

Moving to Cells

How to develop
healthy cells via a prototype
(includes 12 cell lessons)

by Laurence Singlehurst and Liz West

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Cell Definitions

Cell church beliefs:

- The cell *is* church.
- Every cell member is in ministry.
- Each cell is a building block of the church (a cell church is only as good as its cells).
- The training and supporting of cell leaders is crucial.

Definition of a cell:

- Church as cell and celebration, with the cell being the building block.
- Every member in ministry; enabling and empowering every single member of the body of Christ.
- Each cell member taking responsibility to have a network of unchurched friends to whom they are reaching out, and seeking to evangelize and win.
- A sense of mutual accountability to obey the commands of Christ – to love God, love one another, and love the lost.
- Empowering people and encouraging them into a sense of destiny and purpose in what they do on a Monday-to-Friday basis.

Cell Values:

- Jesus at the center
- Community
- Every member growing
- Every member in ministry
- Evangelism

The Prototype Cell Group

Introduction

In seeking to become a cell church, we must keep reminding ourselves that we are in a process that starts where we are right now, and takes us to where we want to go. For the sake of this booklet we will call this the change process. This process is concerned with:

- What we believe;
- The values that we take from these beliefs;
- And the structures that serve these beliefs and values.

Having heard something of the cell idea – perhaps read a book, or been to a conference on it – the temptation is to think, “Yes, I like this, and jump straight into it.” This inevitably means that we violate the change process and end up implementing a new structure. We take our existing small group leaders, we train them in the dynamics of being a cell leader, we try to describe the vision to them, we introduce the idea to the church and we tell them that now all our small groups are cells. I have watched this take place many times and I call it the big bang process.

In one or two churches this method has worked well. But for many others, it has left them with a mixed bag. Some of the trained leaders have understood what is happening and are leading cells. However, many remain as small groups with a new name, and retain a lot of the old weaknesses. Inevitably, some of the leaders and congregation feel rushed into the process of becoming a cell church, so when the new vision does not appear to be fulfilling what has been promised, they become disillusioned.

So, we want to encourage a slower process which involves two levels of prototype cells and a period of teaching and preaching to the wider church on the values and visions.

The Oxford English Dictionary describes a prototype as “a trial model, preliminary version.” This trial or preliminary version allows a safe environment to work through and grasp the issues to be faced in the

final version. This of course, applies to any area where a prototype is used – all car manufacturers spend huge amounts of time working with several prototypes before putting their new vehicle on the production line. They know that time invested at the prototype stage saves hours of recall once a model is on sale. The prototype is tested through all the conditions it will face in the real world. It would spell disaster for a car manufacturer to take the designer's drawings and go straight into production.

Our purpose in establishing prototype cells is to train leaders, not just giving them head knowledge but showing them how to initiate some of the changes in values that need to take place for cell life to become effective. Jesus' strategy was the same; it was focused not on the crowds but on a small core of leaders. William A. Beckham outlines this in his book, *The Second Reformation*:

In John 17, Jesus reported to the Father that their strategy was going to be successful. Why was Jesus optimistic about this? He was facing the cross, the betrayal of Judas and the falling away of the disciples. What was the basis of his confidence? Consider three possible reports Jesus could have presented:

Report Number 1: Our strategy will work because within the first year huge crowds were following Me. I could not get away from them. They clamored for Me to speak to them, some even left their homes and jobs to hear Me preach. There was great response and popularity.

Report Number 2: The strategy will work because in the near future, Pentecost will take place. Thousands are going to believe after only one week of time. Therefore, the strategy will work because of the large number of believers who will exist after Pentecost.

Report Number 3: The strategy will work because of the core disciples. These are the ones who have lived with me in community. I have taught them and lived with them. They know I have come from You, Father! Our strategy will work because of these leaders.

Which report sounds most promising and logical? In light of many traditional church growth methods, report one or two would appear to have the best chance of success. Both reports have sufficient numbers either at the beginning or at the end of the process to forecast expectations for success. However, Jesus confidently gave the third report to the Father. Jesus had a leadership strategy, not a crowd strategy or a numbers strategy...

In this leadership context, Jesus related to His leaders in several ways. At times, He related with them one on one, as He did with Peter, Thomas, John, Philip and even Judas. He also related to the Twelve as a unit. Much of His teaching was to the Twelve; He often took them away from the crowds in order to be with them. In a study of the gospel of Mark, Jim Egli has suggested that 49% of Mark is given to the time Jesus spent with His disciples.

(The Second Reformation; Chap. 18, Jesus' Leadership Strategy)

The first phase of prototype is the leadership team

The main leader of the church gathers together the senior leaders and their spouses (single leaders should be included), and for 12 weeks they experience a prototype cell. This will give them some understanding and experience of what they are getting involved in.

At the end of the prototype, these leaders need to pray and seek God, and ask if this is the way forward for their church. Therefore, this is not just the initiative of an enthusiastic leader since all the senior influences in the church are going to be involved in approving this new idea.

Health Warning:

To avoid concern from the congregation, explain that the leaders are experimenting with some new ideas. This is also important at the second prototype phase.

The second phase of prototype is for potential cell leaders

These are the individuals whom church leaders believe have the necessary skills and character to lead these new cells – which require

different skills and abilities to those needed for leading traditional house groups. We call this facilitating leadership. It still requires a level of maturity and leadership, but the leader is going to seek to lead through the people in the cell by a process of facilitation. And the group is as dynamic as the contribution and participation of its members.

These potential cell leaders will, therefore, have experienced what it is like to be in a cell. In the final section of this booklet are suggested cell outlines and the goals to achieve in these two prototypes. These potential cell leaders will – in addition to their 12 weeks in cells – probably need two days of further training. So when they come to lead a cell they will not be leading it purely out of a theory, but out of their own experience.

Health Warning:

We strongly recommend that the central leadership team lead a cell with the first phase of church members.

A note for small churches: in a small church, the people in the leadership prototype may actually be the people who also lead the first cells. This is fine.

Goals for Prototype Cells

Goals for prototype cells

- Gaining knowledge and understanding of cell values.
- Everyone practiced in leading the 4W's — Welcome, Worship, Word, and Witness — taking each section at least twice.
- Feedback given on the leadership of the 4Ws section.
- Everyone experiencing edification.
- Understanding the need to create and cast vision.
- Experience the recognized development of small groups through the forming, norming, and storming stages.
- Understand the process of relational evangelism through cell.

The above list is not exhaustive, but gives some general goals to work towards in the prototype cells. These goals should be outlined to the group in the early stages and each member's commitment to both the group and the goals should be sought.

A challenge to change our values

One of the goals for the prototype cell groups is to challenge the future cell leaders to work together to change their values to those that undergird cell life. In this way, they will personally experience edification and can facilitate this in the cells which they will lead in the future. It is crucial that these leaders do not expect others to change if they have not already benefited from the process themselves.

Change begins with honest appraisal of the values that motivate these potential leaders. This honesty comes as a result of the trust that builds within the group. It also requires vision casting – the group needs to see, with the eyes of faith, how an individual and a group of people will look when they are totally motivated out of this biblical value system. They need to see that they can recapture the dynamic of the Early Church where building a relationship with God, and becoming like Jesus, is their life's calling – kindling a passion for Jesus and a gratitude for what He has done.

The chart on 10 page shows the significant changes that need to happen during the life of a prototype cell

Understanding the 4Ws

As you have probably learned through books and conferences, most cells — within cell churches — have an internal structure. This structure exists to serve the leaders. It is there to ensure that the vision and the values actually happen. And in the future, where we have relatively young Christians (who do not have the maturity and experience that we have) leading cells, they will be greatly helped by the fact that there is a framework within which to operate.

The beauty of this framework is that it really does help us to experience the vision and the values of the cell. We are then able to train people since we know roughly what is going to happen. In previous house groups, there were not clear visions and values, and every group was shaped in the image of its leader.

The four components of a cell meeting are the Welcome, the Worship, the Word and the Witness.

As we look at these within the prototype cell, we are in some sense creating a false environment, but because the people involved are leaders, or potential leaders, this is fine. It is an important principle that we a) don't lead out of head knowledge and b) we don't ask our church members to go where we have not gone. Therefore, in this prototype we want to experience some of the things that they will experience so that their cell leadership training is reality-based.

The first W is the Welcome

One of the key values within the cell principles is every member in ministry. A second key value is honesty. When the cell meets, the first thing we want to do is to ask everybody an open question, which in our prototype cells we want to make fairly demanding. So we might ask a question such as, "Where did you hide as an adult?" Or we could ask, "What was your coldest physical experience?" Then follow this with, "What was your coldest emotional experience?" We have included some suggested questions in the prototype cell outlines at the back of this booklet.

Significant changes needed during the life a prototype cell

Value

1 Jesus at the center

2 Communities of honest relationships marked by sacrificial love

3 Everyone maturing

4 Everyone using their gifts in ministry

5 Everyone making God known

Change

- Priority of building relationship with Jesus and obedience to Him as a lifestyle.
- Knowing God, not only knowing about Him.
- Emphasis on hearing from God, resulting in character changing and fruit of the Spirit growing.

- Closer relationships of openness and honesty means more commitment to people, not meetings.
- Resulting conflict, when well managed, is seen to be welcomed as an opportunity for increased wholeness.
- Change of the Sunday mind set, whereby church is seen to be the Sunday meeting.

- Expectation that hidden things will come to the surface, and change will happen through the ministry of the whole group.
- Commitment to becoming like Jesus leads to a need for honesty and accountability.
- The result is healing and freedom from the sin and the pain of the past. Each member becomes a witness with their own story to tell of God's goodness.

- Leaders become facilitators, to enable everyone to make their contribution.
- Each member discovers their gifts, and works to use them effectively to mobilize the body of Christ to work effectively both inside and outside the church.

- Prioritizing time to make relationships with people outside of the church.
- Working and praying together to create the bridge between Jesus and our friends.
- We have been blessed to be a blessing to others, which is the motivation for outreach.

What do these questions achieve? *First, everyone in that cell has gone from being a spectator to being a participator the moment that each one speaks.*

Second, community has begun to form. One of the key ingredients that binds together any group of people is knowing that they have experiences that are common only to them, and that they know things about one another that no-one else knows.

I was with a group of leaders where I suggested that we do this. It was met with great disdain, "But we've know each other for years!" they cried. However, when they went around the room answering the question, "Which person most influenced you, for good or bad?", they learned things about one another that amazed them.

Third, honesty begins to develop, particularly when we go to real cells and the questions are perhaps a little easier at the start. We have to engage in a process where people learn to trust each other with the mundane, because people will probably not share the deep needs of their lives with others until they have learned to trust them with something of little value. We, as leaders, often preach about openness and honesty, but the fact is, we can be some of the most hidden people within our churches. So, for both of our main church leaders and our potential cell leaders, this level of honesty is an extremely important part of our prototype experience.

The second W is Worship

Meeting with Jesus and experiencing Jesus, and Jesus being at the center of our churches and of ourselves, is the major ingredient of the cell vision. It is the major ingredient of church that we love God. When it comes to worship within cells, we want to suggest some perhaps new and creative ways of doing this.

For many groups of this size, worship that is musical can be quite difficult, and may even be embarrassing. Many small groups don't have musicians or people who can really sing. So we want to encourage a mix where, perhaps, there will be some meetings in which we worship

with singing as usual, but we also want to explore non-musical worship. For example, we might ask the cell members to read John 3:16 and to think during a couple of minutes of silence about one thing that strikes them in this verse. Then ask them to share their thoughts. Finally, we could go into a time of open prayer where people give thanks for what they have learned and seen of the nature and wonder of God. In the cell outlines we have included some non-musical worship ideas. This kind of worship actually demands more creativity and participation from the members.

On Sundays, we then have the joy of worshipping God through singing and music which, perhaps, we have not used in the cell. But I believe that cell members who have gained confidence through praying and participation in the cell environment would, at a Sunday meeting, be far more bold not only to sing but also to pray aloud and to take part. It has long been said within leadership circles that one of the greatest challenges is to get the group of leaders to worship. So one challenge of the prototype cells is to get the leaders and the potential leaders to become worshippers and to experience a new dynamic in the presence of Jesus.

The third W is the Word

This perhaps is the hardest part to get right, because what we don't want within our cells and prototype cells, is a formal bible study. What we want to experience is more of our values at work. We want an environment for spiritual growth; for every member to be in ministry; for honesty and accountability. When we multiply the process later on, we will, perhaps, base the word section on what is taught on a Sunday. It may or may not be possible to do this in the prototype process. And again, in the cell outlines, we have made suggestions.

There are three components to the Word section. First, there is something to understand. We want to grasp the Word of God. Second, having understood what was taught on Sunday, or what we're doing in our prototype, we want to ask "What is its application for today?" Go around the group and ask how a particular principle, passage, or idea makes an impact on the way we live.

Then we come to the most exciting and difficult part. We ask, “Who needs help to see this principle or idea at work in their own life?” We very much want to do this in our prototype cells, and hope that this will involve one of the main leaders or one of the potential leaders sharing a need they have – being honest about a problem or weakness, perhaps even confessing a sin. Then the rest of the group can gather around that individual, maybe sitting them on a chair in the center, putting an arm on their shoulder, or whatever is appropriate, and every member being encouraged to minister. This can mean several things. Some may pray, others may read an appropriate passage of Scripture. Others might have a gift of the Spirit, a word of knowledge, or a prophecy. We hope to see two things happen: the person receiving prayer meeting with Christ, and the people doing the ministry realizing, “Wow, God can use me!”

But we don’t want to leave it there. *Cells are not a meeting. It is a community* and the leader of the prototype cell will — where possible — encourage practical support among cell members. For example, I was in a cell where a leader and his spouse had their elderly mother living with them. During a cell meeting the leader broke down and shared how hard it was, and how bitter he sometimes felt about having to care for her. He cried out loud to God for a new attitude, and a new heart, and was ministered to and prayed for. The prototype cell leader suggested that the group help him by one or two members giving him a day from caring for his mother once a week or fortnight so he could get a little respite.

Following this theme to build community, the prototype cell leader should know when a member has a financial need and perhaps take up an offering for it. Or perhaps one of the members has a practical need and the leader wants to encourage the cell members to meet that need. We want to see these things happening in the cells, so we need to experience them in the prototype.

The fourth W is Witness

The cell is here to empower its members into relationships with non-Christians. One goal in the cells is that each cell member will have three

local, non-Christian friends and that during a one-to two-year period, these friends will have an opportunity to experience Christ through friendship, prayer, and the moving of God's Spirit.

Now, in our prototype cell we cannot go through an entire cycle. But we want to at least experience some of this in terms of the main church leaders and potential cell leaders having a new passion for the lost. Many of us, as leaders, have very few non-Christian friends. In the cell outlines, we have made some suggestions for you to use in this section.

During the three months of the prototype cell, we want to cover the following areas:

- First, we want to pray every week and ask God what, within our geographical area, are the four main factors that hold people back from giving their lives to Christ. And in each cell we want to spend five to ten minutes praying hard for the area where we live. We trust this will begin to give us a sense of God's heart.
- Second, in one or two of the prototype cell meetings, we want to discuss, "what is evangelism?" We aim to come to the understanding that it is a relational process with a non-Christian, and that, through our life style and works, we seek to win them to Christ. This, therefore, is something in which each of us can be involved. Having discussed that and, we trust, come to a common understanding, we want to address the next stage, which is how we will make local friends. Since we live in a commuting society, we often find that the friends we have at work live nowhere near our homes. Because they will not come to our church, we stop living our Christian life in front of them. We must continue to pursue our witness to them, but realize this is a missionary activity as far as their attendance at a local church is concerned.
- Third, if we want to see our churches grow, we need to have local friends. How are we going to make these friends? The golden rule is that all friendships are made in the context of something else. In two or three of our cell meetings we want people to get into pairs or 3s and think about which activity they can become involved in within their

community so that they make non-Christian friends. For example, it might be joining a parent-teacher association or a coaching a little league.

In the witness section of the last of our prototype cell meetings, we will ask people to share how they are going to make non-Christian friends. That is probably as far as we can go within the 12-week prototype. But we hope both the main leaders and the potential cell leaders will not be asking or challenging their cell members to do something they've not begun to do themselves.

I am sure all of us want to lead meetings that are controlled by the Holy Spirit. It is my firm conviction and experience that having a little structure, such as the one I have outlined, does not limit the Holy Spirit. In some ways it actually helps because we are creating space for God to break in. And as prototype cell leaders, we want to go into each of these cells, having prayed and having called out to God, to take our ideas and ask the Holy Spirit to move through them.

Create honesty – help people to share

When it comes to the ministry time, encourage people to reach out expecting a prophecy or a word of knowledge. I believe that we have, as a church, within our own nation, often seen God at work in large meetings. We have perhaps seen John Wimber at work, or other people who have a tremendous anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is my belief and experience that God wants to move as mightily in these small groups of Christians gathering together in cells. And we want to see the Holy Spirit not only moving among us but also among our non-Christian friends in terms of winning them to Christ.

Last of all, we see God building genuine community among us and, we hope, making us groups of Christians who love and care for one another.

The two phases of prototype development



Main leader of the church

Senior leaders in phase one prototype



Senior leaders then lead second prototype for potential cell leaders



Cell Leader

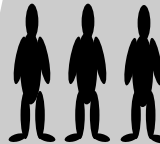
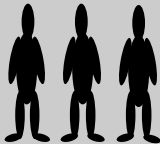
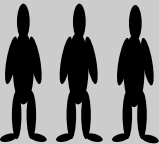


Cell Leader



Cell Leader

Potential cell leaders



Summary of the prototype process

The process we are outlining has a number of stages which can be summarized as:

- Gathering the central leaders to form an initial prototype cell that runs for 12 weeks, using the cell outlines in the back of this booklet.
- This group should experience:
 - facilitative leadership;
 - a 4Ws structure;
 - shared leadership with all participating;
 - an open and honest environment where feedback is given;
 - each member experiencing edification;
 - understanding relational evangelism.
- Pray and seek God to move forward.
- Identify and gather potential cell leaders.
- Use the central leadership team to run a second phase of prototype cells with potential cell leaders.
- Multiply the second phase prototypes into the broader church setting:
 - Ask people to sign up, to join a group;
 - Or encourage cell leaders to invite people to join their group.

Health Warning!

Do not systematically carve the church list into groups and instruct people to join them!

Training steps for cell leaders

During the prototype phase, the future cell leaders experience cell life. It is hoped that they will see that the cell group has brought about growth both for themselves and for the other members. However, they may not have understood why cell life is arranged as it is. This is where the training steps come in. These are useful for all cell leader training and can be used for equipping trainee cell leaders once the cells are up and running.

Having experienced cell life for four to six weeks, it is helpful for the members of the prototype cell to break for a training session. These sessions should be led by the senior church leaders and are most helpful if they are completed in one day, but they can be broken down into a series of evenings or half-days. The curriculum should cover:

1 What is a cell church?

- Vision and values

2 The cell meeting

- Why the four Ws?
- Worship in cell
- What is edification?

3 The cell cycle

- Understanding the stages of cell life

As the prototype cell prepares to multiply, further training is useful. At this stage, the cell members are preparing to lead a group themselves, hence the focus of training is on the leadership task.

4 The role of the cell leader

- What is leadership? Job description: Building community,
- Developing a cell vision: Facilitating a small group,
Dealing with different people.

After multiplication – probably within the first three months of the new cells – further training is helpful to correspond with the next stage of cell life.

5 How to develop leadership

- Recognizing leadership potential

6 Accountability in the cell

- How to be a discipler
- Using the materials from the equipping track

7 Facilitating cell group evangelism

- Developing a heart motivation
- Developing a cell strategy

At a later stage:

8 Leading a cell as it multiplies

Helpful Resources:

Shepherd's Guidebook by Ralph Neighbour

Leading from the Heart by Michael Mack

8 habits of Effective Small Group Leaders by Dave Earley

These resources are available through the TOUCH offices at 800-735-5865 or from their website at www.cellgroupepeople.com

The next step - multiplying leadership teams

Toward the end of the life of the prototype cell group, the senior leaders should make plans for multiplying those in the cell into leadership teams. There are various options depending on the size of the church and readiness of the people to move into cell life:

1. The first prototype of the leadership team invites potential cell leaders to join in and create second prototype cells so that all the potential cell leaders have experienced cell life before leading one themselves. There may need to be several second prototype cells so that none exceeds 12 people.

2. Once the cell leaders have experienced cell life for at least 12 weeks, the rest of the congregation can join the cells. Initially these cells should aim to have eight members. This gives new cell leaders an easier job to establish cell life and gives space for growth with new believers. In smaller churches, this next phase could include the whole church. The new cell leaders repeat their experience of the prototype cell for the first 12 weeks before branching out to create their own outlines.

3. For larger churches, there will need to be several cell cycles before the whole church is involved. When allocating people to cells it is helpful to identify leaders who can be developed and prepared to take on the next cells after multiplication. These potential leaders should be placed in cells where there will be a pathway into leadership after the next multiplication.

Health Warning!

People leading your existing house groups – where a teaching focus has been dominant – may not always make the best cell leaders.

Identifying leaders

The role of the cell leader is crucial to the cell model, so choosing and developing leaders is a vital task for the church leadership. A cell leader is a facilitator. This role can be fulfilled by many different personality types with a variety of gifts.

The following is a helpful checklist when recognizing leaders:

The three C's

Potential cell leaders should exhibit character, competence, and chemistry.

Character

The cell leader needs to demonstrate Godly character. It is more about who they are than what they do. Godly character can be described under the HIT principle:

Humility: Do they know their need of God?

Are they teachable?

Are they willing to serve?

Are they willing to promote others?

Integrity: Are they willing to be accountable to others?

Do they demonstrate a desire for holiness?

Are they working to overcome sin in their own lives?

Are they working towards being the same on the outside as they are on the inside?

Thankfulness: Do they show a gratitude to God for what he has done for them?

Are they open to god for him to teach them?

Will they be reliant on God in their role as leader?

Competence

If someone is teachable, then they can be coached into the role of leader. The process of developing leaders in cells has three parts: experiencing, mentoring, and training. The first stage of identifying a leader is to ask them to lead part of a cell meeting. Their reliability and understanding can be evaluated through this. If the culture in the cell includes positive criticism and feedback, skills can begin to be developed even before someone is approached to be a cell leader

The cell leader needs to become skilled at many tasks, including:

- Creating ownership of the cell by all the members.
- Affirming cell members at all times.
- Explaining what is happening to create security in the group.
- Using body language to encourage contribution.
- Using repetition to emphasize what God has been saying to the group.
- Positive listening, and well-expressed questions.
- Keeping the pace through the meeting.

Chemistry

It is very important for the cell leaders' group to be a place of safety where leaders can be open, knowing that there is complete confidentiality and support. If a potential cell leader is known to be negatively critical of either the model, the vision, or the church leaders themselves, he will destroy the unity in the leadership team. Unless he can be moved to a place of acceptance and support, it is better that he does not become a cell leader, even if he is gifted.

Health Warning!

Those who fill the crucial role of cell leading need to be totally committed to the vision of the church and to have bought into the cell model.

Establishing cell leaders' meetings

As soon as the prototype cell has multiplied, the church leadership needs to set in place a support system for the cell leaders. The model that is generally adopted for this is a monthly cell leaders' meeting plus individual supervision for each leader.

The cell leaders' meetings are the times where:

- The vision for the cell group is constantly revisited;
- The cell leaders gain support for particular situations;
- Issues from the cells can be tackled.

These are usually run by the senior leadership team and regarded as a compulsory part of the job for cell leaders. Trainee cell leaders join this meeting when the multiplication of the cell is expected.

The role of the cell supervisor is to support the cell leader, more specifically, by meeting with them individually and by visiting the cell regularly. They are there to help choose and develop cell leaders and to help the cell leader through the cell cycle, making sure that the cell is working towards the values behind cell life and not swerving to rot (ie, missing out one or more of the five cell values). This implies that the cell supervisor is an experienced cell leader, and has, ideally, led a cell group through every stage of cell life to multiplication, has lead someone to the Lord, and is developing the next leaders. Initially this role needs to be taken by the church leaders who will be the most experienced cell leaders, having led the prototype cell. It is difficult to lead a cell group and also supervise another one. It is also difficult to supervise more than three cells at any one time.

Using the cell outlines in your prototype groups

There are 12 cell outlines for you to use as you run both the first-and second-stage prototype cells. These cover the five core values of cell church and are ordered to give a natural development in values change.

The value to be covered is at the top of each page, followed by the 4Ws sections. As a guide, the welcome should take 20 minutes, worship 20 minutes, word 40 minutes and witness 20 minutes. You will find that the timing of these sections varies enormously, and in the initial stages it will be important to spend an extended time with the ice-breaker.

Remember, as you give the various sections to members of your group, it is important to give feedback on how they have done. You may want to phone them the following day or have a brief conversation with them before you depart.

Week 1

- Value: Jesus at the center
- Welcome Tell the group three things about yourself which they do not already know – one of which is untrue. Ask the group to guess which one you made up.
- Worship Go around the group asking each person to say something about the character of God which they appreciate, and why it is particularly relevant at this time. Lead a time of thanking God for these aspects of his character.
- Word Goal: to highlight our motivation for the choices we make. If Jesus comes first in our lives, our motivation to be obedient will show in the choices we make. Ask the group to think of some significant choices they have made recently. Share some of these with the group, describing briefly the process of their decision-making. Ask whom they were motivated to please in the decisions they made.
- Read John 14:15*
- Jesus wants us to be motivated out of love for him. Ask the group to list some reasons why we should be obedient to Jesus. (For example: Romans 5:6-8. God's love for us demonstrated in Jesus' death. And Deuteronomy 5:33, obedience results in blessing.) In pairs or in groups of three, share one area where you are struggling to be obedient to God and then pray for each other. Or, pray for specific choices that are imminent, that these choices will be motivated out of obedience.
- Witness In the same way that we want Jesus at the center of our own lives, we also want Him to be Lord over the area where we live. As a group, identify the strongholds that are standing against Jesus' rule in our area, eg: materialism, religion, pride, educational achievement. Pray together for these to be broken.

Week 2

- Value: Cells are communities where there is sacrificial love within open and honest relationships
- Welcome Name one thing that makes you feel loved.
Name one thing that makes you feel unloved.
- Worship Remember the things God has done which show that he loves you – share these with the group. Either thank him for these things, or worship him by singing or playing a chorus with the theme of thanking God for his love for us.
- Word *Read 1 John 3:16-24.*
- Make a list of the things these verses tell us to do. Ask the group to list the times when they can remember these things being done in the church.
- What does it mean to “lay down our lives for our brothers?”
- Spend some quiet time seeing if our hearts condemn us (verse 20). As a group, or in pairs, confess aloud the things that come to your mind. Ask God for forgiveness if necessary and be accountable to each other in trying to change. Pray for each other, asking God to help you to do these things.
- Witness *Read John 13:35*
- Jesus says that our especially loving community will have an impact on unbelievers.
- If God is asking us to be marked by our love for one another, how can we achieve this in the cell?

Week 3

Value: Every member in ministry

Welcome Say which color describes the kind of day you have had, and why?

Worship Choose a song from a worship CD or tape. Ask God to speak to you through the music. Listen to the track and then ask the group to write down what it makes them think about. Share these things in the group.

Word *Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-12 and 27-31.*
Which gifts are listed in verses 7-10? Make a list on a flip chart or large sheet of paper. Check understanding by asking different people to describe each gift, giving an example of when they have seen the gift in action. Add a definition of each gift to your flip-chart list.

Discuss together what happens to the whole church if each gift is missing.

Add your answers to the list.

We are told to eagerly desire the greater gifts. To your list of the gifts, add the name of each cell member who would like to have that gift or to grow in using it. Ask God to help you by praying for each other to receive this gift and to have the boldness to use it.

Work out specific ways that you can hold each other accountable to use these gifts in the context of the cell group. Remember – return to your list often to make sure everyone is growing in using the spiritual gifts.

Witness The cell has looked at ways of developing a loving community. How can you expose non-believers to this special community? (John 13:35).

Plan a specific event where you can do this. Pray for God to bless your plans.

Week 4

Value: Every member maturing

Welcome What is your greatest challenge in terms of spiritual growth?

Worship If you have a musician in the group, ask them to prepare and lead about ten minutes of worship choruses.

If no musician is available, ask a group member to bring a CD or tape and lead the group in a time of worship either by singing with the track or by meditating on the words as they are sung. You may need to write out the words and have a copy for each person.

Word *Read Philippians 3:12-14 and 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.*

The Christian life is like a journey or a race. From 2 Corinthians 17-18, what is one goal of this journey? ...to be like Jesus.

Ask someone else to read Hebrews 12:1-13. What holds us up on the journey? What kind of things does Paul mean when he says “everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles?”

In pairs or in groups of three, ask each other for honest answers to the question: “What things are stopping me from becoming more like Jesus?” There are many answers, but it could be a specific recurring sin or hurt from the past, unbelief or lack of faith.

Pray for each other, asking God for a breakthrough in these areas. You could use Romans 8:1-3 as encouragement.

Ask cell members to be accountable to each other about the things they have shared, and to encourage one another to change.

Witness Spend some time praying again for God to establish his Kingdom in your neighborhood.

Week 5

- Value: Everyone making God known
- Welcome How did you become a Christian?
- Worship *Read Psalm 121 together.* Divide the Psalm into four sections of two verses each. Give these sections to cell members and ask them to write a thanksgiving prayer about their section. Read the Psalm again, stopping after each section so that the prayers can be readout after the relevant verses.
- Word What does Jesus think and feel about the lost?
- Read Luke 15:1-7 (you could continue in Luke 15 to read the parable of the lost coin and the lost son).
- What example does Jesus offer?
- Do you feel the same as Jesus does about your friends who do not know Him?
- Ask for honest answers and then pray together to receive God's heart for the lost.
- Witness The group needs to build a cell list of non-Christian friends. Ask each member to name three people who live locally and who are not Christians. This needs to be done prayerfully in order to choose those whom they believe God is asking them to build a relationship. For some cell members, this might mean beginning new relationships with neighbors or taking up a new interest in order to make contacts. It is important to be real about where cell members are on this – for some it means a lifestyle change to make time for these friendships.

Week 6

- Value: Everyone making God known
- Welcome Who influenced you most when you were 12 years old?
Who influences you most now?
- Worship In a time of silence, ask the group to come before God in repentance, confessing wrong attitudes and evidence of selfishness in their lives.
You could choose to focus on repentance around attitudes to the lost.
Worship God together by thanking him for his accepting love and forgiveness.
- Word Read Luke 10:5-12.
Ask the group to work out Jesus' strategy for evangelism. It should look something like this:
Pray, go and make relations; find those who are men and women of peace; build relationships with them; wait for, or create, an opportunity to pray with them for a felt need; when they are ready, tell them about the "good news."
Jesus lived in a world much like our own post-modern culture. Ask the group to work out how this strategy applies to their situations.
What is the next step for them individually, and as a group, to see friends come to know Jesus?
- Witness Work out the next step for those in your network of friends on the cell list. Is it to deepen those friendships or have the courage to pray with your friends, to believe God will answer prayers, or to know how to tell them? Pray for opportunities and God's blessings as you reach out to these friends. (Remember to ask about answers to these prayers next week.)

Week 7

- Value:** Biblical communities are marked by honesty
- Welcome** What would stop you from being honest?
- Worship** Encourage the group to be a thankful people by sharing things which have made them grateful to God.
- Ask everyone to thank God for specific things which He has done for them.
- Word** What can we learn about how we should relate to one another?
- Read the following verses to find some of the answers:
1 Thessalonians 3:12
Ephesians 4:15, 16
Hebrews 10:24, 25
James 5:16
- Discuss what helps the development of trust and honesty. Which things stand against us being open? Name specific ways in which we need to work harder at being open with one another? Be accountable to each other in this.
- Pray for members whose past experiences have made them wary of trusting others.
- Witness** Ask the cell members how they are progressing with their friendships. Pray again for those on the cell list, that they will become open to the gospel.

Week 8

Value: Jesus at the center

Welcome How does God communicate with you? Give an example from your own life.

Worship *Read Psalm 23.*
Think of times when the truth in this Psalm has been evident in your life. Give God the glory for the great things He has done! Find your own way to do this, or write a poem or psalm together, or sing praises to him.

Word *Read John 10:1-6.*
What conditions have to be in place for us to hear God's voice? Make a list from these verses and from the experiences of the group. Encourage people to share their experiences of hearing from God.

If we are going to effectively use our gifts to ministry within the cell, and to those outside the church, we need to grow in confidence about hearing from God. Ask each cell member what they think is the next step for them, then pray for each other to move forward in this. Ask someone to share a current situation where they need to hear from God. Lead the group in a time of listening to God about this situation.

Believe that he is going to speak and go around the group afterwards to hear what they believe he said. (This can be a contrived situation, but God is very gracious and wants to encourage us in listening to him, so do not underestimate what might happen.)

Witness In pairs, ask God what is stopping each one's three friends on the cell list from becoming Christians. Expect God to reveal an area of wrong thinking, sin or something in their circumstances. When you have heard from each person, pray into their situation.

Week 9

- Value: Jesus at the center (order of events modified)
- Welcome: What stimulates your walk with God?
- Word: The purpose of this week is to encourage everyone to be worshippers.
- Read the story of the woman at the well from John 4.
- What can we learn about worship from this passage?
1. *Knowing whom we worship.* In what areas do I need to grow and expand my understanding of who God is?
 2. *Not where we worship, but how.* Read Psalm 24:3-4. What do we need to worship? Are there any aspects of my life which are a barrier to me coming close to God? Read Romans 8:15-16.
 3. *Real worship is spiritual.* Ask god to fill us with his Holy Spirit.
- Worship: Lead an extended time of worship either by singing or with a CD or tape of worship songs. You could begin this with a time of confession and lead into intimate expressions of gratitude to God for who He is and what He has done.
- Witness: Do you know how to tell people the truth about Jesus? Read John 8:44.
- How does Jesus describe the enemy in this verse?
- What would doing the opposite involve?
- What equipping do you think you need to be able to explain the gospel to one of your friends? Pray, and plan to address the issues that come up.

Week 10

Value: Community—what is love?

Welcome If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

Worship Open with a time of confession – asking the Holy Spirit to bring to mind anything we need to confess, thinking especially of anything we have done that has been unloving, eg, gossip, using people, lusting, not doing something for someone, and so on.

Word What do you do when you've been hurt?

Broken relationships need attention.

Read Matthew 6:14-15 and Colossians 3:12-14.

From these verses, what is the key to mending broken relationships?

Who can give an account of when they forgave someone, and what happened as a result?

Is there anyone in the cell who needs to ask for forgiveness from another cell member or who needs to forgive someone?

Is anyone struggling to forgive someone right now?

Pray for each other.

Witness Do you have any difficulties in your relationship with any of your unbelieving friends or family? Is there anyone you need to forgive? Is there anyone you need to ask forgiveness from? How can you put this relationship right? What's the next step?

Pray for one another and next week remember to ask how it went.

Week 11

- Value: Every member in ministry
- Welcome What was the best present you ever received? What made it especially important?
- Worship Build a pile of Ebenezer stones. Bring several stones to cell, enough for each person to have three or four.
- Read 1 Samuel 7:12* and together make a list of the times God has given generously to you as a group or as individuals. Each time you remember an occasion when the Lord has helped you, place a stone on the pile in the center of the room.
- Word *Read Romans 12:1-8.*
- List the eight motivational gifts, explaining that a motivation gift is something that affects our behavior, creating a tendency for us to behave in a certain way in many different situations.
- Everyone will tend toward one or maybe two main motivational gifts. The goal for this time, is for each person to begin to recognize their gift. Work as a group, or in pairs, to create a definition of each gift. Share these definitions. Then ask the pairs to help each other remember times when they have felt pleased or found satisfaction with what they have done, or when they have been complimented by others. From these memories, ask them to work towards knowing their gift. Suggest they continue to think and pray about this during the week and leave a time to share their conclusions at the next cell meeting.
- Witness Use this time to plan another social event when you can met with each others' friends form the cell list. Ask God to show you what to do and for him to bless your plans.

Week 12

- Value: Every member in ministry
- Welcome What do you think is your motivational gift from the list in Romans 12? Give reasons why you have chosen this gift.
- Worship As a more active time of worship, ask the group to think of attributes of God's character and write each of them on a sheet of paper. You will need to name more attributes than there are people in the group. Place the paper randomly on the floor. Cell members then move around the room standing on a piece of paper and all together praise God aloud for the character attribute they are standing on. They move on to the next piece of paper when they are ready and again praise God aloud.
- Word *Read John 7:37-39 and Luke 11:11-13.*
- What did Jesus teach about the Holy Spirit from these two passages?
- From Romans 8:5-11, why do we need the Holy Spirit for us to be effective in ministry?
- Check our motives for wanting to be filled with the Holy Spirit by challenging the group to confess unbelief or disobedience and then pray for one another to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- Witness Now that you know more about the gifts God has given you, how can you use these gifts to bless your non-Christian friends and family? Work in pairs, preferably with those who have the same gift, to answer these questions. Pray for each other to have opportunity, creativity and courage to use your gifts in evangelism. Ask the group to continue to pray and think through these questions and to bring their conclusions to the next cell meeting.

About the Authors

Laurence Singlehurst

As the national director of Youth With A Mission (YWAM) England, Laurence shares the leadership responsibility for 300 staff in the UK and more than 250 British missionaries overseas.

He is a regular speaker at major events, such as Spring Harvest and cell conferences worldwide. However, his particular passion is equipping churches to reach their communities, with an emphasis on network evangelism, which is empowered by cell church structures.

Laurence dropped out of school in the early 1970's. While traveling the world he was confronted with the love of Christ through members of the Jesus People movement, who subsequently led him to the Lord. He is the author of *Evangelism Toolkit* and *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping*.

Laurence lives in Hertfordshire with his wife, Allish, and their three teenage children.

Liz West

Since 1993, Liz has been part of the leadership team of a cell church. This opportunity to plant cell church has given her experience in leading and supervising cell groups through all the stages of cell life. Leading a group of local church members through the process of changing values and structures has equipped her to help other leaders through written resources, conferences and consultations.

As director of youth ministries at YWAM England, Liz has applied her knowledge of cells to youth culture. She has been involved with developing peer leaders and taking traditional youth work through the process of changing into the cell model. She is convinced that cell values and cell life create real disciples – young people who are making a difference among their generation.

Liz is married to David and has three adult children.