

GO AND BUILD CHRIST'S CHURCH

CHURCH BUILDING MINISTRIES

by
DOTA

MANUAL 7 FOR GROUP LEADERS

Fourth revised edition 2016

INTRODUCTION

What is the Church?

On the worldwide level, the Church is the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23) and all Christians are members of that one Body (1 Corinthians 12:12). On the local level, the church is the gathering of Christians in a house (Romans 16:5) or in a city (1 Corinthians 1:2). Only Jesus Christ is the Head of the worldwide Church and of all local churches. Only he is the Chief-Shepherd and Bishop of the Church (1 Peter 2:24; 5:4). The church is *a spiritual house* of which each Christian is a living stone (1 Peter 2:5) or *a dwelling in which God himself lives by his Spirit* (Ephesians 2:21-22). The Church is *the household or family of God* (Ephesians 2:19). It has God himself as the loving and caring Father and all the Christians as one another's brothers and sisters. The Church is *a flock of sheep following a shepherd* who walks in the front (1 Peter 5:2; cf. 2:25; 5:4). The Church is *the holy nation of God* consisting of people whom God chooses out of all the nations in the world (1 Peter 2:9-10). The Church is *the visible expression of the kingdom or kingship of God on earth* (Matthew 13:36-43; 16:18-19; 21:42-44). The Church is not yet a perfect reality (Matthew 13:24-30), but at the second coming of Christ, it will be *the perfect bride of Christ* (Revelation 21:1-2,9-10; cf. 19:7). On the one hand, the Church is *the Militant Church* in the world, where Christians stand firm against the onslaughts of its enemies (Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 6:10-18; Revelation 12:10-12). On the other hand, the Church is *the Triumphant Church* in heaven where the spirits of the departed Christians already live in the presence of God (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:22-24; 13:14).

How is Christ's Church built?

Christ is the Founder, Owner and Builder of the Church. He is building his Church and the gates of hell will not overcome it (Matthew 16:18)! He leads (exercises authority in) his Church through the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28), the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17) and the council of elders of the local church (1 Timothy 5:17). Christ first used his apostles to lay the foundation of the historical churches among the Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:20). Now he uses ordinary Christians to build his Church. He builds his Church on Christians who have the following goals: to build up relationships through the one another responsibilities (Ephesians 4:1-2), to keep the unity of the Spirit through sound Christian doctrine (Ephesians 4:3-6), to maintain diversity within this unity (Ephesians 4:7-11), to equip all Christians in a great variety of practical services in and outside the Church (Ephesians 4:12) and to disciple all Christians to maturity (Ephesians 4:13-14). Thus the Church becomes a Community based on truth, love, Christ likeness and continual growth (Ephesians 4:15-16). The building of Christ's Church is the task of all Christians today.

The DOTA course makes the building of Christ's Church practical by giving the group leader the following:

1. Each of the four manuals contains 12 lessons that can be completed in three months (one lesson a week) or in six months (one lesson every 14 days). In the intensive course a manual can be completed in six days.
2. Important Bible references help the students to get to know Christ, his Church and the Bible.
3. The instructions in bold type like "read", "discover and discuss" help the group leader how to lead the group.
4. The "notes" give a summary of the answer to each question. This serves as a guideline for the group leader.
5. The training course teaches practical methods to build a congregation and to study the gospel of John alone or in a small group.
6. Each lesson includes a preparation to do at home, which may be handed out to the students at the end of the lesson.
7. The training course is easy to transfer to others. After completion of each course of 12 lessons, those students, who will teach the training course to another small group of people, may receive a copy of this manual for group leaders.

Our prayer is that the Lord rapidly increase the number of congregations (house churches) in your area and that a large number of people become obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7). Jesus says, "I build my church and the gates of hell will not overcome it!" (Matthew 16:18)! May the Lord be glorified! "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen" (Romans 11:36).

DOTA (The name originated in 1993-05-10 when the course was mainly broadcasted by radio as "Discipleship training On The Air", a radio broadcasting and training seminars in China). 1995 (First edition). 2016 (Fourth revised edition).

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RECOMMENDATION

The materials are intended to be widely used and to be a blessing to many. But because the purpose of the 4 manuals for group leaders on building Christ's Church is to train or equip Christians, it is recommended that only group leaders of this course make exact copies of the 4 manuals. A student should only receive an exact copy of a lesson or of a manual after he has completed the lesson or the course of 12 lessons and only when he will teach it to another person or small group of people.