

Cell Community Values

Uganda, Kampala, 2005

What has God done?

- He is teaching us how to consider each other really as brothers and sisters in a new way.

Why do we exist?

- **Holistic way of living as Christian** (family, work, church) and searching for God.
 - Cells and Sunday services
 - e.g. cells at home, at work
 - Serving
 - Empowering every believer for service – growth to adulthood as no one is born a spiritual adult.
 - John Wesley: ‘how do you dare to give birth to children just to leave them to the devil’
- Cell is not a spiritual island where to share life (Bible study group, or prayer group or alike)
- Friendship across human divisions (economic, educational, genders, lay-clergy).

Church History

Radical lifestyle of the early church

- Contagious from House to House
- Sharing everything
- Cultural Divisions got broken (Gal 3:28)
 - Everyone a minister
 - No Jew, No Greek (Acts story)
 - No slave nor free (Onesimus)
 - No male or female (Women coworkers of Paul – even apostle Junia, Paul's use of Aristotelian household code to turn over the meaning)
 - Taking care of widows
- In the society these divisions took longer, slavery 1800 years, women's liberation going on still.
- Today's Divisions: lay-clergy, gender, ethnic, economic, denominational, generational.

What went wrong after NT times?

- No longer persecuted but Christianity became ultimately only religion that was allowed in the Roman empire (uniting force for the empire). Even liturgical cloths originated from the rulers. Church buildings instead of homes. Emperor and Pope in unison.
- **Hierarchical church power** structure with the Pope as the ‘substitute of Christ on earth’.
 - **offices** (bishops and priests)
 - **women excluded** from the church. The pagan philosophic thinking reentered: women physical and evil while men spiritual and good. Women could purify themselves only by denying their sexuality, nuns. Augustine: ‘Women were incomplete men’
 - **lay people excluded** from the things of the kingdom also (Latin)
- **Luther bring the Bible to the people**, but left the hierarchy. Women’s sexuality affirmed (Luther got married), but women were destined to the only role accepted, the motherhood. Luther accepted the sinful state with no view of New Jerusalem.

Church that has dominated Christianity for 1700 years:

People go to a building (church)

Certain day of the week (Sunday)

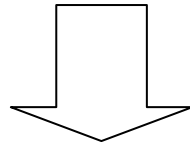
And someone (pastor, professional musician)

**Does something to them (announces forgiveness of sins or
intercedes for them)**

Or for them (ritual or performance)

For a certain price (tithing).

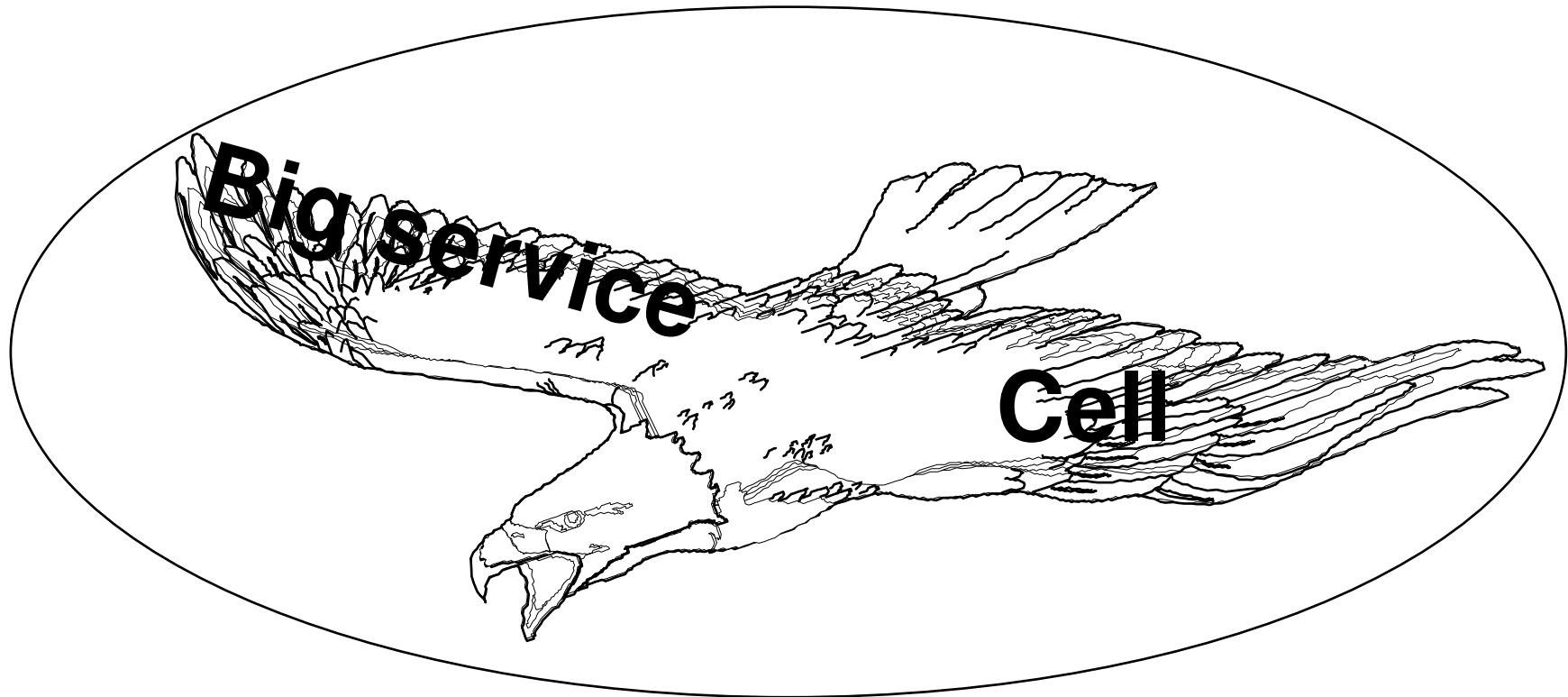
From Community to Public



From Public back to Community

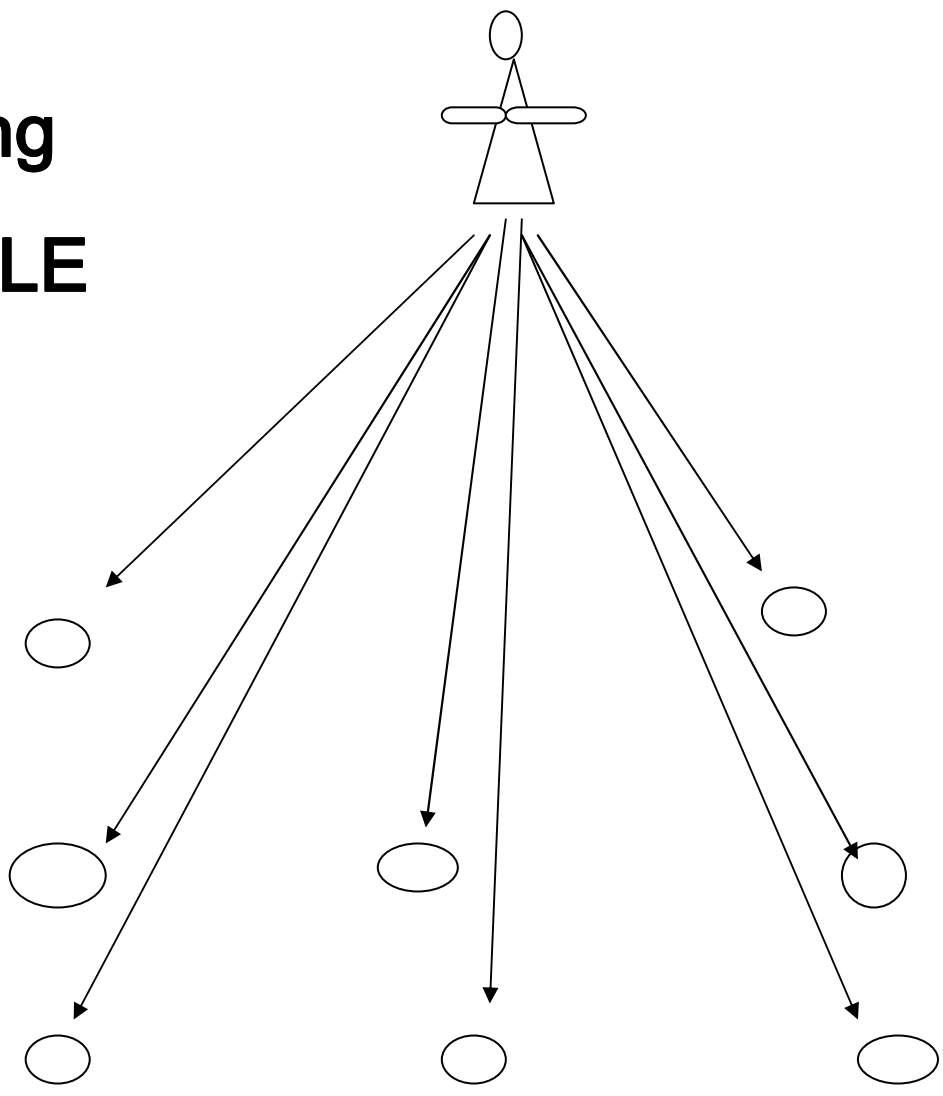
Yearning for real Jesus, intimacy, caring,
knowing God as opposed to loneliness and individualism

2-winged Church



Model of the early church, Acts. 2:46:
meeting at home and in temples

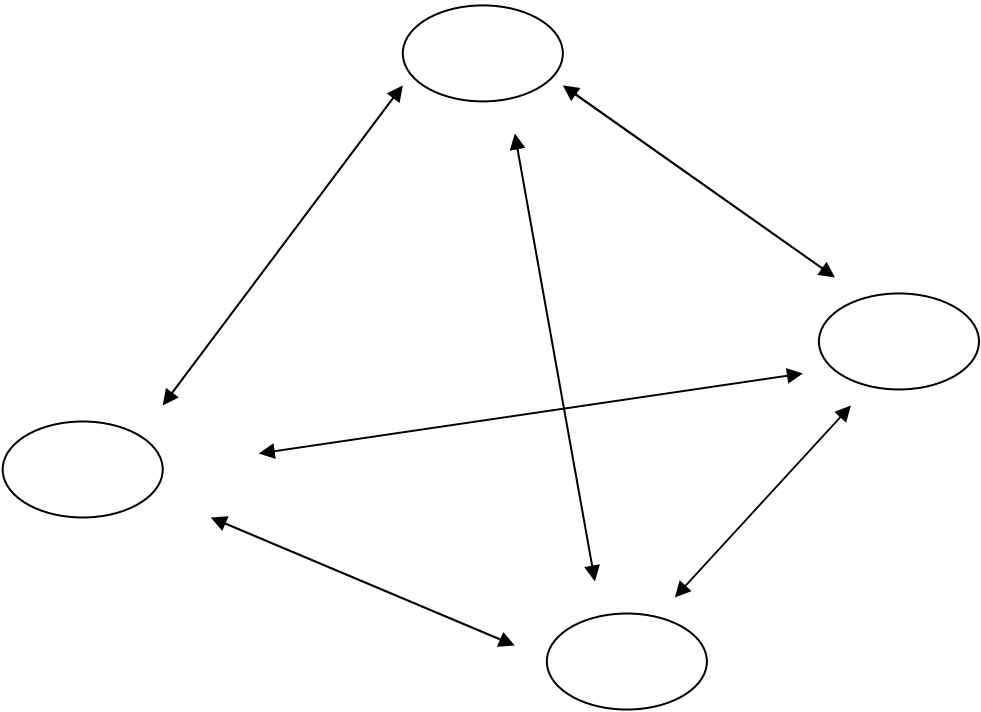
1. Wing
TEMPLE



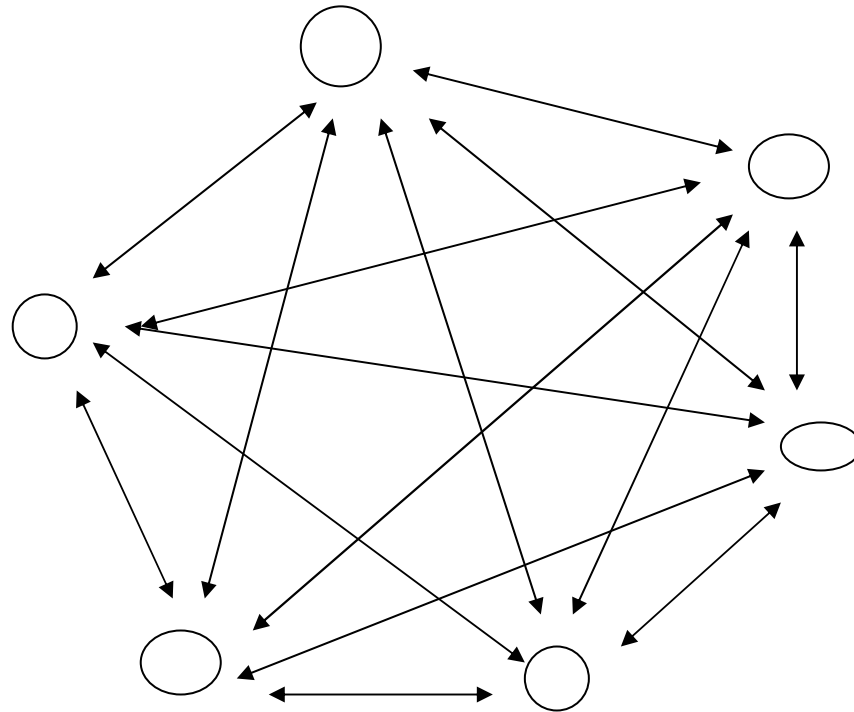
2. Wing

CELL

4 members - 6 relationships



6 members - 15 relationships

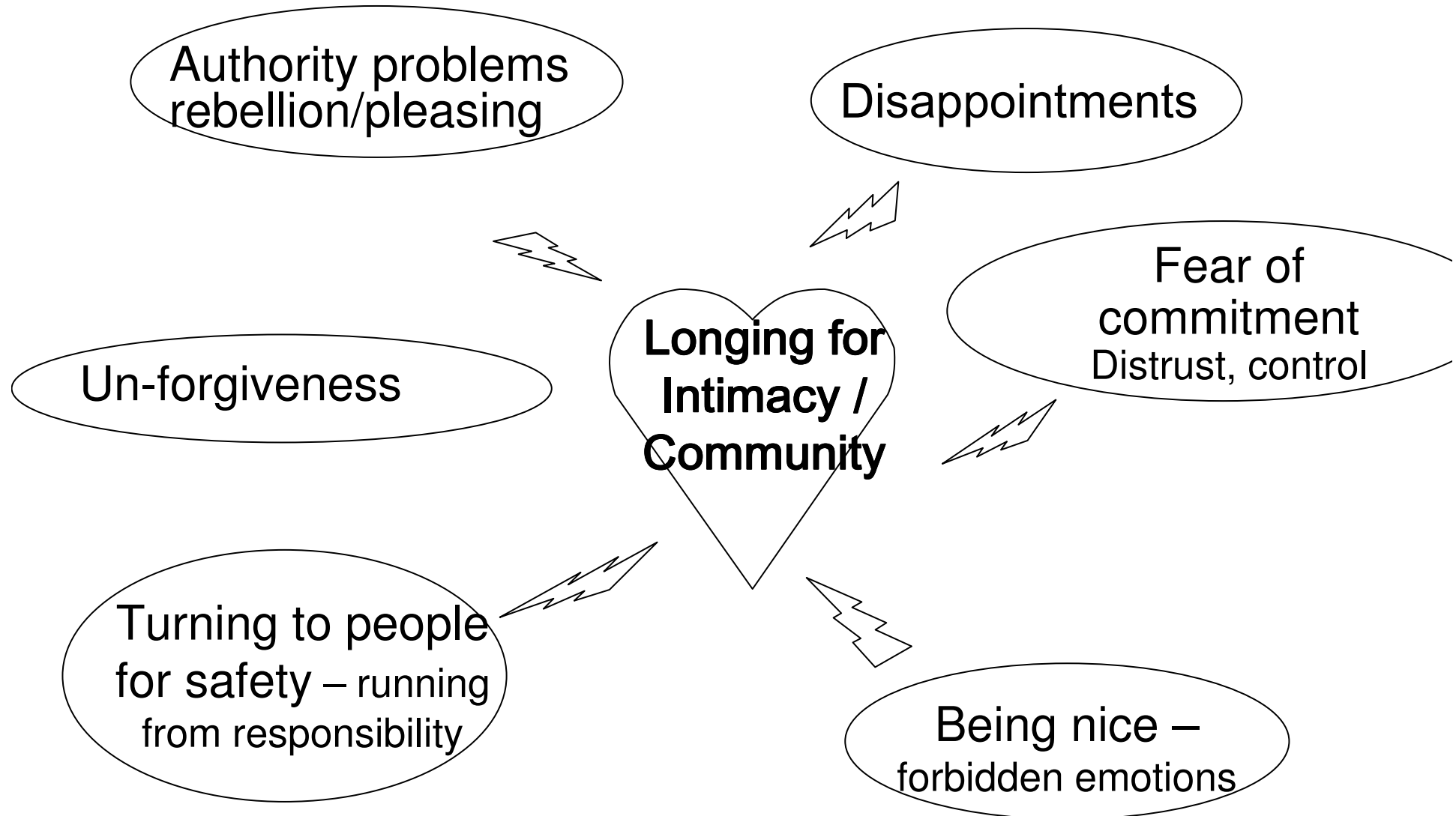


Why do we need cell community?

- To move into the process of growing into Christ-likeness, service and loving or enduring your sister and brother'
- Often: 'Iron sharpens iron' Prov. 27:17
- Openness, trust-worthiness, wounded ness, fishing together.

David Wilkerson in Finland: 'There will be no revival. Challenge to live from day to day in Christ'

Challenging Conflicts



Discussion in the groups

- Do you see these problems in your church?
- How do they show?
- How do you deal with them?

Behind the conflicts and divisions
Collective and personal injustices and
hierarchies of power

- abuse of women
- slavery
- economic exploitation
- religious/denominational abuse
- abuse of children, elderly

Behind the conflicts and divisions

Definitions / 'Witchcraft'

PERSON A – WHO?

- Taking initiative
- Taking risks
- Leader
- Goal oriented
- Logical

**MAN / WHITE /GLERCY
ADULT**

-
- Domineering
 - Violent
 - Rich

PERSON B – WHO?

- Submissive
- Receptive
- Follower / Passive
- Emotional
- Needs financial support

**WOMAN/BLACK/LAY
CHILD**

-
- Oppressed
 - Exploited
 - Needs help and protection
and looks for it.

Hatred denied

- **Leads to**
 - **violence and pride, or**
 - **submission and lack of responsibility**
 - **blaming others**
- **Feeling of powerlessness / No Choice /hope of change**
- **Ultimate fruit:**
 - **economic dependence of Africa**
 - **status of a child (Museveni's statement), lack of responsibility and entrepreneurship → dead sea -mentality**
 - **'We have never seen a white man work!' said the Ugandans as they crowded around the house of an American in the 70's to watch him as he cleaned his house**

We need to say 'no' to

- **Witchcraft-like definitions**
 - **Injustices and ungodly divisions among us**
 - **Lust for money (beggar mentality as well as collecting for yourself without end)**
 - **Sexual immorality, boasting, immoral mindsets and evil talking (also destroys community instantly)**
- **Be aware of the need to grow in these**

Community in the Bible

- **Characteristic of God himself**
 - Father, Son and HS is the original community of oneness! No hierarchy but working together, in equality and mutuality giving glory to each other. No division, no pulling in different direction.
- **First community: the image of triune God**
 - 'Let us make human beings in our image' (Gen 1:26) - male and female.
 - 'It is not good for man to be alone' – An ezer (help) is created. The two became the first community.
 - Applies to all of us, single or married.
 - This gift of God got distorted in the Fall into a relationship of domineering.
- **Expanding the Community**
 - 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish...'
 - Creation works in interdependence and mutuality as well.

Paul's: Community of ligaments

- Eph. 4:16. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

We are all ligaments!

- Head and body – Christ and the Church
 - Organic relationship (like a cell). Head is a picture of someone that joins together.

How to?

What did Jesus do? And us?

‘Did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing’ (Phil. 2:6)



likewise we need to get down to earth to work ‘from the impossible (bunch of uneducated fisherman, or uneducated women)’

towards a transformation in God’s power and persistence.

How to imitate Jesus in bodybuilding as a pastor or lay person?

- **Modeling**

- of relationship to the Father (prayer life and the showed them the power of God)
- shared everyday life with 12 men and trusted them to spread the message to the whole world!

(Matt 13:11: The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.)

- **(Why men? Jesus came only for Jews bridging the old patriarchal and the new 'priesthood of all believers' covenant. Radical message of Pentecost came later)**

- **Mutual sharing**

- **Jesus’s cell group observed each other and Jesus: Peter’s brashness, James’s desire for power, Thomas’ doubts, John’s tender heart were revealed to all along with Jesus’ character. Conflicts were exposed and caused Jesus to tackle them**

- **Mutual learning**

- **Jesus used every ‘teachable moment’**
 - **‘Who do they think I am?’, ‘Who do you think I am?’ PETER said in everyone’s presence: ‘You are the Christ, the Son of Living God’ (Matt 16:13-17)**
 - **Look up Jesus’s reaction to James and John request of sitting at Jesus’s left and right. And his reaction to the 10: ‘those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, ..Not so with you.. (Mark 10:37-43)**

Mentoring: From Childhood to Adulthood

- Accept the child as dependent, not able to spit out the bones of his/her food – needs age specific food.
 - Don't blame a child for dependence.
 - Don't make an adult dependent on yourself.
- Rejection (physical or emotional) during first 3 years affects
 - Ability to attach to others /To have healthy emotions
 - Ability to separate and connect / Intellectual Ability
 - Child will die physically if separated from people!
 - Divorce/loneliness of children in Finland: loss of concentration, ability to learn and form healthy relationships, physical and emotional aggression.
- Watch out how you treat your physical children!! Are you seeing their growth, are you seeing in them what God meant them for? Their gifts? Are you affirming their identity and humanness. Are you listening to them? Compare Susanna Wesley.
- This will be hard if no one listened to you when you were physical child (Need others also on your side to help). Congregation of grown up orphans!
- You need the same acceptance and patience for the spiritually immature parts in yourself and in the ones you are mentoring: ' Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love.' Eph 4:2

Goal: Eph 4

- Eph 4:11-14 ‘It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,
 - **to prepare God’s people** for the works of service,
 - so that the body of Christ may **be built up until we all reach unity in the faith** and in the knowledge of the Son of God
 - and **become mature attaining** to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
- Then we will **no longer be infants**, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead **speaking the truth in love....**

Values for which cells are central learning places.

- All member ministry
- **Becoming disciples**
- **Creating Community**
- **Doing Evangelism**
- **Encountering God**

Like homes for children. Multiplying hurts. Those who are mature leave first. The family task is to equip children for departure. It does not mean abandoning them.

Structure of a cell meeting –4W

Tea 20 min

Welcome = 10 min

Worship = 10 min

Word = 50 min

Witness = 15 min

Why 4 parts?

- Towards holistic life!!
- Away from leader centeredness → not a prayer group, worship group, bible study group, or evangelistic group.
- Everyone can easily start by leading a part.
- Easy to get going and to share the tasks.
- Structure should never replace the Holy Spirit!

Welcome

- Makes joining the discussion easy
- Building the community
- Icebreaker can lead to deep discussions and may be associated the theme of the day.
- 'What is the best thing that happened to you last week?'

Worship

- Watch away from self towards God
- No one way (singing, psalms, prayer of thanksgiving) – good to have variation.
- Choose the songs ahead of time, so that the moment can be used for a quiet time.

Word

- Purpose: anchoring the Word through the witness of the group members into the current moment
→ prayer
- Word, questions relating to own life and **prayer** (goal of everything!!! that God speaks to us)

Word- part is not

- Teaching of the leader
- Theological discussion
- Analyzing the life of others
- Discussion of the few (the task of the leader is to make sure that the most quiet person gets to speak, and the most talkative gives space to others.)
- Sensitive to the leading of the HS!

How to start?

- Small group of 3-4 for accountability.
 - With joint bible reading at home
 - Share what God has talked to you on the reading.
 - Allowing others to ask these accountability questions
 - Pray
 - Always focus on what God is telling you – not on advising the other one.
- Leave me your email address if you want me to send you the accountability questions that I have modified slightly from an American model. You can make the questions yourself too.