



MentorNet #69

FUNCTIONS OF MENTORED TRAINING CHAINS

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Introduction

Letter to the Colossians chapters 1 and 4 name several individuals who formed a kind of training chain. Paul took care not to by-pass links in the chain, respecting each one's working relations, calling them his "co-workers". These individuals included:

Paul ▶ Timothy ▶ Epaphras ▶ Archippus ▶ Nympha

One immediately recalls the oft-cited text of 2 Timothy 2:2. See MentorNet #67, "[The Fourth Generation](#)". In this article, a "training chain" consists of more-experienced church leaders who serve as mentor to a few less-experienced ones, in periodic, face-to-face sessions that include prayer, reporting, planning, learning assignments, review, and skill practice.

Edward Aw and other experienced mentors, who train others through branching chains, have identified several functions of such chains. Perhaps you can identify others?

Functions of Training Chains

1. **Make disciples of leaders.** *Philippians 2:22*. Mentors lay a foundation of loving obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. Edward Aw likens training chains unto "a godly, loving parent raising up godly, loving children to raise up more godly, loving children".
2. **Learn from the field.** *Philippians 1:27*. Those whom you mentor for success in their work will normally prove both loyal to you and accurate in their assessments of their work and needs of their churches. Regular mentoring sessions allow you "to see and hear" through your trainees.
3. **Plan ministry in churches.** *Titus 1:5*. Your trainees look to you for guidance and biblical wisdom that they can apply in their churches. In this way, you can ensure continual development as their churches' members learn to appropriate God's grace in an ever-expanding service.
4. **Train in new skills.** *1 Thessalonians 3:12*. Your mentees continually face fresh opportunities, expanding needs and perplexing challenges for which they may lack experience and skill, as do those whom they train, in turn. Thus, your mentoring flows down the chain.
5. **Encourage workers.** *Ephesians 6:12*. Your focussed attention on workers and their churches a few minutes in a week or month will strengthen their resolve to prove worthy of your trust and sincere hope for their success. These will, then, do the same with other workers, in turn.
6. **Train many more workers.** *2 Timothy 2:2*. In an ever-expanding movement of evangelism and church planting, conventional educational institutes could never graduate enough workers of the right kind, in sufficient numbers. Therefore, your trainees must train most new workers.

7. **Intercede in behalf of churches and workers.** *Colossians 1:9*. George Patterson calls mentoring, “Loving churches through their leaders”. Without doubt, prayers and intercessions accomplish more with God than most preachments, threats, incentives and persuasive arguments.
8. **Project extension and expansion.** *Matthew 28:18-20*. Planning expresses both obedience to Christ’s commandments and faith in the promises of God who wants more believers, more disciples, more congregations, in more families, communities, languages, peoples and cultures.
9. **Recruit more workers.** *Luke 10:2*. Most new workers come, not from a distant sending agency, but from the “harvest”, for God gives needed apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers. Your task, and that of your trainees, is to identify, to empower and to mentor these.
10. **Manage ministry resources.** *Titus 1:7*. Since most new leaders, like the churches that they serve, remain self-supported, and timely mentoring can explore with them ways in which to implement the instructions that Jesus taught, within local budgets and resources.
11. **Report statistics.** *Acts 6:7*. The Book of Acts reports growth numerically or in mathematical terms. Where movements grow continually, leaders pay attentions to actual figures on baptisms, communicants, congregations, budgets, etc., and employ theses in prayerful planning.
12. **Supervise personnel.** *1 Timothy 3:15*. Paul referred to his trainees, such as Timothy and Titus, as his “sons”, neither as his servants nor his employees. See MentorNet #65, “[Work your Personnel, Not the Principles](#)”. He helped these set clear objectives and to meet the same.
13. **Coordinate inter-church cooperation.** *Acts 18:24-28*. Mentors can bring together leaders of several churches, helping them to plan cooperative efforts as well as to move gifted believers between churches where they can meet local needs.
14. **Set workers and churches free to reproduce.** *Matthew 10:1, 5*. Just as Jesus authorized workers to perform the same works as he did, and to do so in homes where they were received, so you can authorize your trainees to do every work of leadership wherever the Lord sends them.

Conclusion

Draw a chart of the generational training chains in which you participant, noting every one who trains others in the way described in the Introduction. Pray and envision every “last link” starting to train others in turn who lead new churches and cell groups. Plan with your trainees to extend their training chains.

Recommended Training Materials

Order P. O'Connor, *Reproducible Pastoral Training*, from <www.WCLbooks.com>.
 Order G. Patterson’s Church Multiplication Guide from <www.WCLbooks.com>.
 Find the *Train & Multiply*® pastoral training course at <www.TrainAndMultiply.com>.
 Download free software, “Come, Let Us Disciple the Nations,” at <www.Paul-Timothy.net/dn/>.
 Download free mentoring tools for new leaders from <www.MentorAndMultiply.com>.
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