

Volume 41: Developing a Small Group Culture
August 2017



WHY GO SMALL?

by Parker Haynes, Associate Minister at Myers Park UMC, Charlotte

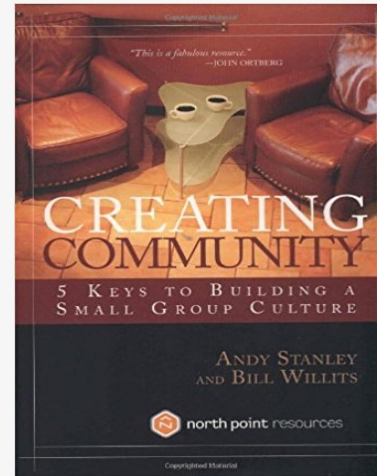
It's nothing new to say that God created us for community. In baptism, we are incorporated into the body of Christ and become the laos. We want others to be present in our lives so

that we can share the most precious, exciting and also the darkest moments of our lives. Being in community with other human beings is powerful because it gives us a chance to let down our guard, practice a form of Brene Brown's vulnerability and be truthful in our relationships. When I think of that kind of community, the church often falls short, but there are inspiring stories of others like Jean Vanier's L'Arche organization. Although it can be difficult to cultivate this kind of community in a wide-ranging church body, small groups give us a chance to practice that authenticity and vulnerability. The Methodist tradition has a rich history of practicing small groups, but our churches have to work in order to create a culture where participation in small groups is the norm... [More](#)

CREATING COMMUNITY

by Andy Stanley

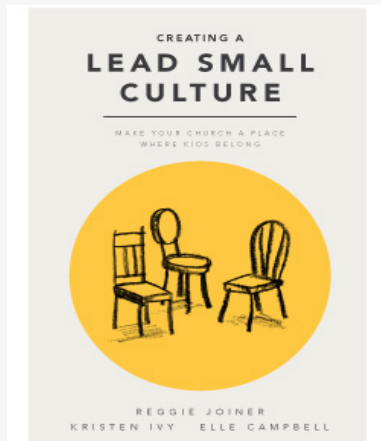
A classic book on creating a small group culture is Andy Stanley's *Creating Community*, which came out way back in 2004, but still offers some great insight into ministry. Stanley covers the gamut of small group ministry, but it's from a broad perspective. He covers big picture ideas that are helpful in providing what you need to know to build a foundation on which to launch your small group culture ... [More](#)



CREATING A LEAD SMALL CULTURE

Make Your Church a Place Where Kids Belong

A book review



One of the reasons I love *Creating a Lead Small Culture* is because while we often talk about doing relational ministry and emphasize how the relationships Jesus cultivated in his ministry transformed people from followers into disciples, we rarely find practical help with this endeavor. But in this book on small group culture, Joiner, Ivy and Campbell not only talk about what a lead small culture is or what it looks like, but they give you the tools to implement it in your church. They identify the three major behaviors every ministry should embrace to create a culture where kids belong [More](#)

A MODEL FOR WESLEYAN CONTEMPLATIVE ORDER



In addition to the class meeting, early Methodism had another vital practice called "bands," which were smaller in size than the class meeting and also more intense in accountability. Today, they would be considered something like an accountability or covenant group. Davidson UMC has re-cultivated the practice of bands in their Wesleyan Contemplative Order. ... [More](#)

THE CLASS MEETING

by Kevin Watson



Since his compelling book on Wesley's class meeting came out in 2013, Kevin Watson's book has been the talk of Methodism and rightly so. Watson traces the history of the class meeting, the reasons Wesley wanted small groups to be a part of the movement and the particularities of why they were so successful. In a time when almost every church has something they call "small group ministry," John Wesley's ideas greatly influenced the modern notion of small groups. The early class meetings were not informational or curriculum driven groups like the Sunday School of the 20th century, but were a community where people answered the historic question: "How is it with your soul?" Watson's translation into modern English is helpful: "How is your life with God?" The class meeting had around seven to twelve people often with both men and women together and they sought to keep the General Rules: Do no harm, do good and attend upon the ordinances of God ... [More](#)

PODCASTS ON SMALL GROUP CULTURE

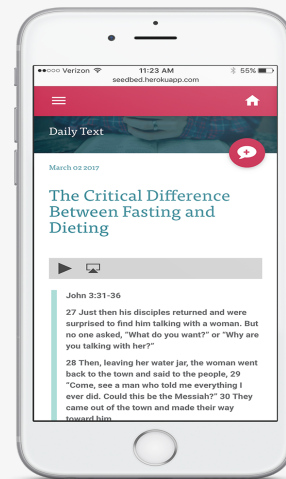


If you don't already listen to podcasts, you might want to check them out. It's one of the best ways to learn and get new ideas about all kinds of things from history to politics to culture and, yes, even ministry. But like books, there are some really good ones and some ones that you could do without. There are not many podcasts simply on creating a culture of small groups, but there are a ton that have an episode or two on that topic. Keeping in mind that you might have a different philosophy of ministry or a different theology entirely, The Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast, the Andy Stanley Leadership Podcast and the unSeminary Podcast are podcasts that can offer some practical help for small group ministry ... [More](#)

NEW ROOM BANDS

A 21st century take on Christian Discipleship

John Wesley once famously said, "There is no holiness apart from social holiness." Over the years, many have mistakenly asserted that he was talking about social justice. In reality, he was talking about doing discipleship in the context of real relationships. In essence, you can't become a real Christian alone .. [More](#)



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