

Covenant Group Evangelism and Team Ministry

**Local church evangelism teaching,
training and outreach in a small
group concept**

Church of God Lay Ministries
P.O. Box 2430
Cleveland, TN 37320-2430
Leonard C. Albert
Executive Director
laity@msn.com



**From Laity Alive-Mission Division*

Our major challenge: *sustainability*

- This is *not* another program. It *is* a simple plan of involving laity in evangelism that *really* works!
- The **most difficult thing** to accomplish regarding an evangelism program in a local church is **keeping the ministry active and growing** once the initial launch has been completed.
- Historically we have tended to be **event oriented** with evangelism (such as a weekend meeting of teaching and training) rather than **purpose driven**.
- **Events are not the ministry!** One big outreach, followed by a few visitation attempts does not result in sustaining the full ministry including follow-up, relationship building and individual discipleship.

Our solution—a new model: *Covenant Group Evangelism Ministry*

- This is a new personal evangelism model that is **relationship based** rather than task oriented. Relationships become the “glue” that hold the people together.
- This is a small group approach that allows for the **continuity of a powerful evangelism ministry** through group and team organization.
- This concept integrates some of the benefits of small group ministry into an evangelism program. It provides the **foundation for an ongoing evangelism outreach ministry within small groups formed with sub-teams**. Planning and supervision is provided by the pastor and/or his evangelism director.

Our plan: *Small groups and team ministry*

- The **big** idea is organizing the laity into a **small group environment** with accountability to a group leader and pastoral staff. This insures that all of the evangelism goals are accomplished including prayer walking, servant evangelism, community outreach, regular and ongoing visitation, follow-up and discipleship.
- The **basic plan** consists of initially **forming groups from the laity consisting of 12 to 15 members**. Each group is then *subdivided into four teams of three to four members each with a leader over each team*. The goal is to keep increasing the number of groups by recruiting group leaders and getting them to help recruit other participants.
 - Once a **group leader** is selected, they are “empowered” to chose their own team leaders and members with pastoral approval.
 - Each **group** is given a specific geographical location in which to minister with their four sub-teams.
 - Each group leader and individual **team leaders** meet informally on a monthly schedule to pray, plan and bond together.
 - Each team visits the community only **once** per month and they are empowered to choose a time which best fits their schedule (with numerous groups and sub-teams *someone* will be visiting the community every week or week-end!).
- **Five blessings** of Covenant Group Ministry:
 - **Powerful relationships** are formed among church laity
 - God’s people learn **how to love lost people**
 - **Mutual ministry** takes place
 - **Accountability** is achieved
 - **Commitment** is sustained because of the lower investment of time from team members (visitation only once per month per team).

Teams within the group

- The **four teams within each group** are as follows:
 - ***Neighborhood prayer walking and intercessory prayer team***
 - Wouldn't it be wonderful if select members of a local church could physically walk through neighborhoods and pray over every home in the community? This is precisely what this team does on a regular basis. This team will, in advance of the other teams, prayer walk the neighborhood targeted by the group leader as well as involve themselves in regular, daily focused intercessory prayer for the evangelism efforts of the covenant group.
 - Some, because of physical limitations or other reasons, will remain at the church (or their home) and offer intercessory prayer for the teams as they go out.
 - ***Servant evangelism team***
 - Servant evangelism projects are designed to “show God’s love in practical ways with no strings attached.” Essentially, servant evangelism is accomplished by any activity that (1) is done in the name of Jesus, (2) provides a beneficial service to people, (3) is accomplished in a setting where no financial consideration is expected or accepted (not even donations).
 - Servant evangelism softens the hearts of persons who are not yet Christians. Some people often think the church exists only for itself or that it only wants people’s time and money. By doing a “low-risk” activity that shows “high grace”. Those resistant to the faith may become more open to the saving message of Jesus Christ.
 - Community projects include raking leaves, shoveling snow, washing cars, wrapping gifts in the mall, giving water or soft drinks at a sports event, feeding quarters in parking meters and Laundromat washing machines, plus hundreds more.

Teams within the group (cont.)

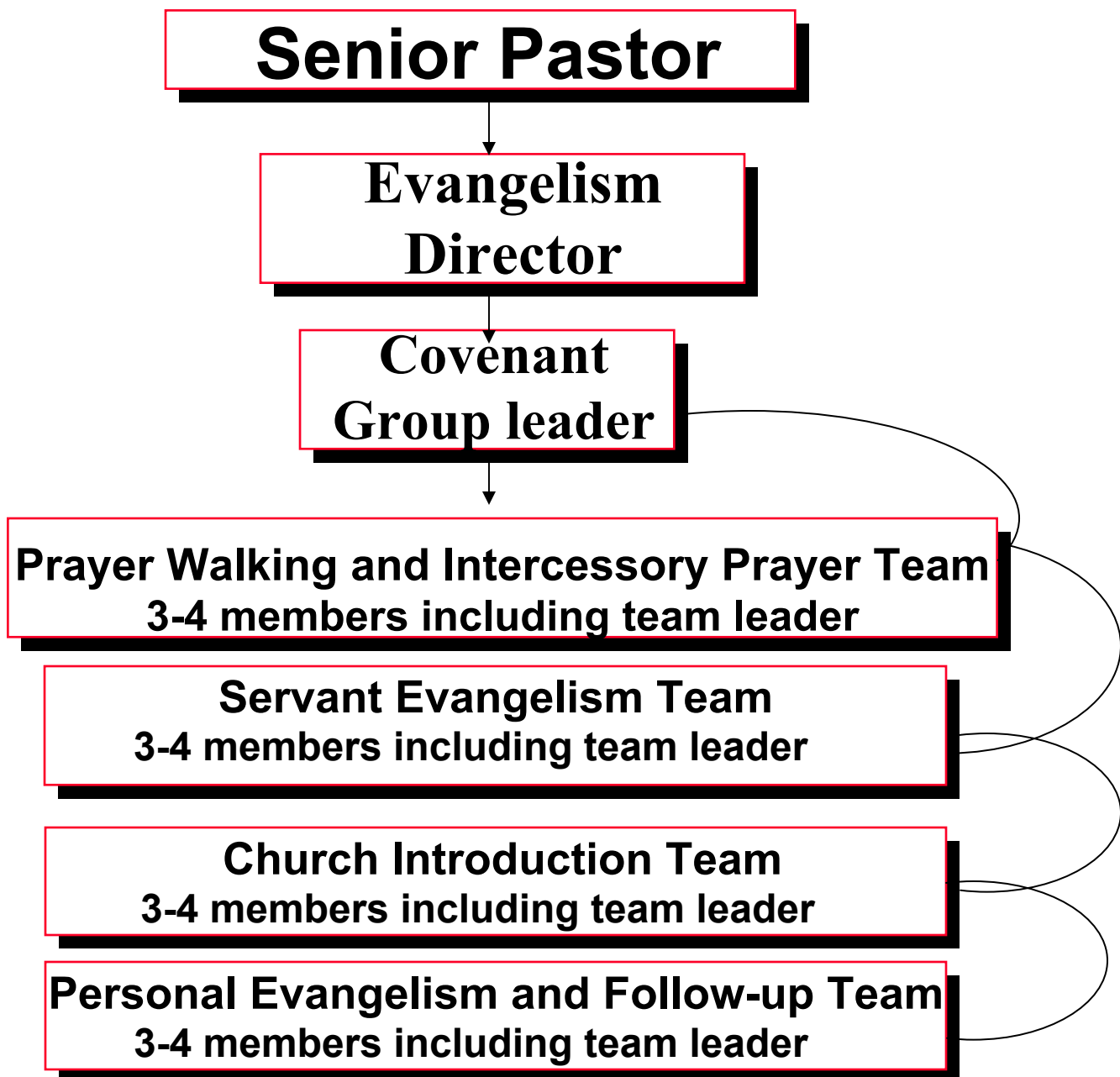
□ ***Church introduction team***

- Think of how nice it would be if the message of the availability and services of a local church could be personally taken to every home in a community! This team consists of those who are willing to do this type of visitation, but do not yet feel comfortable presenting the gospel in the home.
- These individuals will visit homes with the intent of introducing the church, inviting people to the services, leaving literature (tracts and church brochure) and inquiring of and offering prayer for any need. They would cover a large number of homes in the community.

□ ***Personal evangelism and follow-up team***

- This team will introduce the church and follow through on the actual presentation of the gospel. This team should be assigned to a limited number of specific homes for a two hour period. If they are successful in entering some homes for presentation of the gospel, or for prayer, they usually do not get to more than three to four homes in an afternoon.
- Initial follow-up begins with these team members. As the prospect list grows, we recommend that a separate follow-up effort, utilizing other group members, be initiated in order that the personal evangelism team will be available to develop new contacts. It is the intent of the group to attempt to start Bible study in the homes of anyone receptive to the gospel message; not just those who make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ.
- The work of follow-up belongs to the entire church membership. As people are won to Christ, they can be invited to join in some other small groups (G-12, New Believers etc.) as well as a discipleship training course.
- This team also initiates our latest home Bible study course and sets up an appointment in the home for the earnest seeker or new believer.

The Covenant Evangelism Groups and Sub-teams*



* The four teams operate and function under just ONE group. When a group reaches 12-15 team members start another group with a goal of starting as many groups as possible.

The particulars

- The teams should **meet as a covenant group monthly** for prayer, fellowship, testimonies, reporting on follow-up and planning for the next evangelism outreach day. These meetings could be held in either the homes of one of the members, the home of the group leader, or at the church.
 - Each team would meet and minister in their respective area once per month, either mid-week or on a Saturday, allowing maximum impact with minimal time investment.
- The members of each covenant group **agree and covenant together that they will faithfully fulfill the goals and objectives** of the ministry and that they will become **accountable to each other and to God** for the continuance of the evangelism effort.
- Keeping the ministry in small accountability groups **insures that someone close to each person helps them stay focused and interested** in the ministry work.
 - Not everyone's calling is the same, so the composition of the group will enable everyone to be involved in a one-to-one evangelism effort either through prayer or prayer walking, servant evangelism, distributing church information and tracts, and in direct personal soul winning. Even the elderly in a church can become a member of a covenant evangelism group as intercessory prayer members.
- Members of the group frequently **will find themselves involved in discipling the new converts** as they will be the ones building a relationship with them through prayer and personal contact.
- As members become bolder, **they will move within the sub-teams** from prayer walking to actual visitation to becoming personal evangelists through "kindness" outreach and soul-winning.

The people involved: *recruiting efforts*

■ Pastor and/or pastoral staff

- This effort will be more successful with the senior pastor's **personal involvement** and hands-on leadership.
- Initially, the senior pastor and/or a pastoral staff member will probably want to **set up the organization and train the groups and teams (see last page for resource list)**.
- The pastor should **be involved in the visitation process with the teams in some way**.

■ An evangelism director or coordinator

- This person (male, female or couple) should be a **respected leader** in your congregation who is a capable communicator and team player. They will:
 - Coordinate the work of the covenant groups.
 - Partition off your community and city (and beyond!) and plan where the teams will visit.
 - Secure prospects to visit from those who have previously visited your church, newcomers to the community, referrals from your members etc.
 - Initially, this person could be one of the group leaders.

■ Group leaders

- We begin by just **starting groups** (just one would be OK). These leaders (male, female or couple) will be the **key to the success** of the plan. These people will be empowered to recruit other team leaders and members as discussed and they will be allowed to meet together, strategize and plan for the work of evangelism in the local church and community.

■ Team leaders and members

- This is the whole idea: **get as many groups going as possible**. Each group would have 12-15 members as discussed. When the group reaches their quota - **start another group**.

Resources

- Covenant Group Evangelism
 - Organizational CD-ROM** \$10.00
 - Introduction by Leonard Albert
 - Duties and responsibilities of group and team leaders
 - PowerPoint Presentation: Purposes, Principles and Plans for Group and Teams
- Books and Materials
 - *Building a Church of Small Groups* by Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson \$19.95
 - *Prayer Walking: Praying On-site With Insight* by Steve Hawthorne \$8.95
 - *Conspiracy of Kindness* by Steve Sjogren (servant evangelism) \$13.95
 - *Home Visitation Packet* \$5.95
 - *Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership*, by Carl F. George \$12.95
 - *Communicating the Gospel Ministry Kit (\$165 value) – Teaching CD-ROM, Teachers Guide, Student notebooks, tracts etc.* \$99.00

Order from:

Church of God Lay Ministries

P. O. Box 2430

Cleveland, TN 37320-2430

888-766-9009 (toll free order line)

Web orders: www.lifebuilders.to