

The Master's Plan Network – International
A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF “G12”

by Craig Wesley Rench

By God's grace and His phenomenal, amazing providence and divine guidance I believe that the Lord has led me to a model of discipling that is sweeping the world and revolutionizing discipling, spiritual formation and church planting. It is a model that is presently being used by, it is estimated, over 20,000 churches world-wide and 3,000 churches in America. It is a model being used by the fastest growing church in the world today. This particular church is seeing over **5,000** people on average come to Christ each and every week! It is a mindset and a methodology that has been effectively implemented by the fastest growing Church of the Nazarene in the world today. This vision of multiplication is being used by the largest churches in at least nine countries in the world including England, Russia, Singapore, Italy, Scotland, Columbia, Peru and other countries. I propose to research, transition and implement this model in my local church of Anaheim First Church of the Nazarene over the next four years. I believe that this is the most explosive, dynamic, multiplying model of disciple making the world has seen since the Book of Acts. Dr. Yonggi Paul David Cho of Korea, and pastor of the world's largest church with over a million people in his church, has declared publicly that this particular model of spiritual reproduction and intensive discipling is a model that

“can revolutionize and empower the church all over the world to take cities and nations for God.”¹ I think he is right.

This model goes by the short-hand name of “G12”. Many in the charismatic circles have heard of this movement. Most Nazarenes I am finding have never heard of it yet. G12 stands for “The Government of Twelve”. This is a cell church vision and model. Nineteen of the 20 largest churches in the world are cell churches. A few of them are now following the G12 model. A cell church is not just a church with cells. It is a church where the whole movement, thrust, life and ministry of the church operates in and through the cells. Cells in a true cell church are not the same as home groups, care groups, fellowship groups, Bible Study groups, prayer groups, service groups, affinity groups or special interest groups. As Colin Dye of Kensington Temple in London writes:

“Rather, they are tiny units of ‘church’ doing everything that ‘church’ should be doing, while remaining part of the overall body. Cells are where the evangelism, discipleship, pastoral care and prayer life of the church takes place.”²

The vision and mandate of “G12” finds its model and example in the way Jesus Christ ministered to and through his twelve disciples. Again, quoting pastor Colin Dye of London whose church has exploded in recent years utilizing the G12 model:

“Based on the way Jesus chose and trained twelve disciples, the G12 vision is proving to be the most effective way of equipping the body of Christ in the world today. Its goal is to see every member of the body of Christ serving the Lord Jesus and fulfilling His Mandate to make, mature and mobilise (the British spelling for “mobilize”) disciples in all nations.”³

¹Cesar Castellanos, *Successful Leadership Through The Government Of 12* (San Jose, California: Spirit Filled Productions, 2002), 12.

²Colin Dye, “Fulfilling The Mandate” G12 Harvest Magazine Europe Edition, Special Edition (2001): 5.

³Ibid.

It all began in 1983 with a humble pastor in Bogota, Columbia and a small congregation of 120 people. Pastor Cesar Castellanos was so discouraged and frustrated that his church couldn't grow beyond 120 people that he officially resigned from the church to wait on the Lord until God would show him what he should do next. For four months, Pastor Cesar waited in prayer before the Lord. Through a series of visions God revealed to Pastor Castellanos a strategy of evangelism and church growth through cells. In 1986 he went to Korea and adopted the principles of the cell church as taught by Dr. Paul David Yonggi Cho. By the end of 1991, there were 70 cells and roughly 700 people in the church. Pastor Cesar was not content and he earnestly prayed and cried out to the Lord for a plan or something to accelerate the growth of cells and leaders. He believes that the Lord showed him the missing component – the vision and concept called “The Government of 12” or G12. Castellanos writes:

“I began to see Jesus’ ministry with clarity. The multitudes followed, but He didn’t train the multitudes. He only trained twelve, and everything He did with the multitudes was for the purpose of teaching the twelve. Then the Lord asked me another question: ‘If Jesus trained twelve, should you win more than twelve or less than twelve?’”⁴

The Lord continued to show Castellanos that Jesus chose twelve to reach the multitudes. As Pastor Cesar waited on the Lord and studied the life and ministry of Jesus further he began to realize that Jesus stayed with these twelve disciples permanently until they were trained, and then He released them, gave them authority, and empowered them to disciple the nations. The call in Castellanos’ heart was clear: find twelve fruitful and faithful men and reproduce, by the Spirit of God, Christ’s character in them. His wife, Claudia, began to do the same thing with twelve women of the church. His youth pastor, Cesar Fajardo (Castellanos’ brother-in-law) did the same thing with the youth of the

⁴ Castellanos, *Successful Leadership Through The Government Of 12*, 43.

church. Each of these “twelve” would in turn win, consolidate, disciple and send twelve more. (12; 144; 1,728; 20,736) God had promised them unprecedented growth if they were obedient to the vision that He had given them. And unbelievable multiplication came. From 1991 to 1994 the cells grew from 70 to 1,200! From 1994 to 1999, there was an explosion of growth. They grew to 20,000 cells with 45,000 people meeting on the weekends for celebration services. In 1996 the cells grew from 4,000 to 10,500! Each cell has between 6 and 25 people.⁵ Today over 400,000 are being disciplined in over 80,000 cells. Each of these 400,000 are being trained and groomed to lead their own cells. In contrast, Dr. Cho’s church “only” has 75,000 cells for 1,000,000 people. This model is causing Dr. Cho to re-examine his own methodology. Cho has long maintained that only about 10% of anybody’s church has the gift of evangelism and only these should be cell leaders. In the G12 churches it is the firm belief that any and every Christian can and should be trained and mentored for life to be an effective leader of a cell. The church in Bogota truly believes that in a year or two they will have 400,000 cells averaging 4-5 people each. Do the math! Even 8-9 year old children are trained and equipped to lead children’s groups!

The church is called the International Charismatic Mission. It has continued to explode with exponential growth. Today, thirteen years after God gave Castellanos the vision of ministering to twelve men, over 400,000 are being disciplined by leaders who are training all of them to be soul-winners, disciplers and leaders of cells and groups of twelve. The youth group has reached 65,000 youth who lead over **1,500 teens to Christ every week!** The whole church is seeing **over 5,000 people come to Christ weekly!** **Their retention rate is the envy of any church in the world. They are now retaining**

⁵ Dye, “Fulfilling The Mandate” , 5.

between 80-90 percent of their first time converts and nearly 65 percent of these new believers follow through with the nearly year long training to become cell group leaders. They are on target to add 200,000 to their church in this calendar year alone! Are you still breathing!?

This is nothing short of miraculous and amazingly it is apparently reproducible and transferable to other cultures and countries. As stated earlier, this movement has spread all over the world. It is on every continent but Antarctica. It is being implemented by over 20,000 churches worldwide. Over 124 denominations in East Africa alone are using this model of discipleship and multiplication. Here are a few examples from around the world:

Kiev, Russia – a church of 8,000 pastored by a Nigerian pastor adopted the G12 model in 2002 and today is averaging 30,000.

Lima, Peru – a church of 5,000 began to transition to the G12 model in 2000 and today they average over 30,000.

Cali, Columbia – the fastest growing Nazarene church in the world has grown from 300 to over 6,000 in 2 years time since applying the methodology of G12. They are training virtually all of these new converts to be leading their own cells within a year or two. Their pastor honestly believes that they will have 6,000+ cells (averaging 5 people each) in the next two years! Imagine, a Nazarene church growing from 300 to 20,000 in just 5-6 years! So be it! Amen! On Dec. 11, 2005 they had a special evangelistic rally where 12,000+ people attended! They are presently raising money to build a

12,000 seat sanctuary. They believe that God has told them that they will fill it 5 times every weekend. Do the math!

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA – Bethany World Prayer Center pastored by Larry Stockstill was running 5,000 when they began to apply the principles and philosophy of G12 in 2001, three years ago. At that time they were retaining only 6 percent of their new converts. Today they are averaging in excess of 13,000 with 200 new first-time converts every week and they are retaining over 50 percent of these new believers. The leadership of Bethany is convinced that this retention rate is due to the principles, patterns, and methodology of consolidation and discipleship of the G12 model. This retention rate means that Bethany will add 5,000 people to their church this year alone! They are on track to do this. Remarkably, one year ago, in 2003 their youth group ran 400. A year ago they moved their youth group into a full implementation of G12. Today the youth group stands at 2,350 in weekly cell group meetings being led for the most part by other teens! This is the largest youth group in America by at least 1,000!⁶ Most mega-churches in America have youth groups that only run about 300-500 youth. The largest church in America, Joel Osteen’s church, of 26,000+ runs a youth group of “only” 600. There are only 3 or 4 mega-churches that run over 1,000 kids. Bethany is the largest

⁶ Stockstill, “Every Member A Multitude” Conference, Sept. 14, 2004.

by far. Their leaders truly expect to have a “youth group” of 20,000 someday! This is in America!

Bethany is a very mission-minded church. It has given 2-3 million dollars to missions for years. From 1987 until 2003 (15 years) they had planted 1000 churches worldwide. Not bad for one American church! Two years ago they moved all 1000 of these churches to the G12 model. In 2004 they planted 2,000+ churches and in 2005 they planted 6,000+ churches worldwide and they are all using the G12 model! They project to plant 10,000 churches in the current year using this dynamic model. Each pastor is charged with raising up their 12 and their 144, etc. and planting new churches using this explosive methodology (In comparison, the Church of the Nazarene has 18,000+ churches worldwide.)

Medford, Oregon – A small independent Pentecostal church of 150 began to implement G12 about two years ago in 2002. Today they are running over 400 with over 385 being trained to open their own cells in the next few months. They have grown from 17 cells to 75 cells in 18 months. I personally watched this church struggle for 15 years and never be able to break the 150 barrier until 2 years ago... and G12.

G12 Overview:

In a very brief overview here is the G12 vision and its key values.

- It is God's vision to see a world populated with His spiritual sons and daughters who love and worship Him.
- It is God's will that everybody become a born-again, Spirit-filled believer.
- It is God's will that every believer become a witness, a soul-winner, a true Great Commission disciple of Jesus, a trained leader, a trained leader of leaders, and a spiritual reproducer that multiplies multitudes.
- It is God's plan and design that every believer be disciplined for life in a "spiritual father- spiritual son" relationship. (Or in the case of females a "spiritual mother- spiritual daughter")
- It is The Lord's will and plan that on-going, life-long discipleship be done in the context of loving small groups where love, prayer, accountability, correction, evangelism, disciple making, service, worship and leadership training can best take place. (John Wesley believed the same thing and in the 1700's had small cells or "bands" of same-sex groups of twelve.)
- It is God's will that every believer become a "Spiritual Parent" who has led others to Christ and nurtures them into full maturity in Christ and to become true reproducing disciples themselves.
- With God's help and a lot of prayer and hard work by faithful disciplers new believers can and should be trained to become soul-winners and leaders of cell groups within a year's time. This is done by weekly cell meetings, one-on-one same-sex mentoring, a series of classes with over 90 hours of interaction, instruction and assignments, and two weekend retreats within a disciple's

first spiritual year. Curriculum has been developed for all the classes and retreats.

- Following our Lord's example, trained cell leaders who prove faithful and fruitful in soul-winning, prayer, and cell leadership and multiplication are then brought into permanent, same-sex, closed groups of 12 under one spiritual leader who is also under a leader. These groups are long-term – namely, for life! Each disciple eventually attends three small groups a week. They lead their own open evangelistic “fishing” cell with between 3-20 people. They attend their leaders closed group of 12 called a “G12 group” for on-going encouragement, spiritual leadership, prayer support, accountability, correction, love, and evangelistic challenge and goal-setting for souls and cells. There they enjoy depth fellowship with their leader and 11 brothers or sisters. In time, they form their own closed group of 12 “spiritual sons” (or “daughters”) and meet with them as their spiritual guide, guardian, parent and leader. But they continue to meet with their 11 brothers and their leader every week in the original group of 12. It is a lot of work. But remarkably, thousands all around the world, in virtually every country, are doing just this!

This, in a nutshell, is the G12 vision and model. There are several other layers and levels including “Network” meetings, “Generation” meetings, “Macro cell” meetings and “Miracle Catches” (large evangelistic rallies). These other gatherings can occur monthly, quarterly, or in some rare cases, weekly. This is a “bird’s eye” overview of G12.

It is not a perfect, flawless methodology... nothing that any of us can ever do will be perfect. But it is a vision, a method, a process and a model of “doing church” that God seems to be blessing mightily. I am interested in checking it out further and adopting it in my local church – “for the glory of God and the salvation of souls”! God has led us to do this. Pray for us.