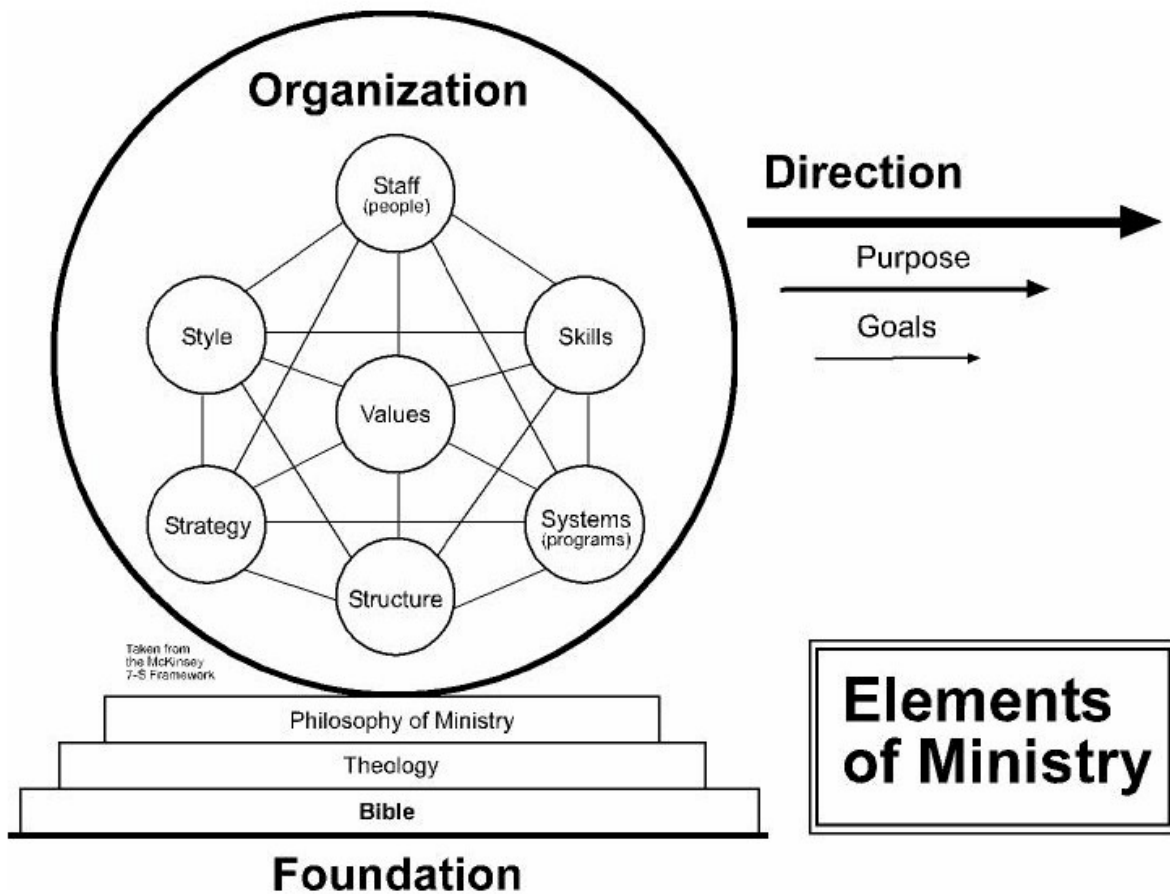


# Group Development

## Part 1: Groups

- I. Our job is to build a group, not merely to preach the gospel.
  - A. Jesus built a group of apostles.
  - B. Paul built churches.
  - C. Preaching the gospel is central to building a group; a Christian group cannot be built without preaching the gospel, but preaching the gospel by itself will not build a group.
  - D. This takes thought and hard work; a strong group will not arise spontaneously.
  - E. However, any group-building that happens will be done by God.
    1. God is at work!
    2. We are His servants.
    3. So our job is to learn how God builds groups and join Him in His work.
    4. “Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it;” Psalm 127:1.
- II. Elements of a ministry.
  - A. Foundation: the beliefs that shape the thinking of a group.
    1. Bible.
    2. Theology.
    3. Philosophy of Ministry.
      - a. Presuppositions – assumed fundamental beliefs.
      - b. Principles – how people grow spiritually.
  - B. Organization (Group): a body of people with shared interests engaged in group activities.
  - C. Direction:
    1. Purpose: Reaching Students for Christ, Equipping Students to Serve.
    2. Goals.
      - a. Growth in Grace.
      - b. Fellowship and Service.
      - c. Evangelism and Missions.
      - d. Biblical Worldview.
  - D. Interaction of the elements of a ministry.
    1. A foundation by itself is useless; nothing happens.
    2. An organization without a foundation will be unstable; it will be blown about by strong personalities, current events, fad methods, etc.
    3. An organization without direction will do things, but may not actually accomplish anything.
    4. Direction without an organization will accomplish little; organized manpower is necessary to accomplish goals.



### III. Elements of the group (organization).

#### A. Staff (The Individual, Demographics).

1. What are your people like?
  - a. The character and composition of your campus (demographics).
  - b. The specific individuals in your ministry.
2. Work hard to know the individual people on your campus.
3. We are fairly good at this.

#### B. Skills.

1. What skills do your people need for the group to function effectively?
2. Bible study.
3. Prayer.
4. Service.
5. Evangelism.
6. Insight on people and relationships.
7. Discipline.
8. Decision-making and decisiveness.
9. Leadership.
10. Etc.
11. We are not so good at training students in ministry skills.

C. Systems (Programs, Avenues).

1. What activities and events will your people do?
2. Essential programs.
  - a. Freshmen outreach.
  - b. Large group.
3. Core programs.
  - a. Bible studies.
  - b. Ministry Team (Core Group).
  - c. Outreach events.
4. Mature programs.
  - a. Conferences.
  - b. Mission trips.
  - c. Social activities.
  - d. Prayer meetings.
  - e. Etc.
5. We excel at some (large group) and do poorly at others (small groups).

D. Structure.

1. What is the hierarchical relation of the programs?
2. How are the programs connected to each other?
3. This is a weak area for us.

E. Strategy (Ministry Dynamics).

1. What steps shall we take to build this group and reach our goals?
2. How shall we get the people for our group?
3. What is the relative importance of the programs?
4. In what order shall the programs be implemented?
5. Pentagon, fishing pools, etc.
6. This may be our weakest aspect of group development.

F. Style.

1. How shall we dress, talk, entertain, eat, etc.?
2. It is surprising how much this affects the nature and success of a group.
3. Be careful not to allow your style to be so pronounced that it turns off people who are not in that groove.
4. We could be more reflective on this.

G. Values (Character).

1. How shall we describe the character of these people?
2. We are very attentive to this, and rightly so.

## Part 2: Stages of Group Development

- I. Stages of Group Development.
  - A. Students relating to each other as individuals.
  - B. Students relating to each other in small groups.
  - C. Small groups relating to each other and connecting to large groups.
  - D. Student leaders involved in stages 1-3 and beginning to understand the Phil. of Ministry.
  - E. Student leaders embracing the Philosophy of Ministry and helping other students through stages 1-4.
- II. Comments.
  - A. This is the most important section in this outline! This is what you must constantly remember and do.
  - B. These stages must be developed *in this order* or the group will become immature and deformed.
  - C. The earlier stages must be maintained as subsequent ones are developed.
  - D. These are not steps in building a group, or stages which you can complete and move on, but aspects of group life that must consistently be present for a group to be healthy.
  - E. A group will be immature or deformed if one or more of these stages is absent.
  - F. The success of all activities (Bible studies, Large Group, etc.) is dependent on all these relationships being present.
  - G. A critical aspect of the campus minister's job is constantly to maintain all these stages.
- III. How these stages are developed.
  - A. A heart for people must be developed through the teaching in one-to-ones, small groups, and large groups.
  - B. The campus minister and mature leaders must demonstrate relating to individuals, helping individuals relate in small groups, and helping small groups relate to each other and the large groups.
  - C. Explicit instruction and encouragement in these relationships must occur in all three avenues.
  - D. The campus minister and mature leaders must coach the other students in doing this (TDOEE). (See "Developing Leaders" for a discussion of training students.)
  - E. This process will be the primary topic of Ministry Team (Core Group) discussion. (See "Developing Leaders" for a discussion of how to use the Ministry Team.)
- IV. When starting a new group with few to no contacts, remember this:
  - A. Often the original members will not be the leaders when the group develops to a later stage.
  - B. Some students will be great leaders for stage 2 or 3, but not for stage 5.
  - C. Before you reach stage 5, you may lose several people who were key leaders or members in earlier stages.
  - D. Do not rush the process; do not expect more from your leaders than they can give at a time.
  - E. This section represents the *values* and *skills* of the organization.
- V. Why Mark Lowrey refused to tell ministers how to build a group.
  - A. If you simply follow some procedure, you never learn how to build a group. All you learn is how to run a certain program, which probably will not work in your next ministry setting.
  - B. What is fundamentally important is learning the basic principles of group development, and learning how to apply them in your setting.
  - C. This is difficult, but it is what you must learn and do.
  - D. When you have learned this, you do not need anyone to tell you how to build a group.

### Part 3: Strategy for Building a Group

- I. Seven Steps to Begin a Group.
  - A. Start by carefully studying the demographics and geography of your campus.
  - B. Do focused, energetic, effective freshmen outreach.
  - C. Do one-to-ones with your contacts.
  - D. Build engaging small groups, especially Bible studies.
  - E. Build exciting, challenging, welcoming large groups, especially the Large Group Meeting.
  - F. Develop leaders. (See “Developing Leaders”.)
  - G. Build a leadership group. (See “Developing Leaders”.)
- II. Comments.
  - A. Beware lest you focus on these steps and forget the Stages of Group Development!
  - B. Going from step 1 to 7 can take anywhere from 1 year (if you start with many contacts, some of whom are mature) to 5 years (if you start with a few young contacts).
  - C. These are the *activities* you do; within these activities you must develop the five Stages of Group Development.
  - D. *The irreducible minimum activities are **freshmen outreach** and **a teaching meeting**. Your ministry will fail if you do these poorly.*
  - E. Well-executed *Ministry Team (Core Group)*, *small group Bible studies*, and *outreach activities* are necessary to *growth*. The ministry will dwindle if these are neglected.
  - F. All other activities, such as mission trips, conferences, and concerts – while possibly very valuable in themselves – can *diminish* a ministry if they rob energy from the five essential programs: freshmen outreach, a teaching meeting, Ministry Team, small group Bible studies, and some sort of outreach activity.
- III. Taking an Existing Group.
  - A. Always begin by carefully studying the demographics and geography of your campus.
  - B. Get as much information as possible about the group from the outgoing campus minister and the Area Coordinator.
  - C. Carefully evaluate the group in terms of the five Stages of Group Development.
    - 1. How strong is each stage?
    - 2. What needs attention?
  - D. Carefully evaluate the five essential programs.
    - 1. How strong is each?
    - 2. What needs to be done to bring them up to standard?
  - E. Determine if there are any other activities which are draining energy from the five essential programs.
  - F. Devise a plan to strengthen the group.
    - 1. Decide what changes need to be made in the programs.
    - 2. Prioritize the proposed changes.
    - 3. Plan how to implement them.
    - 4. Plan how you will work on the Stages of Group Development.
      - a. In Large Group.
      - b. In Bible studies.
      - c. In one-to-ones.
      - d. In Ministry Team.

- G. Implement the plan.
  - 1. Persuade the student leaders of each change before you implement it whenever possible.
  - 2. Move slowly!

IV. Freshmen Outreach.

- A. The importance of freshmen outreach cannot be overemphasized.
- B. The receptiveness of students to your ministry drops precipitously in the three weeks after they arrive at the university.
- C. The goal is to show freshmen that you are a significant part of the university community and that you genuinely care about them.
- D. Include as many RUF members as possible in freshmen outreach.
- E. You want to meet as many freshmen as possible in the first days and weeks of school.
- F. Try to follow-up all contacts within 24 hours with an email, phone call, visit, or note; then keep in touch.
- G. Invite them to something that is happening the first week – several things if possible.
- H. Students tend to make commitments to relationships, activities, and clubs within the first three weeks – don't get left out because you weren't present!
- I. Hold large and small group meetings the first week.
- J. Introduce them to other RUF members, particularly those in their dorm.
- K. Someone needs to keep good records of names, email addresses, etc. of all new contacts.
- L. Monitor the progress of all contacts in assimilating into RUF.

V. Large Group.

- A. Each Large Group Meeting must meet the needs of the group that week.
- B. The first Large Groups of the year must be geared toward welcoming freshmen and other new students.
- C. Choose the scripture you will teach on the basis of the needs of the group that semester – not because you saw another campus minister teach something.
- D. Preach to the heart! Encourage! Alarm! Challenge! Let no one leave the meeting unchanged.
- E. Create a heart for God and people in your teaching.
- F. Instruct in what biblical ministry is like.
- G. Always hold up Jesus, whatever you are teaching.

VI. This section represents the *structure* of the organization.

## **Part 4: Levels of an RUF Ministry**

- I. Initial Group (0-15 members, years 1-3).
  - A. Sometimes started with a very gifted student leader.
  - B. Most members are average students with below-average leadership ability.
  - C. Primary campus minister activities.
    - 1. Effective freshmen outreach.
    - 2. One-to-ones.
    - 3. Build healthy small group(s).
    - 4. Take students to conferences.
- II. Young Group (10-30 members, years 2-4).
  - A. Still attracting mainly people with average to below-average natural leadership ability.
  - B. Seeing the fruit of your labors in students who are competent to lead a small group.
  - C. Viability reached at 20 members; group can plateau here.
  - D. Primary campus minister activities.
    - 1. Effective freshmen outreach.
    - 2. One-to-ones.
    - 3. Improving small groups.
    - 4. Decent, organized, edifying large group meeting.
    - 5. Gather a ministry team.
    - 6. Take students to conferences.
- III. Established Group (25-60 members, years 3-6).
  - A. Begin attracting a small, but regular stream of “natural leaders”.
  - B. Developing a steady stream of trained members and leaders.
  - C. Plateau can occur at 40 due to increasing group security and inability to know everyone in the group.
  - D. Plateau can occur at 60 due to great group security and greater leadership challenge to grow past 60.
  - E. Primary campus minister activities.
    - 1. Effective freshmen outreach.
    - 2. One-to-ones.
    - 3. Strong small groups.
    - 4. Outstanding large group meeting.
    - 5. Ministry team that understands the ministry and is active in it.
    - 6. Beginning to engage the campus; e.g. well-developed dorm strategy, evangelistic activities, etc.
    - 7. (By now conference recruitment should be done by the ministry team.)

- IV. Penetrating Group (50 members and up, usually after 5 years).
  - A. Consistently attracting top-rate student leaders.
  - B. Training active members and highly skilled leaders.
  - C. As growth continues, periodic restructuring becomes necessary to maintain a manageable, dynamic community.
  - D. Primary campus minister activities.
    - 1. Effective freshmen outreach.
    - 2. One-to-ones.
    - 3. Strong small groups.
    - 4. Outstanding large group meeting.
    - 5. Ministry team that understands, owns, and operates the ministry.
    - 6. Actively engaging the campus; e.g. well-developed dorm strategy, evangelistic activities, etc.
    - 7. Seeking to engage new areas of the campus community; e.g. minority groups, internationals, commuters, etc.
- V. This section represents the *appearance* of the organization.



## Part 5: Conclusion

- I. Hindrances to group development.
  - A. Slack freshmen outreach.
  - B. Failure to match the teaching content to the needs of the group.
  - C. Failure to preach to the heart.
  - D. Using Ministry Team and other small groups as preaching platforms.
  - E. Failure to train students in the Stages of Group Development.
  - F. Failure to develop a strategy for steady growth.
  - G. Mission trips and other tertiary programs.
  
- II. Principles of group development.
  - A. Maintain a solid foundation: scripture, doctrine, philosophy of ministry.
  - B. Keep your purpose in view: Reaching Students for Christ, Equipping Students to Serve.
  - C. Know your campus.
  - D. Work hard at freshmen outreach.
  - E. Preach to the heart.
  - F. Move students through the Stages of Group Development.
    - 1. Students relating to each other as individuals.
    - 2. Students relating to each other in small groups.
    - 3. Small groups relating to each other and connecting to large groups.
    - 4. Student leaders involved in stages 1-3 and beginning to understand the Philosophy of Ministry.
    - 5. Student leaders embracing the Philosophy of Ministry and helping other students through stages 1-4.
  - G. Form a Ministry Team when students begin to understand that the essence of ministry is caring for people.
  - H. Train and place students in positions of service: Bible study leaders, worship team, publicity, etc.
  - I. Develop the Ministry Team into a body that “owns and operates” the ministry.
  - J. Depend upon God!
  
- III. Our job is to build a group, not merely to preach the gospel.
  - A. Building a group is a work of God.
  - B. It is neither mechanical nor magical.
    - 1. The secret is not simply following the right procedure.
    - 2. Nor can you expect success by hoping for God to create a group regardless of what you do.
  - C. We are calling you to recognize the way God works with people and join Him in that work, depending upon His grace for success.

## Appendix A: Development of RUF at Lehigh University

\*\* Not a plan to be followed!! Merely an illustration of group development. \*\*

| Year  | Members | Large Group Attendance | Total Bible studies | Student-led Bible studies | Ministry Team Members |
|-------|---------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 98-99 | 5       | 5                      |                     |                           |                       |
| 99-00 | 12      | 10                     |                     |                           |                       |
| 00-01 | 18      | 15                     | 1                   |                           | 7                     |
| 01-02 | 25      | 18                     | 4                   |                           | 9                     |
| 02-03 | 35      | 25                     | 5                   | 1                         | 15                    |
| 03-04 | 70      | 55                     | 5                   | 3                         | 30                    |
| 04-05 | 80      | 60                     | 9                   | 6                         | 35                    |

## Appendix B: Sample Plan for Building a Group on a Challenging Campus with Few Contacts

- I. Year 1.
  - A. Study the demographics and geography of your campus. (This is a constant necessity.)
  - B. Do effective freshmen outreach.
  - C. Meet each of your contacts and invite them to a Bible study.
  - D. Lead a dynamic Bible study.
  - E. Do one-to-ones with your students.
  - F. Take students to fall conference.
  - G. If you have any mature and eager students, begin training them in stages 1-3 of a group.
  - H. At the end of the fall semester evaluate and plan for the spring.
  - I. Take students to spring conference.
  - J. During or near spring break evaluate the year and plan for next year.
  - K. If your students are ready to take some responsibility, form a Ministry Team (Core Group) after spring break. Meet biweekly for 1 hour to discuss the people in the group.
  - L. Take students to summer conference.

- II. Year 2.
  - A. Do effective freshmen outreach, involving students.
  - B. You and your students meet each of your contacts and invite them to a Bible study.
  - C. Lead a dynamic Bible study.
  - D. Do one-to-ones with your students.
  - E. If you have a Ministry Team, meet biweekly for 1 hour to discuss the people in the group.
  - F. If you do not have a Ministry Team, continue one-to-one training in stages 1-3 of a group.
  - G. Take students to fall conference.
  - H. At the end of the fall semester evaluate and plan for the spring.
  - I. Take students to spring conference.
  - J. During or near spring break evaluate the year and plan for next year.
  - K. Sometime in spring semester consider whether you are ready for a Ministry Team yet.
  - L. Take students to summer conference.
  - M. Hold a 1-day planning retreat for people you are developing as leaders.
- III. Year 3.
  - A. You and your students do effective freshmen outreach.
  - B. You and your students meet each of your contacts and invite them to a Bible study.
  - C. Lead a dynamic Bible study or Large Group, depending upon size.
  - D. If you now have a Large Group, begin small group Bible studies. Determine a strategic method for using small groups to reach your campus.
  - E. Do one-to-ones with your students.
  - F. If you have a Ministry Team, meet weekly or biweekly for 1 hour to discuss the people in the group.
  - G. If you do not have a Ministry Team, continue one-to-one training in stages 1-3 of a group.
  - H. Take students to fall conference.
  - I. At the end of the fall semester evaluate and plan for the spring.
  - J. Hold a 1 to 2-day planning retreat before spring semester for people you are developing as leaders.
  - K. Take students to spring conference.
  - L. During or near spring break evaluate the year and plan for next year.
  - M. Sometime in spring semester consider whether you are ready for a Ministry Team yet.
  - N. Take students to summer conference.
  - O. Hold a 1 to 2-day planning retreat for people you are developing as leaders.
- IV. Year 4.
  - A. You and your students do effective freshmen outreach.
  - B. You and your students meet each of your contacts and invite them to a Bible study.
  - C. Lead a dynamic Large Group.
  - D. Begin several SG Bible studies *the first week of classes* following your strategic plan.
  - E. Do one-to-ones with your students.
  - F. Meet weekly or biweekly with the Ministry Team for 1 to 1½ hour to discuss the people in the group and philosophy of ministry.
  - G. Take students to fall conference.
  - H. Hold a 2 to 3-day planning retreat before spring semester for people you are developing as leaders.
  - I. At the end of the fall semester evaluate and plan for the spring.
  - J. Take students to spring conference.

- K. During or near spring break evaluate the year and plan for next year.
- L. Take students to summer conference.
- M. Hold a 2-day planning retreat.

### **Appendix C: Sample Plan for Building a Group with Several Dozen Students**

- I. Year 1.
  - A. Study the demographics and geography of your campus. (This is a constant necessity.) Determine a strategic method for using small groups to reach your campus.
  - B. Meet your initial contacts.
  - C. Do effective freshmen outreach, involving students if possible.
  - D. Meet each of the freshmen contacts and invite them to a Bible study and/or Large Group Meeting.
  - E. Lead a dynamic Large Group Meeting.
  - F. Begin several small group Bible studies *the first week of classes* following your strategic plan.
  - G. Do one-to-ones with your students.
  - H. Take students to fall conference.
  - I. If you have mature students, begin training them in stages 1-3 of a group.
  - J. At the end of the fall semester evaluate and plan for the spring.
  - K. Take students to spring conference.
  - L. During or near spring break evaluate the year and plan for next year.
  - M. If you have exceptional students, form a Ministry Team (Core Group).
  - N. Take students to summer conference.
  - O. If you have a Ministry Team, hold a 1 to 2-day planning retreat.
- II. Year 2.
  - A. You and your students do effective freshmen outreach.
  - B. You and your students meet each of your contacts and invite them to a Bible study and/or Large Group Meeting.
  - C. Lead a dynamic Large Group Meeting.
  - D. Begin several small group Bible studies *the first week of classes* following your strategic plan.
  - E. Do one-to-ones with your students.
  - F. If you have a Ministry Team, meet biweekly for 1 hour to discuss the people in the group.
  - G. If you do not have a Ministry Team, continue one-to-one training in stages 1-3 of a group.
  - H. Take students to fall conference.
  - I. At the end of the fall semester evaluate and plan for the spring.
  - J. Hold a 1 to 2-day planning retreat before spring semester for people you are developing as leaders.
  - K. Take students to spring conference.
  - L. During or near spring break evaluate the year and plan for next year.
  - M. Sometime in spring semester consider whether you are ready for a Ministry Team yet.
  - N. Take students to summer conference.
  - O. Hold a 1 to 2-day planning retreat for people you are developing as leaders.

III. Year 3.

- A. You and your students do effective freshmen outreach.
- B. You and your students meet each of your contacts and invite them to a Bible study and/or Large Group Meeting.
- C. Lead a dynamic Large Group Meeting.
- D. Begin several small group Bible studies *the first week of classes* following your strategic plan
- E. Do one-to-ones with your students.
- F. Meet weekly or biweekly with the Ministry Team for 1 to 1½ hour to discuss the people in the group and philosophy of ministry.
- G. If you do not have a Ministry Team, continue one-to-one training in stages 1-3 of a group.
- H. Take students to fall conference.
- I. At the end of the fall semester evaluate and plan for the spring.
- J. Hold a 2 to 3-day planning retreat before spring semester for people you are developing as leaders.
- K. Take students to spring conference.
- L. During or near spring break evaluate the year and plan for next year.
- M. Sometime in spring semester consider whether you are ready for a Ministry Team yet.
- N. Take students to summer conference.
- O. Hold a 2-day planning retreat for people you are developing as leaders.

C. David Green