

TRAINING CARE FACILITATORS TO NURTURE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG MISSIONARIES

Faye Tidwell

The purpose of this project is to develop a training seminar for a standard of best practice for member care. This process utilizes a community-building network among members (missionaries), enabling them successfully to care for one another.

After thirty-five years of missionary experience, cross-cultural research, and crisis counseling, the author has determined that there is a need in Assemblies of God World Missions (AGWM) for a trained care facilitator in each designated area of the mission field. The trained facilitator would promote healthy relational attitudes, proper self-care, and spiritual growth among the area's missionaries.

The project design incorporates a word study of the New Testament use of "one another" passages. The research includes the role of encouragement and examines the biblical-theological foundation of community. Study and research of these community models indicates the need for a contextualized best practice approach. This approach will create an effective system to care for "one another" in missions.

The model of training utilizes the scriptural reference of Barnabas, who provided both nurture and support to the Apostle Paul. In a similar manner, modern-day missionaries often need someone to "come alongside" them for emotional guidance and affirmation. The best practice training also incorporates an extensive review of literature, which includes topics such as: personality theories and behaviors, individual growth and development, communication skills and styles, motivational and coaching principles, life adjustments, and learning styles.

In July 2004, the author facilitated an introductory training seminar to one hundred AGWM leaders. In November, 2004, fifteen individuals attended a training workshop for care facilitators. The project design involved the administration of a pretest and posttest instrument. The evaluative data determined the effectiveness of the seminar in raising the need, awareness, and skills training for care facilitators. The results of a post seminar evaluation and a completed posttest revealed that the participants benefited from the principles taught during the sessions.