

McCLAIN MINISTRIES

WHY CELL GROUPS?

One of the major problems of society is the depersonalization of human beings. With the increase in population, everyone becomes just a face in the crowd. Many books have been written about the difficulty people are having trying to cope with this depersonalization. They see themselves only as numbers. They feel alienated, lonely and aimless.

The problem has also found its way into many of our ministries, particularly the large ones. Many of our dynamic ministries have been built on the strong personal preaching of an anointed man or woman of God. People are hungry for the Word of God and for assurance that God considers them more than mere numbers. Yet, while they are hearing words of encouragement from these anointed ministers, they are experiencing much the same thing as in the secular world. They are merely spectators.

It is true that in many churches some of the members of the congregation are involved in meaningful group activities and prayer groups, but usually only a small percentage of any congregation is involved in such groups. The initial enthusiasm of new members gradually wears off, and eventually they become only Sunday Christians-even in some very "lively" churches.

Cell groups, on the other hand, provide a real opportunity for people to find meaningful involvement in the life of a church or ministry. Not everyone can be an elder or a deacon; not everyone can teach Sunday school or provide counseling. But with cell groups, there is a real opportunity for everyone to become actively involved.

The cell group system is not intended to be separate from the church or ministry but can successfully be integrated in both. Although the leader teaches from the Word of God, the other members have the opportunity to bring a word of prophecy, tongues and interpretation, a word of knowledge or a word of wisdom. But the greatest privilege the cell groups have is the opportunity to intercede for one another.

But why use the word 'cell' to describe the groups? Simply because a cell is a living organism. **The cell groups are living cells, and they**

function much like the cells in the human body. In a living organism, the cells grow and divide. Where once there was one cell, there are now two. Then there are four, then eight, then sixteen, and so forth. Cells are not simply added to the body, they are multiplied by exponential progression.

With the advent of the 'virtual' world, cell groups are unlimited. The potential is beyond anything our minds can imagine. A member of a cell group can live anywhere in the world and enjoy communal life. **It's a life of helping one another.**

There is real security for the cell group members. Each one becomes a family member with the others of the group in a kind of community relationship that is more than a community. In the group, each person is free to discuss his/her problems and seek counsel and prayer. In fact, the relationship goes beyond counsel and prayer; the members really take care of one another. They visit other members in the hospital. They pray for healing as well as provide tremendous encouragement. And when there is a death in the family of one of the members of the group, it is like a death in the cell group family; all of the members rally around the family that experienced the loss, to support them and provide for their immediate needs.

How wonderful it is to know that someone is praying for you daily. Everyone is dedicated to helping others. **When an individual belongs to a cell group, that person knows they are loved and cared for, and that is the kind of love and security many people never find any place else.**

So far, you've seen some of the wonderful reasons for cell groups; to perpetuate love and security among its members as well as fuel exponential increase. However, there is one other key reason for the development of cell groups in the core of a ministry or church organization-**Evangelism.**

Like the human body, the body of Christ needs to constantly renew and replenish itself. Therefore, one of the needs of a dynamic and growing ministry is evangelism. If a ministry is not involved in serious evangelism, it will remain stagnant or it will begin to die.

But more than that, it is a command of our Lord Jesus Christ to evangelize-go into all the world and preach the gospel, make disciples. I realize that when I mention the word "evangelism" it

immediately conjures in our minds the stereotype of going door to door. There is nothing wrong with going door to door. In fact it should be a part of evangelism but it should also include sharing the good news of the gospel right where you are; in your family, with your love ones and in your community.

With the advent of the virtual church, can you envision the potential for evangelism? **Wow!**

So, why cell groups? Because they are living organisms that go beyond just a central personality, they are living, breathing entities that last into eternity.