

Civil War Campfire Metaphor

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Introduction

As we think through what it's like to gather disciples from the Scatter phase into a Gather phase, the burning question is, "What does that look like." If one does not take seriously the New Wineskin of the Gathered Church, you will likely revert to practices of the legacy church model and abort the momentum of a movement.

What does a Neo-Modalic look like? What are its purposes? How is it different?

The overarching parameter for the design of a New Wineskin gathering has to be rooted in the chaordicness (chaos + order!) and freedom of the leading of the Holy Spirit. He knows what is needed in each gathering. He designs every new gathering of disciples.

Acts 2:42 provides four important clues as to what the first church was doing in their day to move from Neo-Sodalic to Neo-Modalic: 1) Apostles teaching, 2) Fellowship, 3) Eating meals together, and 4) Prayer. However, Acts 2:42 does not provide many details such as... What did they teach? How did they teach? What did they talk and fellowship about? How often did they share meals? Was it only communion, only meals or both communion and meals? What did they pray about? How big were their gatherings? ...and much more...

Considering that we are in a battle and our battle is not with the physical but the Spiritual (2 Cor. 10:4, Eph. 6:10-18)...perhaps considering a battle metaphor from the physical world will help to give us insight into the Spiritual battle we face. This document is not designed to tell you what to do. Instead this document uses a metaphor of a Civil War campfire and strategic questions to leave wide open the opportunity for the Holy Spirit to help you unpack Acts 2:42 so that you can implement a Neo-Modalic gathering specific to God's people He has entrusted to you.

Civil War Campfire

During the Civil War – the war between the North and South – as the day wound down from the chaos of smoke, gunpowder, blood, and the mayhem of war, soldiers would begin to look for the lines to return for the night. Often disoriented and battle-fatigued, those at the rear would build large bonfires to serve as beacons to guide the weary soldiers back to their lines.

The soldiers stumbled in as the bonfires receded to campfires. It was around these campfires that certain activities occurred that lend wisdom in analogy to the purpose and practice of a Neo-Modality.

Individual Needs

Nothing was more comforting than to return to the campfire and realize no one there was shooting you...nobody attempted to bayonet you. **Security** was the first and foremost thing experienced as each soldier dumped his gear and sat around the campfire.

Everyone one was hungry and eager for nourishment. **Food** was high on the list, unless you were hurt. Company surgeons offered **First aid** and patched the soldiers' battle wounds.

Not all were on the battle field, but most were. The few who were not on the front lines – the minimally-staffed rear echelon, provided critical care to those actively engaged in battle every day. The majority would have had no safety, food, or first aid if camp guards had not been guarding, cooks not cooking, and surgeons not tending to wounds.

Community Development

A military regiment, company or platoon is a team. As the team gathered around the campfire there was a time of **Unwinding**. The adrenaline of the battle drained away, the weariness stabilized, and the body began to regain its

natural rhythms. The soldier looked around the campfire at familiar faces and noted who was missing. *Camaraderie* was formed in the common suffering, knowing who had your back, rejoicing in who had survived and mourning those who had not returned. This band of brothers experienced a bond not easily broken.

Finally, the community shared its *Stories of the Day*. These stories were of a personal nature...a sharing of the struggles' intimacy that only those around the campfire truly understood. Tales of heroism, sacrifice, loss, fear, glory, disappointment, sorrow, respect and more were swapped as they unwound with their post-meal pipes and drink. These stories knit the group closer together than any outsider can imagine.

Leadership Influence

As the men relaxed in their stories, a shift occurred from personal to *Reports of the Day* as a debriefing. This accountability shift checked the soldiers' faithfulness to the battle plan of the day and their unreserved dedication to execute it. The camp captain took action with a soldier (e.g rebuked, encouraged, disciplined, re-trained, etc.) who failed to attack this bridge or cross that creek or take this town, but instead chose to nap in the warm sun with his back against a creek-side willow.

In addition, this became a time of *Re-Directing* when the soldier was briefed on which ground would be taken, miles advanced and towns captured. At that point the empty cartridge pouches were refilled, broken weapons replaced, and rations re-supplied. The soldier was then *Re-Armed* for the next day. Here other rear echelon people exhibited their value to the front-line soldier – intelligence officers collated information, and supply officers delivered ammunition, arms, food and clothing.

Individual Responsibility

While much of what happened around the campfire was given to the soldier, this last phase focused on personal responsibility. The soldier was responsible for getting his *Rest*. The man who stayed up all night carousing or chatting was not ready for the next day's responsibility. Any soldiers lingering around the campfire late the next morning were definitely out of place because it was their responsibility to *Return to Battle*.

And finally, there was a need for *Flexible Expectations* because the line they returned to the next evening may have moved. With the ebb and flow of war, lines were never in the same place. The enemy was never static, and thus the lines reflected the status of the battle. The soldier had to flex with the circumstances of a dynamic situation.

Transferable Principles

How does the Neo-Modalic gathering emulate the purpose and practices of the Civil War Campfire? It takes honest insight, creative thinking, and ears attuned to the Holy Spirit to determine what safety, food, stories, re-directing, etc. look like for the Christian on the battlefield of a disciple-making movement.

And lest one take the metaphor of a battlefield too far, let me suggest a reality. Yes, it could be that your battlefield is working among anti-social and atheistic gang members, but the battlefield is equally critical in trying to be Christ to the slovenly person in the next cubicle who has some annoying personal habits.

A valuable exercise could be comparing two columns side by side. List all the Civil War Campfire elements on the left column with a brief definition of each as you understand it. Then in the right column list the comparables necessary for a successful Neo-Modalic gathering – one that equips, encourages, resources, and empowers each that God wants in the battle. While this is a strategic exercise, it becomes a spiritually creative exercise when in the prayer and presence of the Holy Spirit. In addition here are some questions to consider.

Strategic Questions

As you consider the questions of each category, place yourself in the context of the people God is calling you to gather (ekklesia) into a Neo-Modalic. This is a spiritually creative exercise which requires you to seek Spirit of God in a fresh form of humility for the purpose of making disciples who make disciples. Consider your answers in obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit and be cautious that you do not default to models, programs, or forms of

your past. Seek God, not traditions of man. Man's traditions may be very good in general, but very bad in the context of your gathering for the purpose of making disciples who make disciples who form the body of Christ.

Security

- What does security mean to your gathered disciples? How much do they need?
- What are the threats (e.g. spiritual, emotional, physical, intellectual, etc.) felt or perceived by the gathered? How will you and the group protect each other?
- Are there security issues among those gathered with each other? How will you help them work through those issues...how will the group contribute?
- What levels of confidentiality and vulnerability do you need to foster? What are the obstacles?
- What is the Spirit of God saying to you about the security of His people in a gathering?

Food

- How might physical food facilitate the group? How extensive a menu is necessary? (e.g. snacks, potluck, prepared meal, etc.) How the group will handle the logistics and finances?
- What spiritual food (equipping) is necessary for the discipleship of the group? What needs to be taught? Who will teach it? How will you determine the priority of topics? What deliver system will you utilize? (e.g. lecture, discussion, on-mission training, Q&A, etc.)
- Beyond food and teaching, what other physical needs must be met to effectively disciple in the gathering?
- Will you include communion in your gathering? How often? Has tradition of man corrupted communion?

First Aid

- Who is hurting and who can aid?
- How does Scripture address emotional/spiritual healing and how we heal?
- What ways can you assist with healing without playing the role of a counselor?
- How is the Holy Spirit already working healing within individuals?
- What emotional wounds are impairing the discipleship of the group? How does God want to address this obstacle? How will they help each other invite God into their woundedness?
- How should you pray for those in need of healing?

Unwinding

- How will people relax? How will you facilitate the gathering's ability to be comfortable with each other?
- How will people have fun?
- What social "norms" will be permitted or prohibited when people gather?
- How can people be themselves, removing competition for most impressive spiritual saint?
- What will foster more confession, openness, honesty and acceptance?
- Are men and women more comfortable unwinding together or separately?
- What should be the frequency of gathering men and women together vs men and women separately?
- How can people's ability to laugh or cry together be promoted?
- How big can a gathering be where people still feel comfortable with unwinding?
- How is prayer incorporated into the gathering to promote unwinding?

Camaraderie

- How will people connect with each other? Care about each other?
- What will they do to help each other connect with God?
- How can camaraderie be increased such that people in the gathering have each other's backs in battle despite their sins, idiosyncrasies and other annoying habits?
- How is grace applied and grasped on the battle field in the form of teamwork and camaraderie?
- What role does prayer have with camaraderie?

Stories of the Day

- Is "Security" adequately in place to facilitate intense personal stories?
- How will you and the group facilitate the telling of stories?

- How will you help the group identify and celebrate the presence of God in their stories?
- How many people can be in a gathering so that all that need to be heard can be heard?
- How will you prevent certain individuals from dominating the conversation? How will you draw out the shy?
- How can you incorporate prayer into stories that are shared?

Reports of the Day

- What level of accountability will you foster amongst the group? How will you help them ask meaningful, but safe questions? How will you communicate that you are accountable to them and give them permission to challenge you?
- What kinds of reports are most valuable to the individual who is telling? To the group hearing them? To you?
- How will they hear God in their reports? Is a prayer list useful?
- What is the Holy Spirit trying to tell you and the group about what you've heard from the reports?
- What will you do with information and clues about what the enemy has been up to? Is there a common theme/report from the enemy in some individuals, the entire group?
- What is God already doing? Are you working with His agenda for your neighborhood and city? Do you need to change your agenda? Scrap your agenda? Can you change or scrap your agenda for His?

Redirecting

- What must be done to promote a climate amenable to post-report redirection or re-envisioning? How will they hear the Holy Spirit's nudge through the comments of their group peers.
- How will the collective group contribute to each person's redirection?
- What "tools" will be used to better fit a person to the next "battle." What accountability will be set in place to evaluate the process and success of the redirection?
- How can prayer help with redirecting?

Re-Arm

- Based on the gifts and role of each individual how will you best re-arm, assign and send each person?
- What head knowledge pieces are missing in each member of the group? Is there a collective commonality in the missing piece(s)?
- What heart experiences are people missing in the group? What heart experiences are individuals going through now that provide teaching moments and can be used to increase skill levels?
- What hands and feet skills are missing? How will the group facilitate the acquisition of missing skills?
- How can you best teach what they need to know? Will you use lecture, discussion, apprenticeship, or some combination? What are the learning styles in the group?
- What is the Holy Spirit already doing in each individual and the group that will provide teaching opportunities to re-arm? Encourage?
- How can the gathering pray together about re-arming?

Rest

- How does each person understand and practice rest of the body? Of the soul? Of the mind? Within their temperament? (e.g. Extrovert vs. introvert, task vs. play, etc.)
- How successfully is the group practicing the principle of Sabbath?
- How does the group account for and encourage a balanced life – marriage, family, ministry, work, recreation, etc.?
- What can we do (should we do) in seasons with no discipling or ministry opportunities? Why does God provide these opportunities?
- What role does prayer have with resting?

Return to Battle

- What obstacles cause a person to linger around the campfire rather than return to where the HS has called them at the front lines of battle? How will you detect and confront those who've stayed behind?
- Who and what needs to accompany a person into the next "battle?"
- How can prayer assist with returning to battle?

Flexible Expectations

- Who is fighting a battle that no longer matters? How could you help them shift to a different front line?
- How does the person or group determine when yesterday's glory is not the same as today's mundane routine?
- Where is the enemy? Where have the battle lines been drawn? How has the enemy shifted his nefarious work and where? Have the "Gates of Hell" moved and the need for ministry with it?
- How can reports about enemy activity help you and the group? Modify plans? Encourage? Confirm plans? When should you ask for back-up (help) from other gatherings and disciples of Christ?
- How might you have become too comfortable... less effective... marginally obedient?
- How can the gathering pray together about flexible expectations?