Diverse Disciple-making (Various ways to disciple people)

Introduction  
The Biblical mandate to make disciples who make disciples is real! It came straight from the lips of our King. When He said this, He was telling them to reproduce what He, Himself did for them the previous three years. At the OU BCM, we have modeled the Paul-Timothy model of a One-On-One relationship the last 45 years. One-On-One is fully Biblical, but it is not the only Biblical model of multiplying disciples. Let us first analyze how Jesus went about investing in His Disciples.  
  
The Model of Jesus  
Being intentional with a few  
The Gospels show that Jesus chose to spend time with the few (Disciples) in order to impact the many. However, there are not many specifics on how much time Jesus actually spent with each Disciple. The Bible is clear that Jesus invested in several select groups of people in multiple settings. These groups varied in size and purpose. For example, He interacted with the Twelve Disciples the most. It was within this group that Jesus spent the majority of his time teaching and training. Throughout the Gospels, we are told Jesus often pulled the Twelve aside, for what appears to be specialized training. Within the Twelve, Jesus is seen as spending even more specialized time with Peter, James and John. Look at Matt 17:1-13, these three men were at the Transfiguration. The rest of the Twelve did not get to see this, only these three men. When Jesus heals Jarius’ daughter in Mark 5:21-43, the only people allowed to go see this resurrection take place were these same three men. Finally, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus took the Disciples with Him. However, Mark 14:33 points out that Jesus went further into the garden with Peter, James and John.  
           
One-On-One  
Jesus used One-On-One as an effective method of discipleship. In Matt 14:28-32, Jesus is seen walking on water and Peter says, “Lord, if that is You, command me to come to You on the water.” Jesus tells Peter to come to Him. He is literally walking toward Jesus on the water, but something happens. The Bible says, “But seeing the wind, he (Peter) became frightened, and began to sink…” While sinking, Peter cried out to the Lord. Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed Peter. Notice what happens next. Instead of hugging Peter and consoling him.  Jesus says, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” In the middle of the sea while Jesus and Peter were on the water, Jesus rebukes Peter. Why? The reason is that many of the times when we see Jesus in a One-On-One discipleship interaction, it comes in some sort of rebuke or correction. For other examples see Matthew 15:1-20, 18:21-35, and John 21:15-18.  
  
Following Christ's Example  
We want to be a ministry that trains people like Jesus trained people. Because of this intentional mentality, we are a ministry that has chosen to invest in students via the One-On-One relationship, small groups and through teaching that is training focused. However, these are not the only methods for investing in and equipping students to be disciple makers. Jesus used specific methods to meet people where they were, and we need to do the same.  
  
Understanding the Power of 3 (Growth Groups)  
The Growth Group is a very important part of the Freshmen Challenge group. A Growth Group includes you the leader and two hand picked students of the same sex. As you lead your Growth Groups groups you need to understand the strategy and vision behind the “Growth Group” meetings. It is important that you clearly understand and then explain the vision to those in your groups. Doing this will make your meetings a success. The BCM seeks to make disciples, not just One-On-Ones. We will never discount the impact of a One-On-One relationship. One-On-One still has a place in our ministry, but we are asking you to focus your energy and strategic training time on these groups of three called Growth Groups. Your Growth Group will grow stronger as you see the value in them. You can only take a follower where you are willing to go. So think about that as you plan for these groups.  
  
Why a Growth Group works?  
Below is a list of reasons, and necessities taken from the book Transforming Discipleship by Greg Ogden. *Greg Ogden. Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time (Kindle Location 1530). Kindle Edition.*

* ***There is a shift from unnatural pressure to natural participation of the discipler.***
  + When a third person is added, there is a shift from the discipler as focal point to a group process (group think). When a third person is added the focus is off the discipler and propelled toward a group process. This means that the discipler is now also a group participant. Groups work on problems together and this frees the leaders to not be a Bible answer man.
* ***There is a shift from dialogue to dynamic interchange.***
  + When you add a third party, the number of possible interplays of communication increases to ten, and ultimately creates a corporate personality. The extra person aids in discussion, stories, and life experiences. Many times in a group we learn from the person next to us.
* ***There is a shift from limited input to wisdom in numbers.***
  + There is wisdom in many counselors according Proverbs 15:22. The Holy Spirit uses the wisdom and advice of other members to help us, even if they are not the leader.
* ***There is a shift from addition to multiplication****.*
  + The goal of making disciples is to make disciples who make disciples, and to do it for the rest of life. When you are out of college, One-On-One seems very strange unless it is a counseling situation or the person has just come to Christ. It is much easier to invite someone to a small group like a Triad. Learning to participate and lead a “Growth Group” will be a blessing to you and people you later influence. Also, time is always an issue. If we can meet with two people in the time takes to meet with one person and get equal or greater results, we should.

# Necessities: Things for your group to be successful.

* ***Atmosphere of the groups must be one in which everyone is sold out to be all that Christ wants them to be.*** When group members are coming to just fulfill a requirement and do not really want to change, they hinder the group. To overcome this issue it is harmful to say, “Okay we’ll just meet in a One-On-One because you like it better.” That is fueling self-centeredness. There is much to offer the other person who is also going to meet with you in the Triad.
* ***Must have open and honest trust and accountability.*** This starts with the leader (James 5:16). A group can only go as far as the leader is willing to take it. All groups will fail eventually or be a checklist item if there is not open and honest members. Trust is foundational to helping each other grow, to holding each other accountable, and to seeking help from each other to deal with sin issues.
* ***Groups must be encouraging.*** In our society encouragement is hard to come by. Your groups need to be a place where the members openly and specifically encourage each other. This takes observation, vulnerability, and wisdom. It does not take a wordsmith.
* ***Go through hard times together.*** Your groups must be a safe place to work through things and face challenges with your group members. This is a huge strength to the Triad. As the leader you are not the counselor. You and the other person in the group act as family to the person who is struggling. You walk with them together. There is safety in numbers.
* ***Must learn how to listen.*** This is a learned trait. You cannot just make it up. A reflective listener listens, processes, and then shows the speaker they have listened. If you do not know how to do this please ask the Staff to help you with this.
* ***Must be centered on the Word of God.*** As the leader you prepare to go through the Word together. This takes a lot of work, but the nice thing is you do not have to have all the answers. You need to be able to direct a discussion. Ogden uses 2 Timothy 3:16-17 as the model of how to use the Word (teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness).
* ***Must covenant together.*** When we signed up to do this we made a covenant to standards of righteousness and commitment together. This is a must for a Growth Group to succeed.

Conclusion  
We are not abandoning One-On-One throughout the ministry. We are changing the way we structure our Discipleship groups. A “growth group” is another helpful strategic method that follows the Biblical mandate to “make disciples”. We encourage you to pour your life into these groups, and pray for life change in the students you have been entrusted. Remember, our vision is, “To know, love, and glorify God, and in dependence upon Him, to develop multiplying disciples to reach the nations!”