What is the purpose of LIFEoutfitters?

Agree or disagree:
Small group ministry is the perfect training ground for future leaders in the church.
Placing people into a small group does not guarantee that equipping is taking place. It is only the beginning of faithfully showing up to be exposed to spiritual growth and challenge.
Each LIFEgroup leader must see the participants with eyes of faith.

Faulty Leadership Training
“Christian education in many churches is not conducive for mobilizing lay leadership. The goal of training is unclear and the training process is even fuzzier. Everyone is encouraged to enter the classes, but few know what they are being trained to do. The hope is that leaders will develop themselves.
☐ Discipleship. The purpose of small groups is to make disciples. This is in obedience to Christ’s command in Matthew 28:18–20, that the church should make disciples.
☐ Leadership. Disciples are not made unless there are disciplmakers who can help them learn and apply the Christian life. Therefore, leadership is essential to small group ministry. The goal of this book is to help equip effective leaders who can make disciples through small groups. So while the goal of small group ministry is discipleship, the foundation for small group ministry is leadership.
☐ Community. People can only learn and grow in an atmosphere of love and acceptance. That atmosphere is Christian community. Community is not one aspect of group life, it is the very structure within which the group operates. A healthy community will produce healthy disciples. Therefore, the goal of small group ministry is discipleship; the foundation is leadership, and the structure of small group ministry is community.

Lee Iacocca once asked legendary football coach Vince Lombardi what it took to make a winning team.
““There are a lot of coaches with good ball clubs who know the fundamentals and have plenty of discipline but still don’t win the game. Then you come to the third ingredient: if you’re going to play together as a team, you’ve got to care for one another. You’ve got to love each other. Each player has to be thinking about the next guy and saying to himself: ‘If I don’t block that man, Paul is going to get his legs broken. I have to do my job well in order that he can do his.’
The difference between mediocrity and greatness,” Lombardi said that night, “is the feeling these guys have for each other.”

In the healthy church, each Christian learns to care for others. As we take seriously Jesus’ command to “love one another,” we contribute to a winning team. (Leadership Journal - Summer ‘94 - Page 49)

Studies show that the North American culture is the most individualistic in the entire world. This is why mentoring another by helping them and leading them to become life long learners, is a rare thing in Christian circles.

In our own century we have examples of how the church can grow even during persecution. When the Communists came to power in China in the 1950s, all missionaries were expelled, and it was estimated that there were perhaps one million weak Chinese Christians. There was great concern that the church in China would be wiped out, and indeed large-scale persecution broke out.

Thirty years later in the 1980s, the doors to China started to open, and Christians were finally able to observe what had happened to the Chinese church during the 25 years that the borders were closed. Observers were surprised to discover that the church was alive and well! It is now estimated that there are somewhere between thirty and one hundred million Chinese Christians. Imagine, the church multiplied at least thirty times with few Bibles, a limited number of trained pastors, and no church buildings. Like the early church, the Chinese church relied on prayer and the “house church” for its survival and growth.

A fascinating aspect of discipleship is that Christians in the twentieth century are in the direct line that can be traced back twenty centuries to the original twelve disciples. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul illustrates the process of disciplemaking in the following way: “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” Thus, all disciples of Christ have been entrusted with the gospel message which they are to continually invest in the lives of others. Rather than ending with us, the process must begin again with us, as with each new generation.²