

Weekly Blogs on Leadership

by Dr. Jay Zinn • 3/28/2016

Week 4

The dire need for discipleship leaders

On the day of Pentecost, in Acts 2, three-thousand souls were added to the church (Acts 2:41). In Acts 5, another five-thousand was added, totaling eight-thousand people in Jerusalem who became Christians within a short span of time. Can you imagine how frightening that must have been for the apostles? How could they possibly shepherd and care for all those people? I believe through discipleship, just as *they* had been discipled by the Lord

I believe the apostles formed gatherings of twelve separate assemblies at the Temple's site along the colonnades of Solomon's Porch to teach the commandments and principles of Christ. Those who could attend would then return to homes and friends to share what they had heard. They didn't have Bibles. They didn't have a pocket scroll of the Old Testament. The teachings they received came by word of mouth in small settings. Perhaps these couriers of the apostle's teachings became facilitators of groups of disciples. They would return as often as they could to the temple to receive more of the apostle's teachings and return to share with their group. Imagine the heavy demands this created for the apostles, to handle the extraordinary rate of growth they experienced. They needed leaders—*fast*—as fast as they could find them.

These leaders had to be people of good reputation (integrity), full of wisdom (sagacity) and the Spirit of God. And what exactly does that mean, *full of the Spirit* of God? I think it's something that can be easily discerned, whether absent or present, like the fragrance of a garden. With it comes the power in this person to change the very atmosphere around them. It was the unconscious influence that made Jesus and spiritual things very tangible to others. So these three things—integrity, sagacity, and presence—will be expressed through active, unselfish service toward others, unceasingly absorbed in the work and building of the kingdom of God. There is no neutrality or compromise seen in this type of person, either spiritually or morally.

Such will become the person who applies themselves to discipleship as a lifestyle, willing to lay down their lives enough to serve and pour into other young disciples of Jesus in order to raise up, nurture and cultivate new leaders, strong leaders, who are desperately needed in God's kingdom work. After 40 years of pastoring, I'm absolutely convinced that the most effective way to train new leaders is through discipleship. It accelerates their growth quickly so that they may be facilitators of a growing army of leaders whom God is calling to work in his field.