

The Missing Link



There really is a missing link! Not the kind espoused by Darwin but rather in how we train others for ministry. In the church we have tended to take the “training” out of “training.” It is rare to find equipping that includes training in our educational institutions or churches. We are great at the academics, but slim on the training side of things.

A holistic approach to equipping must include three components:

- Head
- Hands
- Heart

Or to put it another way,

- Academic learning
- Skills
- Character development

The one component that is most often neglected in “training” programs is the “Hands.” This seems to be a “missing link.” Intrinsic to the term “training” is the idea that someone will be equipped to **do** something. The dictionary says that training is “activity leading to skilled behavior.” By that definition, there appears to be something lacking in many seminary programs. It is possible to graduate from Bible college and seminary with a 4.0 grade point average and still not know how to preach, evangelize, counsel, disciple, marry, or bury because we do not require the students to actually try these skills. Our western approach to education has deteriorated to being satisfied with the student “knowing,” but not “doing.”

We would not accept this approach in a variety of other professions. Would you allow a surgeon to operate on you with only classroom experience? Would you fly on a plane that is piloted by someone who only read a book? Do you want your chef to have more experience than owning a cookbook? Why do we accept it in ministry?

BMW has a series of workshops that helps a church think through how it can do non-formal, church-based training that includes all three: head, heart, and HANDS. Frequently, as we complete the workshop and begin helping put together a plan, the default reaction is to start crafting an academic curriculum. The tendency is to equate training with classes. Scripture makes it clear that we must give attention to all three:

HEAD	HANDS	HEART
“retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me” II Timothy 1:13	“be diligent, handling accurately the word of Truth” II Timothy 2:15	“pay close attention to yourself” I Timothy 4:16
“many will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons” I Timothy 4:1	“But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on a rock.” Matthew 7:21	“discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness” I Timothy 4:7-8
“Thy Word have I hid in my heart” Psalm 119:11	“But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” James 1:21	“show yourself an example to those who believe” I Timothy 4:12

Preach and teach these things" I Timothy 6:2	"teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." Matthew 28:20	"kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you." II Timothy 1:6
"Give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." I Timothy 4:13	"do the work of an evangelist" II Timothy 4:5	"But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control..." Galatians 5:22-23
"You need someone to teach you again the first principles and oracles of God" Hebrews 5:12	"For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word" Hebrews 5:13	"But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Hebrews 5:14
"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel" Ezra 7:10	"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel" Ezra 7:10	"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel" Ezra 7:10
The term "PASTOR" emphasizes the academic. He is to feed the flock.	The term "BISHOP" emphasizes the skill. He is to oversee the flock.	The term "ELDER" emphasizes his character. He is to set the example.

The Biblical Model

A well-rounded training program for equipping people for the ministry will give equal time and priority to all three areas. The following chart illustrates how the head, hands, and heart can be engaged in the training process.

	<i>HEAD</i>	<i>HANDS</i>	<i>HEART</i>
<i>PRAYER</i>	Know the doctrine of prayer	Learn to pray	Confess sin
<i>EVANGELISM</i>	Know soteriology	Develop people skills	Provide a consistent testimony
<i>TEACHING</i>	Know the scriptures	Learn how to teach	Live a godly life that backs up the truth
<i>PREACHING</i>	Learn homiletics	Gain communication skills	Practice what you preach
<i>COUNSELING</i>	Know the Bible	Practice skills of listening, speaking and asking questions	Show godly empathy

Three Questions

1. **Which of these three is most important?** The qualification of an Elder in I Timothy 3 answers this question. For ministry it is obvious that character is the most important. If you are ungodly, it doesn't matter how much theology you know and it doesn't matter how good your communication skills are. The main qualification for ministry is character: the heart.
2. **Which one should be taught first?** All three must be done simultaneously. They are inter-linked. Our tendency is to fill someone's head first, and then send the person out to do ministry. To properly train a person for service, a mentor must commit to three events each week with the mentee: (1) academic learning, (2) ministering together in a real live situation, and (3) heart to heart discussions on personal disciplines and godliness.

3. **Which drives the other two?** Hands development will force growth in Heart and Head. It is possible to have head knowledge and be ungodly. There are a lot of godly people who don't have ministry skills. But if you focus a training program on skills development, there is a better chance of causing academic learning and character growth. Jesus often did this. After attempting to do ministry (and failing), the disciples came back highly motivated to listen to the next lecture. This approach demands that the mentor/teacher take the time to "do" ministry with those he is training. It is not sufficient to simply tell people what to do. But when ministry is done together (mentor and mentee), training will take place.

APPLICATION TO MISSIONS

Success on the mission field is directly related to the training a missionary has received. If it is all academic, the missionary will be severely limited. The greatest weakness of candidates and new missionaries that we consistently see is the lack of skills development. This is where the local church is so critical for the success of a missionary. The church has the potential of properly training potential missionaries in ministry skills. As BMW evaluates candidates, we look at the following three areas:

1. **HEART:** Do they meet the character qualifications of a church leader?
2. **HEAD:** Do they know the Word of God?
3. **HANDS:** Do they have the following skill sets?
 - Discipleship
 - Evangelism
 - Exegetical skills
 - People skills
 - Counseling
 - Administration
 - Strategic planning
 - Writing skills
 - Communication
 - Time management
 - Financial (personal and church) skills
 - Language aptitude
 - Culture awareness, sensitivity
 - Computer skills
 - Conflict resolution
 - Teamwork

THE CHALLENGE: Evaluate every training program in your church by these three criteria. Could it be that people are hesitant to minister primarily because we have not trained them? Could the next generation of missionaries to be sent out by the local church be highly effective if we were to provide the "missing link" of training?

If you would like to know more about the BMW workshops that will take you through a process for implementing a different type of training culture in your church, give us a call or check us out at www.biblicalministries.org/resources/companionchurchconcept.org.