



ENGAGE GROUPS Sarah Holloway

Over time, [nlcf] leadership realized that our small groups have a great strength in our relationships with each other and in our pursuit of God. What we've also realized, however, is that our small groups have a weakness in reaching out to others.

We use a Triangle metaphor (pictured below) to show how these three areas should be balanced. In order to bring more balance to our small groups, we made a change.

This change centers on the word "missional." It's a word used a lot in Christian lingo and in churches that may be unfamiliar. Basically, it means going out, instead of bringing in. It is following the example of Jesus in the ways that He was often among people, talking with them, eating meals with them, and loving them. We want to follow that example in these new small groups. We've changed our small group model to what we have started calling "Engage Groups." The idea is that it will still maintain the strengths of our "home groups" while also

encouraging us to be more outward-focused and "missional." The main differences between a home group and an engage group will be these two things:

- 1) They will be smaller; they will have around 15 people as opposed to 30 people.
- 2) They will be oriented around a specific group of people they are trying to engage.

Some examples of engage groups that started this spring are Engage Runners, Engage Gamers, Engage Lee Hall, Engage Cooking, etc.

For example, Engage Runners is oriented around people that have a common interest in running. So in addition to the Bible study, prayer, and fellowship, there would be an added component of doing something to engage runners every month. An example could be doing a race together and inviting friends to join in.

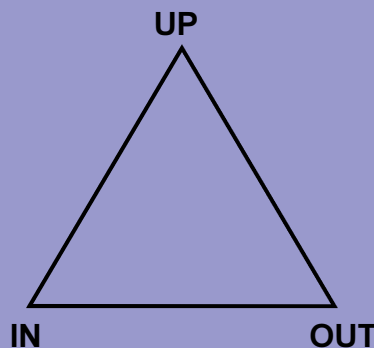
Home groups were our small group model for 20 years. Change can be hard, so please pray for [nlcf] as we continue to walk through this transition.

UP: Our relationship with God

IN: Our relationships with other Christians

OUT: Our relationships with those who don't follow Christ.

The idea is that we would be balanced in all three areas. We know that no one person or church is perfectly balanced all the time, but our shift to Engage Groups is an effort to become better balanced.



One Sunday afternoon the Engage Running Group ran the Blacksburg Classic 5k and 10 miler. Candice (one of the leaders) shared this story after the race, "I was able to talk a guy at work into running too. At the race he asked me what I was going to listen to on my Ipod to pump me up, and I got to tell him that it was all Jesus music. He already knew that I'm a Christian and was there with my "church group." Then a girl from my office was there cheering on her boyfriend and today we talked all about it. She wants to run together."

Spring Break Trips

HONDURAS Steve Englund

For many years, [nlcf] has been taking teams to Honduras to tell people about Jesus and be his hands and feet. For the past four years, we have taken teams to a small city called Danli. In Danli, there is a small fellowship of believers with a huge heart for God and their community. They have a very special place in our hearts, and we hold a special place in theirs too.

[nlcf] was the first church to ever send a missions team to Danli through [GCLA](#). Each year we have gone there it has been during VT's spring break. This past March, we took a team of 18 students and 4 staff to Danli.

While there, we had the privilege of telling people about the love of Christ, we handed out tons of clothes and shoes we collected before the trip, we prepared and distributed food bags to those who had need, we rebuilt



a kitchen for a family, and we made beds for families who needed them.

One great thing about going to Danli is that when we go there, we're not just going into a new place, doing work, and then leaving them to figure out what should happen next. The church in Danli is alive, and has a passion for seeing the Gospel impact their community. When we go there, we're just joining in with what they're already doing and maybe giving them an extra boost. After we leave, they faithfully continue the work God has called them to.

Marlon Chavez is the pastor of the church in Danli and we're very excited that he will be coming to visit us here in Blacksburg May 29th through June 1st. While he's here,

we hope to continue to build our relationship with him and the church, as well as show him what life is like here in the Burg. We're excited about what is next for us when it comes to our relationship with the church in Danli. There are some great things on the horizon!

MISSISSIPPI Jeanette Staats

Since Hurricane Katrina hit, [nlcf] has sent nine teams to the Gulf Coast area to help with rebuilding efforts. This past Spring Break, a team of 14 traveled to Pass Christian, Mississippi, to serve alongside [SouthCoast Design Build](#).

About a week before we were supposed to leave, our housing fell through. After some frantic phone calls, we found separate housing for the guys and the gals, but little did we know at the time how this housing situation would impact our trip! On Sunday we were able to worship with the Church of the Good Shepherd (the church that graciously housed our guys and allowed us to use some space to hang-out and cook meals). It was a blessing to meet and worship with so many people that lived through the storm or relocated to help with the rebuilding efforts. The church body greeted us with open arms. Their hospitality was a testimony to us all. During the week, we worked with Leah McBride (an [nlcf] and VT alum) of SouthCoast Design Build on Ms. Dang's home, a woman who lost her



house after the storm. When we walked onto the site the first day, we were met with the framework of a house about 15 feet in the air (on stilts) with little interior framework. By the end of the week, we had helped do a good portion of the roofing, wrapped the house in Tyvek and started siding, completed the majority of the interior walls, and completed other odd jobs.

The thing I love about these trips is that they take us out of our normal day-to-day activities. Throughout the week I saw students climb scaffolding to heights they never imagined they'd be able to conquer. I saw new friendships formed. I saw someone share their testimony in front of a church body for the first time. I saw someone light up after holding a nail gun and realizing a whole new world exists outside of

Computer Science. And I saw the church body span across many miles. It is shocking to many that there is still work to be done in the Gulf Coast area. However, what I find most shocking about these trips is that while we go and offer our helping hands and meet some very real physical needs, most often God thanks our efforts by rocking our worlds spiritually and relationally.

Downtown Congregation Update Joe Racek

It's now been almost two years since I've returned from church planting in Los Angeles to concentrate on [nlcf]'s Downtown Community Congregation. Both Lisa and I have enjoyed getting to know so many new friends as well as a few old friends, and have been spiritually encouraged by connecting with people who are passionate about their faith and following Jesus.

Our congregation is filled with a mixture of ages. Although there aren't big numbers in every category, we have babies, toddlers, young children, pre-teens, teenagers, undergraduates, graduates, young professionals, older professionals, and even a retired couple within our congregation!

One of the challenges that we have been facing is to really know who we are as a congregation. We have a vibrant campus congregation that focuses on students, but the Downtown Congregation is spread across many different ages and life stages. The question is, how can we be faithful to how God has called us to be a church in our areas of Blacksburg and Christiansburg? How can we stay connected with the student congregation, yet also live out the calling that God has for us in particular as a community church with a different missional focus and different needs?

I often hear from alumni living in different parts of the country that experience a difficult transition out of "college life." Friendships change, schedules are different, and proximity to others bring challenges. Our Downtown Congregation has been going through a similarly difficult transition time – we are re-learning how to come together in a different way and for a different purpose than before.

What's been extremely helpful is that we recently had [nlcf]'s founding pastor, JR Woodward, come in for a week to conduct an intensive assessment of this [nlcf] congregation in particular. As a result of this assessment, we have now begun a six-nine month process of gathering our leaders to seek God's direction for us. We are working together in seeking God to unify our mission, unique values, goals, and strategy for how He wants to use us in His Kingdom. We hope in the next

months to not only come up with this framework for our congregation, but also for God to raise up an equipping team that values shared leadership in equipping and leading the Downtown Congregation.

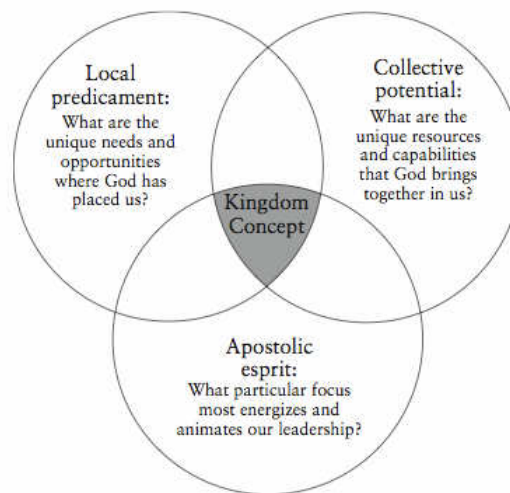
Even though we are waiting for this in the future, God is clearly doing something now in our midst which has been very exciting and has made us feel that His Grace is pouring over us. There are five people who want to get baptized on Easter Sunday. They've shared about how God has moved greatly in capturing their hearts with the love of Christ. One of those five just accepted Christ recently after coming to our worship gatherings and home groups for about half a year.

Also spreading has been a desire for multi-generational discipleship. One of the strengths that a community congregation has is for people to be involved in discipleship relationships with those both younger and older. A couple of our home groups have begun to diversify, involving both singles and married, parents and non-parents, undergrads, grads, and working professionals. We've seen God use these small groups to strengthen

discipleship and create natural ways to bring people together across different stages in life.

And finally, we have also had some new developments with our Sunday Worship Gathering. We're excited to try a different location, beginning to meet right within our newly renovated building (130 Jackson) in downtown Blacksburg. We also have some new ideas for creating better spaces for our children's ministry during Sundays. I love seeing how God has brought certain people, some very new to our congregation, to help make these new changes happen.

Pray for us as we continue to seek God and develop a strong leadership team of volunteers right within our congregation. We desire to continue to take bold steps of faith in what God has in store for us in the near future. And thank you for your prayers and support; we have been blessed by God's grace even these past couple months, even when we don't always feel like we have it all together!



Currently our leadership team is looking at these three areas of where God has placed us and how He has gifted us in trying to discover our Kingdom Concept - the unique way God wants to use us in His Kingdom! (from Will Mancini's "Church Unique")

How You Can Help

Tithes, offerings, and donations/gifts to [nlcf] are used to pay for the ministry we do at Virginia Tech and in the New River Valley. As alumni and parents, you can play a huge role in making our ministry at [nlcf] possible with your financial support!

General Fund: Gifts to the general fund are used to pay for the general needs of the budget. These can include sound, lighting, projection, computers, printing, office supplies, advertising, books, food, good coffee and all the other essentials that help us do what we do.

Other Needs: [nlcf] also supports church plants (like [Imago Dei](#)), partner churches overseas (like [Almaz Church](#) in Kiev, Ukraine), and specific ministries (like [Leadership Training](#)). You can also choose to give directly to these needs.

Send a check:

Make a check payable to “NLCF” and send it to
PO Box 111

Blacksburg, VA 24063

You can indicate “General Fund” or a specific need in the memo portion of your check if you wish. You will receive a receipt in January each year for tax purposes.

Set up automatic giving online:

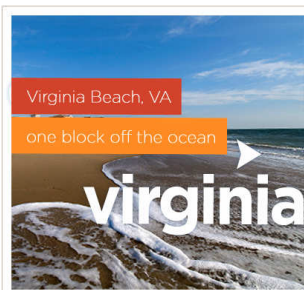
[nlcf] partners with [Network of Giving](#), an online funds transfer service built by [nlcf] members. Simply sign up at networkofgiving.com to begin donating. You can choose a start date, giving frequency, end date, and select which “funds” or “needs” you wish to donate to.

Looking Ahead

Here are some things coming up in the life of [nlcf] that we ask you to keep in your prayers:



Mission Trip to Kiev, Ukraine (May 26th - June 2nd/9th): [nlcf] is taking 17 staff and church members to Ukraine to work with our sister church Almaz and with the [Vorzel Orphanage](#). Those going on the trip have the option of staying one or two weeks. One person is staying for a month!



Leadership Training Virginia Beach (May 21st - July 31st): [nlcf] is bringing around 15 students and staff to this summer leadership training program on Virginia Beach. [LT](#) is a summer-long program for believers who desire to be

transformed into people who impact their world as they live out their faith.

Alumni Page

We are working to put together an “Alumni Page” on [\[nlcf\]’s website](#). This will be place where you can see what other alumni have been up to, keep up-to-date with what’s happening at [nlcf], and find out where other [nlcf] alumni have gotten plugged into a church community.

Here’s where we need your help! We want to have a section available called “Key Churches in Key Places.” We want to know about the church you go to so we can help graduating seniors get plugged into a great community when they leave Blacksburg.

Please email Sarah (sarahkholloway@gmail.com) if you want to share about your church!



Questions? info@nlcf.net