet (1 Corinthians 15:20-28).

There is not a lot of honour in our society these days; but God likes to see it amongst his people. Can we learn to honour the gifts of Christ that we see emerging in the church? Can we express our appreciation for what we recognise of God in others?

Once I had the privilege of seeing my father receive the MBE from the Queen at Buckingham Palace. It was a great honour for my mother and me to be there to see the investiture. He deserved it for years of faithful and loyal service to the government of our nation. However it was nothing like the night that the young Timothy's applauded him when I introduced him in Basingstoke. The applause went on and on and really blessed my Dad and honoured me. You see, he had trained me up in the way I should go, and much of what I have become today is due to him and the role model he always has been to me. My mother too is an outstanding woman of grace to whom I will always be indebted for her wisdom, patience and perseverance.

"What we honour we always get more of" has been a frequent saying of Barney Coombs. I have personally found this to be true.

If you honour those you are training when they deserve it or when they need it, they will be a fruitful person with you. Otherwise we will consign them to a life of discouragement. Recognise what they have in God, draw it to the attention of others, commend them for their calling and their good labour.

Trust: the Final Approval

Trust is earned, it is not a gift. It is when you are called up as a friend by the one who has been training you and you now become a co-labourer. You don't give trust and then keep taking it back. That's merely control. You give it and trust, and that means you must be gracious enough to allow for mistakes. After all we have made enough mistakes to last us a lifetime! In John 15:14-16 Jesus calls up his disciples to be his friends. It is a great moment full of divine tension. A moment to savour and, in my own experience, one of the greatest moments in the discipleship process.

Chris and I have experienced this so many times and are all the richer for it. We have been blessed to have worked with so many gifted and talented people who proved that faithfulness, loyalty and servanthood can be qualities the gifted can also possess. We have laboured together for over two decades and we are looking for many more years together enjoying trust, honour and acknowledging each other's gifts and strengths.

It is our joint desire that we always acknowledge the gift of God in our fellow-workers and recognise our indebtedness to them wherever we have worked together and to proclaim we cannot make it on our own. We need you!

As I have been writing this today, I have had contact with Dave Marchment, who is now leading Basingstoke, so ably replacing me; with Gina Charsley, who was our administrator, before she left to serve Barney so well as his administrator; with our dear friends and prayer warriors, the Dennings, who came in to report on their trip to King's Bible College in Scotland; with Gladys Thomas, whom we honoured earlier in this book for her grace and love as a dear friend and co-labourer. Every day we give thanks for those with whom we labour and who are such a blessing to us. Make sure you don't miss the roses by dwelling on the thistles!

Now we have recognised our fellow-workers, how do we release them?

Chapter 7

Release: The Trainee Takes on Responsibility

The Goal of Self-Government

Chris and I waited nine and a half years for children. We had to learn to be patient and how to pray and war for our provision to be released to us. We had a word from God that we would have three children. There was a long gap between *our promise* and *our provision*. But in the intervening years we learned so much. Our character was slowly being formed. We were married in July 1968, and when Hannah eventually arrived it was September 1977. Rebecca followed in March 1979. Stephen, the first promised, was the last to arrive, born in July 1981.

The whole period of waiting took 13 years. In our present age that is a very long time. There was plenty of time to produce an Ishmael! God's timing and his provision, though, were just right for us. Having waited so long and gone through so much heartache and training, the temptation would have been to be clingy and possessive with our children. Fortunately God gave us two revelations. The first was that we were merely *stewards* of the children and our job was to bring them to *self-government*.

We were to train up our children in order that they could stand up on their own two feet and look after themselves, becoming producers not just consumers.

This was to become inevitable, for our lifestyle has always been one of constant travel as our call is to go to the nations. Our children have had to

learn to be rightly self-sufficient. This is very exciting to watch, especially as the eldest has now left home and gone to college!

The Spirit of Release

The second revelation we had was the *spirit of release*. This was a very powerful insight as we saw the attitude of Jesus in John 12:20-29. The disciples were excited because the Greeks had come to see Jesus. They were getting their passports ready, they were going international! At that very moment they felt Jesus had the world at his feet. Well it is true, he did; but not in the way that they imagined!

Jesus started talking about death, and falling into the ground. He talked about a grain of wheat that must fall into the ground and die or it will only abide alone. He wanted, like Chris and I did, to reproduce. He also wanted to let go! *The spirit of Jesus is the spirit of release*. Because he was so free to do this, out of that one seed dying, when Peter preached at Pentecost (Acts 2), three thousand more seeds sprouted in the kingdom that day. Now it was many nations, not just Greeks!

When God gives you people to train, be aware that the day will come when you must release them, not cling on to them. In letting them go, you will gain them in a new way. In attempting to retain them, you will lose them!

So Where do we Start?

Jesus didn't just throw his disciples in at the deep-end, *he sent them on his behalf*. The disciples very quickly learned what it was to be sent out by Jesus: you needed a good memory! In Matthew 10:5 we read, "These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions ... " There follows a list of what Jesus told them to do, and it is amazingly long. It dealt with where to go, who to look for, where to stay, what to preach, what to wear, who to pray for, and what to pray about!

He then went on to give them instructions about money, food and lodgings and what kind of greetings to bring to the households that they stayed in! They were warned about their enemies and even their families. The whole chapter is mind-boggling in its detail. In short Jesus went into

tremendous detail in order to ensure that his disciples were properly released. It was not just, “Off you go lads. Thank goodness that’s all over and now I can have a rest!”

Over the next three years he would repeat this strategy again and again. Sending the seventy-two out in two’s, (notice *never alone*), Jesus ensured that, not only would they go with clear instructions, but that they would also *report back*.

Can you imagine what the conversation might have been like in the team as they went off on their ministry trip? ...

“What was point seventeen, does anyone remember?” said Simon the Zealot, who just wanted to get on with it.

“I don’t believe I do,” said Thomas.

“Don’t worry about the points – let’s just call down the fire!” said James and John.

“No, we must pay attention to detail,” said Matthew.

“I wonder if there’s any money in this?” said Judas, “because I heard him say not to take any!”

“Well I’m in charge, so follow me,” said Peter, “I can always be trusted.”

The rest kept quiet and prayed they would get it right!

Sending People on your Behalf

Many times over the years I have been sent on behalf of others. I have also sent others on my behalf. I am not sure which is the more nerve-wracking!

Chris and I were once asked to go to South Africa on behalf of Bob Mumford. That was a very great honour as we have always had a high respect for his ministry and have learned so much over the years from his life. The amazing thing was: the church there treated us no differently to the way it would have treated him! Everywhere we went we received outstanding kindness and generous hospitality, with people loaning us the best they had. It soon became very obvious to us that they were not receiving the two very young speakers that Bob had sent; they were receiving him!

That chapter in Matthew's gospel when Jesus sent out the original twelve ends in an interesting manner. "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward." (Matthew 10:40-41)

We were deeply impacted by this experience and it further taught us that, "Blessed is he that comes to us in the name of the Lord." Let's be ready to receive those who are sent.

Is it Harder to Send Others than to go Ourselves?

Unfortunately, for most people, it is. We don't believe others can do it as well as we can. We are not convinced that they will get it right. We are nervous they will upset things. And then there are the financial implications. They might get the love offering! May the Lord deliver us from such small-minded thinking and envision us to see the army of ordinary people he has put at his leaders' disposal. These crack troops are there in his faith and vision, so why not in ours?

Right now I have a problem. Our friends in Norway need me to go and encourage them, but I cannot go at the time they want. What should I do? Well the answer is very simple. Vic Gledhill is in Norway that week and will go over with Steiner, his Norwegian friend, and encourage them. If Vic goes and they receive him, then it is as good as my having gone! The following week Andreas Tofters will go in with a team from 'The Garden of the Lord' with whom we work in Sweden. If Andreas goes to Norway, so do I. Isn't this wonderful? When the Body of Christ begins to see this truth, then workers will truly be released.

"Would you receive ... on our behalf?" has become a question I am asking more and more. We must share the workload, the adventure, and the glory between us – and I am not talking about giving them the assignments that don't appeal to us!

This is how many of our leaders have got started in the ministry. Mark Mumford, leader of East Midlands Christian Fellowships, got started in the ministry in a very simple way – by setting out the chairs for the meetings.

He never did this haphazardly, spending a long time ensuring there was leg room and clear vision – no small task as the room held well over one hundred people. He also trimmed the huge yew hedges and helped cut the large lawns. He gave himself diligently to these tasks, and was soon taking on other responsibilities, often accompanying me as I travelled around the groups in Oxfordshire that I was encouraging.

We watched him growing as a servant. We watched him growing as a man of God. The elders gave him and his new wife, Nesta, a house group. They did a good job. Others were watching too and were blessed by what they saw. The Salt and Light leaders agreed we should ask them to go to Eastwood in the East Midlands, where they did such a good job that Chris and I were able to be released from there to go and help in Basingstoke.

We continue to thankfully watch their progress as they lead this exciting church. Mark is now valued amongst the nations for his wisdom, warmth and humour, and as a man of God.

But what would have happened if we had given up on Mark in those early years of his character training? Where would he be now if he had not been trusted by the leaders of Salt and Light Ministries?

The great thing with Mark is that he understands the ‘Family Business’ and employs the same strategies as the rest of the ‘Firm’!

Sending as Part of a Team

One of the delights for me in leadership is in taking teams on the road. The joy we have in putting together the varied gifts and ministries to bless, build and influence other works and cultures is remarkable. This year I have worked with the full five-fold ministries, with trainees, with new Christians; I have been in mega churches of thousands and mini churches of a few faithful believers. I have worked with local, national and international leaders, on national conference teams, such as Spring Harvest; and all the time I have loved it, because I have been on ‘Team’! I am a committed *team fanatic*.

Pioneering Teams in Salt and Light

I recognise that this has been a key way we have developed leaders for years in Salt and Light Ministries. Ron Trudinger, that great pioneer amongst the Aborigines, and Vic Gledhill in India and Nepal, paved the way, with Barney, long before I arrived in Basingstoke. Vic and I have taken well over 400 people with us to India and Africa over the years. What an opportunity to learn alongside men and women of God.

I recall once listening to Paul and Shireen Cooper from Huddersfield describing how they cast out a baboon spirit from a man in Muzerabani on the Zimbabwe/Mozambique border. The man ran up a tree as they cast it out! They were so excited, and so were we. It was their first ever trip into Africa and they have been back since and are continuing to grow in God. The stories the teams tell are a source of inspiration and provocation for others to go as well.

Anybody in leadership in Basingstoke will have been a veteran of these teams. It is a great way to put trust in people and to watch their progress with joy. The excitement we feel when they report back cannot be explained. Recently our daughter Beckie returned from a team trip to the East Midlands led by Hazel Marchment. She had gone prepared to give through drama. Other things happened and she never got to do the drama. Was she upset? Not a bit of it, as she lay on our bed she poured out everything that had gone on with the team. In fact she had come home and rushed straight out to the Basingstoke River of Life meeting because she didn't want to miss out!

You can have your two weeks on the beach in Majorca and get burnt on the outside or you can come with us overseas and get burnt on the inside! Which do you think has eternal value?

The Final Stage: Released to your Own

This is the most delicate stage to gauge. Often the disciple will think they are ready before the Master thinks that is the case. *Trust is essential at this point.* You must believe I will release you into the right thing at the right time. I must recognise you are as ready as you ever will be!

When the day of Pentecost came for Peter he really had been sifted as wheat as the Master had promised him (Luke 22:31). He had been spoken to by Jesus in quiet and loving rebuke on the seashore after a day's fishing and commissioned to "Feed my sheep." He now knew his limitations as much as he knew his strengths. At last he had come under discipline for the purpose of instruction to produce maturity and he was ready. Now he would be led by another in the way he should go and not run around doing his own thing (John 21:18-19). However he would always remain a follower even though he was to have his own.

This is the Nervous Time ... for all!

Will it work? Will they sink or will they swim? There's only one way to find out – let go! Be near enough to help in difficulties; but far away enough to give them space to have a go, to put into practice *on their own* all you have been training them in.

Once you have released them, stay *related* but *not controlling*. Stay available and be dependable, but don't be in their back pockets. Give them room to breathe and let them make mistakes.

Ask yourself the question, "What am I doing now that somebody else can do?" Then ask the question, "What can I do that no one else can do?"

When you can answer these two questions it is time to make some changes and place some trust in others.

Now that the workers are released it is a good time to reflect on the future.

Chapter 8

Reflections: Some Key Issues

The time after the release of your workers is a good time to look back and to see what you have all learned, then to look ahead and see what still needs to be put in place. One of the greatest sadnesses to me in the Body of Christ is to meet leaders who “once worked with ... ” They now no longer have a relationship with whoever they began their journey. Even worse are those who were brought to birth by a ‘midwife’, but don’t have any spiritual parents. Their orphan progress is hindered by their lack of oversight, and God never intended it that way!

There are other books in this “Roots and Shoots” series which will deal with these vital ingredients. It must be said however, that God intended us to be placed in a family, with spiritual fathers. (See 1 Corinthians 4:14-17) It was never God’s intention for us to be alone nor for us to work in independence. In fact it is a gross sin before God to work alone. Where we get the ‘loner’ model from I fail to see. Even the Godhead works in perfect harmony together and each person of the Trinity needs the others. Why am I saying this?

My father is still my father even though I am fifty years of age and have my own wife, children, home and work. We are still related and still enjoy spending time together. It will be that way until death parts us.

Letting Go but Staying Related

We believe in the Biblical principle of joints and ligaments, which is the very means by which the Body of Christ is held together. We can clearly

see this principle in Ephesians 2 and 4 and in Colossians 2:19. It always amazes me, when people grow up in a spiritual family, get trained, and then leave to start some other ministry, that they don't stay related. Why not I ask? I realise there can be many answers, *but if we have built relationally and not out of method, then we will stay together not pull apart.*

Jesus himself invested in great depth in the lives of his disciples for over three years and when he was going to leave them he elevated them in their relationship saying, "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I have learned from my Father I have made known to you." (John 15:15)

Why don't we do the same? Or are we still talking 'new' but acting 'old' with our 'professional relationships', where we keep the saints at arm's length and where everything is polite but nothing changes or even grows?

When Jesus rose from the dead he could not resist going to his disciples. Over five hundred actually saw him according to 1 Corinthians 15:5-6. When the disciples were fishing in John 21, he was watching. Then they had a fish breakfast that he had actually cooked for them. In Acts 1 Luke records that Jesus went to the trouble of conducting a forty day seminar with them on the Kingdom. Eventually it was time to return to his Father, but he had promised he would still be praying for them (John 17:20; Hebrews 7:25).

It never crossed Jesus' mind not to stay related, and it should not cross ours either!

When I handed the role of Senior Pastor of Basingstoke Community Church to Dave Marchment it never crossed my mind not to stay related. In fact I began to try to discover how we should not just maintain the relationship but how we should develop it and improve it. After all, this is a family we have laboured in for eighteen years, and it would have been irresponsible not to stay involved. *How* we are involved is the big issue.

Don't Interfere – Just Watch and Pray

That is exactly what our elder Brother is doing right now! Jesus let his disciples get on with it – after all, they did have the Holy Spirit to help them, as well as an assortment of five-fold ministries. So now I don't go to the

BCC prayer time each day as I used to, and I'm not monitoring every decision. We have good communication and I receive the elders' minutes so I can keep up to date with what is going on. Now my role is to keep out of the detail and to *stay with the big picture and to exercise authority in prayer.*

True, I still get involved with the strategy and minister whenever I am asked; but the day-to-day responsibility is that of the elders, who do an excellent job. I must work at keeping the relationships on course and find ways of being a blessing and encouragement to them. I can ask the awkward questions when necessary, but I must do everything that I can to be supportive of the local leaders and work to help them rather than work against them. That is the posture we must adopt when we have released people.

Calculated Risk-taking

When you have had vision for someone it is so exciting to launch out and take risks with them. It is wise to take calculated risks. I have often taken risks with people and situations, but nine times out of ten they have been well thought through. I would be foolish to be living at risk all the time and it would be emotionally tiring. Some people have been wary of what I do because they are judging from the outside without ever taking the trouble to ask how I was thinking or why. You will always have to get through the cries of the cautious people if you are going to get anywhere in life. Don't turn them off completely because often there are grains of wisdom in what they are saying and it may lead us to avoid a careless oversight or timing that is too hasty.

If you are not willing to take risks, you will never be a leader. Jesus took a major risk with Peter – would you?

Round up the Mavericks – Life won't be Boring!

When I first arrived at Basingstoke I looked for men and women who walked on the wild side. They were abandoned to God. Barney Coombs calls them 'mavericks'. There were plenty around! Not all of them were being gainfully employed in the Kingdom. Slowly we began to release these men to function in controlled environments. They did a great job usually; and when they didn't, we talked about it!

Today many of those men are my most trusted and gifted friends and fellow-workers. David Oliver, a prophet and businessman is one of them. What a blessing it has been to travel around the world with him, equipping churches and affecting nations. Recently I watched him in Nairobi, Kenya, leading an incredibly anointed evening with one hundred and fifty Christian business leaders in the city. I marvelled as he opened up a seminar using biblical wisdom to train them in good business practices.

Phil Norris is another of these men. When he returned from University in Bristol, we asked Phil to go to an area of the town where we could just about keep a house group alive over the years. He rapidly increased numbers to around fifty with the help of his friends. He was single when we gave him the leadership and only twenty-two. We had watched him for years. He comes from a great servant-hearted family where he has had excellent parenting from Hugh (one of our elders) and his wife Merle.

Today Phil leads the North Region of BCC, works into Westbourne Grove in London and into the Czech Republic. He has a good wife Helen who is totally alongside him in the work. She is the young mother of three little ones and a real warrior, who married Phil and the growing church! At present Phil is seeking to develop a new planting on Hatch Warren in Basingstoke, and also heads up the Youth Council of Salt and Light Ministries.

The great thing about Phil is that he is looking to reproduce in others what has been reproduced in himself. Mavericks can make faithful men if only we will believe in them.

Consequential Thinking

As leaders of some years' experience, we have been doing the job longer than our young leaders have, and so we can often save them major problems by getting them to think consequentially: ask them, "What might happen if we do this?" "What could happen if they were to do that?"

Barney has saved me on several occasions. Sadly we don't always listen. I recall telling one of my brothers that I sensed a certain car that he was going to purchase would not do him any good. It didn't – especially when he got it

home and discovered not only that his dear wife could not reach the foot pedals, but that also it was too wide for their garage!

This is often a time for “staying up the watch tower” to look and pray, rather than for direct involvement in the hand-to-hand fighting in the trenches alongside them. Let’s warn them of the enemy advances that we see, by all means; but let’s not rescue them too quickly or provide the answers too soon.

Jesus put the need for consequential thinking very clearly in Luke 14:28-32 in the stories of the man starting to build a tower and the king thinking of beginning a war.

Fathers Must Stay Fathers

Avoid “Grandad mode” at all costs, where you get into spoiling the kids! We must preserve both our own integrity and that of the flock and not make things more difficult for the local leadership. When the spiritual sons and daughters leave home then you remain in your role as father and don’t desert your post. Even now, with all the experiences God has taken me through it is still very important to me that both Barney and my own natural father keep good contact with me. Not so long ago, Ngwiza Mnkandla called me from Zimbabwe and said, “Hi, don’t forget you’ve still got a sheep down here!”

We all need the encouragement and support fathers bring, even when we have our own families.

The Joy of Watching Family Grow

As we release workers and they develop new things, we have the joy of seeing the family expand, new gifts and ministries appear and new places begin to open up.

This is how many of the churches began in Zimbabwe. Ngwiza and the team were training Timothy classes and the young men and women would go out street preaching, winning people to Christ. They came one day to their Pastor and announced that they had a new work for him in Mbare, in the oldest township in Harare the capital. Ngwiza told them to get on with looking

after it themselves! It is all growing so fast now that it is hard to visit all these new churches, so we have to trust what we have trained.

Trusting What you have Trained

Recently we were together with a team in Gweru and we spent the morning with a dozen leaders from the area as they gave an account of the new works that they had started. The main church planter had only been with the base church for four months, under the leadership of two of the ex-Bible College students, Bright and Timothy. Since going out he had planted five new churches in the Gokwe rural area. As we listened, we recognised we were seeing trust at work and the fruit of many years' labours of the Faith Ministries' leaders returning to them.

We will have the joy of seeing the cycle of life start all over again, if we practise what we preach.

The big question in all of this is: *Will the fathers really let go?* Sadly the answer is that some will refuse to do so.

Insecurity may trap some. Some will be unable to relinquish control. Others would prefer us not to grow up. Fortunately there are those who are committed to share what God has given them, doing all that they can to develop and make way for new leaders to emerge. Not to do so is a tragedy of earthquake proportions. We are currently on our fourth generation of leaders in our sphere in Salt and Light Ministries and we are looking at whom we start to train in the lower teenager bracket right now.

Where are you looking? We have to start somewhere. Where will you begin and whom will you begin with?

Start with Vision and Make it Big!

I have purposely left vision to the end. It is a massive topic. Without it people perish, or dwell carelessly, says the writer of Proverbs. If the leaders have no vision for you, don't even begin to try to get things going between you. If there is no joining between you, why try to build an artificial limb?

John Maxwell in his great book "Developing the Leader Within You" says, "A leader's vision of the horizon allows people to see the heights of

their possibilities. Each individual will determine how high he or she wants to go. *Your responsibility is to put plenty of sky in the picture.*” Chris and I love this statement. There should be no limits to any of us that want to grow in God, except for those of grace and sphere that God himself allocates. So let us be busy in releasing ministry not locking it up.

Sadly some people are just too short sighted for you to follow. They see no sky, only the ground at their shuffling feet. They can dampen the Spirit quicker than a cold shower. Try this for classic lack of vision:

In a “Saviour for All Seasons”, William Barker tells the story of a Bishop from the East Coast of America who many years ago paid a visit to a small Midwestern religious college. He stayed at the home of the college president, who also served as professor of physics and chemistry. After dinner the bishop declared that the millennium couldn’t be far off, because just about everything had been discovered and all inventions conceived.

The young college president politely disagreed and said that he felt there would be many more discoveries. When the angered bishop challenged the president to name just one such invention, the president replied he was certain that within fifty years men would be able to fly.

“Nonsense!” spluttered the outraged bishop. “Only angels are intended to fly.”

The bishop’s name was Wright; and he had two boys at home who would prove to have greater vision than their father. Their names were Orville and Wilbur – inventors of the motor-driven aeroplane.

The father and his sons both lived under the same sky, but they did not see the same horizon.

Ask yourself this key question: “Does my vision release people to achieve new things or does it trap them to my limitations?”

I can honestly say that I constantly seek the Lord for vision for people’s lives. It motivates me in prayer. It fuels me in the tough times. It provokes me when I would just like to rest. Please don’t die in your potential, realise it!

That thought hounds me. I am beginning to set myself new goals and I am looking around and saying, “Lord with what little time that I have left, please don’t let me waste it. Please would you give me more people to train and to care for, so they can grow into all you desire.”

When I die I would like to think that something of what has been so carefully invested in me by others will have been passed on to the following generations. How about you and your leaders: is this your heartcry?

I honestly believe with all my being that this is the very heart of the Father in Heaven and he longs to see the same spirit of release operating on earth.

Chapter 9

Conclusion: Identifying, Equipping and Releasing Leaders

Let's look finally at the life of Timothy and observe a biblical model where we can see a spiritual father spotting, training and releasing a son in the Lord, a man of God of whom Paul said he was "a kindred spirit".

What did Paul see in Timothy?

1. He recognised that Timothy's parental *background* was invaluable to his own revelation of the mystery of the Jew and Gentile. Timothy had a believing Jewish mother and a Greek father. Timothy understood cross-cultural ministry issues. (Acts 16:1)
2. Timothy was given a sound, early *scriptural grounding*. He was of the third generation of faith in his family. (2 Timothy 1:5)
3. Timothy was *spoken well of* by the brethren. (Acts 16:2)
4. Timothy was *gifted*. (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6-7)
5. The *prophetic word* pointed towards him. This was vital considering all he was to face in the Kingdom. (1 Timothy 1:18)
6. Timothy had the *character* of a man of God. (1 Timothy 6:11)
7. Timothy was *young and teachable*. (1 Timothy 4:12; see also Lamentations 3:25-27)
8. Timothy was a man who could *take heed* to both his character and his doctrine. (1 Timothy 4:16)

9. Timothy was a *tender man* (2 Timothy 1:4; 1 Timothy 5:23) but also a *tough man*. (1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3)
10. Timothy could *suffer* for the gospel, whether personally (Acts 16:3) or along with others. (Acts 16:16ff)

These are the things that are highlighted in Paul's letters and in Luke's account of their travels with Timothy. Their relationship was undoubtedly deep and intimate and we see the characteristics that made Paul such a supporter of this relatively young leader. As we progress through the travels that they undertook together, it is remarkable what young Timothy faced so soon in his ministry.

It is also amazing to realise how much of Paul's training of Timothy was mobile. He was trained 'on the move' and not 'in the classroom'. His input was in the circumstances and adventures of every day life. If you got into action with Paul, you became fruitful pretty quickly.

How did Paul Equip Timothy?

Out of Paul and Timothy's initial jointing in Acts 16 there followed a number of things that formed part of Paul's training and equipping of Timothy:

1. Timothy was circumcised (so as not to be a stumbling block for ministry among the Jews). There was initial pain and cost to follow. (Acts 16:3)
2. Together they delivered the ruling of the Apostolic Jerusalem Council to every city. (Acts 16:4)
3. Paul, Timothy and Silas strengthened the young churches and helped them to grow. (Acts 16:5.)
4. Timothy experienced with Paul the resistance of the Holy Spirit concerning their plans. (Acts 16:6-7)
5. They experienced an apostolic calling through a vision that Paul had in the night. (Acts 16:9-10)
6. Timothy experienced being all at sea! (Acts 16:11) – and with his weak stomach at that!
7. Timothy experienced Lydia's prayer meeting in Philippi. (Acts 16:13-15)

8. Timothy was involved in the public casting out of demons. (Acts 16:16-18)
9. Timothy found himself right at the centre of a public riot. (Acts 16:19-22)
10. On his first ministry trip he saw his spiritual father and Silas imprisoned. (Acts 16:22-24)
11. Timothy was exposed to the earthquake that opened the jail for Paul and Silas; a miraculous sit-in by its inmates when they could have escaped; the salvation and subsequent baptism of the jailer and his household in Philippi; and a new church plant! (Acts 16:25-31)
12. Timothy also saw the release from jail of his senior partners in the Gospel. (Acts 16:35-40)

All of these experiences were part of the training process that Paul put his young disciple through.

Paul's letters to Timothy are full of instructions as to the spirit, attitude and foundation of the doctrines and practice that Paul was teaching Timothy to operate by. Paul also put a lot of experiential training into Timothy's life through Timothy's shadowing of him and the hands-on style of discipling that Paul operated.

How was Paul able to Release Timothy?

1. Because of their special relationship, Paul could entrust many tasks to Timothy. This included both people and places. (1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10-11; Philippians 2:19-24)
2. Though Timothy was Paul's disciple, he was ultimately to become his fellow-worker. (Romans 16:21)
3. He was also a "sent one", an apostle with Paul. (2 Corinthians 1:4; Philippians 1:1)
4. Timothy was eventually entrusted with identifying and setting in elders and deacons (1 Timothy 3) and with discipline and correction in the churches when required. (1 Timothy 5:19-22)
5. Timothy was entrusted with church doctrine and practice.
6. Timothy was fathered by Paul in a releasing manner.

My whole life model for training has come out of the relationships that Jesus and the apostle Paul adopted with their disciples. I know of no other way. It is time consuming. It is also a very vulnerable way of working, on both sides.

It can be the source of great joy and deep pain. There are days that make you laugh and days that make you weep; but there is no escape from it once you have tasted it. This really is the best wine.

I once heard the British athletics commentator David Coleman say that he had heard a marathon runner saying; *“The will to win is important; the will to prepare is everything!”*

In every move of God, God uses circumstances as an anvil. We are praying that this book will prove to be a driving force to bring many to that anvil, so that significant workers may be formed for the King and his Kingdom.

Let us get prepared, for the race is on! Eric Liddell, the Olympic runner said, “God made me to run and when I run I feel his pleasure.”

What is it that God has made you for? And what is it that you do that makes you feel his pleasure? My prayer is that you find a way of discovering this great call and a coach that helps you fulfil it.