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7-14-2023

Reading Spiritual Classics Together: How to Facilitate a Sacred Roots Study Group

Hank Voss

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READING THE SPIRITUAL CLASSICS TOGETHER

How to Facilitate a Sacred Roots Study Group

Workshop 2

Rev. Dr. Hank Voss and Rev. Eric Himelick
Friday, July 14, 2023

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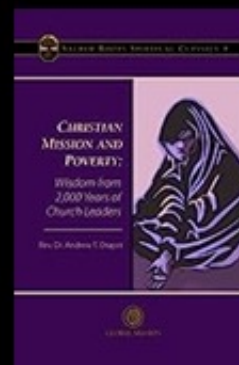
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Workshop 2, Evangel Gathering 2023

Reading the Spiritual Classics Together

Big Idea

A Sacred Roots Study Group is a simple way to develop Christian leaders like A. W. Tozer and Howard Thurman.



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Workshop 1, Evangel Gathering 2023

Flourishing with Friends

Objectives: As a result of this workshop you will:



Know the six steps to launching a Sacred Roots Study Group.



Feel excited about equipping and empowering leaders with the deep spiritual roots leaders like A. W. Tozer and Howard Thurman displayed in their generation.



Understand how to practically facilitate a Sacred Roots Study Group.

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Workshop 2, Evangel Gathering 2023

Reading the Spiritual Classics Together

I. Our Vision: Toward Ten Thousand “Tozers” and “Thurmans”

A. Introducing Tozer

1. A. W. Tozer grew up poor without the opportunity to complete high school.
2. At nineteen, he began to preach, becoming one of the most influential pastors in his generation.
3. His books, *The Pursuit of God* and *The Knowledge of the Holy*, have helped millions know and love the Triune God revealed in Scripture.



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Reading the Spiritual Classics Together

I. Our Vision: Toward Ten Thousand “Tozers” and “Thurmans”

B. Tozer’s Education

1. When asked how he learned to read Scripture with such clarity and theological depth, Pastor Tozer would often point to his “friends” and “teachers.”
2. These teachers were a list of thirty-five Christian spiritual classics Tozer read and reread throughout his life.

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Reading the Spiritual Classics Together

- I. Our Vision: Toward Ten Thousand “Tozers” and “Thurmans”
 - C. Sacred Roots Spiritual Classics (SRSC) are for those with a desire to be used by God like Pastor Tozer.
 1. The Sacred Roots Project envisions ten thousand Christian leaders, serving in challenging ministry contexts across North America, engaging with spiritual classics in community by the year 2030.

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 - C. Sacred Roots Spiritual Classics (SRSC) are for those with a desire to be used by God like Pastor Tozer.
 1. The Sacred Roots Project envisions . . .
 2. Will you join this growing community as we pursue God together by reading and discussion spiritual classics with gospel friends and kingdom coworkers (Matt 9:35)?

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Reading the Spiritual Classics Together

- I. Our Vision: Toward Ten Thousand “Tozers” and “Thurmans”
 - D. Throughout Church history, fruitful Christian leaders have been intentional readers.
 1. Augustine (d. 430)

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 2. Protestant Leaders

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D. Throughout Church history, fruitful Christian
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1. Augustine (d. 430)
2. Protestant Leaders
3. Charles Harrison Mason (d. 1961)

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1. Augustine (d. 430)
2. Protestant Leaders
3. Charles Harrison Mason (d. 1961)
4. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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D. Throughout Church history, fruitful Christian
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1. Augustine (d. 430)
2. Protestant Leaders
3. Charles Harrison Mason (d. 1961)
4. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
5. C. S. Lewis, A. W. Tozer, James Houston,
Rick Warren

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Reading the Spiritual Classics Together

II. Reading the Sacred Roots Spiritual Classics with Friends

- A. The Sacred Roots Spiritual Classics (SRSC) are not meant to be read alone; indeed, it is impossible to do so

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Reading the Spiritual Classics Together

II. Reading the Sacred Roots Spiritual Classics with Friends

B. It is also leaders in the present with whom you must imagine reading the SRSC.

1. Whatever benefit you find in reading will be doubled when you share it with a friend.

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Reading the Spiritual Classics Together

II. Reading the Sacred Roots Spiritual Classics with Friends

B. It is also leaders in the present with whom you must imagine reading the SRSC.

1. Whatever benefit you find in reading will be doubled when you share it with a friend.
2. Whatever trouble or difficulty you find in reading the text will be halved when you share it with a friend.

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Reading the Spiritual Classics Together

II. Reading the Sacred Roots Spiritual Classics with Friends

B. It is also leaders in the present with whom you must imagine reading the SRSC.

1. Whatever benefit you find in reading will be doubled when you share it with a friend.
2. Whatever trouble or difficulty you find in reading the text will be halved when you share it with a friend.
3. Resolve to never read a SRSC alone.

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II. Reading the Sacred Roots Spiritual Classics with Friends

C. Careful readers of Scripture know that the most influential leaders among God's people have always worked in teams.

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Reading the Spiritual Classics Together

II. Reading the Sacred Roots Spiritual Classics with Friends

C. Careful readers of Scripture know that the most influential leaders among God's people have always worked in teams.

1. King David's "the three" or "the thirty."
2. Paul's missionary and ministry team members number nearly one hundred.

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Church planters at the 2022 Evangel Gathering

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Research Results

- According to Sacred Roots' 2022 survey, 69 percent of congregational leaders recognize the signs of stress and burnout within themselves.
- Additionally, 25 percent were discontented with their friendships and 32 percent were dissatisfied with other relationships.
- When asked in what primary areas congregations need the most support or assistance, by a margin of 20 percent the two selected answers were "pastoral care strategies" and "faith/spiritual formation."

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According to Sacred Roots' 2022 survey, 69 percent of congregational leaders recognize the signs of stress and burnout within themselves.



Church planters at the 2022 Evangel Gathering learned to use the Sacred Roots Spiritual Classics to equip their congregational leaders.

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Delegates worshipping together at the 2022 Evangel Gathering.

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Reading the Spiritual Classics Together

Additional Reasons to Launch a Sacred Roots Study Group

- 1) Free resources for your group.
- 2) Support from Evangel and Sacred Roots team.
- 3) Opportunity to earn a Certificate in Spiritual Formation from Taylor University's Office of Church Relations.
- 4) Accountability and Encouragement

Sacred Roots:

Research Findings



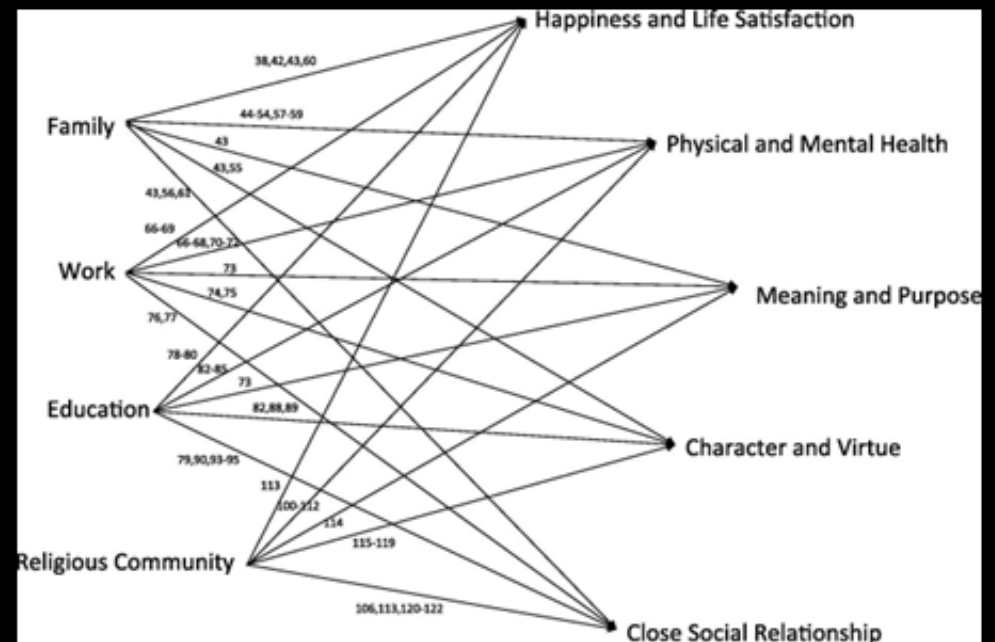
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Goal – to help congregational leaders to flourish in ministry

- According to Tyler VanderWeele, flourishing is “a state in which all aspects of a person’s life are good,” or “complete human wellbeing.”
- Four pathways to this kind of flourishing are: family, work, education, and *religious communities or congregations*.



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Sacred Roots Research: Our Sample

- Size – 48 congregational leaders.
- Age – average 50 yrs.
- Gender – 87% M, 13% F.
- Ethnicity – Asian, Black, White, Hispanic, African.
- Multicultural, multiethnic population.
- 75% from churches of 250 or less.
- Mostly Urban (70%).

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Findings of Our Work

- One major finding was the impact of close relationships on congregational leaders. While the pandemic disrupted interactions, the act of meeting in small groups was a key source of growth and transformation for congregational leaders. A majority of participants found that their congregational leader groups were a significant source of friendship and support (76%) and they plan to continue these relationships over the long-term (88%).
- Deep friendships across denominational, ethnic, gender, and age differences were developed that helped develop and sustain a sense of flourishing or thriving.

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III. How to Launch a Sacred Roots Study Group



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Launch a Sacred Roots Study Group

1. Apply *(waived for EG23 attendees)*
2. Prepare *(waived for EG23 attendees)*
3. Commit
4. Resource
5. Execute
6. Reflect, Report, Certify

SIX STEPS TO STARTING A SACRED ROOTS STUDY GROUP



1. APPLY

Complete the application found at sacredrootsinstitute.org/about/resources. This gives us some general information about you and your ministry. We will reach out to you in 7-10 days after receiving your application.



2. PREPARE

After receiving your application, we will send you three videos to watch. Feel free to take notes on the videos and to share them with others! After each video, there will be a couple questions asking for your thoughts and ideas. Once you have watched all three videos, submit your responses to us.



3. COMMIT

Next, it is time to commit. We will send you a Three Plan to complete for your Sacred Roots study group. The Three Plan will include the names of your 4-12 study group members, your tentative schedule for meeting, and any specific themes you hope to cover over the next year.



4. RESOURCE

After receiving your Three Plan, we will resource your Sacred Roots study group with four Sacred Roots Spiritual Classics of your choosing. A complete list of Sacred Roots Spiritual Classics can be found at sacredrootsinstitute.org/your-books. Depending on your location, Sacred Roots Spiritual Classics may be provided in print for free, in print at a significant discount, or digitally.



5. EXECUTE

Now it is time for you to take the lead! Meet with your Sacred Roots study group weekly, monthly, quarterly, or in whatever rhythm works best. Read and discuss the Christian spiritual classics together, appreciating yourselves to our spiritual mothers and fathers of the faith who have gone before us. Remember that generations of Christian leaders have read and learned these spiritual classics.



6. REFLECT, REPORT, CERTIFY

Lastly, report completion of your spiritual classics study and the names of your group members to SacredRoots@Taylor.edu. We will send you a brief evaluation for you and your study group members to complete. You will receive a Sacred Roots Certificate in Spiritual Formation from The Urban Ministry Institute and Taylor University's Office of Church Relations within one month of us receiving your evaluations.

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Reading the Spiritual Classics Together

III. How to Launch a Sacred Roots Study Group

A. Step One: Apply *(waived for EG23 attendees)*

1. Complete the application found at SacredRootsMinistry.org/cohort-resources.
2. The application gives us general information about you and your ministry.
3. We will reach out to you in 7–10 days after receiving your application.

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III. How to Launch a Sacred Roots Study Group

A. Step Two: Prepare *(waived for EG23 attendees)*

1. After reviewing your application, we will send you three training modules to complete.
2. Feel free to take notes on the videos and to share them with others.
3. After each video, answer the questions and submit your responses to us.

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III. How to Launch a Sacred Roots Study Group

A. Step Three: Commit

1. Complete the online Thrive Plan for your study group.
2. A Thrive Plan includes the names of your leaders, the name of your church, your tentative schedules for meeting, and tells us which SRSC your group will study.

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III. How to Launch a Sacred Roots Study Group

A. Step Four: Resource

1. After receiving your Thrive Plan, we will resource your Sacred Roots study group with up to four spiritual classics of your choosing.
2. A complete list of Sacred Roots Spiritual Classics can be found at sacredrootsministry.org/#our-books.

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Reading the Spiritual Classics Together

III. How to Launch a Sacred Roots Study Group

A. Step Five: Execute

1. Meet with your study group.
2. Read and discuss the Christian spiritual classics together.
3. Remember that generations of Christian leaders have read and reread these spiritual classics.

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Reading the Spiritual Classics Together

III. How to Launch a Sacred Roots Study Group

A. Step Six: Reflect, Report, Certify

1. Report completion of your spiritual classics study and the names of your study group members to SacredRoots@taylor.edu.
2. We will send you a brief evaluation for you and your study group members.
3. Receive a Sacred Roots Certificate in Spiritual Formation (study group members) or a Certificate in Formational Leadership (study group facilitators)

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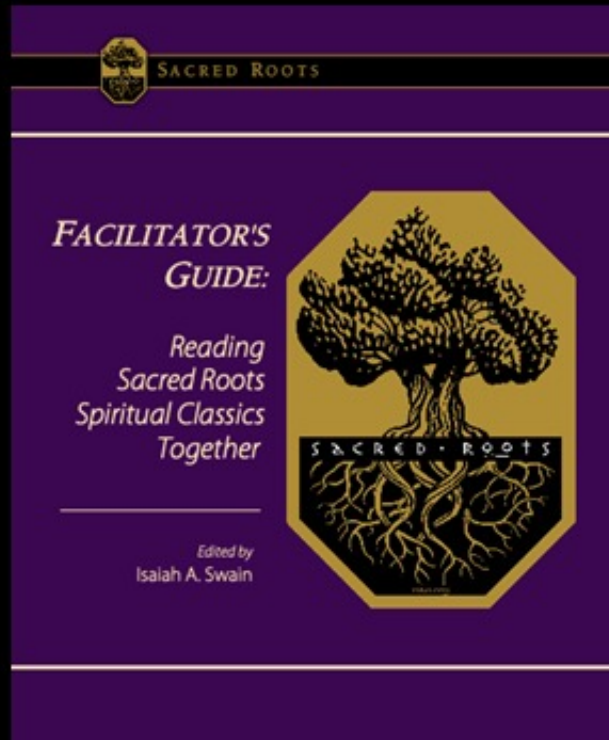


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Reading the Spiritual Classics Together

IV. Tips for Facilitating a Sacred Roots Study



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IV. Tips for Facilitating a Sacred Roots Study Group

A. Preparation

1. Commit your group to prayer.
2. Read the assigned SRSC chapter(s) well before your study group meeting.
3. Contextualize the discussion questions.
4. Learn about your leaders.
5. Watch the SRSC videos at SacredRootsMinistry.org

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IV. Tips for Facilitating a Sacred Roots Study Group

B. Before the Meeting

1. Determine when, where, and how long you will meet.
2. Pick a suitable location.
3. Communicate logistics to your group.
4. Clarify expectations for group members.

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IV. Tips for Facilitating a Sacred Roots Study Group

C. During the Meeting

1. Arrive early to set up the space.
2. Greet your leaders as they arrive.
3. Allow time for spiritual friendship among your group.
4. Spend time in prayer.
5. Transition to discussing the spiritual classic.

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IV. Tips for Facilitating a Sacred Roots Study Group

D. After the Meeting

1. End the meeting on time.
2. Consider being available after the meeting.

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The Challenge

This year I will . . .

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The Challenge: This year I will . . .

- 1. Explore a Sacred Roots Spiritual Classic on my own, with a mentor, or a mentee.***
- 2. Experience Rev. Bob Engel in a Monthly Zoom Sacred Roots Study Group (SRSB).***
- 3. Engage with a pilot SRSB for incarcerated church leaders or returning citizens called to ministry leadership.***
- 4. Embrace a full SRSB for incarcerated church leaders or returning citizens called to ministry leadership.***

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The Challenge: This year I will . . .

2. Experience Rev. Bob Engel in a Monthly Zoom Sacred Roots Study Group (SRSRG).



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The Challenge: This year I will . . .

- 3. Engage with a pilot SRSG for incarcerated church leaders or returning citizens.***



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The Challenge: This year I will . . .

- 4. Embrace a full SRSG for incarcerated church leaders or returning citizens called to ministry leadership.*



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The Challenge

This year I will . . .

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Workshop 1, Evangel Gathering 2023

Flourishing with Friends

Objectives: As a result of this workshop should now be able to:



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Feel excited about equipping and empowering leaders with the deep spiritual roots leaders like A. W. Tozer and Howard Thurman displayed in their generation.



Understand how to practically facilitate a Sacred Roots Study Group.

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