

# BUILDING A GOOD TRAINING FOUNDATION

## INTRODUCTION

Well begun is half done. When you begin right, you avoid many problems later. Have you ever seen a building that was not built on a good foundation? Later on you see cracks in the walls, and things slowly start to fall apart. It definitely pays to take the time to make a good start. This holds true as you choose students and build relationships with them. Think it through and take the time to do it right. Build a good foundation with your students. First of all take time to build your initial contacts.

## I. INITIAL CONTACTS

That is what you have at the very beginning when you start to tell other people about your Mentoring ministry . These are the first contacts you make with potential students. Here are five areas, which will help you in building those contacts.

### A. Your Mentoring ministry 's testimony

Each Mentoring ministry has its own testimony about quality, about the love of the leader, about the management style of the leader. Usually this is word of mouth, but it's very powerful. If you have a negative image, it's very difficult to change it. Don't allow problems to creep in.

### B. The content and quality of the Mentoring ministry 's literature

We recommend that every well-established Mentoring ministry develops a handbook. A handbook shows: what you believe, the lesson materials that you offer, some things about the importance of discipleship, your emphasis on evangelism and starting new churches, how students can enroll , what is expected of a student, and then the expected results from his studies. A handbook includes all of this information. You would have five or ten pages which would be a small booklet and that would be called a Mentoring ministry handbook. It would not be a brochure, which is usually only one or two pages. This handbook will be part of your official contact with people.

### C. The telephone

Attitudes are communicated. "Yes. Good evening. I am listening to you. Yes. No, that's wrong. What? What did you say? Oh, yes it's me, it's me." What attitude did I just communicate? Okay, it showed that I really didn't want to communicate with him, or I was too busy with something else, or I was too tired. Yet many people talk just like that on the telephone. Very few people know how to answer the telephone correctly. We'll share with you more detail in another lecture when we tell you how to handle the telephone, but your voice communicates a great deal. It shows whether you are happy, whether you are thankful. "Yes, you are interested? Oh that's wonderful! We really needed another student ." Make sure the attitude you communicate is positive, concerned, and personal.



### D. A slide or a video presentation

Put together a presentation that will be effective in presenting your ministry. This is usually done for a group. In a presentation you probably would have some pictures of your leader. You may have some pictures and talk about the ministry . You may show a coach leading a small group. You may have a little interview with a student , which would communicate to people what is going to happen when they study. You may want to close with some pictures of a group of unbelievers or with some pictures of a baptism as the result of the

discipling ministry, or maybe show a church that have been started by discipleship students. Think through what would communicate best to people who don't know about Mentoring church leaders .

#### **E. Visit the Mentoring Ministry office**

This may not be possible for everyone but if possible invite them to come and see your office. Show them some of the books, the study materials , some of the certificates or diplomas. Show them some of the records of what other students have studied. Show them how friendly your secretary is as she jumps up to prepare some tea and cookies. Show them how nice and clean and good smelling the toilet is, "Oh, if this is the result of discipleship studies then we want to take discipleship training ." You may laugh at that but it's important. Most of us eat three times a day plus a couple of snacks, but you use the bathroom a lot more than that. Involve your students. You don't always have to be present yourself. You can use some students and train them to do some of these things. Some of them might be able to do a better job than you do.

## **II. THE ACTUAL INTERVIEW**

Now, I'm sure that in most areas the interview is very short, "Kostya, you want to study? Okay, well, here's the book. See you next month." That's not a very good beginning. It should be totally different. In the beginning you need to take time to make these future students, both husband and wife, feel like a king and queen.

#### **A. The student's wife and children**

If they have children they should be included in the interview -- all of them. Either they come to you, or you go and visit them in their home, but get acquainted with them and find out things about them: what is important to them, what are their future goals, whether they have a good lifestyle and what their Christian testimony is. By observing the children you learn about their family relationships.

#### **B. Look for agreement**

Look for agreement with the discipling vision, with the discipling philosophy of doing spiritual work, with the discipleship discipline about having to study several hours , attending every single seminar, doing homework, doing spiritual service, being involved in a spiritual activity. Nobody is allowed to study Mentoring materials if he does not have a spiritual ministry. Both husband and wife should understand and agree with these ideas that we are talking about. The more the wife is behind the husband, the easier and better it will be for him.

#### **C. Be honest**

##### **1. *Let them know what they are getting into.***

If he is going to study several hours they will need to change their family lifestyle. It won't happen if they won't change their lifestyle. In order to change their family lifestyle the wife has to make changes in her life. Maybe they are going to eat supper earlier than at 8 o'clock in the evening. She may need to take the children out of the house for an hour so that the husband can study quietly. If there are several children, maybe an older one can milk the cow or take the cow to the pasture or feed the pig. Let them know what they are getting into. There is a cost.

##### **2. *Build trust and openness***

This is so important. People must see that you are a mature believer, that you are steady and dependable. You must be open to handle criticism. Be open to make some adjustments or to find new ways to help a new student to study. Don't try to be someone you aren't.

#### **D. Are the parents and children of the student saved?**

In other words does he come from a Christian family? Does he have a Christian heritage? What about his wife? Are they active in a Bible believing church? Is there evidence of a deep commitment to Christ? Are

they helping people, serving people, caring for people? It will help you to have the right expectations of him as a student and potential leader.

#### **E. Student's interests**

Ask what type of ministry he is interested in. Maybe he wants to become a missionary. Maybe he wants to lead the choir. Maybe he wants to do some other spiritual things. Maybe he is not ready to really do spiritual things but he wants to study first to learn and grow spiritually. That's possible too. Get his perspectives on the future; why does he really want to study? That's an important question. Because sometimes the student just wants to study because, well, he's got nothing else to do. It's cold outside, and it sounds nice to sit inside and just study. Try to evaluate what kind of student he will be.

#### **F. Stress the privilege of attending**

If it's a privilege to attend then you can have high standards. Then the student must rise up to meet those standards. If he doesn't think it's a privilege he will become tired and discouraged. It's a great privilege for me to be a missionary here. I think God had a hundred people for this job. He just said, "Not you. Not you. Not you. Not you. Ah, Abraham, yes." It's a special treasure to me. You must be very careful with this treasure that God has given you because God can take it away. It is a privilege to be a student and prepare for spiritual service.

#### **G. Stress standards and co-operation**

Many people just don't understand what a discussion group is all about. They don't understand that they should study at home **first** and then come to class prepared to talk about what they have studied. Most students want to come to class and sit and listen. We have nearly a hundred thousand Baptist listeners. We need people that want to **talk** about Jesus. We need to have standards. Standards won't work if students won't co-operate with the standards. Occasionally you need to talk strongly with people. "Now, listen, this is not good enough. We can't go on this way. You will have to do this better." But you can't say week after week, "How come you are doing so bad?" "How come you are doing so bad?" "How come you are doing so bad?" Students must develop an attitude of wanting to do this, wanting to co-operate. To listen to a lecture they don't need to do anything, but for a discussion they need to be prepared to participate.

Ultimately the main job of the coach is to encourage and motivate the students to co-operate. Why is that so important? It is important because the student needs to do the same thing in his church. Everybody can just go to church and just sit there and listen. Nothing happens. The church of Jesus Christ is built up when people become participators. That's what we are teaching in our groups through the small group discussions.

### **III. FURTHER SCREENING**

We've had **the actual interview** where the Mentoring ministry director or maybe a coach gets together with the student and his wife and family. But there are some other things to check out:

#### **A. Beware of criticism of other Bible colleges**

Be careful if the candidate is extremely critical of other Bible training institutions. "Well, I was in this institute in the Crimea and all I did was this, this and this, and it wasn't helpful at all. I was in the St. James Institute but that's from the charismatics and so I didn't like that and I want to come and study with you." What do you think he is going to tell the people a year from now? A year later he is going to criticize you. That's maybe not the kind of student you want to have. You may just say, "Well, I'm glad you have an interest in discipleship and mentoring, but our materials are difficult and our system is very different. I think you are too busy right now. I would like you to pray about it and maybe we'll think about it next year."

#### **B. Check previous Christian colleges**

If he has been in another institution, check there why he left. Maybe he didn't want to leave but was kicked out. Maybe he left because he wasn't keeping the standards, or was unwilling to study. There could be just

a variety of difficulties. If he didn't finish you should follow up and check why. Your goal is to raise up a leader for the church, so you need to be aware of who this man is.

## IV. THE ACCEPTANCE

Now you are ready to accept him as a student in your Mentoring ministry :

### A. Build love, trust and openness

Do whatever you can to build these qualities into your student. Your example will be the primary issue. As you love, trust and are open with him, he can learn to respond in the same way.

### B. Discuss the signed statement or letter from their pastor

Every student must have a written note from his pastor saying that he can study mentoring lessons . We are training church leaders and we don't want to do anything behind the back of his pastor. If the church doesn't recommend him or if the pastor is against it, maybe this is not a good situation right now and it would be better to wait. You need a letter from the pastor, not for the *Basic Christian life*, lessons but for the higher level lesson materials for training church leaders.

### C. Supporting policies and finances and so forth

You need to talk about any financial policies you have, or other areas of support students are required or encouraged to give. Maybe there is a year-end meeting or conference that everyone is expected to go to. Students may need to pay for transportation and other costs. These should be discussed after he is accepted as a student.

### D. A commitment to help

You are making a commitment to help the student. At the same time you should have a commitment from the wife that she is going to help her husband also. Maybe she can even help to cook a meal for a conference or clean the office once a month, or some other service.

### E. Stress giving beyond tuition

In other words you want to encourage students to make financial, spiritual, and other gifts towards the discipleship and mentoring ministry.

## V. HELP THEM TO GET STARTED

### A. Family orientation

It is good to introduce the family to other students in their town. Help the wife get acquainted with some other wives. Make it possible for her to hear some testimonies about what the lessons have done for other husbands and fathers.

### B. The student's first week or first lesson

#### 1. At the beginning of the school year

During September at the beginning of the academic year you should phone him several times extra. Maybe everybody knows where the meeting is and he doesn't know. He thinks it's in the church but you decided to meet at somebody's apartment. Other students know already how to prepare for the first lesson. He comes and didn't even bring a pen and notebook. "Notebook? Why do I need that?" There

are many things to think about from the beginning of the school year, and then to follow up. "Do you have a plan for studying six hours ?" "Is it working out? Is it hard? "Can I help you with anything?"

## 2. *During the year*

Visit him at home. Ideally try to visit once a quarter or once during every lesson series . If you have a local group or small group you can do that. Maybe your bus arrives two hours before the group begins. Each time visit one of the homes of your students--a different one each time. Telephone them. It's good to have contact especially during sickness or when there is a birthday of one of the children. It takes less than five minutes but they hear your voice, they know you care and they think, "Nobody has done this before." Send a note for New Year or Christmas, Easter, for Woman's Day. Maintain that contact.

## CONCLUSION

Building a solid foundation is crucial to the future success and reputation of both the student and the Mentoring Ministry . A proverb explains it this way; "Good begun is half done." It will diminish problems by half later on. Christ said; "Provide a good measure, shaken together and pressed down." Jesus wants you to do extras for people. That is His 'Gospel of Love.' Make this new student successful. That **is** your mentoring ministry. God bless you as you become a builder of people for the sake of Christ's Kingdom.

Amen.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

## *Practical assignment*

Completed

- Choose one of the items under "Initial Contacts" and make a written plan about how you are going to improve your Mentoring ministry 's image in this area. Write a report about how you put your plan into action. Include a copy of the plan

