

TRUTH QUEST

In the beginning, God created the
heavens and the earth.

The earth was formless and empty, darkness
was over the surface of the deep, and
the Spirit of God was hovering over
the waters.

וְהָאֵלֹהִים בָּרָא אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאֲרֶץ
וְהָאֲרֶץ תֵּהוֹמָה וְחֹשֶׁךְ
עָלָה עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹמוֹת
וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְעַלְּמָה עַל-פְּנֵי
הַמַּיִם וְהָאֵלֹהִים בָּרָא אֶת-הַמַּיִם
וְהָאֲרֶץ תֵּהוֹמָה וְחֹשֶׁךְ עָלָה
עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹמוֹת וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים
מְעַלְּמָה עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם

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He who testifies to these things,
"Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come,
Lord Jesus.

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with
God's people, Amen.

The Search for Spiritual Understanding

By Neil Cole



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New American Standard Bible

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About this Resource

TruthQuest is a community-based theological discovery system. It requires a class of four (minimum) to eight (maximum) with one facilitator. It will take one year to cover all the theological areas. One day a month for the year devoted to the group process is expected for each person as well as studying throughout the month at home. Each participant needs a TruthQuest Notebook and the facilitator will need a Facilitator Guide, both of which are available at www.CMAResources.org.

We highly recommend that you try Life Transformation Groups (LTGs). LTGs are a simple way to empower ordinary believers to do the extraordinary work of making more and better disciples. You can read about LTGs in the book *Cultivating a Life for God* or *Search & Rescue* available at www.CMAResources.org.

About the Author



Neil Cole is an experienced church planter and pastor. Aside from founding the Awakening Chapels, which are reaching young postmodern people in urban settings, he is also a founder of Church Multiplication Associates (CMA) which has thousands of churches throughout the US and in over forty nations of the world. Simultaneously, Neil founded CMAResources, which produces tools, training and resources for raising leaders for the harvest from the harvest. Besides being a church planting practitioner, as the director of both CMA and CMAResources he is responsible for resourcing and mentoring church leaders with ministry tools to reproduce healthy disciples, leaders, churches and movements.

Neil is also an international speaker and has authored *Cultivating a Life For God*, *Organic Church*, *Search & Rescue*, *Organic Leadership*, *Church 3.0* and *Journeys to Significance*. He has also co-authored *Raising Leaders for the Harvest* and *Beyond Church Planting* with Dr. Robert Logan and *Organic Church Planters' Greenhouse* with Paul Kaak. He lives in Long Beach, California with his wife Dana and their three children.

About the Publisher

CMAResources seeks to identify missional principles and reproducible methods that can propagate in a variety of cultures and contexts. We aim to empower ordinary Christians to accomplish extraordinary works with the powerful gifts given by Jesus. All of our resources are focused toward that goal. We want to provide a voice to artists, authors and pioneers of this new emerging church multiplication movement.

We believe that any resource worth producing meets the following criteria. It must be...

1. *Received Personally*: It has a profound effect in what it sets out to accomplish in a person's life.
2. *Remembered Easily*: It is simple enough that it can easily be passed on in a short encounter.
3. *Reproduced Strategically*: It can be applied in a variety of cultures and contexts around the globe.

Our discerning list of resources help contribute to church multiplication movements internationally. Visit our website to order resources, to find information on our training events or to read the free articles dealing with multiplying healthy disciples, leaders, churches and movements. Sign up to receive our regular e-newsletter from the link found on our website:

www.CMAResources.org

Acknowledgements

This work is the product of more than a decade of trial and error.

I wish to thank those who have been my mentors and set the bar high on what it means to develop and reproduce leaders. These are the shoulders I stand upon:

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To my wonderful children, who gave me away on many Saturdays to work with young leaders and develop this system. I love you very much and am always proud of you!

And finally, to Dana, my beautiful wife and my best proof reader, thank you so much.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the future leaders of our movement who awoke this morning captive to sin, but will one day awaken to Christ and emerge as pioneers of a new work of God in this generation.

Awake, sleeper,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ will shine on you.

Introduction

Quest: (*kwest*) *n.* 1. a seeking 2. a journey in pursuit of a lofty goal... 3. a chivalrous enterprise in medieval romance usually involving an adventurous journey.

—From Webster's definition of "Quest"

Quest is a word that denotes a journey, an adventure. It comes from the same root as the word "question." All of us have questions, but how many of us have a *quest* that consumes our lives?

For too long, truth has been understood as merely an accumulation of facts and information. Truth is not merely something to memorize, but something to search for, battle for, and discover. It is an undiscovered land, abounding with adventure and new places we've never seen. We must be pioneers blazing a new trail, not just investigators accumulating research. Truth must be seen more as a lifelong quest than as a library of information. *Quest* sounds romantic; *library* does not. Join us in a quest for truth that will not only change your life...but drive it!

TruthQuest is a new and revolutionary approach to training emerging leaders for church leadership. This is not a curriculum! TruthQuest is not merely a workbook to study theology. Rather, TruthQuest is a *community-based discovery system* designed to equip leaders to continue the journey of learning for the rest of their lives. Even more than that, it is also intended to help them introduce this lifelong journey to others who can in turn do the same. It is hard to find something that not only teaches others but can also easily reproduce and multiply into the lives of succeeding generations. TruthQuest is designed to do just that. As its name implies, it is the beginning of a quest for truth, and this adventure will last a lifetime.

This is not meant to be a solo journey. TruthQuest uses peer mentoring and mutual accountability to learn the doctrines in ways that will affect the life of each learner. Unlike anything else available TruthQuest equips people in deepening layers—personal study, reflection, preparation, teaching, challenging others, and being challenged. It is not enough that students learn material; but the truth must flow into their lives and affect the way they live.

Too many American Christians are educated beyond their obedience. Spirituality has been redefined as merely knowing more spiritual facts rather than being spiritual people. This must change.

Oswald Chambers rightly challenged us when he said, "Obey God in the thing He shows you, and instantly the next thing is opened up. God will never reveal more truth about Himself until you have obeyed what you know already."¹

The goal of this system is not just to have people know *what* to think, but to teach them *how* to think. This is why TruthQuest is called a "discovery system." In fact, the system is designed to not have a theological bias in the subtleties of theology. The learners may choose to believe things that are different from one another and the facilitator. The goal is not that we all think the same, but that we think. It is best that people are given the opportunity to grow and change throughout their maturing process. For that reason, TruthQuest is not as concerned that they get everything "right" in this short year of discovery. The result of this way of learning is that people will believe differently, and it is best to not try to control those things. The preferred goal is that they think through their opinions and be able to face the challenges of others in the group who have also done their homework. Others often come to different conclusions. Hopefully participants will continue being learners for the rest of their lives. All of this makes the process very dynamic and deep because people begin discovering how to learn in a dynamic interchange with others.

Because we believe that mere knowledge is insufficient for developing church leadership skills, we designed TruthQuest to promote learning theology in ways that affect our lives. TruthQuest's goal is not to have people memorize a body of knowledge but to have them to be able to understand how the doctrines of God's word transform our lives. Paul wrote to his apprentice Timothy, "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."² Doctrine that doesn't translate into character is useless. Academics are not enough to qualify someone for leadership. Our leaders must be able to communicate God's truth with relevance and from a life transformed by those very truths.

This is not a typical educational tool. TruthQuest seeks to get the learners started in the discovery process in only a year. This is a great way to help busy people who can't afford time or money for a more formal education, to find equipping and learning that they can pass on to others. It is a church-based theological learning system that can easily replicate and fuel a movement with leaders who know how to learn and who know how to facilitate others in the learning process.

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Something's Got To Change!

"The kind of thinking that will solve the world's problems will be of a different order to the kind of thinking that created those problems in the first place."

—Albert Einstein³

In December of 1987 at the Urbana missions conference the big news was the fact that the world's population was about to pass the five billion mark. That seemed like such a historic moment. Today we are past the six billion mark and pushing quickly toward seven billion (2013 estimated).⁴ This is historically unprecedented growth, but simply reading the numbers does not have the impact that it should. To have a better perspective, realize that all of the world's population from the beginning of time until the last century added together would not equal the number of people living on the planet right now.

The church in the Western world, however, has not advanced but declined since that conference in 1987!⁵ The world is multiplying, and the church isn't even adding! Things must change if we are to be an influence in this lost and dying world.

It has become increasingly evident that there is a void in leadership for the Western church, a void in quantity and in quality. Jesus identified what is needed to reap a greater harvest in Matthew 9:37. He said, *"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few."* Current means of leadership development are not sufficient to keep pace with population growth and the great need presented to the church today. More of the same isn't going to make a difference.

It is time to stop and re-evaluate the current system of training leaders in America, even if the conclusions are difficult to embrace. Our institutions have become sacred in the church world and are seemingly untouchable. It's not always easy to step outside and view our current institutions with an objective eye, but I believe we are in desperate days when this evaluation is necessary. It has been said that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

Below are eight reasons why current formal theological education methods are not sufficient for providing the necessary leaders for the church:

1. *Formal education does not produce enough leaders.*

If you were to survey most of the seminaries in the United States and ask how many of their students were planning to planting churches, the number would be remarkably small. Then, if you were to actually perform a qualifying an assessment to filter out those with the necessary qualities to plant churches from the few who remained, the number would dwindle down to a precious few.

2. *Formal education does not produce the variety of leaders needed.*

If you were to survey all those teachers who are involved in teaching formal Bible education, that group would be remarkably white, highly educated, and middle-to-upper class. Few of these leaders have had or will ever have a ministry that is cross cultural—reaching out to people of another ethnicity or economic class. If we rely on these formal institutions to train the leaders needed to reach the global masses for Christ, we will never fulfill our mission. The population of the world is darker skinned and heading to the cities. The masses are fortunate if they have a high school diploma (or equivalent), let alone a bachelor's degree which qualifies them for a master's level seminary program. We must find alternative means to train people in theology which does not require higher education and an upper middle class income.

The culture and climate of these institutes of higher learning promote a scholastic, academic type of leader. Granted, the church around the world does need scholars, but not just scholars! Because the people teaching the classes and mentoring the students are academic scholars, they reproduce after their own kind, and the leaders sent out into God's kingdom are all academic teachers. The result is that we have churches that function more like classrooms than families on mission, and very few leaders or churches become effective at reaching out to lost souls.

The overwhelming majority of professors in seminaries, as well as students pursuing their training, are men. Half the population, however, is

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Textbook Selection Tool:

Each learner must have two textbooks from different theological points of view. The following lists of books are in order from simple language to more technical.

DISPENSATIONAL:

- Ryrie, Charles. *Basic Theology*
- Thiessen, Henry C. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*
- Geisler, Norman. *Systematic Theology (3 Vols.)*
- *Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *Systematic Theology (8 Vols.)*

COVENANT / REFORMED:

- Boice, James M. *Foundations of the Christian Faith*
- Packer, J. I. *Knowing Christianity*
- McGrath, Alister. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*
- Bloesch, Donald. *Essentials of Evangelical Theology (3 Vols.)*
- Bloesch, Donald. *Christian Foundations (7 Vols.)*
- Boettner, Lorraine. *Studies in Theology*
- Buswell, James A. *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*
- Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*
- *Hodge, Charles. *Systematic Theology*

*These have abridged editions in one volume at a reduced price.

CHARISMATIC:

- Williams, J. Rodman. *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective*

WESLEYAN / HOLINESS:

- Oden, Thomas C. *Systematic Theology (Vol. 1-3)*

OTHER:

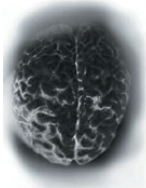
- Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*
- Grenz, Stanley. *Theology for the Community of God*
- Strong, Augustus H. *Systematic Theology*
- Milne, Bruce. *Know the Truth: A Handbook of Christian Belief*
- Enns, Paul. *The Moody Handbook of Theology*
- Lewis, Gordon, and Bruce Demarest. *Integrative Theology*
 - **Evans, William. *Great Doctrines of the Bible*
 - **Lewis, Gordon R. *Decide for Yourself: A Theological Workbook*

**These books are best as a 3rd choice

Name:	Choice #1:	Choice #2:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

Learning Community Management Tool:

Name, Email & Phone :	Test Score(s):	Selected Text Books:	Amount Paid to Date:	Sessions Missed to Make-up Later:
1.		1. 2. 3.		
2.		1. 2. 3.		
3.		1. 2. 3.		
4.		1. 2. 3.		
5.		1. 2. 3.		
6.		1. 2. 3.		
7.		1. 2. 3.		
8.		1. 2. 3.		



Brain Bruiser Discussion Questions

As the learners discuss the theological concepts check off any of the questions below that seem to be addressed. If the discussion slows down, or you feel that the learners are not probing deep enough, use the Brain Bruiser Questions that remain unchecked to stimulate more meaningful conversation. Note that we do not give solutions to these questions. They are designed to generate discussion so that the learners discover truth themselves. In some cases there may be more than one solution or even questions that do not lend themselves to any solution this side of heaven.

- Is certain special revelation more authoritative than others? Which ones? If so, why?
- Is general revelation enough for a person to find salvation?
- What can we know about God strictly from general revelation?
- How much of the gospel can be found in general revelation alone?
- If there are possible errors in the copies or translations we now have, how do we know that we can trust our Bibles?
- Is it possible that there are inspired and inerrant books written by Biblical authors that are lost and not in the canon?
Can you find any such examples mentioned in the Bible in either the Old or New Testaments?
- Did the prophets/ apostles know they were writing Scripture?
- Is the canon complete? If so, how do you know? Is it possible for God to inspire more Scripture? In either case, why?
- Why is Hebrews included in the New Testament canon? Why is the book of Enoch (quoted in Jude) not included?
- Does the Bible cover all aspects of life? Can you think of an area that is not covered? Are there principles that address this?
- Was the Old Testament sufficient? Did the Old Testament saints feel that their Bible was lacking anything?
- Do you think they felt about the Old Testament the same way we feel about the Old/New Testament canon?

APPLICATION TRACKING TOOL This tool tracks the personal application for each doctrine. Fill in the name for each learner called upon to share personal applications in one of the four doctrine categories. Vary the order and categories so each learner applies the truth in a well-rounded manner. 3-5 minutes should be sufficient for each learner to share.		THE TRUTH APPLIED IN REAL LIFE				
		The Revelation of God	The Inspiration & Inerrancy of Scripture	The Canonization of Scripture	The Authority of Scripture	
D	Old beliefs I need to lay aside & new ones to adopt:	1. Name	1. Name	1. Name	1. Name	Faith
	Old behaviors to lay aside & new ones to adopt:	2. Name	2. Name	2. Name	2. Name	
N	How does the truth affect my relationship... ...with my spouse (if appropriate): ...with my child / parent: ...with my employer / employee: ...with my friend: ...with my brother / sister: ...with those in authority:	3. Name	3. Name	3. Name	3. Name	Love
		4. Name	4. Name	4. Name	4. Name	
A	How does this truth help me to overcome the enemy's schemes:	5. Name	5. Name	5. Name	5. Name	Hope
		6. Name	6. Name	6. Name	6. Name	
	How does this truth help me in pursuing the mission I have in God's kingdom:	7. Name	7. Name	7. Name	7. Name	
	8. Name	8. Name	8. Name	8. Name		

Supplemental Facilitator's Materials

In the following pages, there are supplemental worksheets to help the Facilitator(s) of a TruthQuest learning community. These worksheets can be torn out and photocopied for the selection process and ongoing management of those in the TruthQuest learning community.

The following is a list of the materials in this Supplemental Section:

Candidate Checklist

Items to be completed for admission and prior to the first meeting.

Candidate Application

To be completed by the candidate for acceptance into the TruthQuest session.

Candidate Recommendation and Character Evaluation

To be completed by a pastor or mentor about the candidate.

Advanced Bible Knowledge Exam

To be completed prior to the Orientation Meeting.

Notes Page

For during the Learning Sessions - for the learners and/or facilitators.

Reading Log

Some facilitators like the learners to record their reading of the two systematic theology books to demonstrate completion of the task. Not required, but maybe useful.

Advanced Bible Knowledge Exam Answer Key

For the Advanced Bible Knowledge Exam- facilitator eyes only!

(Note: This key is not perforated so it can remain with the Facilitator's Guide and not be circulated.)

Candidate Checklist

Application for Admission to TruthQuest

To be filled out and returned before the orientation meeting along with the deposit of \$ ____

Due Date _____

Solid Handle on Bible Overview/Survey

Suggestion: Read *30 Days to Understanding the Bible* by Max Anders.

Due Date _____

Solid Handle on Bible Interpretation

Suggestion: Read one of the following resources:

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart

How to Interpret the Bible for Yourself by Richard Mayhue

A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible by Robert H. Stein

Reading the Bible with Understanding by Lane A. Burgland

Due Date _____

Recommendation and Character Evaluation Form for TruthQuest

To be filled out and returned by the mentor before the orientation meeting

Due Date _____

Advanced Biblical Knowledge Exam for TruthQuest

To be completed and returned to the facilitator(s) by the orientation meeting

Due Date _____

Attend the TruthQuest Orientation Meeting and secure TruthQuest Workbook

For all accepted candidates and facilitator(s)

Date _____

Paid the remainder of the costs (\$_____) for TruthQuest

Due Date _____

Enjoy the journey of discovery and your quest for Truth!