Report to FGBC Fellowship Council

Leadership Development Team
Tom Julien, January 29-31, 2014

At the 2010 National Conference, held in Cincinnati, Moderator Tom Hocking appointed three teams to help implement the three areas of ministry defined in the Commitment to Common Mission, adopted at the 2008 Charis conference. The Leadership Development Team was one of those three teams; it was composed of Mike Yoder, Keith Shearer, Dave Lawson, and myself. Tim Sprankle was soon added as a communications coordinator.

Our first meeting was held the following January at Wooster, along with the new Moderator, Bob Fetterhoff. At that meeting it was decided that our main emphasis in leadership development would not consist of formal training for vocational leaders, but would focus rather on seeking to infuse an equipping culture into all leadership levels of our churches, according to Ephesians 4:11-16, focusing in particular on mid-level lay leadership, the joints and ligaments that hold the church together and allow it to function.

Our goal is to encourage the development of a fellowship-wide network of Equipping churches, called E-Net. By equipping church, we mean a church in which equipping the saints is a vital part of the DNA of the church's culture.

Since then, our functioning team has grown informally to well over a dozen men firmly committed to becoming equipping coordinators, and the team continues to grow. Our strategy is to create in each district a team of four to six men who will meet and pray together regularly in order to develop the equipping network in their district. Good progress has been made in six districts, and several other districts are moving ahead. Recently our team was strengthened by the commitment of Ed Short to be a part of our team. Ed is a specialist in discipleship training, and a part-time member of the CE National staff. Ed will be available for district workshops as well as for the personal recruitment of E-Net Coordinators.

Because E-Net is principle-based rather than being a programmed approach, its growth is organic rather than organizational. This has been both a strength and a weakness. It is a strength because since every church has its particular culture and organizational structure, Ephesians 4:11-17 needs to be individually adapted to every body of believers. On the other hand, organic progress is often unobservable and therefore difficult to measure. This means that our approach requires a great deal of commitment and perseverance.

In one of our meetings we agreed that E-Net will have to expand relationally in order for it to become a reality in our fellowship. Our main approach has been therefore to build relationships in which the vision of E-Net can be shared. Much of this is done through strategically placed phone calls to key men in our districts.

During its three years of existence, E-Net has produced a number of helps and documents, along with a guide, explaining what is meant by an equipping church, and how equipping can be implemented. Our team has sought to continually clarify our approach in order to help churches become more effective in unleashing their resources.

The following paragraphs give an overview of how we are currently presenting equipping ministries to our churches.

In an Equipping Church, ministry effectiveness is measured not by how well the leaders *do* ministry, but by how well they **equip others** to do ministry. For many leaders, this represents a paradigm shift: the main emphasis in our theological training is to prepare us for *doing* ministry, not to prepare us for *equipping others* in ministry. Because of this, as leaders, we tend to get our value from how well we *do* ministry, not by how well we equip others. Further, we are able to do ministry better and faster than having to equip others to do it. And finally, the people of the church pay the staff to do the ministry, not necessarily to be equipped by them.

However, the continuing spiritual vitality of a local church and of our fellowship is directly related to intentionally putting into practice Ephesians 4:11-16. The life-span of a church in which the people are merely consumers of the ministry is definitely limited, no matter how skillful the paid staff might be.

Ephesians 4:11-16 is without doubt one of the most significant passages of the Scriptures. In it we have the DNA of an equipping church

1. Every church is to fulfill five ministry functions. (These are functions, not positions.)
2. The people in our churches have been sent by the Lord to fulfill these functions.
3. Equipping seeks to encourage every member to rise to his full ministry potential, "attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."
4. Through equipping the entire church to grows up into Christ, the Head, from whom the whole body is joined and held together by every supporting ligament.
5. As a result, the church grows and is built up in love, as each part does its work.

The root meaning of the term *equip (katartismo)* is to bond, or join together. An equipping church seeks to connect members with ministries. Equipping transforms ministry *consumers* into ministry *collaborators*.

Though equipping occurs in one way or another in every church, the challenge of every church is to make it a part of the church's DNA and culture. An Equipping Church is one in which there is an intentional **commitment** to equipping, the designation of someone to serve as an equipping **coordinator**, and an effort to make equipping an expression of the church's **culture**.

There are five components of an Equipping Church:

Intercession: infusing prayer into every aspect of the equipping process.
Identification: matching the potential of the people with ministry needs.
Involvement: creating ministry teams in which each member has a role to play.
Instruction: offering training, mentoring, and coaching to those involved in teams.
Inspiration: motivating those involved through positive affirmation.

Being an equipping church is a journey, not a destination.

Since E-Net is not a part of the organizational structure of the FGBC, the members of the E-Net team would like to appeal to each member of the Fellowship Council to do everything possible to bring an awareness of its ministry to the churches of our Fellowship, and to provide opportunities for Equipping to have a visible role in our conferences and other gatherings. Please contact any of the members of our team for further information.

May the Fellowship Council play its role in actively equipping the FGBC in its ministry.