

The Ultimate Roadtrip, A Guide to Leading
Small Groups

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THE
ULTIMATE
**ROAD
TRIP**
A GUIDE TO LEADING
SMALL
GROUPS



The Publishing Division of the Campus Ministry
Campus Crusade for Christ

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(FIRST ADDITION, 1995)

This book was written by a small group of sorts, men and women who've led hundreds of groups in Campus Crusade for Christ over the past several decades. As in all small groups, each person made an invaluable contribution toward the final product and, as a result, this book is far better than if one person wrote it alone. The first group of writers met in Fort Collins, Colo., the summer of 1993. Ned Mervich, Dianne Henschel, Peggy Linn, Kelli Cox, Dennis Brockman and I spent several weeks forging the initial content for this project.

During the following school year, Kelli Cox, Gordon Klenck, Marajen Denman, Liz Swanson and Kent Mulkey added great stories and perspective, slowly building on the work from the previous summer. In April, the project was greatly helped by a brainstorming session at the Communication Center—thanks Tim, Glenn and Kent. Along the way Kelli became a mom and gave attention to her new son. Thank you, Kelli, for keeping this book afloat with your persistence and attention to detail.

Over the 1994–1995 school year, Dave Carlson, Judy-Clark and I wrote new chapters, rewrote old chapters, and polished up the manuscript. As we finalized each chapter, a group of veteran Campus Crusade staff members gave us their input. Their insightful critiques and contributions made the material much better. We're grateful to Jane Armstrong, Steve Pogue, Gladys Hillman, Ned Mervich, Eric and Liz Swanson, Ray and Diana Anderson, and Cynthia Hagen for their help. Gary Purdy and Marajen Denman went the extra mile, bailing us out on short notice by adding their multiple insights and talents.

As each chapter approached its final form, Greg Kriefall did a

masterful job of editing confusing pronouns and rambling sentences. Barry Rush and Dennis Brockman gave leadership and direction to the overall development and production process. And Larry Thompson, Sherry Thompson and Laura Stowers of Thompson & Thompson Graphic Design did their usual expert job with the layout and graphics.

Over the past year Dave Carlson has been a constant companion via e-mail, telephone, face-to-face interaction, and express mail. Dave pored over this book numerous times, and the project is far better due to his talents and tireless work. Dave: thanks for your hard work, flexibility and creative brilliance. It's been a joy working with you.

Finally, I'd like to thank the people in my life who have sacrificed for this project—my wife and best friend, Sonya, and my children, Andrew and Meagan. Countless times they've wondered when Daddy would get off the computer. Many committed people have given financially to make our work possible. I want to thank everyone who cares enough to give financially to the great cause of reaching college students for Christ.

To God be all glory! The Holy One shares His glory with no one, and it is because of His grace and for His glory that we humbly offer this work to His world.

RICK HOVE

Libertyville, Illinois

Easter, 1995

PREFACE

The Ultimate Road Trip, Leading A Small Group. It isn't a title you would expect for a book on leading small groups, but then again this isn't your ordinary, run-of-the-mill book.

We like the road trip metaphor because it fits small groups. Groups, like road trips, have noteworthy destinations. And, like road trips, small groups are rich with relationships and good times. You need a great destination and relationships for a good trip and for a good small group.

Before we wrote a word for this book, we read. We devoured book after book, asking ourselves if anything new could be said about leading small groups. We concluded we could make a unique contribution to the vast resources available on small groups.

We envisioned a book that captured the thrill and power of small groups: the friendships and memories, the fun, the trials, the impact. This book would be fun to read, easy to learn from, and practical. And we wanted a book which would somehow contribute to God's kingdom, for He is the ultimate reason any of us even care about a book on small groups. You now hold our best effort.

All who contributed to the book have served Christ within the organization of Campus Crusade for Christ. The book reflects our experiences, values, and convictions, but the principles taught in it are not limited to Campus Crusade small group leaders.

Like every book, we had to leave some things out. This is a book about leading small groups. We haven't discussed what kind of group you might lead (evangelistic, cell, discipleship, or whatever), who should be in your group, how long you should meet, or the content you should discuss or teach. Those decisions are up to you.

This book is about **how** to lead a small group. And we think you'll likely find what you need to know about leading a group in these pages.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

In the last decade *The Ultimate Roadtrip* has been read and reread by Bible study leaders all over the country, providing them with practical wisdom, time-tested ministry experience, and substantial theological insight. This third edition preserves all of the material of the second edition with the exception of reshuffling chapters five through eight, reformatting the questions in what is now chapter eight, and supplementing content in chapter five on what it means to change at the heart level. All other editorial changes are minor and for the most part unnoticeable.

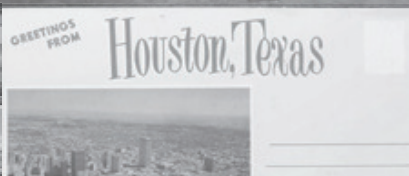
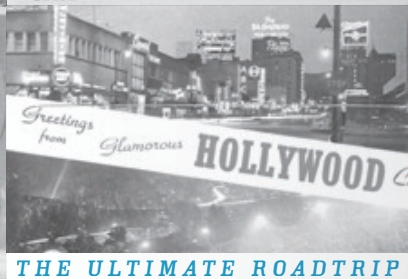
Special thanks to Jeff Lark for providing additional content and editorial labor, and to Mark Arnold for his update and redesign of the book.

We trust that *The Ultimate Roadtrip* will continue to be a faithful guide and companion to Bible study leaders within the ministry of Campus Crusade and beyond.

RICK JAMES


Publisher, CruPress

Spring, 2008



THE ULTIMATE ROADTRIP

THE ULTIMATE ROADTRIP



IT STARTS SMALL— BROWNIES AND STUFF.
BUT AS GOD CHANGES YOU AND WORKS IN YOUR GROUP, IT
BECOMES BIG, AS IN ETERNALLY BIG. IN FACT,
YOUR SMALL GROUP CAN BE THE VEHICLE
GOD USES TO CHANGE LIVES.

MORE. *IT'S*

IT ISN'T WHAT IT
APPEARS TO BE.

1

LEADING A SMALL GROUP IS A
GREAT ADVENTURE.

CHAPTER 1

WELCOME TO THE JOURNEY



1.1 THE ADVENTURE 1.2 STORIES OF THOSE WHO'VE GONE BEFORE

1.1

THE ADVENTURE

Rarely do we stop to think of the influence a small group can have on its members. It all starts with a simple, seemingly insignificant, decision by an individual to go to a small group meeting.

Many people get involved in small groups because they want friendships or fun. Most of the time they aren't disappointed. Others come along for loftier ideals—to study the Bible and get to know God better. But few people understand at the outset how important a small group can become in their life.

Jesus knew the power of working with a small group. The twelve men in His group were like you—young, enthusiastic and teachable. They came from different walks of life. They had different strengths and weaknesses, and they certainly all needed a radical transformation that only God could accomplish.

The Lord's unlikely small group went on to live lives fully devoted to Christ. They were known as those who turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6).

These disciples guarded what was entrusted to them, passing it on to others. Two thousand years later we are the beneficiaries.

You'll read many stories in this book of how God has worked through small groups. True, this is a book about leading small groups, but more importantly it's about our glorious God and His desire to change you and your world through small groups. Many have faithfully gone before you forging the way.

1.2

STORIES OF THOSE WHO'VE GONE BEFORE

In the fall of 1968, ten women at the University of Texas began meeting together. They were a mixed group of freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors. Half were in sororities. Most were committed to the Lord, although one of them, Marajen, was very young in her faith and barely involved in the Campus Crusade for Christ movement.

They didn't have a lot in common, but they came together to pray that God would change their lives and use them to change the world for Christ. How's that for a lofty purpose?

That year they studied 1 Corinthians and slowly opened their lives to each other and the Lord. The encouragement and support in the group helped everyone, especially Marajen, who was struggling in her Christian life.

Eventually each woman had a personal ministry on campus. Marajen was radically changed through the encouragement and prayers of the others. She began sharing Christ in the Theta house and over time saw twenty-nine of her sorority sisters trust Christ.

By the time all ten members of that original Bible study had graduated, God had answered their prayers in a big way. He had changed their lives and used them to make an impact in several sororities, plus a couple of dorms. Now it was time to influence the world beyond their campus.

Marajen decided to join the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ. Seven others also sensed God's call to go into full-time Christian work. One became

a high school teacher and had a profound impact on students' lives. Another helped direct a major outreach in Atlanta.

Where are these ten women now? Nearly thirty years later, five of these women are still in full-time ministry. The others continue to walk with the Lord, ministering to their families and their communities. Over the years, thousands have come to know the Lord or been influenced because of their lives. Their small group started with the simple desire to grow in Christ and make a difference in the world. Only time will tell how many lives will be changed because of this small group.

In the fall of 1976, five men at the University of Alabama had a Bible study. Tuesday afternoons they met in a house near campus to study the Scriptures and talk about the small groups they were leading. The men had a lot of fun together—caravaning to Daytona Beach, FL, for a spring break evangelism conference, double dating, and playing hoops. The group lasted three years until graduation sent the men in different directions.

Today Ken and Scott are actively serving Christ in their businesses in Birmingham. Ken pioneered a ministry to young businessmen that later became a full-time ministry influencing thousands. Scott gives vital leadership to a

THE POWER OF A SMALL GROUP

"My brethren...let us plainly and freely tell one another what God has done for our souls. To this end you would do well, as others have done, to form yourselves into little companies of four or five each and meet once a week to tell each other what is in your hearts that you may pray for and comfort one another as need may require. None but they who have experienced it can tell the unspeakable advantage of such communion of souls. None, I think, that truly loves his own soul and his brethren as himself will be shy of opening his heart in order to have their advice, reproof, admonition and prayer as occasions require. A sincere person will esteem it one of the greatest blessings." — GEORGE WHITFIELD (Whitfield travelled extensively throughout America in the 18th century and was a major figure in the Great Awakening in America and the evangelical revival that swept Britain.)

growing and effective church. David and his wife have a home ministry to unwed mothers in Atlanta. They've led some of these mothers to Christ. The other two men both serve Christ full time with a missions group.

It's been nearly twenty years since the five of them met together amid their busy classes and activities at the University of Alabama. Each point to that small group as one of the highlights of their years at college. Their lives have never been the same, and their communities around them are different. It might have seemed like a casual decision back then to join a small group, but twenty years later the lasting effect of their experience begins to come to light.

Remember struggling Marajen from the group in 1968? Thirteen years later as a staff member with Campus Crusade, she spoke to a sorority at Texas Christian University where a sophomore named Judy sat in the audience listening intently. After hearing Marajen that evening, Judy decided to get involved in a Campus Crusade small group. She grew in her relationship with God and with the others in the group and developed a heart to influence women in the same way Marajen had influenced her. So she joined the staff of Campus Crusade.

JENNIFER'S CLOSE GROUP

I'm still in close contact with all the people in my first small group. We have gone through so much together, from dealing with school to the death and suicide of one woman's mom and dad. This taught me how important it is to be there for each other.

DAVID'S START

I went to my first small group meeting as a freshman. I learned that Christ was God, and I was blown away! Maybe I'd heard that before, but it never clicked. After that I really began to grow.

CHRISTINE'S BLOODY TALE

Being in nursing school was stressful, and I saw some gruesome things. Each week I looked forward to our small group where I could share what was going on. It was such a good outlet for me to talk about life and death and what really matters. (I'm sure some of the other members left half-sick.)

DIANA'S SNAPSHOT

At the beginning of my sophomore year, three friends and I began meeting together to encourage one another and hold each other accountable in our walks with the Lord. We really enjoyed each other, so we decided to room together the next fall. Over the next two years we had our own small group of sorts. We studied the Bible together, invited non-Christians into our apartment, and encouraged one another to honor the Lord with our lives. We even prayed that one day our husbands-to-be would actually like each other! More than twenty years have passed since we graduated, yet we are just as involved in each others' lives. We circulate a round robin letter every two months and carve out time to take a retreat together once or twice each year. Even though we live apart and have fifteen children between us that keep us busy, we are committed to each other. Who would have thought our small group in 1973 would result in such lifelong encouragers?

In 1988 while working at Vanderbilt University, Judy gathered a few sophomore women to be in a small group. They were in different sororities, came from different states; they all had different majors; and only two had met each other before. Some were new Christians, while two had been Christians for many years. This was a diverse group.

When it was time for the first meeting, Judy made brownies, popcorn and served diet Coke. Surely *that* would break the ice. To her amazement the women passed by the food completely—no one ate a thing. They didn't know each other. They didn't talk much. And they didn't even eat. Judy felt depressed. This group may never come together, she thought.

But Judy stuck with her commitment to build a group. At the next meeting, the women seemed more relaxed and conversation wasn't nearly as strained. They actually laughed together. At the end of their second meeting, Judy knew they had the potential to become unified.

As the weeks passed, the women showed they cared by getting involved in each others' lives and sharing in each others' walks with God. They became friends and spent time together outside of the group time. Judy watched in amazement as the women grew from shy, nervous acquaintances who wouldn't even eat brownies in front of each other to a close-knit group of friends who would scavenge her refrigerator at will!

At graduation the women signed up for their senior class trip to Panama City, FL. On the way out of town, they stopped by Judy's house with a card that said, "Something is Missing ...". Inside the card it said, "YOU." They kidnapped Judy and paid her expenses so she could be with them on their senior trip.

This group of women became more than just a casual group that studied the Bible. They continue to be friends and have served as each others bridesmaids. Their lives were changed, and they had significant ministries in others' lives—from women in their own sororities to those they ministered to on mission trips to Mexico and Russia.

Like the groups at the University of Texas and the University of Alabama, this group of women from Vanderbilt continues to influence others beyond the campus. One is a new mother, one works with children, one is a Christian counselor, one is a staff member with Campus Crusade, one is in medical school pursuing her dream of being a missionary doctor, and another is in business. Their careers are as different as their personalities and backgrounds, but all of them do what they do for the glory of God.

Time and space do not permit us to tell all the great small group stories that could be recounted here. Most groups start without a great splash or fanfare. None were led by perfect leaders with all the answers. But somehow, all across the country, in all different generations, God has worked in the midst of small groups. Only God knows the inside stories of the many lives which have been influenced in small groups.

Our prayer is that someday you'll add your small group story to those who have gone before you who have made a difference in this world. We pray we'll hear the story of how a great God worked through a faithful and available servant to graciously change lives. Now it's your turn.

Go ahead. Change the future.

FOR THOUGHT / DISCUSSION

- 1 Do you think God will do great things through your group? Why?
- 2 Share some of the ways you've been a beneficiary of those who have gone before you in their walks with the Lord. In what ways does this motivate you to pass God's Word on to others?
- 3 George Whitfield said that a "sincere person will esteem it (a small group) one of the greatest blessings." What reasons did he give? Do you agree or disagree?

An aerial photograph of a complex highway interchange with multiple overpasses and ramps, surrounded by green trees. The image is in grayscale with a light blue tint. Text is overlaid in a blue, serif, all-caps font.

SMALL GROUPS
ACROSS

THE COUNTRY AND
WORLD HAVE HAD A **TREMENDOUS**
INFLUENCE IN PEOPLE'S LIVES. SOME INDIVIDUALS
HAVE COME TO KNOW CHRIST IN A SMALL GROUP,
OTHERS HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO WALK
WITH GOD, MANY HAVE MADE
LIFELONG
FRIENDS.

SMALL GROUPS HAVE ALSO INFLUENCED
THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND THEM, CHANGING FRATERNITY
HOUSES, APARTMENT COMPLEXES, RESIDENCE HALLS, AND
CAMPUSES. SIMPLY PUT, SMALL GROUPS ARE
POWERFUL
INSTRUMENTS

**GOD USES TO
CHANGE
LIVES.**

CHAPTER 2

DON'T TRAVEL ALONE!



2.1 THE POWER OF A SMALL GROUP

2.2 CRUCIAL ELEMENTS

2.3 WHAT TO EXPECT

2.1

THE POWER OF A SMALL GROUP

All understand the power of small groups to change behavior. Sales organizations utilize small groups to train for and encourage better sales. And, of course, Christians have met in small groups for two thousand years.

Why are small groups so powerful? For one thing, they help diverse individuals, usually only marginally connected, grow together as friends and work together toward similar spiritual goals.

These groups are effective because individuals draw strength and support from each other. Rarely does anyone benefit spiritually from being a lone ranger.

Small groups not only change the lives of those in the group, but they often bring about powerful change beyond the group. Families take notice as the son or daughter that left for college comes back with a grow-