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TruthQuest: The Search for Spiritual Understanding - Participants Workbook

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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 at least one facilitator. It will take one year to cover all the basic systematic 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](http://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](http://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:

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# TRUTH QUEST

## Introductory Notes

### 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:

- Robert Logan for getting me started and encouraging my crazy ideas even though they had not been proven.
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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.

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### 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.”<sup>1</sup>

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.*”<sup>2</sup> 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.

## 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 Einstein<sup>3</sup>

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 an historic moment. Today we are past the six billion mark and pushing quickly toward seven billion (2013 estimated).<sup>4</sup> 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!<sup>5</sup> 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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### 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*

### 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* (overly simple)
- \*\*Lewis, Gordon R. *Decide for Yourself: A Theological Workbook*
- \*\*Lawson, John. *Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (liberal persuasion)

\*Available in a single volume abridged version  
\*\* These books are best as a 3rd choice

### What A TruthQuest Meeting Looks Like:

Each day-long TruthQuest meeting has four segments reflecting the four sub-topics of the theological area. Each segment should take from one to one and a half hours. Dividing the segments up with two for the morning and two for the afternoon with a lunch break in between is typical. Also there is break in the middle of both the morning and afternoon periods. Some groups find it a

blessing to go out to lunch together and get away from the meeting place during that break.

When discussing one of the segments, it is normal that two-thirds of the time is spent discussing the theological concepts and then one-third to share personal applications for each. The Facilitator will help to keep the meeting on track.

It is important for each learner to take notes while the others are sharing for the following reasons:

1. They may hear something new that they hadn't discovered in their own studies.
2. They will want to keep track of what is said so as not to repeat it.
3. They may find that they have a question or challenge that they will want to bring up in a short time.
4. It will help to keep the learner's alert and in tune with what is being said.

To start a segment, the Facilitator will call randomly on a participant to share what they have discovered on that particular facet of theology. After some sharing, the Facilitator may continue to call on others randomly to add to the discussion, or he/she may simply open the discussion to any that may want to jump in with challenges or questions. This lively dialogue is an important aspect of the learning for everyone.

Once the theological concept has been discussed, the Facilitator will begin calling randomly on learners to share a personal example from the practical application categories (around the "DNA").



Realize that in this environment it is okay to not know all the answers. It is alright to question and challenge people. And it is okay to have different viewpoints than others in the group. The goal is not to have everyone agree at the end of the day. This is a learning system. *It is not our aim for participants to know all the answers but to learn how to ask good questions and deal with theological concepts in a practical way.*

# Ω INTRODUCTORY NOTES

## TRUTH QUEST

### Suggested Checklist of Items to be done by the Prospective Participant:

- Application for Admission to TruthQuest  
Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Completed and returned before orientation meeting along with the deposit of \_\_\_\_\_.
- Solid handle on Bible Overview / Survey  
Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Suggestion: Read *30 Days to Understanding the Bible* by Max Anders.
- Solid handle on Bible Interpretation  
Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Suggestion: Read one of the above mentioned books on interpretation.
- Recommendation and Character Evaluation Form.  
Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Completed and returned by the mentor before orientation meeting.
- Advanced Biblical Knowledge Exam for TruthQuest.  
Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Completed and returned to the facilitator by the orientation meeting.
- Attend the TruthQuest orientation meeting & secure TruthQuest Workbook.  
Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  - For all accepted learners and facilitators.
- Attend the first TruthQuest learning session  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Paid the remainder of the costs (\$\_\_\_\_\_) TruthQuest.  
Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Enjoy the journey of a lifetime! Let the quest begin!

### End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Oswald Chambers. *My Utmost for His Highest*, October 10.
- <sup>2</sup> 1 Timothy 1:5
- <sup>3</sup> Michael Frost & Alan Hirsch. *Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2003) p.7.
- <sup>4</sup> <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/worldpop.html>
- <sup>5</sup> Tom Clegg. *Lost in America* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2001) p. 28.
- <sup>6</sup> Archbishop Anthony Bloom. *Beginning To Pray* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1970) p. 15.
- <sup>7</sup> Henry Scougal. *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Publishing House, 1976).
- <sup>8</sup> Proverbs 27:17
- <sup>9</sup> Psalm 119:89, 152; Matthew 24:35; 1 Peter 1:24-25
- <sup>10</sup> Skip Heitzig. *How to Study the Bible and Enjoy It* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2002) p. 1.
- <sup>11</sup> James 1:22
- <sup>12</sup> James 1:25
- <sup>13</sup> Examine the parables found in Mark 4 and you will see how planting the seed of God's Word should result in spontaneous and expansive influence of the kingdom of God. Especially note the parables in Mark 4:26-32.
- <sup>14</sup> Matthew 13:31-33
- <sup>15</sup> Roland Allen. *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) p. 3
- <sup>16</sup> Thomas A. Wolf. [www.universal-disciple.com](http://www.universal-disciple.com)
- <sup>17</sup> Wolf. [www.universal-disciple.com](http://www.universal-disciple.com)
- <sup>18</sup> Allen. *Missionary Methods*, p. ii.
- <sup>19</sup> Wolf, [www.universal-disciple.com](http://www.universal-disciple.com)
- <sup>20</sup> Malcom Gladwell. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things can Make a Big Difference* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2000) pp. 24-25.
- <sup>21</sup> Allen. *Missionary Methods*, pp. 87-88.
- <sup>22</sup> Wolf, from a personal conversation held in 2002.
- <sup>23</sup> Life Transformation Groups (LTGs) are a simple and profound method for making and multiplying disciples; explained in Neil Cole's books *Cultivating a Life for God: Multiplying Disciples through Life Transformation Groups* (Carol Stream: ChurchSmart Resources, 1999) and *Search & Rescue: Becoming a Disciple Who Makes a Difference* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007). Also find out more at [www.lifetransformationgroups.com](http://www.lifetransformationgroups.com)
- <sup>24</sup> George Patterson and Dick Scoggins. *Church Multiplication Guide*. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1993).
- <sup>25</sup> Helpful discussion in Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology (Baker, 1996) under "Apostle" by R. David Rightmire.
- <sup>26</sup> John 14:6
- <sup>27</sup> John 1:1
- <sup>28</sup> Hebrews 1:1-2
- <sup>29</sup> 1 John 4:8
- <sup>30</sup> John 15:12-14
- <sup>31</sup> 1 John 4:19
- <sup>32</sup> John 3:16
- <sup>33</sup> John 1:14; 1 John 4:9-11
- <sup>34</sup> John 20:21
- <sup>35</sup> Hebrews 3:1
- <sup>36</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:13
- <sup>37</sup> Charles R. Swindoll. *The Quest for Character* (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1987) Back cover page.
- <sup>38</sup> Proverbs 20:6, 11; 26:10; 1 Timothy 3:10
- <sup>39</sup> Matthew 25:21
- <sup>40</sup> Matthew 6:21





a. The revelation of God applied to my faith in God's **Divine Truth**:

- Old *beliefs* about the revelation of God that I need to lay aside and new beliefs I need to adopt:

- Old *behaviors* about the revelation of God that I need to lay aside and new behaviors I need to adopt:

b. The revelation of God as it effects my love in all my **Nurturing Relationships**:

- How does this truth effect my relationships?

*...with my spouse (if appropriate):*

*...with my child/parent:*

*...with my employer/employee:*

*...with my friends:*

*...with my brother/sister:*

*...with those in authority:*

