

Training to Multiply: case studies from North India

The crisis of ministry in the church in India

In 1980 I was involved in a curriculum revision process at Union Biblical Seminary (now in Pune). We learned a lot and perhaps achieved some progress in our training. But we also experienced frustration. UBS graduates were not staying in local pastoral ministry. They went for further study, or joined para-church organisations, or became part of their denominational hierarchy.

This was not just the problem of UBS. It was the problem of the whole Indian church. In the vast majority of cases, local churches were weak. The image of a local pastor was very low – you were a failure if you were still a pastor beyond 35 or 40. There were unrealistic expectations from both sides - the congregations and the graduates. The congregations expected the pastor to do everything for them. The graduates at first resented this but many ended up believing that they were the only ones who could minister. They became ‘one man bands’. And they quite enjoyed being set apart as some kind of ‘holy man’, on the upper side of the clergy/laity divide.

Emerging churches: new opportunities and challenges

Those frustrations still exist. But this is also a new day for the church in India, with the emergence of literally thousands of new local churches. Many are very small – house churches meeting in villages or urban slums.

Here is an enormous challenge for church leaders and theological educators, at every level – to help these new believers become disciples and their churches to become healthy, continuing to reproduce and multiply. The difference from thirty years ago is that many of these new churches are open to Biblical patterns of ministry. They want to learn God’s word. They are committed to multiplying and passing on what they have learned. So they are ready to learn how to train others, how to recognise and develop their members’ spiritual gifts and how to equip them for life and witness in their families and communities.

The next ten years will determine whether these new churches will become true agents of transformation through the Gospel, or remain in their old ways, baptised but not really disciples.

Questions for planning training

How do we develop training to respond to these challenges? Here are some basic questions. We need to look for Biblical answers and apply them to the local context.

Seven basic questions for curriculum planning

Why?	Purpose needs, aims, objectives
Who?	People who should learn and teach God’s word?
What?	Content God’s revelation, needs, learning objectives
How?	Process methods, learning experiences
Where? & When?	Context church, society learning experiences
By whom?	Models who are the models?
What result?	Evaluation How do we know we have been effective?

Some Biblical principles in answer to the questions

Why?	Purpose needs, aims, objectives
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Several passages speak about our **purpose** in learning, teaching and training.

2 Timothy 3.15-17

Colossians 1.28

2 Peter 3.18

Matthew 28.20

Ephesians 4.11-16

Ephesians 3.10

What we discover about purpose is linked to the Biblical answers to the other questions.

Who?	People who should learn and teach God's word?
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There are three main categories:

• All God's people	Col 1.28; 3.16; Rom 15.14
• Families	Gen 18.17-19; Deut 6.6-9, 20-25; Ex 13.14; Jos 4.6; Psalm 78.5-6; Prov 1.8; 2.1; 3.1; 4.1-4; 6.20
• Leaders	Local: Titus 1.5-9; 1 Tim 3.1-7; 5.17; Ac 14.23; 20.28 Gifted: Eph 4.11; 1 Cor 12.28; Ac 11.25-26; 13.1; 15.32,33

Theological education is for *all* in the church. That means it must be accessible and appropriate for different stages of growth and levels of ability.

Families have a key role: how do we equip parents to fulfil their role?

And how do we give training for *leaders* that recognises their distinct ministry without separating them off? Are the gifted teachers being set free and made available to teach and equip local leaders, so that God's word is taught creatively and effectively right at the local church level? Or are they hemmed in by academic institutions or denominational administration?

What?	Content revelation, needs, learning objectives
How?	Process methods, learning experiences
Where? & When?	Context church, society learning experiences
By whom?	Models

Content, process, context and **models** are closely linked to each other and to the earlier questions. If the purpose is to help the church to grow, and the church is a body, a community, a complex, living organism, then it seems clear that the best place for teaching and learning is in the context of that living organism. In **Ephesians 3.18f** Paul reminds us that we can only know the love of Christ 'with all the saints', not on our own. That means being part of the church's joys and frustrations, its politics and struggles, the different types of people in it. The goal is not simply to train individuals to become excellent, though that has its place. It is to help the whole church to grow and be a model, demonstrating the reality of God's purpose (**Ephesians 3.10** - 'through the church... God's many-coloured wisdom will be displayed').

How do we teach and train different kinds of people in the **context** of the church and of daily life? What **process** of learning experiences will be appropriate? What **content** do we include? The questions are linked. Content will be based on God's revelation in the Scripture, but cannot be separated from questions of context and process. The *way* we teach may contradict *what* we teach.

Who should be the **models**, that students will copy, consciously or unconsciously? A common answer is the 'scholar/teacher' model. By itself that seems inadequate. Both Jesus and Paul were superb scholars and teachers of the scriptures. But their approach was not simply to give lectures.

Jesus taught his disciples on the job, in a community

Jesus' primary method of teaching and training was in the small community of his disciples.

It was based on

Example and observation
Involvement and assignments
Reflection in the group

- This kind of teaching involves the *whole of life, all the time, in every situation*. The disciples learned from Jesus but also from each other, in all the aspects of life, not just the narrowly 'spiritual'. There was an emphasis on practical application.
- Jesus also taught very much by example. We could call this the *apprenticeship* model, or the *guru-sishya* model.
- It is also important to remember the *community* aspect. Jesus deliberately emphasised the role of the disciples in learning from each other, even negatively, when they disagreed with or competed with each other – because Jesus was forming the new people of God, the new community of the church. They needed to learn together, not just alone.

Paul taught through a chain of multiplying and equipping

Paul followed the same pattern, working always in a team, with a group of younger colleagues.

But the further principle he emphasised was that of *multiplying in a chain*. See **2 Timothy 2.2**, and Paul's whole relationship with Timothy and his team members

Acts 16.3 (*joining the team*);

2 Timothy 3.10 (*watching Paul*);

1 Cor 4:17: 16:10 (*assignments*);

2 Timothv 1:6.8: 2:1,7: 3:14; 4.1 (*receiving Paul's advice by letter*)

The same principle is found in **Ephesians 4.11-16**, with the *equipping* role of the leaders, which unlocks the potential of the whole people of God for service and growth.

What result?	Evaluation
	How do we know we have been effective?

Col 1.28	maturity
Eph 3.18-19	knowing <i>with all the saints</i> the love of Christ
Eph 4.13-16	unity, knowledge of Christ, maturity, truth, love, growth of the body
2 Pet 3.18	growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus

As we have seen, it is not only individual growth that we are concerned for, but also growth within the body. We need to evaluate how effective our training has been by observing the life and health of the local expressions of the body - congregations, house churches, cell groups. Are they reflecting these qualities? Are they having a transforming influence in their communities? The answers will tell us whether the members are learning and being taught effectively – and also whether their leaders' training has been effective.

Existing models of training in India

- Residential training
- Missionary training
- Distance learning (TEE)
- **Church-centred training for multiplication**

Hindustan Bible Institute

BILD International

BILD International helps churches develop comprehensive, wisdom-based education programs through a church-based philosophy, curriculum, and network.
In India: a single network of direct BILD partnerships working together in English, Hindi, and the 16 regional languages--19 major partners and over 200 smaller ministries.

Grassroots Church Planters training (GRCP / Train & Multiply)

Local discipleship training programmes and short courses

Other experimental responses in North India

UP Mission

School of Biblical Teaching

Kachhwa Transformational Ministries

Ministry Training Network

Pastor's Training Course

UP Mission

When UP Mission started in 2001, they assumed that their work was simply to plant churches and move on. They quickly realised that their work had just begun with the new churches and took seriously the task of training their existing workers and developing new leaders.

Why (purpose)? They very clearly stated their **goal** of bringing transformation in people's lives, in four areas:

knowledge of God, boldness, servant leadership, sacrificial giving

Who should be trained? The answer to this question was closely linked to the analysis of the India Leadership Study completed in 2001 and shared in a number of consultations in India during 2002. This categorised five types of leaders according to their sphere of influence¹:

Type 1 Leaders (self-supporting small group leaders)

Type 2 Leaders (self-supporting local supervisors)

Type 3 Leaders (full-time local leaders)

Type 4 Leaders (regional leaders)

¹ The ILS report was written by Dr David Bennett. He adapted this classification from a chapter by Dr. Edgar Elliston in Missiologial Education for the 21st Century (Orbis, 1996).

Type 5 Leaders (national leaders)

The **North India Leadership Consultation** held in Delhi (Feb 1-3, 2002) summarised the situation with regard to these leaders and their training as follows:

1. God is at work and churches are growing in each region. There are considerable facilities available for training in general, at various levels. However, much of this is primarily directed at training Type 3 (full-time) leaders. It is also not clear how many of them are accessible to the people of the region

2. Type 1 and 2 leaders are the key to the healthy growth and multiplication of the church. They are self-supporting and provide leadership, teaching, pastoral care and outreach at the local level. They are needed in large numbers, compared to the other types.

BUT there are hardly any facilities for adequate training of Type 1 and 2 leaders.

3. Type 3 leaders have a key role in training the Type 1 and 2 leaders. But many of them are not doing this. They need to be envisioned and equipped so that they in turn identify and equip the Type 1 and 2 leaders.

4. Type 4 and 5 leaders have a key role in equipping particularly the Type 3 leaders so that together they can fulfil their role of equipping the Type 1 and 2 leaders.

Based on this analysis, UP Mission focussed on training its *paid church planters (Type 3)* so that they could teach and train their local leaders (Type 1 and 2). They began with their own training material, based on 3 days together each month, along with intensive field work and supervision.

But from the beginning they consciously built in a *multiplying focus* and from 2004 the paid church planters were challenged to recruit around 2000 more men and women who are now serving as self-supporting church planters. They are known as Timothy's and Esthers (T1 and E1), and also receive regular, on-the-job training. Some have already recruited their own Timothy's and Esthers (T2 and E2). A few have gone further to recruit the 3rd generation - T3 and E3.²

The full time Church Planter seeks to identify *4 bi-vocational leaders in each house church* 1) a House Church leader, 2) a Women's leader 3) a Children's leader 4) an Evangelist who reaches out to 3 nearby villages. They all undergo a 12 month course meeting for 3 days every month called 'Buniyadi Shiksha'.

How should these people be trained to reach the goals of character transformation outlined above? The **content** and **process** need to be appropriate.

So their teaching has *wholistic objectives*, not just for content (knowledge) but also for attitudes and skills ('Head', 'Heart' and 'Hands')..

- **CONTENT (HEAD)** The knowledge of Christian beliefs and skills of teaching the Bible
- **CHARACTER (HEART)** Training new and existing leaders to develop Biblical attitudes
- **SKILLS (HANDS)** The skills of multiplying and reproducing churches.

It is based on a **process** of personal mentoring which includes reporting and feedback, so that each participating leader is helped to grow through supervision, accountability and support, both when they meet for training and on the job in their ministry location.

Evaluation was built in from the beginning. At a certain point, after two years of training, it was realised that significant re-structuring was needed in order to reach the stated objectives. One aspect of this re-structuring was the move to recruit large numbers of self-supporting workers, mentioned above.

This model has excelled at multiplying and training church planters. A further challenge for it is to identify the local house church leaders and equip them to study and teach the Bible for themselves. Currently most teaching at the local level is still being done by the church planters on their visits, rather than by local people living there.

School of Biblical Teaching

² This classification of T1, T2 and T3 (= Timothy 1, 2, 3) is different from the classification used by the ILS of Type 1, Type 2 etc.

This challenge to bring teaching and learning skills right to the house church level has been taken seriously by the School of Biblical Teaching, working with church planters and mission leaders from the network facilitated by **Concern** in several states.

Why (purpose)? The aim has been 'to equip those who will be able to train Biblical preachers and teachers, who will be able to understand, apply and teach God's word effectively (Ezra 7.10).'

Who should be trained? The stated purpose meant that there were always at least two groups of people in view – the grassroots level of the *house church leaders*, as well as the *trainers* who would teach them. These are mostly full-time church planters (Type 3). So the **process** had to be arranged in a way that would train trainers, equipping them to equip others. The earlier workshops were organised in two parts. In the first part a smaller group were taught for 3-5 days; in the second their co-workers joined them and they taught what they had just learned, receiving feedback from the resource people. The focus has been on developing *skills* to study a Bible passage, discover its main theme and then prepare to teach from that passage. Quite a lot of un-learning was needed, as many have not been exposed to the disciplines of such an approach.

However, it is a challenge to give **models** which participants can actually use in their local situation. Inevitably, they want to copy what they have learned, in exactly the way they have learned it, rather than adapt it appropriately.

This illustrates the importance of the **context** of training. It would be ideal for the workshops to be followed up by local training on the job, with the trainers actually teaching their local leaders and receiving feedback and evaluation. Where this has been done it has been very effective. The next best way to help people make the link to the next 'level' at which they need to pass on their teaching has been to arrange '*practice house church*' sessions during the central workshops. In these the trainers take the passages taught by the resource persons and work out how they would teach them in their house church, with a full outline of the whole meeting - music, prayer, readings, memory verses, Bible teaching and worksheets for families to take home.

The **content** of the training has been based on a combination of Bible *books* (with focus on the skills of teaching from passages in sequence), the whole *story* of the Bible (History of Redemption), and broad Biblical *themes*. This is the combination which would also be recommended to the trainers for their own use in planning their teaching in the local church. Having a regular plan for this seems obvious but is not widely practised, due to a combination of lack of models, lack of time to prepare, responding in ad hoc ways to the immediate situation, or even ideas that preparation is contrary to the working of the Holy Spirit. This is one of the on-going challenges for this training.

Kachhwa Transformational Ministries

Kachhwa Transformational Ministries is based at Kachhwa Christian Hospital, near Varanasi. Their training combines the features of both the programmes already mentioned. They have also clearly identified complementary training approaches for different types of ministries. These include training for new believers (3 days), house church leaders (21 days), church planters (3 days a month) and itinerant Bible teachers (3 months). They have also done a lot with women, from basic literacy to all the training to become Bible teachers.

They have made creative use of festivals, especially at Easter and Christmas, to bring large groups together for teaching and celebration, using songs and music in the local Bhojpuri language, rather than Hindi, dramas and recitations of the Biblical story, and continuous reading of the Bible for 24 hours over the loudspeakers. This gives an opportunity for church planters and house church leaders to observe new models and develop new skills in this *large group* setting.

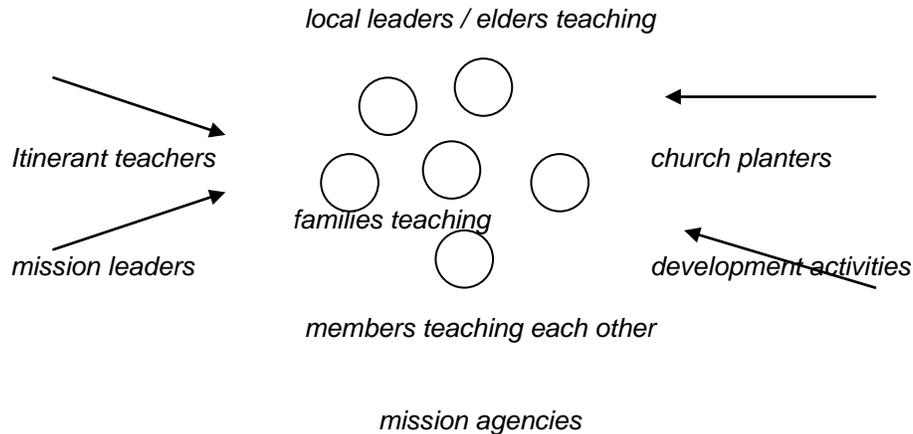
A wholistic vision

These training programmes aim to be wholistic in several dimensions:

(a) Their vision is to help the local churches to be the agents of God's Kingdom, serving as salt and light to transform the communities around them in *every dimension* – spiritual, social, economic, educational and physical. Many of the leaders being trained are involved in a range of ministries that combine these dimensions.

(b) The leaders seek to equip the *whole* body, every member, for their ministry.

(c) Part of helping this to happen is to enable a balanced combination of teaching and learning both from *within and outside* the local churches themselves.



(d) The outside resource people working with the programmes described above include both some who learned all their Bible knowledge and teaching skills on the job, and others trained in Bible colleges and seminaries, some with doctorates. It is good to see them working together.

The question of recognition: Ministry Training Network

These training programmes are all non-formal. A major need, as they develop, is to provide recognition for the people receiving training. They may be participating in a variety of learning experiences, from different providers. They are definitely growing as a result. But is there a way to provide recognition, so that others can realise the value of their training and they will be able to build on it? Many are less educated. They may have few educational qualifications (or none). Can they progress to further levels of training and education to reach the full extent of their potential?

In response to these questions some of the training programmes mentioned above have combined with others to form a '**Ministry Training Network**' to enhance the different training being given in various networks, so that leaders involved in non-formal training would be:

- More motivated to complete training courses
- Have certification leading seamlessly toward a diploma and beyond
- Encouraged in more well-rounded training
- Enabled to be more intentional about getting all of their training needs met.

Pastors Training Course

This new course aims to provide training at the next level for those who have been receiving training through SBT and similar church based programmes. It will make available **recognized, church-based, seminary-level training**, enabling churches to retain leaders as they train them, in order to build strong urban and rural churches in N India. The course will provide a **framework** within which people can find the best resources for their training and development, based on close **mentoring**, regular **intensive sessions**, led by national and international resource people, and **distance learning** from accredited courses.

Questions

What examples of discipleship training to multiply do you know of?
What are their strengths and limitations? Do the 7 questions help in analysing this?

How could you encourage creative training patterns?
What are some things to encourage? To avoid?

What is the place of outside resources from the UK?

- Buildings?
- Finance?
- People?
- Other?