

What is the Need of the Moment?

Pastor Ivan Leung



What is the need of the moment is an urgent and important question. Everyone will give a different answer, depending on one's needs in their own particular circumstances. For someone who is sick, his/her need would be good health; for students, their needs would be good grades; for the unemployed, the need is employment; for para-church organizations, their needs would be financial support; for missionaries, their need would be more resources; and for the churches, their needs may be more co-workers. Each person may respond differently according to their needs, however, Jesus' answers to this question is of prime importance. The following Bible passages reflect the mind of Jesus Christ.

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are

few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:35-38)

He appointed twelve - designating them apostles - that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach. These twelve became Jesus' disciples. (Mark 3:14)

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

From the above passages, we can see Jesus' core value and what He perceives as the need of the moment. **Jesus is concerned with people.** In Matthew 9:36, *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.* When Jesus saw people who did not know God and living meaningless lives, His heart was distressed and became compassionate towards these lost souls. Consequently, He went to different cities and villages, preaching in the synagogues, spreading the Gospel, and hoping that some would come to Christ.

Not only did Jesus preach about the Good News, He also trained his twelve disciples, and worked closely beside them to spread the Gospel. In Mark 3:14, it says *He appointed twelve - designating them apostles - that they might be with him and that he might send*

them out to preach. Therefore, not only was Jesus concerned with the unbelievers, He cared for His followers, training them to become apostles who would in turn build up others' spiritual lives.

Prior to Jesus' ascension, He reiterated His deepest concern. In Matthew 28:18-19, Jesus said, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..."* Making disciples of all nations is a passion that is close to our Lord's heart.

In our churches today, we are constantly seeking better methods to do church and run a ministry whether it be from one conference or another or one book or another. However God is more interested in where our hearts are at and whether we are providing Godly leadership. From Jesus' perspective, the need of this moment is a group of dedicated followers or faithful disciples who will gladly obey the Great Commission, as well as those who are willing to train others to become His disciples. Therefore, the church's need of this moment is a group of devoted spiritual leaders, faithful in giving personal training to new Christians, helping them to grow continuously and become mature Christians. Through individual discipleship training, the church will gather a group of mature disciples who in turn can train others to become committed disciples.

In my experience as the pastor of this church, God has taught me the importance of discipleship training

and spiritual leadership training. When we begin to build up people, God will build up the church. Therefore, when the church is filled with spiritual leaders, willing to serve together, God will bless the church and its ministries. Conversely, if the church is filled with “spiritual infants” working in discord or dissension, the church ministries will be hindered and God's name will suffer!

The church must not underestimate the importance of discipleship and leadership training. If our young people are not trained, who can we pass our “baton” to? How would the future look? Therefore, if our church wants to grow and mature, we need to train our next generation incessantly. Healthy spiritual leaders can build up a healthy church; and a healthy church is a growing church.

Praise God, under His guidance, VCAC has developed a 5-year plan (2007 - 2011). Our church saw the need, so we have established the Vancouver Chinese Alliance Church - Leadership Training Institute (VCAC-LTI) to train believers. We are strongly committed to building up a team of lay-leaders and liberating

them to serve with their spiritual gifts to advance God's Kingdom by means of the Multi-Site Church Model (MSCM). The visions of VCAC-LTI are missions-focused, multiplication of leaders, spiritual character building and church mobilization. We truly desire to see how God will train the potential spiritual leaders in serving together as a healthy team to build up a healthy, balanced, growing multi-site church.

In 2007, we started a leadership certificate program in the Chinese congregations and the same program will begin in the English congregations this year. This leadership certificate program aims to equip our lay leaders in three areas:

- To deepen our understanding of the Bible.
- To develop Christian character.
- To improve ministry skills.

The program does not only emphasize Bible knowledge, theological training and spiritual development, but also teaches practical ministry skills for believers to serve in different capacities in the church. Through an individual “apprenticeship” model, the core courses and the electives, the program sets out to

provide a balance in Bible knowledge and practical serving techniques. The outcome is that the students' spiritual lives will be renewed, and their spiritual gifts will become more exercised and seasoned, so that they can assist collectively in building a healthy church.

We thank God that after a year of careful consideration, Ambrose University College (formerly Canadian Theological Seminary) had approved our leadership certificate program in February, 2008. For the brothers and sisters who have completed this program and want to enroll into Ambrose University College, they will be able to obtain 9 credits from the university. A leadership certificate will be jointly awarded to the students by Ambrose University College and VCAC.

May God continue to bless our church, so that we can become a growing community, willing to build up and train more spiritual leaders, who will faithfully teach others, strengthen this spiritual family and expand God's kingdom.

**Blessings,
Pastor Ivan Leung**



Many members from our Chinese congregations attended the VCAC - Leadership Training Institute courses that were held at Knight Street and Fraser Lands. This past year, the courses offered included such topics as “Transformational Leadership”, “Introduction to Lay Preaching”, “Systematic Theology” and “Introduction to Coaching”.