

**Equipping and Empowering the People of God:  
Developing the People of God through Team Leadership and Ministry**  
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ABSTRACT

According to its mandates, Central Bible College exists “to educate and train ministers and missionaries.” Since its founding in 1922, it has sought to meet the need of the Assemblies of God fellowship for qualified men and women to serve in various capacities of full time ministry. The institution presently offers twenty-one majors for the expressed purpose to prepare individuals for a variety of specialized ministries in the church.

The *Pastoral Theology I* course of study is required for all but one of the school’s twenty-one majors. The focus of *Pastoral Theology I* combines a study of leadership and administration with an overview of church government and Assemblies of God polity. While the course has for some time provided students with needed understandings and perspectives, it has traditionally considered leadership largely from a hierarchical point of view.

The church’s dependence on hierarchical leadership has been a contributing factor in bringing about some unintended consequences. One of these unintended consequences is the underutilization of its greatest resource, its people. In most 21<sup>st</sup> century churches, the majority of people are mere attendees who possess little understanding of their roles in the ministry. These people are generally satisfied to remain passive while professional ministers and a few dedicated lay people provide the services necessary to their spiritual well being.

The project *Equipping and Empowering the People of God: Developing the People of God through Team Leadership and Ministry* seeks to provide future leaders with a theological perspective of the people of God, as well as a fundamental understanding of the process of

discipleship and leadership training. It proposes to utilize the venue of the current *Pastoral Theology I* course as a means of helping Central Bible College accomplish this goal.

Research for the project examined biblical theological and practical theological considerations. Important emphases included: (1) a biblical understanding of the people of God, (2) biblical examples of teams and teamwork, (3) strengths and weaknesses of hierarchies and teams, and (4) empowering people in the local church. An additional aspect of the research involved interviewing district officials, church consultants, and pastors.

The academic and empirical research became the basis for a unit of study within the *Pastoral Theology I* course. The unit comprised ten fifty minute sessions which were taught during the fall, 2003 semester. During the presentation of the material, the seventy-eight students who made up the class were free to interact with the various aspects of the study. A pretest and post test surveyed students' attitudes and philosophies of leadership before and after the unit offering. A proposal to reconfigure the *Pastoral Theology I* course to include much of the unit's contents will ultimately be presented.