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### Developing New Church Leaders in a Digital Age

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

PROJECT PORTFOLIO:

DEVELOPING NEW CHURCH LEADERS IN A DIGITAL AGE



IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF LEADERSHIP IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES  
PORTLAND SEMINARY

BY:

ROY GRUBER

PROJECT FACULTY:

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PORTLAND, OREGON

FEBRUARY 2023



## CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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This certifies that the doctoral Project Portfolio of

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has been approved by  
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for the degree of Doctor of Leadership in Global Perspectives.

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## Dedication

The Project is dedicated to the brave souls who endured a negative church experience but never gave up on God, deciding instead to continue a search for amazing grace and the opportunity to develop their God-given potential.

# Acknowledgments

On this journey, I felt like a competitor in the arena, cheered on by a crowd of supporters. I do not have the words to express my appreciation for each valued contributor adequately. Especially, I am thankful for:

Sally, my wife, and partner in everything. Thanks for yet more sacrifice these three years.

Washington Heights Church, for your willingness to let me be a learner.

Dr. Diane Zemke, my Project Faculty, who gave direction and wisdom every step of the way.

My cohort mates, Troy, Eric, and Andy. I am better for knowing you all.

Sam Barber, for your encouragement to do this program. "Till we meet again."

Jordon Jackson, for all your help and for saving the day and the Project one day.

Andrew Moore, for hours of your time to brainstorm and draw.

Mike McGill, thanks for bringing the website and app to life.

Kyle Arambula, for your gift of drawing and making the idea a reality.

All my colleagues at WHC, thank you for your understanding and help along the way.

## Epigraph

What would be possible if your church or ministry had an instant supply of twice the number of thriving leaders you have today? How could you make an impact on your community if you had a continuous new crop of thriving leaders to serve and bring forward your dream and vision? The possibilities are endless. The world needs more godly, thriving leaders.<sup>1</sup> Tom Comacho

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Comacho, *Mining for Gold* (London, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 2019), 4.

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## Preface

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:13-18 ESV)

I love the local church. I have attended it most of my life and have served it as a Pastor for over thirty years. I know the church contains flaws. I know that because it contains flawed people like me. However, the church remains the treasured bride of Christ, and His desire for the church to thrive still stands. A great deal of the effectiveness of the church rests with its leaders. In a time of church decline in America, the need for more leaders becomes more evident daily. My ministry context exists in northern Utah, where the Christian faith occupies a minority position to the predominate Latter Day Saint faith. The next largest group is often called "The Nones," those with no connection to organized faith. God is working in this context to bring young men and women to the Christian faith. Often, those new to Christianity begin a journey with little understanding of their new faith, much less the development of a leader.

The Project created over the last three years will not solve the leadership crisis. However, I trust the Project will offer one tool among many that serves to provide a pathway toward future leadership in a way that fits this cultural moment.

# List of Abbreviations

LDS: this abbreviates Latter Day Saints, the common name of the Mormon Church. The church's official name is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

WHC: this abbreviates the name Washington Heights Church, where I serve as Lead Pastor.

## Glossary

**Digital learner.** Those who engage digital platforms to accompany learning or instructional practice that effectively uses technology.

**Digital native.** A phrase coined to define those born after the advent of the internet (1995).

**Gen Z.** The generation born 1996-2012.

**Millennials.** The generation born 1981-1996.

**Typographic animation.** Refers to any moving text or imagery that expands or shrinks. Kinetic animation is another name for the same type of moving imagery.

## Research Method

This Doctoral Project utilized a blended research and design methodology called ‘Collaborative Design for Ministry and Nonprofit Contexts’. In Collaborative Design, practitioners work with stakeholder representatives to address a Need, Problem, or Opportunity (NPO) in their context. Using a combination of bibliographic resources, local knowledge derived from stakeholder Workshops, and an iterative process of continuous adjustment using ‘just enough’ feedback information at each juncture of development, practitioners produce an application-oriented Project that seeks to effect Christ-centered change.

## Abstract

Massive cultural and technological shifts usher in a new digital age, creating a leadership crisis in the American church. In a time of decline, how can the church thrive in the future? The answer to that question resides in future leadership in the church. The NPO for the Project states: The church needs to develop digital learners into new leaders for the next generation. The Project was developed to offer one tool to onboard new Christians toward future leadership.

A few essential insights emerged from the research for the Project. First, in addition to significant cultural changes, there is emerging proof of biological changes in digital natives' brain wiring. The digital age contains more than a generation gap. In addition, the research identified a longing for mentorship by digital natives. A coach in the context of a relationship offers future effectiveness over a master teacher delivering lectures or written content. Finally, research proved the value of learning through experience as a way to internalize and retain understanding.

My ministry context as a Lead Pastor is in northern Utah, an area predominantly comprised of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) and those with no faith. Over the last several years, many people have started their faith journey. However, those new Christians lack any framework of Christian beliefs and practices.

The Project is an app titled "Leadership Onramp." Eight animated sessions designed for digital learners introduce new Christians to foundational topics. Session questions get processed with an existing ministry leader and active engagement in a ministry role. Three core principles guide a participant toward future church leadership: digital content, relational context, and experiential learning. Participation in the process offers one way to narrow the gap between new Christian faith and future leadership. The Project is customizable and scalable to any ministry context.

# Introduction

## Ministry Context and Starting NPO

I began this program with a need born out of my ministry context. A frequent staff discussion often included sentiments that “We need to put structure around developing new leaders.” Our local church, Washington Heights, experienced sustained conversion growth over a decade. While we celebrated God’s work in the lives of many, we witnessed an emerging vacuum of equipped leaders from those new to the Christian faith. Our growth in new leaders did not match our increase in attendance. What were we missing? While I was not sure about the leadership development solution at the outset, I was convinced that what had worked in the past to produce new leaders did not accomplish that goal anymore. The past approach to leadership development included classes led by master teachers who imparted great information to people. However, people did not attend in significant numbers anymore. One can try to squeeze more fruit out of old ways or decide that an entirely new strategy is needed. We decided on the latter. My starting NPO stated: The church has the opportunity to develop digital natives into leaders for the next generation.

In the end, the Project turned out to be one actionable tool that enables existing ministry leaders to guide those new to the Christian faith toward future leadership in and through the church. Like a missionary who enters a different culture, the church needs to exegete this new day to engage it effectively. In a digital age, wise communication will speak the indigenous language of this emerging age. In a time of profound and lasting cultural change, combined with a season of decline, the American church cannot afford to be ineffective in developing potential new leaders for the next chapter of the church’s existence. In general, I believe the church often lags behind cultural trends. Those trained in an analog world decades ago, like me, would do well to equip the church for what lies ahead. One way for equipping to occur comes by not holding onto methods proving ineffectual. The methods are not sacred, but the church’s mission is unending. The Project offers one attempt to engage digital learners in ways that fit the new cultural norms.

## Discovery Phase

The initial phase of the development journey, the Discover Workshop, intended to examine the NPO as valid, focus the Project’s audience, and shape the intended outcomes as defined by the NPO. I had a few vague ideas about what a final project might entail. However, part of the program’s process invites one to make specific commitments. Despite a history of making quick decisions about solutions, I committed to a research manifesto, trusting the process of the program and not assuming an outcome at the outset.

The Discovery Workshop proved to be an essential gathering for my understanding of the urgency of addressing the leadership void. As I shared the NPO with a diverse group of Gen Z, Millennial, and Gen X folks, they quickly challenged the premise of opportunity and deemed it a need. I was surprised by the level of self-awareness of those inside the church about the leadership crisis. I also observed anxiety about the church’s future and its ability to influence culture in beneficial ways. Whether it gets vocalized in these terms, postmodernism signals a change with pervasive effects and a post-Christian world unsettling to many long-time followers of Jesus. My ministry context in

Utah adds another local dynamic of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon) church. In addition to social norms, people also vocalized a fear of losing their children to the predominant faith at some point. Yet, repeatedly, the entire group voiced overwhelming support for the effort to find solutions that strengthen the church for the present and future.

Following the Discovery Workshop, I contacted three experts in ministry work. The former Regional Director of our association of churches, a leader in the multi-site movement and former Pastor, and the Lead Pastor of a mega-church all interacted with my NPO and the takeaways from the Workshop. Each confirmed the need for tools in the emerging culture. One cautioned about making small changes for a significant need. The church does not need to “tweak” the methods already in use. Instead, it needs to overhaul them. The Lead Pastor gave input about the topics and issues he sees as lacking in those new to Christianity. Once again, significant support confirmed the NPO’s validity and the Project’s general direction.

## Design Phase

In the program’s Design phase, the research added specifics to the overall direction. A surprising result of the research shows early studies revealing biological changes in the brains of those born in the digital age. While there are many dates to define the onset of digital natives, I understood that beginning to be those born after 1995, the establishment of the internet. Every generation experiences a gap between itself and the one before it. However, the digital age contains more than a gap. There is a shift underway that changes foundational methods of communication and will only accelerate going forward. Another finding from the research came from the field of education. Schools recognize the digital shift and are pioneering different ways of teaching. Educator Mark Prensky coined the term “digital native” and dedicated the last two decades to providing help to educators in meeting the new challenges in the classroom. Another change to my NPO took place during the Design phase. Some researchers distinguish between digital natives and digital learners. Digital learners are not defined by a birthdate but rather by a manner of engaging digital content. My final NPO states: The church needs to develop digital learners into leaders for the next generation.

Knowing that the Project would be an app with digital content, I offered three Concept Pitches. The first concept sought to provide digital content for individuals or small groups that were accessible individually. The second pitch provided digital content to be accessed by a participant in coordination with a mentor while the participant served concurrently in a ministry role. The third concept would follow the same structure as the second but leave the ministry participation as a capstone after going through the digital content with the mentor. Concept Pitch One was quickly eliminated as it did not provide the relational context emphasized in the research about Millennials and Gen Z generations. I selected Concept Pitch Two for the Project because it adds the experiential learning component to the journey a participant takes with a mentor. One final decision was needed to determine if the context of the sessions was best suited for a small group or a one-on-one setting. Prototyping utilized a Gen Z leader who journeyed through two sessions with a small group and two sessions of one-on-one. His feedback did not clarify the choice as he related the effectiveness of the material, and the discussion depended on the size of the group. Some

sessions were better suited for groups, and some for individuals. Finally, I decided for the Project MVP to be the one-on-one setting due to its flexibility and scalability. In our region of churches, many of the churches are small in size, and the prospect of needing a small group to begin the process could prove daunting.

### Delivery Phase

In the delivery phase, the app's content and platform became a reality. Every app needs a website to support it. I coordinated with a staff member and developed the design and layout for both. The scope of the Project begins with application in my ministry context. I envision our Pastoral and Director staff developing new leaders using the Project as a platform to facilitate that journey. In addition, one of my benchmarks includes our current Regional Director of churches as an evaluator of the Project for potential use within the churches of our region. In September of 2023, I anticipate the opportunity to present the Project to many of the churches in our region. The app will be free on Google Play and Apple's App Store. The possibility exists for exposure nationally within our association with seven regions. In addition, I will track the app's effectiveness in producing new leaders once it becomes available. Currently, three sessions exist in a final form of hand-drawn typographic animation. June or July of 2023 should ensure the time needed to generate all eight sessions in the final form. Feedback through iterative use provides essential input to the Project's final form. Ministry leaders, participants, and outside users will help refine the Project's ultimate version.

### Personal Learning Points

My learning experience through this process includes numerous challenges and points of growth. I needed to fight my tendency to form firm conclusions early. I have seen the value of the steps involved in the discover, design, and deliver method. I felt uneasy about inviting people to engage with my early thoughts, fearing ideas I did not embrace. That anxiety proved unnecessary as the stakeholders contributed valuable insights and considerable encouragement. Another challenge came in the design phase as studying the core principles of the Project was massive in scale. The impact of digital communication and education, along with the value of experiential learning, intimidated me due to its broad scope. My project faculty was an invaluable source of focus, direction, and calm during times of stress. A personal challenge came on January 30, 2022, when a co-worker and close friend passed away after a long battle with cancer. Sam and I worked together for eighteen years. He served as the Executive Pastor and greatly supported me in my pastoral role. His passing increased my workload significantly for several months. 2022 was a challenging year for me personally and professionally.

I have learned the value of a fully-formed process in addressing large-scale projects. For example, during my first year in the program, I led the church through an organizational change from a Constitution to Bylaws. That decision requires member input to approve the change. Those decisions can be fraught with conflict and opposition in a congregationally structured church. A few years earlier, I tried to change one section of the Constitution, but it failed to receive the needed votes. This time I was attempting to change the entire document except for the section on theology. This time, using principles from this program aided in receiving a unanimous vote to make the

change. Specifically, unlike the previous attempt at change, stakeholder meetings (town hall format) allowed people to voice concerns or offer suggestions. My personal bias is toward action. This program taught me the value of steps that bring people along.

### Current Gaps

Specific gaps in the Project will require ongoing attention beyond completing the doctoral program. Of the three core principles, digital content, relational context, and experiential learning, I feel that the experiential learning component is not developed or understood to the degree of the others. I also wonder if meeting with a mentor and concurrent serving will be overwhelming to someone early in their spiritual journey. Also, the final version of the animation on the three completed sessions does not fully meet my expectations at this time. Minor glitches in the animation and abrupt transitions still need to be addressed. In addition, I vastly underestimated the labor intensiveness of hand-drawn animation. With that said, I am pleased with the “look” of the animation, and I would not change the decision to use it. Another gap exists with the role of the mentor, which plays such a vital part. I question whether or not every existing ministry leader can fill that role well. Will effectiveness come through their experience and the relationship, or is there a gifting component that is essential to the process? Ongoing evaluation from mentors and participants alike will answer that question in time.

Throughout the program’s process, numerous options for a Project presented themselves. The digital age allows for many manifestations of actionable tools. I counted eighteen different kinds of animation in the research. Many information-based approaches to leadership development in the church already exist. I aimed to create something that added a resource to an underserved part of the leadership development effort. A temptation of any project is to solve the world’s problems through one avenue. This unrealistic goal only produces unmet expectations. I aimed to provide one tool to facilitate a journey toward leadership and narrow the gap between new Christian faith and future service.

### Fundamental Discoveries

Broadly, a few fundamental discoveries mark the process for me. First, the profound impact of the digital age is a reality that the church ignores at its peril. I realize that I speak with an immigrant’s accent in the digital age. What comes naturally to my two children is a learned language to someone raised, educated, and experienced in an analog world. I long for my generation of ministry leaders to do whatever it takes to set up the church and its leaders to succeed in the next generation. Now is not the time to hold power and voice resistance to new ideas as “we have never done it that way before.” In the 1990s, I read a book with a title so apt in describing the state of the American church, *Dying for Change*.<sup>2</sup> Humility is needed to admit that after many years of service, a new kind of leader needs to emerge for future effectiveness. Will existing leaders be willing to

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<sup>2</sup> Leith Anderson, *Dying for Change* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishing, 1998).

pivot, releasing some of the power and authority of their position to allow others to lead in ways that come naturally to those native to the new culture? I hope so.

A second lesson pertains to the power of relationships in the new cultural day. Generally speaking, previous generations operated through structures, titles, and roles. Younger generations value a flat system and a collegial environment. It is easy to give lip service to relationships in a spiritual context. The emerging generations instinctively know a person's genuineness about interpersonal engagement. They know if somebody is sincere or not. Leadership in the new day is less about organizational charts and more about asking people questions about themselves and their lives and listening deeply. While that change in leadership dynamic is not complex, it does represent change, which is always hard.

A final big-picture lesson centers on the nature of spiritual growth. The Project offers diverse inputs toward development. I fear that the church has historically put too much emphasis on content and not enough on relationships and experience. Information serves a valuable purpose, but even cursory reading of the Gospels indicates that Jesus trained His disciples in various ways, not just with spiritual content.

After the program's completion, several steps remain to establish the public version of the app. First, I will work with the animator to complete the five unfinished sessions. I will also work with a staff member to get the animation's timing precise in matching the recording and smoothing the rough transitions. Further iterative usage within Washington Heights Church will provide feedback throughout 2023. Finally, a completed version of the app given to and evaluated by the Regional Director will determine further exposure within the church of our region. The finished app version will be available in January 2024 for free download.

## Conclusion

During this program's journey, I feel I have made friendships that will far outlast the program, and I am thankful for that. At times, I felt overwhelmed with the scope of the work and torn between my church role and my desire to do more work in the school program. It has been a joy to see the app come to life with the animation recently. When I first contacted a company to get a bid on drawing the sessions, the estimate came back "north of \$200,000!" I was shocked and unsure how to proceed. Then, one of our staff members said that a young man in the church draws well. He turned out to be the animator for the Project. We pay him well, but much less than the quote above. It seems as though God provided the right person at the right time.

I believe this program helped me to become a better leader. In recent years, we have added several Millennial and Gen Z staff members. Without the influence of the program, I may well have resisted the new dynamics inherent in those generations. Instead, I learned about the value of native speakers in the digital age. They have added significantly to the Project and the church during this program. As I watch digital native leaders engage culture effectively, I gain great hope for the future of our church and beyond.

My dream for the Project is to serve the church well by helping some people find future leadership roles. So much of the church's future, humanly speaking, rests in the hands of its leaders. As people follow Jesus in a postmodern world, leadership will play a vital role in the church's health and effectiveness. I long for the Project to be one tool among many that builds people and helps them serve the church effectively. Each week, I see young men and women new to the Christian faith excited about their new faith. I dream of an environment where people are spurred on to discover their gifting and serve God wholeheartedly, fulfilling the mission of reaching many with the gospel. I pray the Project plays one small part in that effort.

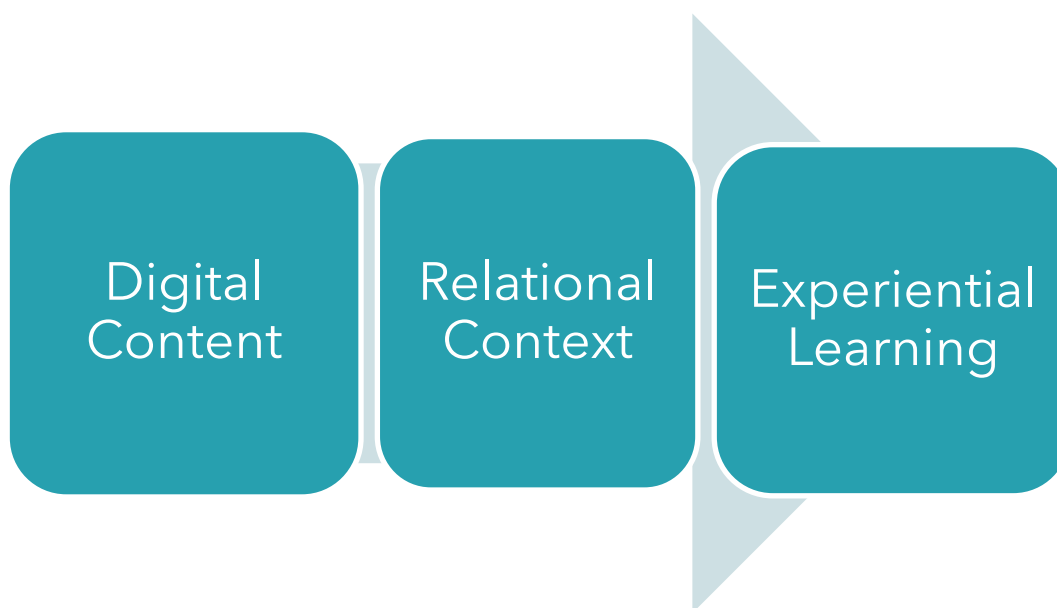
# Doctoral Project

## Introduction

My doctoral project provides an actionable tool enabling existing church leaders to onboard new believers to the Christian faith toward future church leadership. I serve as a Lead Pastor in a ministry context marked by many people with limited exposure to Christianity and many active or former Mormons. A few years ago, a first-time guest visiting his first church service of any kind asked, “Why do you sing out loud together? That is weird.” A typical behavior quite familiar to those in the church has no framework for those unfamiliar. If that visitor becomes a follower of Jesus, a wide gap exists between new faith and future leadership. Over the last several years, Washington Heights Church welcomed many new followers of Jesus to the fold. A new Christian with future potential for church leadership, but a limited framework for their new faith, led to the genesis of the project’s idea. How can the gap between a new faith and future leadership be narrowed?

My project is an app with eight typographic or kinetic animated sessions that digitally communicate essential foundations for those with little or no Christian background. Digital content speaks in the “native language” of the digital age. After viewing an animated session, participants answer three broad questions to engage with what they watched. After answering the questions, the participant meets with a mentor currently serving as a ministry leader. The participant also serves in a ministry role while journeying through the sessions.

The project contains three core principles that onboard and develop those new to the Christian faith:



**FIGURE 1: THE PROJECT’S CORE PRINCIPLES**

Entering this project development process, I believed an opportunity existed for the church to effectively communicate in new ways to engage the emerging digital culture. My research on digital communication not only reinforced my assumptions but led me to a greater sense of urgency about the need to engage digital learners in their native language. Marshall McLuhan famously said, “The

medium is the message.”<sup>3</sup> How one communicates is a communication of its own. In the wake of a digital shift, the church is wise to learn and speak the new language that will endure for some time.

The digital content in this project was chosen from a myriad of choices based on an anecdotal survey during this three-year process and informed by numerous comments made by those who regularly engage with digital content. In particular, stakeholders gave input that led to a final choice about the content style. Over the years, the Bible Project produced animated digital content that Millennials and Gen Z folks consistently found engaging.<sup>4</sup> The animation of my project loosely follows that typographic style.

The role of a mentor occupies a vital place in the project. The relational context of the project reflects an emerging desire for younger generations to learn from someone who relates to them more like a coach or guide than a purveyor of information. The project entrusts its effectiveness primarily to a mentor, an existing ministry leader, and the influence of a relationship that grows over several weeks. Generally, the church puts its development “eggs” in the information “basket.” This project reflects an approach that emphasizes the power of relationships in processing and applying information as a key to personal development. Younger generations appear to bring a needed correction that places value on trust, connection, and influence in addition to information. The digital content of this project will only be as effective as the mentors make it. A job description for the mentor role is included in the Appendix.

The experiential learning component of the project includes the development toward future leadership that only comes through on-the-job training. Information and direction exist as a means to an end toward future leadership service. That end entails an impact on the church. As a participant serves, they can be observed, and relate experiences that get processed with an experienced ministry leader. Admittedly, this portion of the project is the least defined and requires a way to evaluate its impact on the desired outcome of onboarding new, future leaders.

The project showcasing that follows contains a majority of the digital content with lesser amounts of the relational context and the experiential learning represented as they occur in “live time.”

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<sup>3</sup> “The medium is the message,” Wikipedia, last modified February 25, 2023, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_medium\\_is\\_the\\_message](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_medium_is_the_message).

<sup>4</sup> This link shows one example of the Bible Project typographic style of animation: “Gospel of Matthew Summary: A Complete Animated Overview (Part 1),” YouTube video, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Dv4-n6OYGI>.

## Presentation of Project

While much of what follows to showcase the project comes in still images, it is designed to be viewed as typographical animation. The links to the two completed animations are provided here:

### Links to view the animation

**Session 1:** <https://leadershiponramp.org/session-1>

**Session 4:** <https://leadershiponramp.org/session-4>

The project contains eight sessions in total. Currently, the two sessions above exist in the final form. Each session focuses on one topic. Completing all sessions in the final form should occur in June of 2023. This anticipated completion is based on the time to complete the two sessions.

The process from idea to design followed the “discover, design, deliver” model of the program. I began the program with a desire, namely, to develop future leaders in the church I serve. Stakeholder input and research helped give parameters that ultimately led to the project. The actionable steps began with writing a script for eight sessions. A small group of Gen Z staff members and I storyboarded the eight sessions. The storyboard images were drawn as rough drafts by a staff member. Finally, an animator was employed to take the rough draft images and create a final version. A visual presentation of the development process is included in Appendix E.

### Sessions

Below is a list of the eight sessions, the topics, and a brief description of each. Full text versions of the sessions are contained in the Appendix. The sessions contain an informal tone and a non-technical presentation of the material due to the intended audience of new believers. The full-text of the eight sessions is included in Appendix E.

#### **SESSION 1: THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH**

One of the significant questions surrounding the church is: For whom does it exist? Christians? Non-Christians? Both? This session positions the church as an outward-focused community, seeking to engage culture with compassion that shows God’s love in practical ways.

#### **SESSION 2: PRAYER**

A leader’s spiritual life repeatedly came up as a significant need with stakeholders and in interviews with experts. The reason expressed for the urgency about this issue relates to many high-profile moral failures. This session unpacks the pervasiveness of prayer and connection with God, evidenced in the life of Jesus during His earthly ministry.

#### **SESSION 3: SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

Leadership is a spiritual gift. However, those who possess other gifts are able to learn leadership behaviors that can equip them to serve in leadership roles. This session seeks to define all the gifts listed in the New Testament.

## **SESSION 4: INTEGRITY**

Emerging generations identify someone or something that possesses genuineness instinctively. This session speaks to the inner world of a future leader and for that inner world to align with what people see on the surface.

## **SESSION 5: THE BIBLE**

Many people new to faith have questions surrounding the Bible. In our ministry context, we believe in the authority of the Bible and desire future leaders to engage in it regularly.

## **SESSION 6: THE CHURCH AS COMMUNITY**

Former Mormons often share stories of spiritual abuse as a part of their church experience. This session aims to cast a compelling and healthy vision of the church.

## **SESSION 7: SHARING OUR FAITH**

Reaching out to others about faith can intimidate some and repel others. This session seeks to remove negative stigmas or strange versions of sharing one's faith with others.

## **SESSION 8: CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP**

Leadership exists in every facet of life. What is unique about Christian leadership versus other expressions of it? This session connects God and His calling on people to lead in God's kingdom work.

## **Website**

Every app receives support from a website. Below is the landing page of a website created on *Subsplash* to host the *Leadership Onramp* app. While the website's content closely mimics the app, the layout appears slightly different. The dropdown menu is extended in the image to show where to access the sessions. My benchmarking goals seek to promote and build access to the app, not the website. The reason for creating a website that would also facilitate the journey for participants and mentors centers on the likelihood of people searching for the material online and discovering the site before the app.

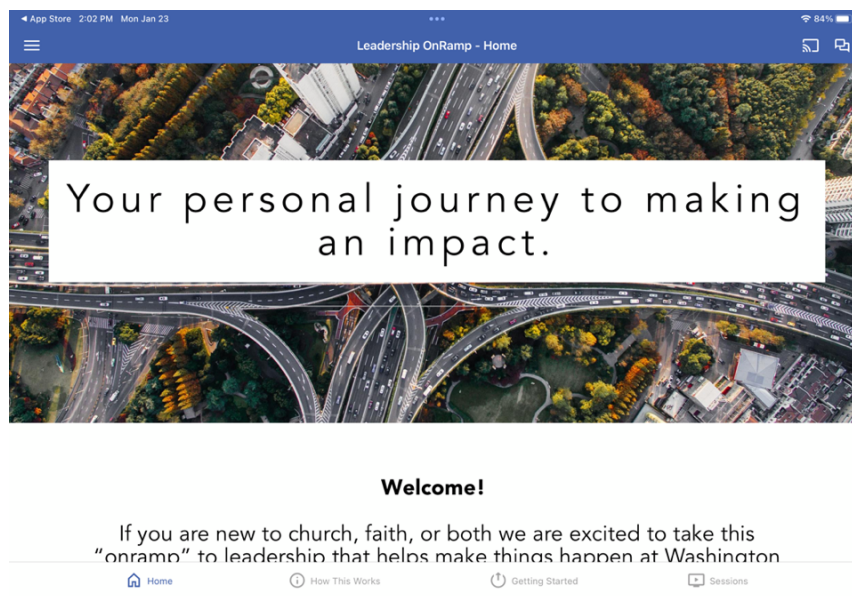


Welcome!

**FIGURE 2: WEBSITE LANDING PAGE**

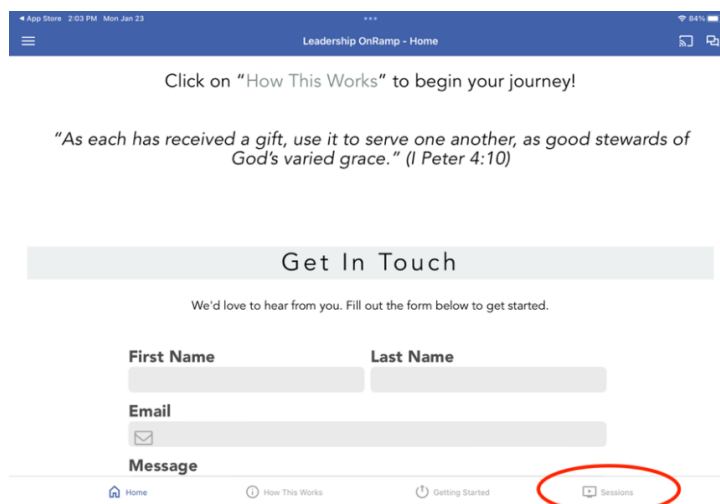
### App

Below is the app landing page. On the page, one needs to scroll down in order to see all the content on this opening page. I made the decision to keep the content and options on the app to a minimum to facilitate ease of navigation. Long ago I heard it said, "Apps only do one thing well." I intend to keep the focus of the project to one goal: moving people new to the Christian faith toward future church leadership.



**FIGURE 3: APP LANDING PAGE**

The figure below shows the bottom of the app landing page with the access to the session circled in red.



**FIGURE 4: APP HOMEPAGE SHOWING ACCESS TO SESSIONS**

After clicking on the “sessions” button, options to view all the sessions appears. Below, the image displays the page after accessing session 1. The participant views the session on their own. Then, they answer the questions within the app below the video. The participant then meets with the mentor to discuss the video, questions, and any experiences from serving.



| HOW THIS WORKS | GET STARTED | SESSIONS -

SESSION 1



Name \* Assigned Leader \*

Question 1. In your own words, what is the mission of the Church? \*

Question 2. Do you think it's easier to be inward focused or outward focused? Why? \*

Question 3. What kind of values, words, and actions communicate the good news of God's love to those far from God? \*

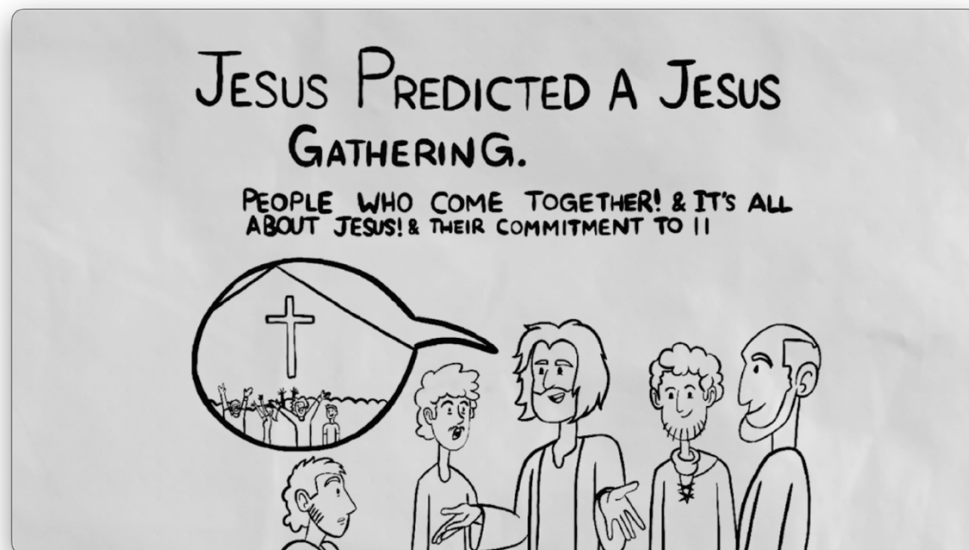
Submit

**FIGURE 5: SESSION 1 AND QUESTIONS**

The two sessions in their final form are currently being fine-tuned to match the animation to the recorded dialogue and fix a few choppy sections that cut to the next scene too quickly.

### Session 1 selected images and the time they appear in the animation

Still images of the animation were taken to show the final draft version of the digital content. The first session focuses on the mission of the church.



**FIGURE 6: (00:42)**



**FIGURE 7: (00:53)**



FIGURE 8: (1:01)

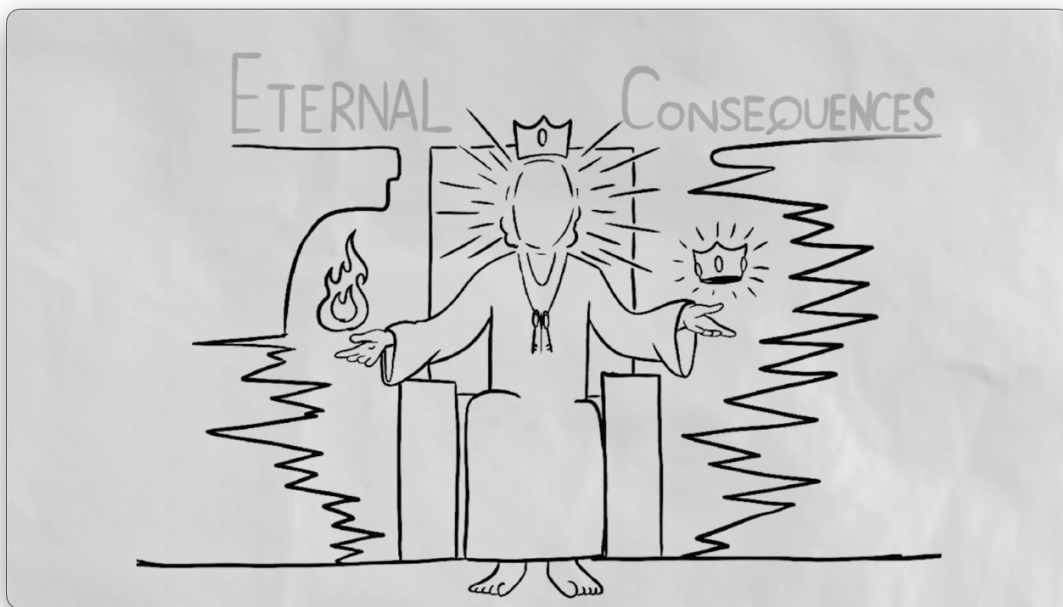


FIGURE 9: (1:19)

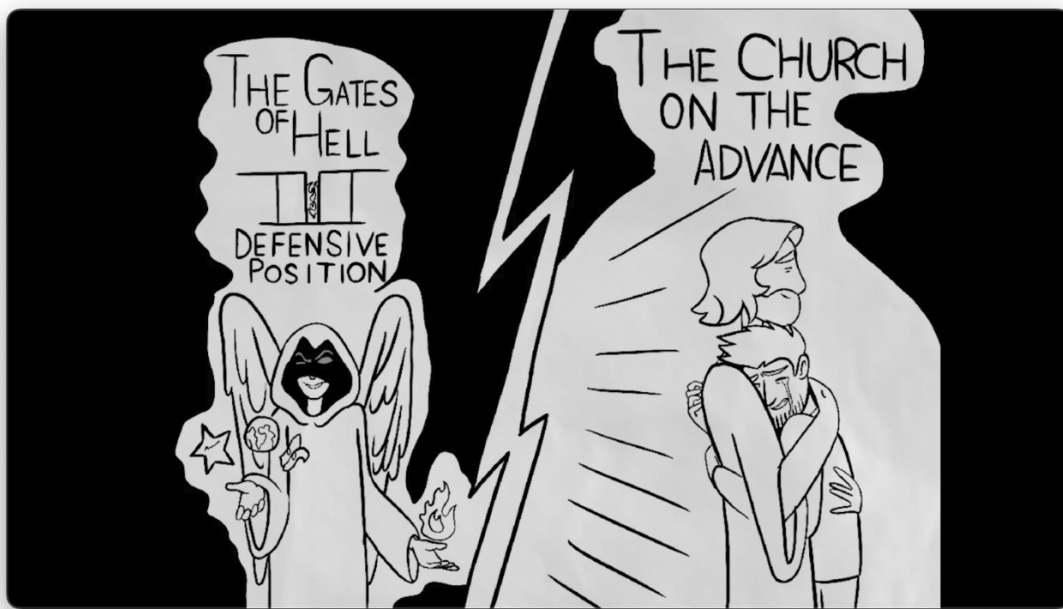


FIGURE 10: (1:31)

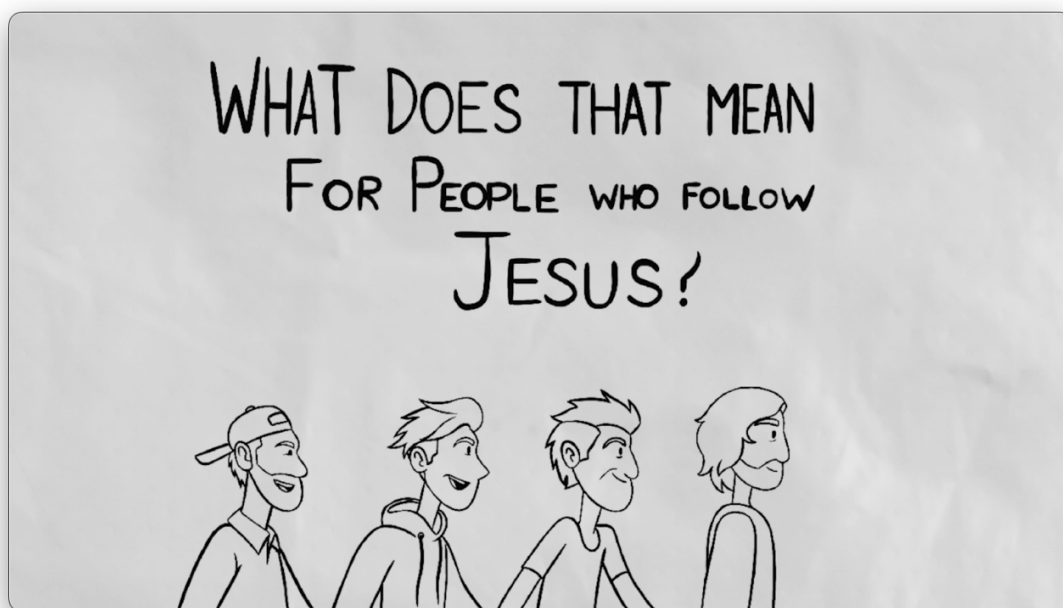


FIGURE 11: (1:34)



FIGURE 12: (2:09)



FIGURE 13: (2:14)

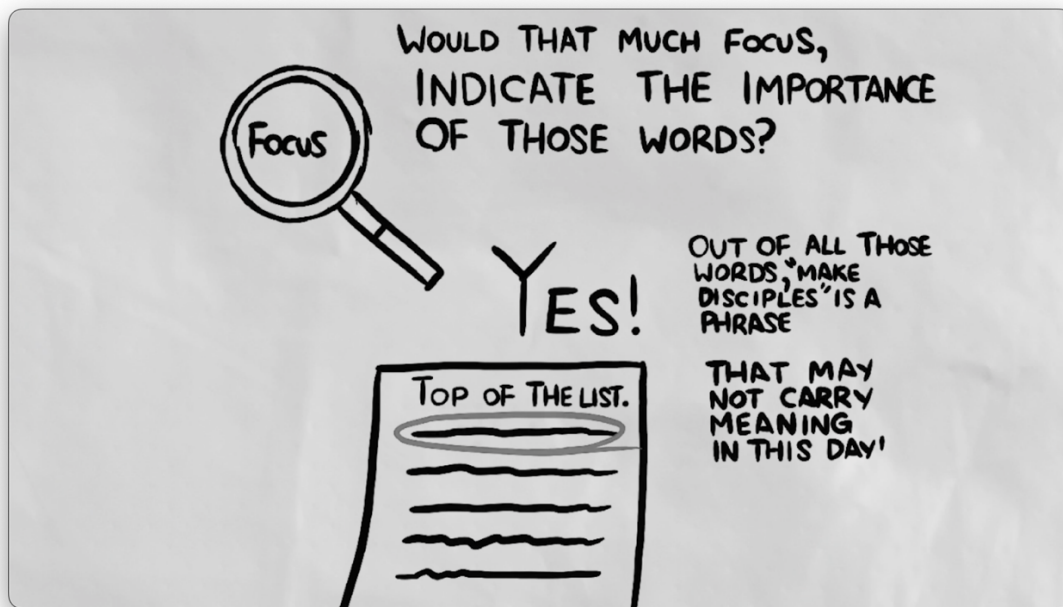


FIGURE 14: (3:27)

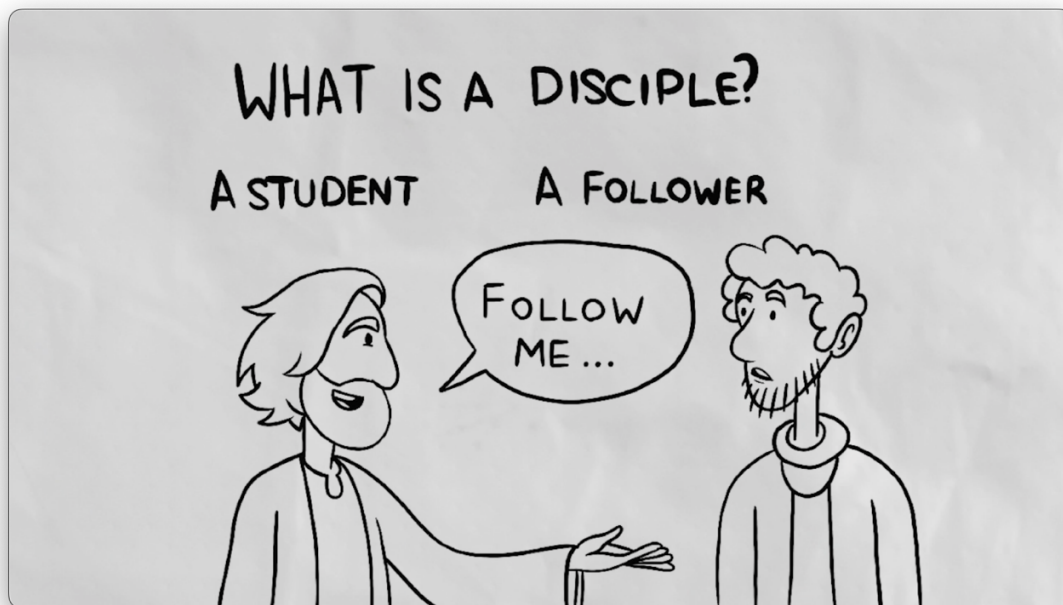


FIGURE 15: (3:38)

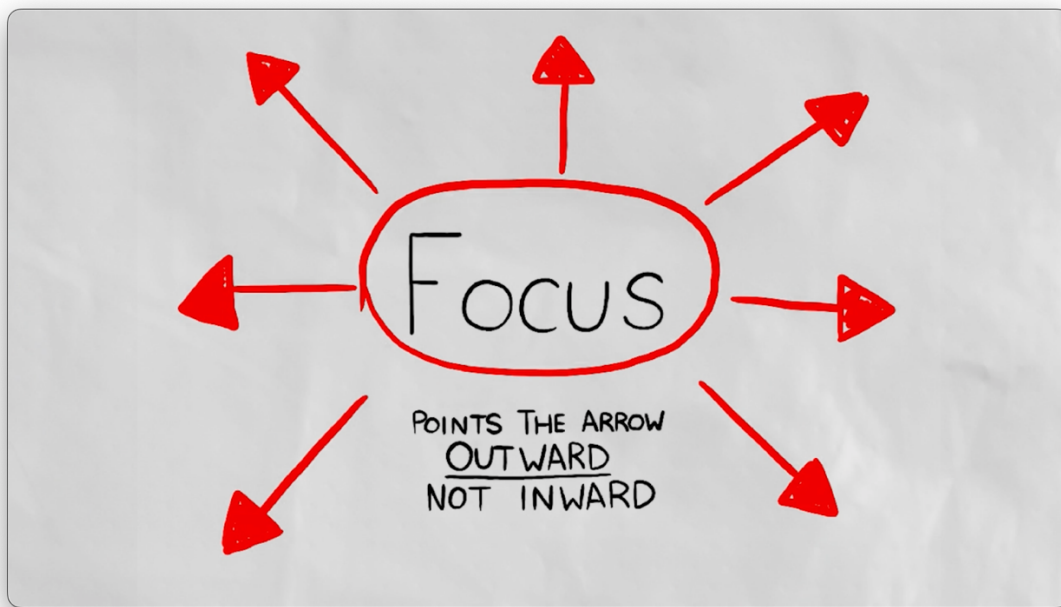


FIGURE 16: (3:58)

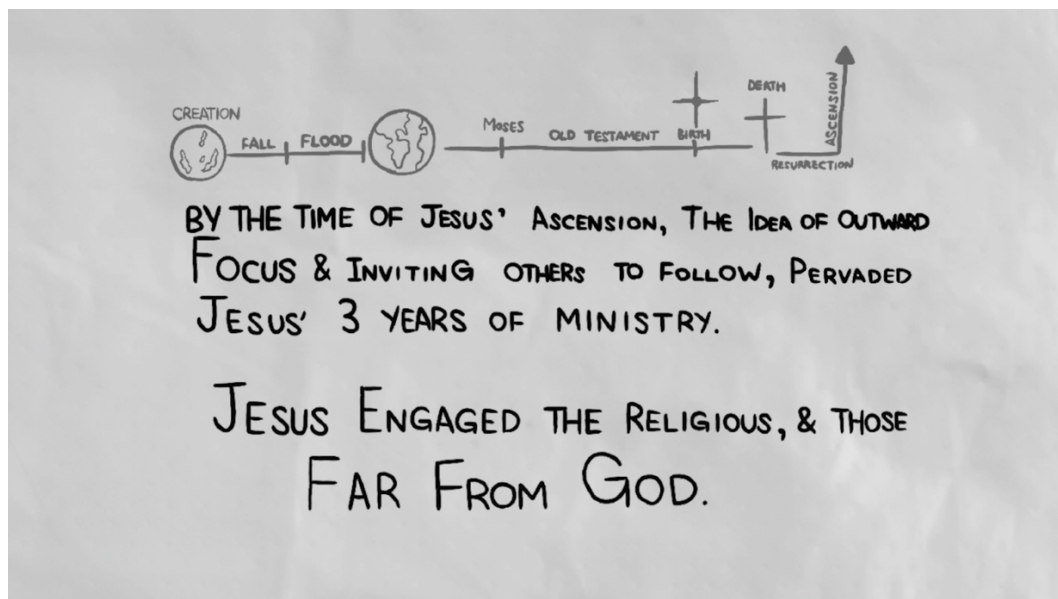


FIGURE 17: (4:50)

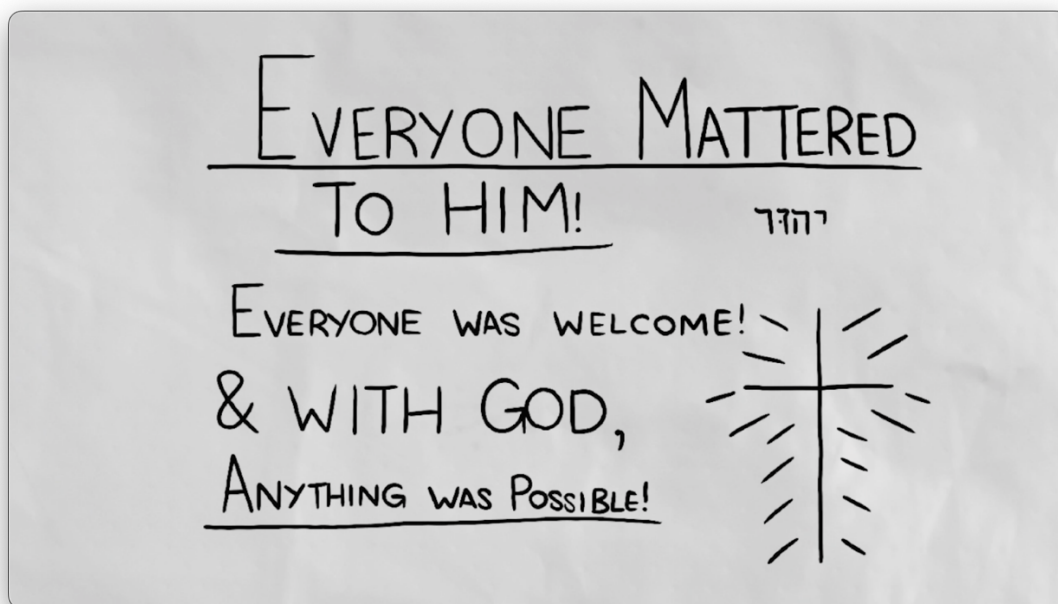


FIGURE 18: (4:58)

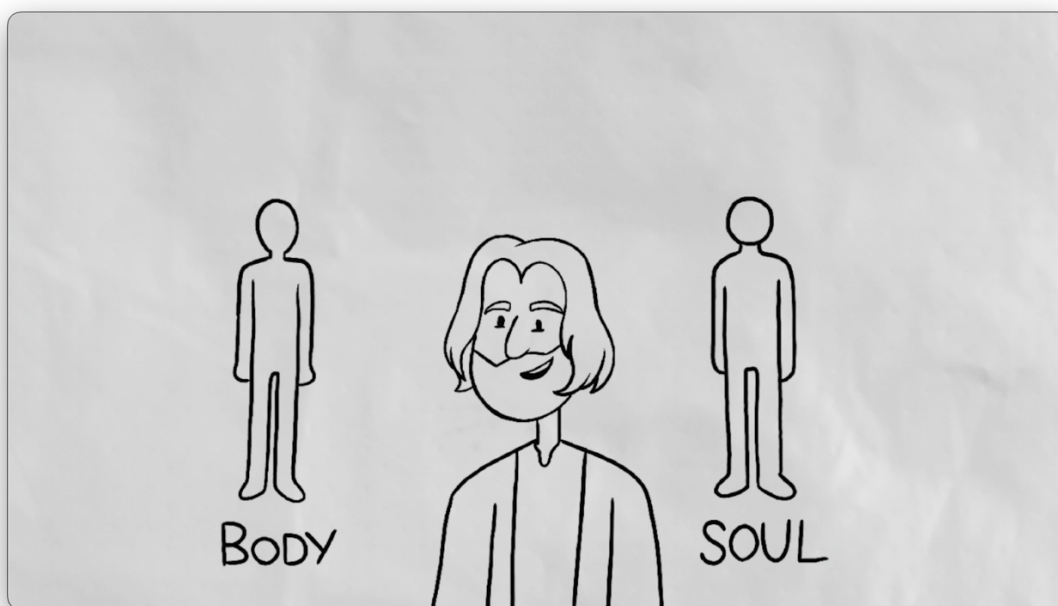


FIGURE 19: (5:01)

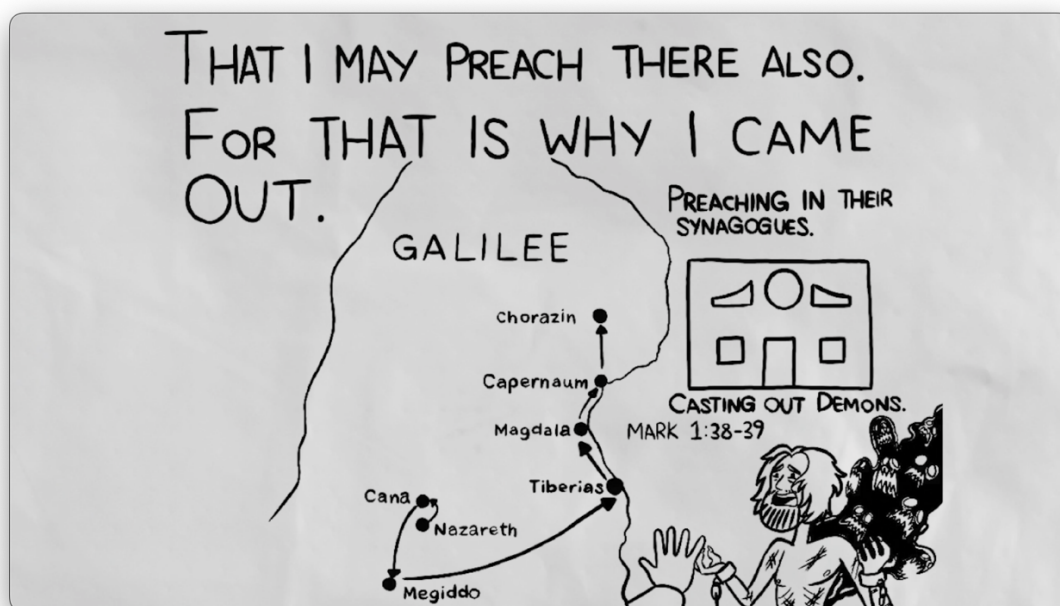


FIGURE 20: (5:27)

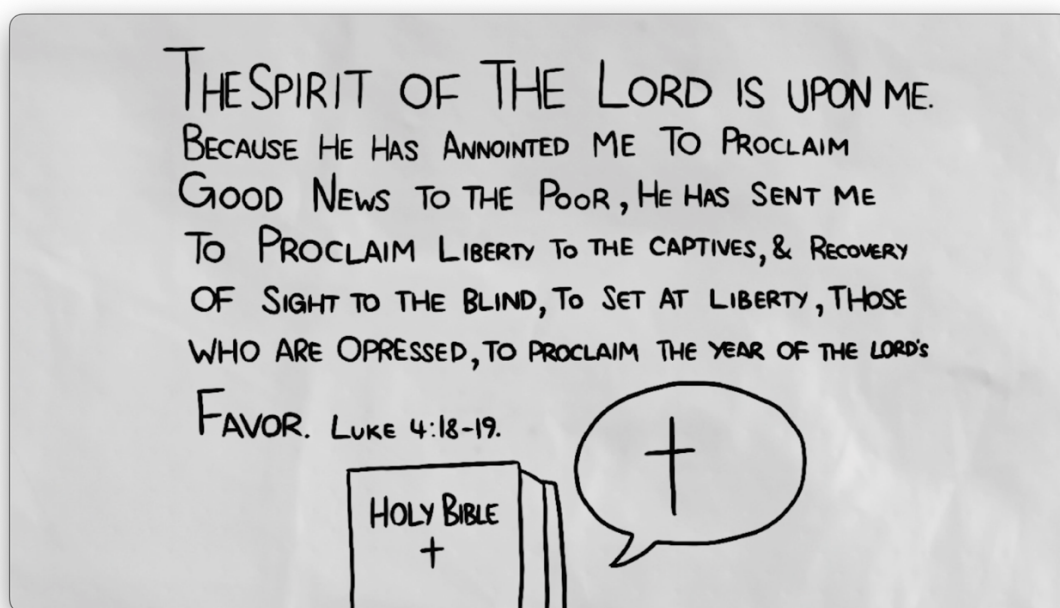


FIGURE 21: (5:51)

FOR THE SON OF MAN, CAME TO SEEK  
& SAVE THE LOST. LUKE 19:10

ULTIMATELY, HIS PURPOSE, WAS TO MAKE A ONCE &  
FOR ALL TIME SACRIFICE, FOR THE SINS OF HIS



FIGURE 22: (6:06)

SHE WILL BEAR A SON, AND YOU SHALL  
CALL HIS NAME, JESUS.

FOR HE WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR  
SINS. MATTHEW 1:21

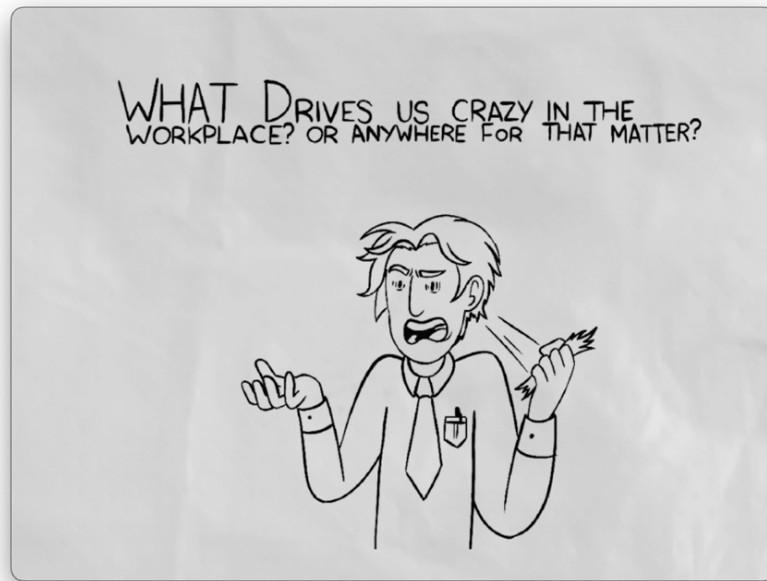
FOR EVEN THE SON OF MAN, CAME NOT TO BE  
SERVED, BUT TO SERVE, & TO GIVE HIS LIFE, AS A  
RANSOM, FOR MANY. MARK 10:45... +

JESUS GAVE COMPASSION, WITH NO STRINGS ATTATCH

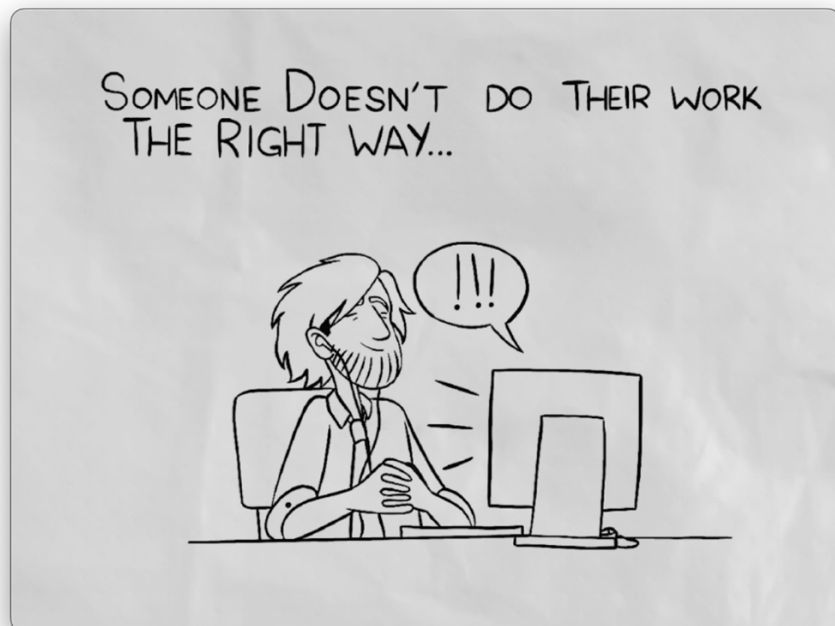


FIGURE 23: (6:31)

Session 4 selected images and the time they appear in the animation  
The topic of session 4 is integrity.



**FIGURE 24: (00:03)**



**FIGURE 25: (00:06)**



FIGURE 26: (00:17)



FIGURE 27: (00:27)

LET'S BE HONEST  
IT TAKES A LOT OF  
EFFORT, FOR US TO LIVE  
WITH GOOD INTEGRITY.



**FIGURE 28: (00:26)**



**FIGURE 29: (00:29)**

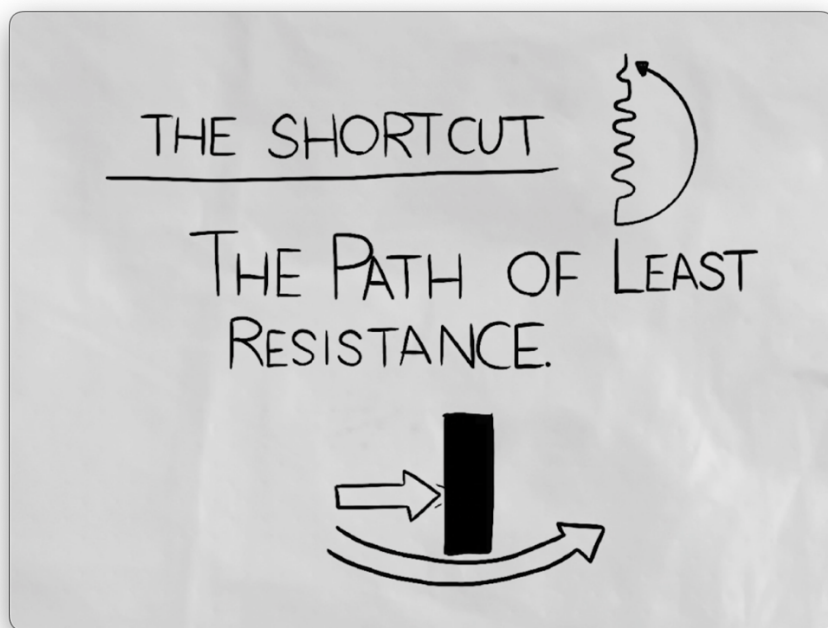


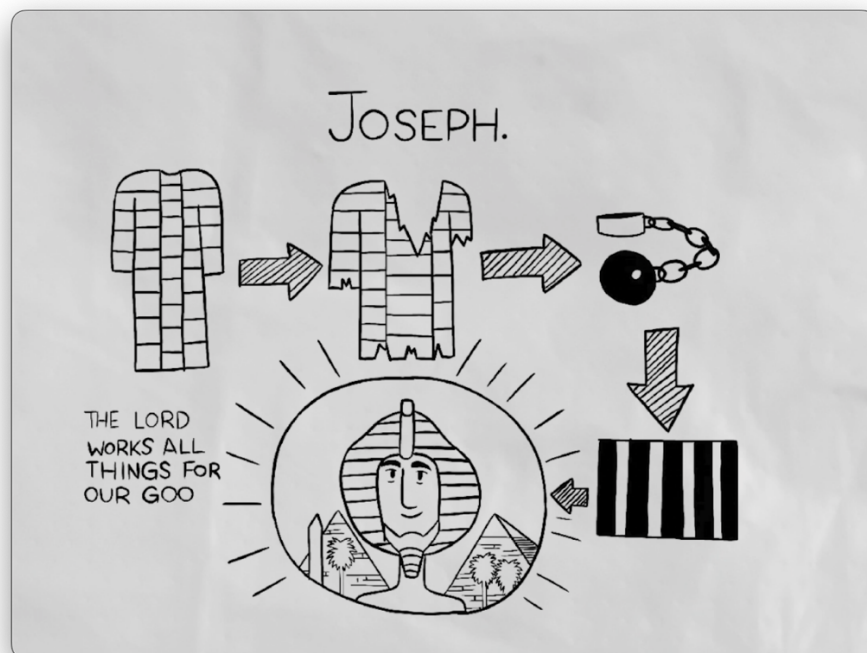
FIGURE 30: (00:33)



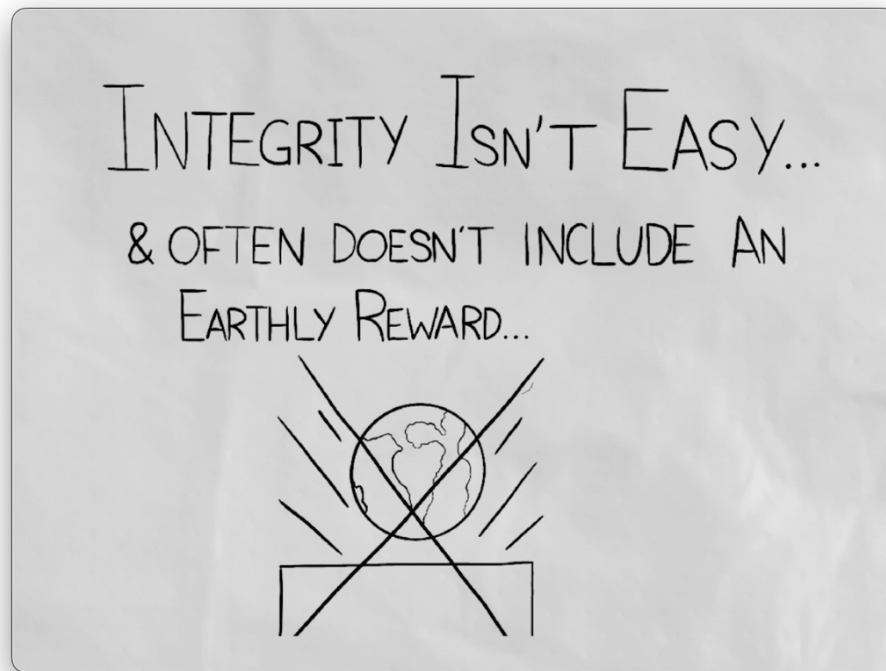
FIGURE 31: (00:41)



**FIGURE 32: (00:52)**



**FIGURE 33: (1:02)**



**FIGURE 34: (1:07)**



**FIGURE 35: (1:14)**



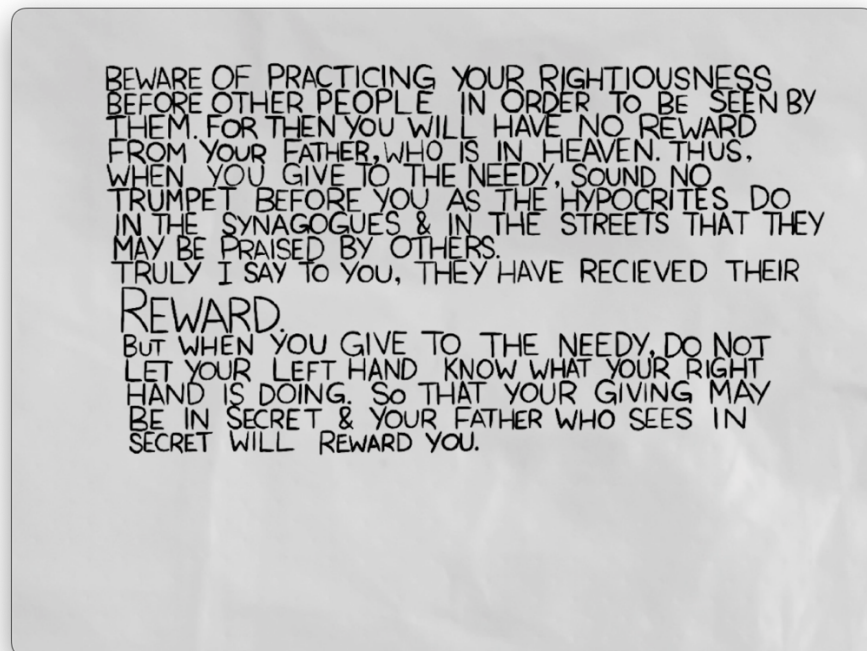
**FIGURE 36: (1:22)**



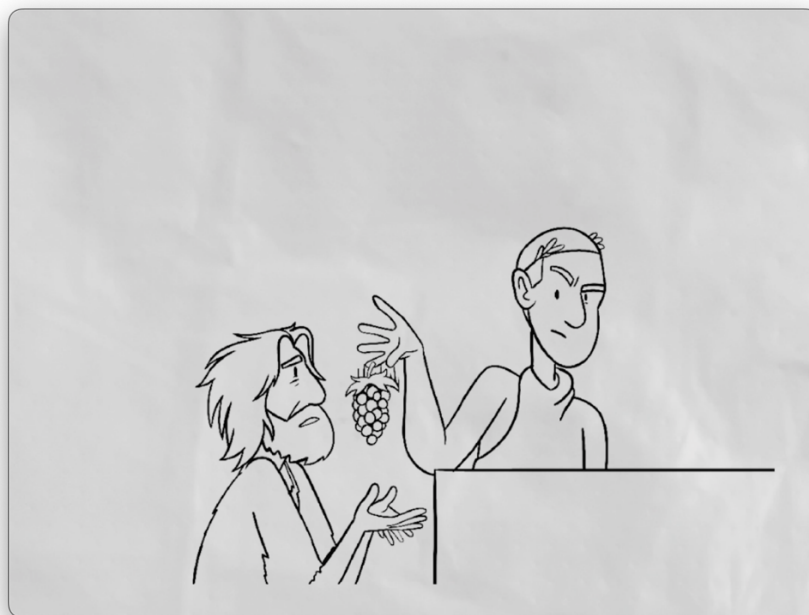
**FIGURE 37: (1:32)**



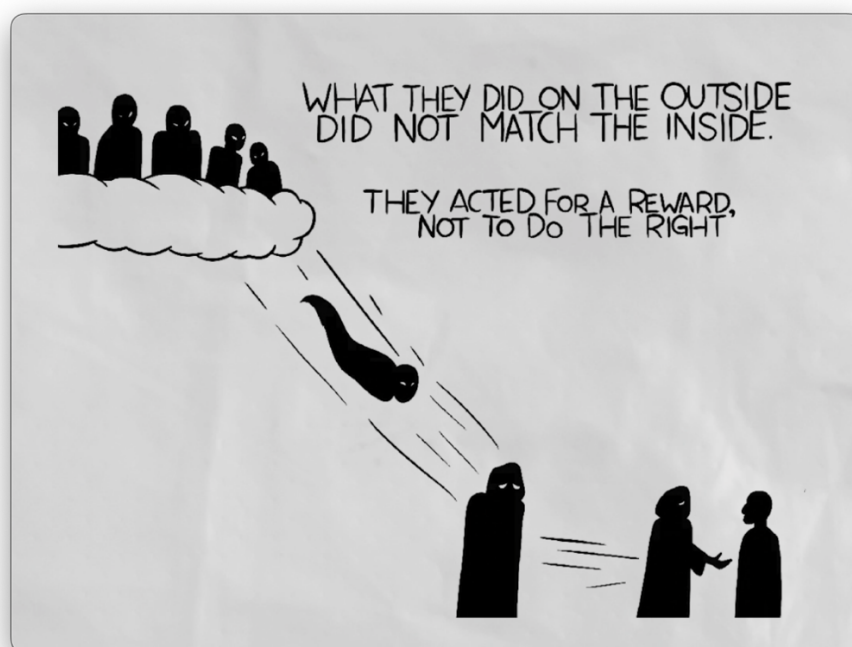
**FIGURE 38: (1:47)**



**FIGURE 39: (2:18)**



**FIGURE 40: (2:48)**



**FIGURE 41: (3:11)**

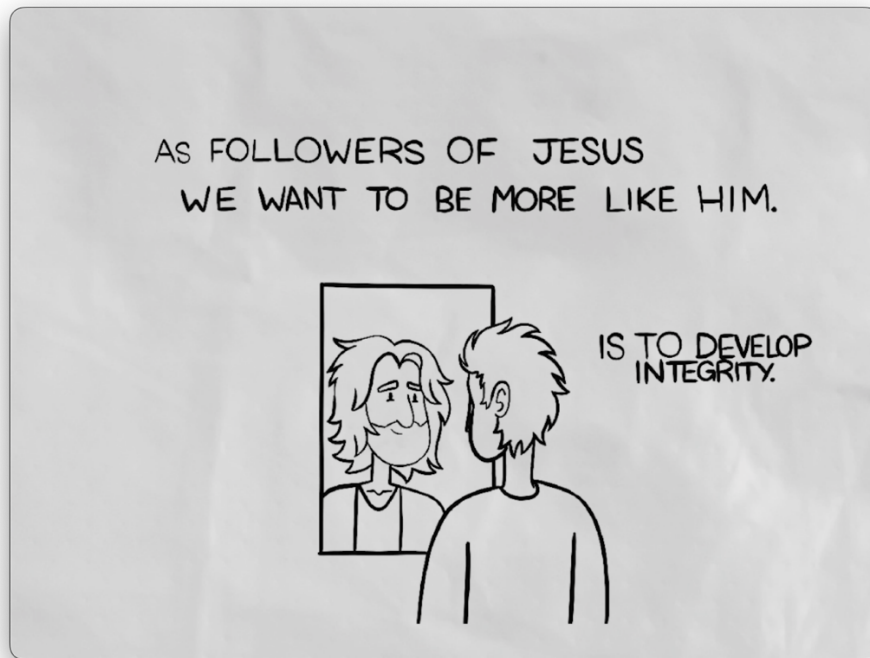


FIGURE 42: (3:37)

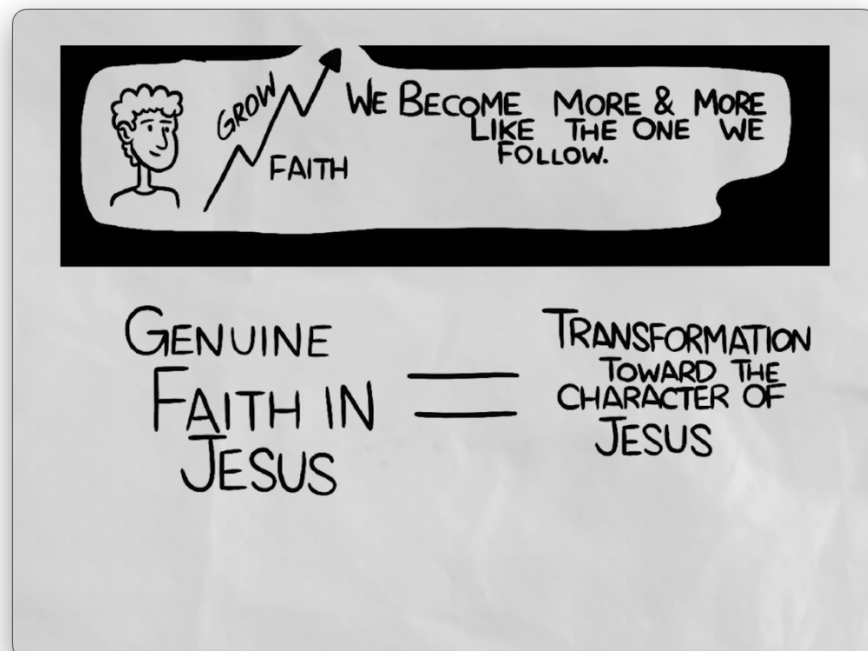


FIGURE 43: (4:13)

## Assessment

1. Three staff members will use four sessions and subsequent discussions to evaluate the digital content, the mentoring relationship, and the experiential learning via a 5-point Likert Scale.

The responses of three mentors to this quality benchmark scored very high for the digital presentation, the meetings between mentor and mentee, and the time serving in ministry. Each mentor understood that the project being developed would be a tool they will use in future roles, so they assessed from a personal perspective of future usage. The quantity of four sessions listed in the benchmark above was not met due to the greater than anticipated amount of time needed to produce each animated video. When the benchmark was created I did not understand how long the drawings would take. All the animation is hand-drawn on an iPad using the *Procreate* app. It has become clear that one session takes three to five weeks to complete, depending on the length of the script. Since only one animated session was completed by December of 2022, this benchmark will apply as an important gauge when all eight sessions are complete. Future use of this benchmark is found in the Launch Plan. The iterative use of the material plays a vital role in refinement and applicability to the development process. One potential challenge relates to needed changes to the digital material. Depending upon the scale of edits needed, the final version of the eight sessions may be delayed from my Launch Plan goals.

2. The three mentees in Benchmark 1 will evaluate the digital content, the quality of the mentoring sessions, and the experiential learning via a 5-point Likert Scale. (The mentees will be asked the same questions as above.)

This quality benchmark was applied to Session One in December of 2022 and will be applied as part of the evaluation in the second half of 2023 after the eight sessions are complete and loaded onto the app and website. The scores reflected high marks for effectiveness of digital content, meeting with a mentor, and the experience of serving. In addition, all the scores with participants received high marks. This result causes me to wonder if people are reluctant to share negative aspects. That question leads me to desire an additional way to receive mentee feedback that reflects critical engagement with all aspects of the process. I assumed the anonymous nature of the feedback would allow for critical comments, but none have manifested to this point. Perhaps when a larger group of participants journeys through the app process, it will produce a more helpful critique.

3. The course retention rate of those who begin the project process will be 90%.

One reason for rethinking the development of new leaders pertains to the high drop-out rate of former strategies that entailed traditional methods of lecture, reading, and note-taking. Anecdotally, most of those who did not complete prior leadership development methods skewed toward the younger demographic. The anticipation of this success

benchmark demonstrated by a high retention rate would confirm newfound effectiveness. A hypothesis of this project seeks to discover the improved engagement with Millennials and Gen Z through communication that speaks in a digital native language. Should the retention rate not meet the 90% goal, I will survey those who did not complete the project process to determine a motivation for ending the process before completion.

4. After the first year of implementation, our church will see a 20% increase in leadership development over the previous year. (Currently, and for the last several years, we have tracked new leader development. At Washington Heights Church, we define a new leader as: "someone who is filling a role of making a ministry happen and/or leading others on a team." To be counted as a new leader, they cannot have served as a leader within the last year.)

The only way to reach this lofty success benchmark goal relies on the app's anticipated usage across the spectrum of our staff. Currently, the Pastor/Director staff at Washington Heights Church contains eleven people. If each of those staff members journeyed with three people through the process in one calendar year and assisted the participants in finding a place of ministry and an expectation of future leadership, this benchmark would be met.

5. The Regional Director of our association of churches will offer and promote the app within the region.

The initial response to this future quality benchmark after viewing Session One was very positive. I anticipate support to present the app at the Annual Meeting of regional churches in September of 2023. In our region, there are fifty-one churches. Each year, roughly half of the region's churches attend the Annual Meetings in Colorado. Beyond our region, Venture Church Network has five other regions for potential growth. Nationally, our association of churches contains one thousand and thirty-four churches. The Director of our Rocky Mountain region lending his support will be vital to national exposure and growth.

# Project Launch Plan

## Doctoral Project Description

NPO statement: The church needs to develop digital learners into new leaders for the next generation.

My doctoral project will produce an app that onboards new believers toward future leadership within the church. The core principles of the project are original digital content, processed in a relational context while learning experientially. Eight sessions will introduce someone new to the Christian faith through content illustrated by accompanying video. The future leader will serve in a ministry context while journeying through the sessions. The app's content and the ministry experiences get processed with a mentor who currently leads in ministry. A website is needed to support the app's operation and will be developed concurrently with the project.

The research portion of my project revealed the pervasive nature of the current digital shift, the growing number of people unfamiliar with the Christian faith, and the value of active learning. The church cannot primarily rely on quality written content to develop new leadership in light of a digital shift. A growing need exists to speak with a digital voice in the context of relationships and on-the-job learning. A multi-faceted approach to leadership development promises effectiveness in this cultural moment.

## Audience

The primary audience for my doctoral project targets new believers with a background devoid of experience or knowledge of the Christian faith. In my ministry context, most people who are new believers come from a Latter Day Saint (LDS) or unchurched background. In America, the number of people projected to grow up without engagement in the Christian faith will compose the majority within the next few decades.<sup>5</sup> For those new to the Christian faith, future leadership presents development needs requiring an onboarding strategy that narrows the gap and guides the way from new beliefs toward future church leadership.

The primary means of engaging participants to explore future leadership rests with existing ministry leaders. The app offers one tool to existing leaders to develop future leaders. A leader invites a prospective future leader to journey through the eight sessions with him or her. The process of viewing sessions, answering relevant questions, dialoguing with a mentor, and serving in ministry allows for customized leadership development.

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<sup>5</sup> "Modeling the Future of Religion in America," *Pew Research Center*, September 13, 2022, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/09/13/modeling-the-future-of-religion-in-america/>.

## Development Plan

Date	Phase or milestone	Key goals/ deliverables	Key assessment metrics
March – June 2023	Consult and approve the completion of drawings for the five remaining digital sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install the app's completed digital content</li> <li>• Establish tracking metrics for app and website</li> <li>• Roll out mentor job description</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• App downloads</li> <li>• Website visits</li> <li>• Mentor and participant user evaluation</li> <li>• Mentor feedback on job description</li> </ul>
July – August 2023	Complete ten participant journeys through all eight sessions with mentoring and serving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5-point Likert evaluations from mentors and participants</li> <li>• Revise scripts, digital content and/or questions</li> <li>• Capture feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Church Director evaluation regarding further usage within churches of our region</li> <li>• Initial evaluation of Session One contained in Appendix F</li> <li>• Mentor evaluation about effectiveness of the material</li> </ul>
September, 2023	Present the Project app at the annual gathering of regional churches in Estes Park, Colorado, pending approval by the Regional Church Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize the Pecha Kucha as the intro to the presentation</li> <li>• Consult with churches that commit to the app</li> <li>• Post mentor job description on the app</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal: 10% of churches attending churches commit to using the app</li> <li>• Solicit feedback from participating churches and add to a master list of edits</li> </ul>
October – December 2023	Final edits to sessions, questions, and mentor job description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capture learning and review from Washington Heights Church and regional churches</li> <li>• Itemized list of edits to incorporate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track website visits</li> <li>• Track app downloads</li> <li>• Mentor/Participant feedback gathered at Washington Heights Church</li> <li>• Regional churches' feedback gathered</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edited animations to animator by Nov. 1</li> <li>• App/website corrections to website manager by December 1</li> </ul>	
January - June 2024	Completed app rolled out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review form and content by participating mentors</li> <li>• Post app on Google Play and Apple App Store by Feb. 1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Random survey of those who download the app for the first time</li> <li>• Track repeat use of the app (are people using it more than once)</li> </ul>
Early November 2024	Full Year Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize Project Plan for 2025, including a revised definition of the scope</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidenced-based plan for application to other regional churches and denominations</li> </ul>

**TABLE 1: DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

### Development Process

The development process for my project relies on iterative use and feedback from mentors and participants. Past evaluations have shaped the present questions following specific videos and the mentor job description. As detailed in the Development Plan, the development process will seek regular evaluations before the public rollout of the app and after its completion. I expect, and welcome adjustments throughout the development process, as the overriding goal is to develop a tool of maximum efficacy.

I also anticipate a time when a significant change takes place in the content of the project. The topics for the sessions developed from stakeholder input, one-on-one interviews with experts in the field, and my leadership journey in my context. In a rapidly changing culture, a topic not currently included may supersede those now included. A potential challenge of that change relates to the animator as the hand-drawn image pertain to one individual and are unique, unlike images generated digitally with software. Therefore, I cannot guarantee that the same animator will be available to me when a change is needed.

The material created in my project mainly reflects the Intermountain West and the spiritual dynamics found there. If the app gains a broader audience in diverse parts of the country, there may be a lessening value to the topics chosen. My hope for success centers on the ability of mentors to customize the material to their respective contexts and culture.

The Regional Director of our Association of Churches will also provide valuable feedback and edits. As part of the Launch Plan and the benchmarks, the Session One and questions were sent to the Regional Director for feedback. His response for potential future use within the region provided a significant positive milestone in the development of the animation and the structure of the Project overall. His response came in the form of a letter which is presented in a Launch Plan Appendix that follows this Launch Plan.

# Appendix A— Milestone 1 The NPO Charter

## PERSONAL RESEARCH MANIFESTO

I commit to researching my NPO by trusting the research process, examining diverse opinions on the topic, and asking colleagues to hold me accountable for forming early conclusions and/or confirmation bias.

## NPO STATEMENT

The Church has an opportunity to develop digital natives into new leaders for the next generation.

## NPO SCOPE AND CONSTRAINTS

At the conclusion of this doctorate program, a practical, digital tool will be utilized within a church setting that develops Millennial and Gen Z followers of Jesus into leaders. The scope of this effort will test within one local church with the opportunity to be expanded into our association of churches, the Rocky Mountain Church Network. While difficult to quantify at this time, the boundaries, constraints, and costs will be assessed and maintained throughout the process.

## NPO CONTEXT

The initial context of my NPO will be in a Conservative Baptist church in Ogden, Utah. Millennials and Gen Z participants, ages 18 to 29, will make up the majority of those involved in the development of the NPO since they are digital natives. During the doctoral degree, our regional association, the Rocky Mountain Church Network, a regional subset of the national Venture Church Network, will also provide additional context for input and development of the project. The size of the individuals or groups participating in the project will vary with the type of the need in the process.

## ROOT CAUSES

One significant root cause for my NPO stems from a significant cultural shift to digital culture. The COVID pandemic greatly accelerated the shift already underway. Those raised in a digital world, digital natives, think, learn, and interact differently from older generations. The church's tried and true means of developing new leaders in the younger generations already has proven ineffective. The goal of leadership development remains the same, but the method of doing so needs to meet the new cultural reality in ways that speak the language of the new cultural reality. The present-day Church faces an urgent need to develop new, young leaders, as its future effectiveness rests with its leaders.

## DISCOVERY WORKSHOP STAKEHOLDERS

My Discovery Workshop stakeholders included a high school principal, an online teacher, two Gen Z staff members from my church, an InterVarsity leader from the local university, and someone who leads an online group through the church.

## ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

My one-on-one interviewees included a mega-church pastor and mentor to me, an author/former pastor/retired Director of the Rocky Mountain Church Network, and an author/former pastor/church consultant.

## 3-5 KEY BIBLICAL TEXTS

Biblically, I will examine leadership, explicitly focusing on Jesus' development of the disciples into leaders for the first generation of the Church. Specifically, I will examine John 1:35-51 for the theme of relationship/companionship in leadership development. I will study John 13:1-20 for the theme of leadership as serving. Ephesians 4:11-13 because it locates leadership development within the New Testament Church. I will also focus on Matthew 28:19-20 to clarify the ultimate goal of leadership, namely, the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

## ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Within my field of research, primary voices include Marc Prensky (MA), an educator with a specific focus on digital natives; David Kinnaman, the President of the Barna Group that collects data on trends and realities of ministry; Stephen and Mary Lowe (PhD), theologians and educators; and theologians Benjamin Forrest (EdD), Chet Roden (PhD), Don Howell (ThD), and Warren Bennis (PhD). Other research areas include the relationship between digital, relational, and experiential development of leaders within the church and secular arenas. A potential area of study relates the similarity in learning style between digital natives and oral learners worldwide.

# Appendix B– Milestone 2 NPO Topic Expertise Essay

## Introduction

The church in North America needs new, young leaders. While the necessity for spiritual leadership always exists, the current reality sounds an alarm. The majority of churches experienced a plateau or decline in the last two decades.<sup>6</sup> In addition to waning growth, large numbers of those in the two youngest generations regularly disengage with organized faith. In 2019, 64% of young adults who grew up in the church left at some point, many never to return.<sup>7</sup> The COVID pandemic promises to accelerate trends already underway. In the last year, one in three practicing Christians stopped attending church in-person or online.<sup>8</sup> The shrinking ranks of prospective new leaders among younger followers of Jesus necessitate an effective strategy to raise a new generation to lead the church forward.

Concurrent to the waning church influence among the young comes a significant shift in culture toward digital. Digital natives (born between 1995-2012), who only know the digital world, make up 24% of the population.<sup>9</sup> The church's ongoing need to engage and develop new leaders calls for a relevant platform. Jean Twenge surmises the profound changes in the emerging digital culture when she writes, "iGen is distinct from every previous generation in how its members spend their time, how they behave, and their attitudes toward religion, sexuality, and politics."<sup>10</sup> This paper explores the biblical, historical, and contemporary literature that informs an approach for developing digital natives into new leaders for the next generation of the church.

Leadership needs a definition since copious descriptions exist in the secular and spiritual arenas. Biblically, the challenge of a leadership definition results from a diverse amount of words translated as "leader." Robert Wayne Stacy notes that in thirteen modern English translations of the New Testament, forty-eight different words, phrases, or expressions get translated through the English

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<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey M. Jones, "U.S. Church Membership Falls Below Majority for First Time," *Gallup* March 29, 2021 accessed April 13, 2021 <https://news.gallup.com/poll/341963/church-membership-falls-below-majority-first-time.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> David Kinnaman and Mark Matlock, *Faith For Exiles* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2019), 15.

<sup>8</sup> Barna Group, "Barna: State of the Church," <https://www.barna.com/research/new-sunday-morning-part-2/>, accessed February 4, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Jean M. Twenge, *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy - and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood* (New York: Atria Books, 2017), 10.

<sup>10</sup> Twenge, *iGen*, 3.

words “leader” or “leadership.”<sup>11</sup> This paper will define leadership broadly according to the definition given by Robert Clinton, “A leader is a person with God-given capacity and God-given responsibility who influences a group of followers toward God’s purposes for the group.”<sup>12</sup> More specifically, a church leader’s influence includes oversight and shepherding of lives. In the New Testament, the two main semantic ideas most often connected with the concept of “leader” or “leadership” are governing and guiding.<sup>13</sup> Leadership within this essay will refer to a role a man or woman fulfills that may or may not include an office or a title.

## SECTION 1: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

### Leadership Development in the Biblical World

This section examines four key Bible passages that relate to the development of leaders in the life of Jesus and in the church. This study reveals two essential themes for developing new leaders, namely, relationship and experience. Leadership development for the church happens best in spiritual community, where gifts get applied, evaluated, and advanced.

#### **JOHN 1:13-35: AN INVITATION TO RELATIONSHIP**

The passage features the invitation to the first disciples, Andrew and John, and the response to recent testimony about Jesus.<sup>14</sup> The two men refer to Jesus as “Rabbi,” a term of honor given by a student to a teacher.<sup>15</sup> Herman Horne suggests that Jesus’ simple invitation, “Come and see,” extended the offer of companionship.<sup>16</sup> Jesus and His followers would spend the next three years together in many settings with the promise that Jesus would change them for His purposes. Jesus’

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Wayne Stacy, “A Concept Study: Leadership in the New Testament Greek,” in *Biblical Leadership*, eds. Benjamin K. Forrest and Chet Roden (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2017), 295.

<sup>12</sup> J. Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988), 127.

<sup>13</sup> Stacy, “Leadership in the New Testament Greek,” 296.

<sup>14</sup> Leon Morris, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), 39.

<sup>15</sup> D.A. Carson, “The Gospel of John” in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 155.

<sup>16</sup> Herman H. Horne, *The Teaching Techniques of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1978), 20.

new students would become the early church leaders and that outcome began with an offer to transformational relationship.

The day after inviting Andrew and John, Jesus calls Philip. (John 1:43). Jesus' invitation to Philip contained only a few words, "follow me." The word *akoloutheo* means "to come after."<sup>17</sup> The simple command takes on a technical term for student-teacher relationship through John's Gospel (8:12; 10:4; 12:26; 13:36; 21:19, 22).<sup>18</sup> Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini discern a progression toward leadership within the three-year ministry of Jesus. Seekers came to believe; believers became disciples, and when Jesus appointed certain disciples as apostles, they became leaders.<sup>19</sup> While all followers of Jesus are to experience spiritual formation, certain students grow into leaders who govern and guide.

### **JOHN 13:1-17: SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

The night of His arrest, Jesus gave His disciples an example to follow (John 13:15). As Leon Morris reports, "The public ministry of Jesus is over."<sup>20</sup> Apart from a few words spoken to others, Jesus' focus rests on the disciples. Jesus prioritizes and targets the preparation of those who will soon lead the coming church by teaching a visual lesson about servanthood.

Jesus washed the feet of His students to demonstrate serving as a core aspect of leadership. Merrill Tenney calls Jesus' actions "a voluntary humiliation that rebuked the pride of the disciples."<sup>21</sup> Servanthood demands humble action. Don Howell concludes, "greatness in God's kingdom consists in imitating the Son of man who came not to be served, but to serve."<sup>22</sup> Deliberate choices to give others preference over self, through menial acts of service, serve as proof of submission to

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<sup>17</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Fredrick Danker, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 36.

<sup>18</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *Anchor Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, vol. 29 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 78-79.

<sup>19</sup> Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 65-66.

<sup>20</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel of John*, 610.

<sup>21</sup> Merrill C. Tenney, "John" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 136.

<sup>22</sup> Don N. Howell, *Servant of Servants: A Biblical Theology of Leadership* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2003), 189.

God's call to servanthood.<sup>23</sup> Jesus focuses intentionally on the character and the resulting behavior in the life of those who lead on His behalf.

### **EPHESIANS 4:11-13: THE LOCAL CHURCH AND LEADERSHIP**

Within the church, God gifts some with leadership, and their ministry serves the church as a whole.<sup>24</sup> Four roles in the passage describe various leadership activities within the church. "Apostles" and "prophets" are elsewhere referred to as those who provide a foundation for the Christian church (Eph 2:20; 3:6). "Evangelists" refers to those who pioneer work amongst those who never heard the gospel. "Pastor" and "teacher" are grouped to suggest a complementary expression of the role found in the same person.<sup>25</sup>

The words in this passage do not exhaust the totality of roles given in the New Testament. Van Zyl lists, in addition to those noted in this passage, the following leadership roles: "teacher," "overseer," "elder," "deacon," "leader," or "leadership," and "assistant."<sup>26</sup> Whether these terms are distinct from one another, possess some overlap in function, or are synonymous serves as an ongoing debate.

This passage presents spiritual formation as a normative goal for all believers. Leaders serve to "equip" members of the church for ministry to the exclusion of none. Inferentially, potential new leaders surface from the ranks of those in the process of spiritual formation. Specific barriers can inhibit the progression of gifted people toward future leadership. Historically, by the early second century, the three functions of overseer, elder, and deacon, became offices that led to a distinction between the clergy and the laity.<sup>27</sup> More recently, the church mimics the secular culture in valuing academic training and degrees over gifts and character. Callahan reports,

As the education training and resultant number of degrees required to enter various professions were increased in the culture at large, the church likewise upped the ante and matched the culture degree-for-degree. When a college degree became important in the culture, a number of

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<sup>23</sup> Howell, *Servant of Servants*, 201.

<sup>24</sup> A. Skevington Wood, "Ephesians" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 58.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Hermie C. van Zyl, "The Evolution of Leadership in the New Testament – A New Consensus?" *Neotestamentica* vol. 32, no. 2 (1998): 587.

<sup>27</sup> van Zyl, "The Evolution of Leadership," 586-587.

denominations said a college degree was virtually essential to enter the ministry in their denomination.<sup>28</sup>

The intentional development of new leaders requires current leadership to identify and nurture men and women who possess God-given gifts and aspirations for leadership. Academic training serves a valuable purpose but leadership gifts best reveal themselves applied within the context of a local church.

### **1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13: LEADERSHIP AND TESTED CHARACTER**

This essay interprets “overseer,” “elder,” and “pastor” as synonymous and interchangeable roles. The passage lists specific qualifications for elders and deacons in the local church. Observable character traits mark the lives of those who lead. The characteristics listed find expression and affirmation by observation over time. Most of the criteria listed aims at character, not competency.

Little instruction exists here or in other passages as to the structures of church leadership roles. Paul’s most significant concerns center on the spiritual maturity and emotional stability of those who occupy leadership roles in the church.<sup>29</sup> The character qualities listed belong to the following groups: 1) Reputation with others, including those outside the faith; 2) Marriage and family management; 3) Basic character virtues; 4) Self-management; and 5) Ministry skill (for elders only). Don Howell summarizes this passage,

When Paul sets forth the established criteria for church leadership, he says very little about function, role, personality type, or spiritual gifting. True, the elder must be one who understands and can effectively teach the Word of God. But Paul’s primary focus is on the underlying spiritual and moral constitution of the leader. Paul’s philosophy of leadership is character-grounded rather than role-defined.<sup>30</sup>

The development of new leaders within the church targets character and maturity as non-negotiable attributes. Biblical leadership criteria demonstrates application to life and not to knowledge or longevity. Observation and affirmation of character best happens in a relational context by those who know a prospective new leader personally.

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<sup>28</sup> Kennon L. Callahan, *Effective Church Leadership: Building on the Twelve Keys* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1997), 7-8.

<sup>29</sup> Howell, *Servant of Servants*, 287.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.

## Synthesis of Themes, Values, and Commitments

Jesus' teachings regarding leadership possess broad application. His development of the disciples involved function more than form, actions more than offices. Jesus stressed leadership character and faithfulness rather than personality type. The ultimate fulfillment of the local church under the guidance of its leaders rests on the great commission (Matt 28:19-20), namely, making new followers of Jesus. Leadership often equates to authority and power but of the over one hundred uses of the word authority (*exousia*), it rarely finds application in the context of church leadership.<sup>31</sup> The New Testament emphasis for leadership consistently calls for humble servanthood in the effort of an outward focus.

In Jesus' teaching and in the epistles, spiritual formation applies to all believers, while leadership applies only to some. This paper and the subsequent project focus on the development of new leaders. The task of raising new leaders resides with existing leaders. Jesus developed some of His followers into effective leaders in the first generation of the church. In order to follow Jesus' example, a relational environment proves essential to the task. In the course of living life together, a vast spectrum of people grew to lead effectively. Aubrey Malphurs notes the experiential context in which Jesus' disciples grew when he states, "They learned while doing."<sup>32</sup> Leadership includes information but must involve more than that. Leadership development contains "on-the-job" learning. Two non-negotiables for leadership growth include a relational and experiential context.

Biblically, leadership gets listed as a spiritual gift (Rom 12:8). The role of church leadership as listed in the epistles, however, does not mandate the presence of a leadership gift. By inference, leadership skills applied to certain roles with the presence of proven character exists as an option for local church leaders. In other words, some possess a God given ability to lead spiritually while others learn skills and behaviors that allow them to lead well also.

## SECTION 2: TOPIC HISTORY AND KEY VOICES

### A Brief History of Leadership Development in the Church

#### **POST-APOSTOLIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (100 - 500 CE)**

While the New Testament does not give a specific command about church structure, it contains passages with a plurality of elders, indicating decentralized leadership among multiple people with interchangeable titles.<sup>33</sup> Multiple leaders (elders, overseers, pastors) normatively served to govern,

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<sup>31</sup> Daniel J. Lewis, *Early Church Leaders* (Troy, MI: Diakonos, Inc., 2001), 17.

<sup>32</sup> Malphurs and Mancini, *Building Leaders*, 67.

<sup>33</sup> Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6; 20:17, 28; 21:18; Phil 1:1; I Tim 5:17; Jas 5:14; I Pet 5:1-2; Titus

guide, and develop gifts in the lives of followers of Jesus (Eph 4:11-13). The inference of the passages implies leaders are appointed from within each local church to serve that church. Immediately after the New Testament era, the scant information points to a plurality of leadership in local churches followed by growing institutionalizing church leadership structures due to internal and external pressures.

In *The Didache* (c. 100 CE), it states, "And so, elect for yourselves bishops (*episkopous*) and deacons who are worthy of the Lord, gentle men who are not fond of money, who are true and approved."<sup>34</sup> Presbyters attained their ruling position through election through the local church.<sup>35</sup> The internal concerns of doctrinal purity led to authority residing with a recognized group within the local church.

The letter *I Clement* (c. 96 CE) records numerous details concerning church governance. While the identity of Clement remains uncertain, he represented the church in Rome and wrote the Corinthian church to assist with issues springing from a recent turnover in leadership.<sup>36</sup> The author writes to persuade the reinstatement of wrongly deposed elders, affirming the pattern in Acts of bishops and deacons in various churches.<sup>37</sup> Clement's letter conveys a belief that the presbyterate exists as a permanent institution initiated by the apostles.

The early second century movement toward a hierarchy of leadership offices also appears in influential Church Fathers' writings. In letters by Ignatius in 106 CE, a distinction between the roles, titles, competencies, and statuses of deacons, elders, and bishops emerges.<sup>38</sup> Ignatius calls for obedience and loyalty to a local bishop for the sake of unity and purity of apostolic doctrine.<sup>39</sup> Heretical threats, such as Gnosticism, gave rise to the practical need of centralizing church leadership. Over time, a single "monarchical bishop" gave consent for baptisms, communion,

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<sup>34</sup> Didache, 15.1.

<sup>35</sup> Didache, 15.

<sup>36</sup> Michael J. Kruger, "Were Early Churches Ruled by Elders or a Single Bishop," Michaeljkruger.com, July 13, 2015, accessed March 4, 2021, <https://www.michaeljkruger.com/were-early-churches-ruled-by-elders-or-a-single-bishop/>.

<sup>37</sup> I Clement, 42.4.

<sup>38</sup> John H. Elliott, "Elders as Leaders in 1 Peter and the Early Church," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 64, no. 2 (January, 2009), 688.

<sup>39</sup> Lewis, *Early Church Leaders*, 24.

marriages and led a hierarchy of bishops, elders, and deacons according to that structure.<sup>40</sup> While a single bishop ruled, a body of elders served as advisors to the bishop, and a group of deacons assisted the local church in worship and pastoral visitation.<sup>41</sup> The pattern of church governance articulated by Ignatius became the standard throughout all churches by the end of the second century. The local bishop stood as the unchallenged leader of church life.<sup>42</sup>

The second and third centuries added increasing institutional structure to leadership positions. Irenaeus elevated the authority of the bishop to an even higher level than before. Irenaeus emphasized the episcopate as the locale of apostolic tradition and succession.<sup>43</sup> Along with the office, a special endowment of particular capability resided with the bishop. Irenaeus writes in *Against Heresies*, "Wherefore it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the church - those who . . . possess the succession from the apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth, according to the pleasure of the Father."<sup>44</sup> An ability unique to the position attributed correct teaching to a specific office.

Tertullian added an ontological distinction between the clergy and the laity when he wrote, "It is the authority of the Church that instituted the distinction between clergy and laity and the honor shown the ranks of the clergy made holy for God."<sup>45</sup> Tertullian also introduced the word "ordination" as a visible rite that elevated the clergy to a particular rank, status, and authority within the church.

The ranks of the clergy proliferated after 313 CE, when Constantine issued the Edict of Milan.<sup>46</sup> Not only did Christianity become socially acceptable, the clergy also experienced certain privileges with the state and its leaders, such as exemption from taxes. What began more as a movement

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<sup>40</sup> Lewis, 24.

<sup>41</sup> Ignatius, "The Seven Epistles of St. Ignatius of Antioch," *Catholic Culture*, accessed March 2, 2021, <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=3836>.

<sup>42</sup> Lewis, 24.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Oden, *Classic Christianity: A Systematic Theology* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 182.

<sup>44</sup> Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," 4.26.2., *New Advent*, accessed March 7, 2021, <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103426.htm>.

<sup>45</sup> Tertullian, "Exhortation to Chastity," 7.3 in *Teaching Authority in the Early Church*, trans. Robert B. Eno (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1984), 54-55.

<sup>46</sup> William A. Dreyer, "The Amazing Growth of the Early Church," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 68, no. 1 (2012): 4.

developed into an institution with more precise lines of demarcation between those who led the church and those who participated.

### **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN THE MIDDLE AGES (500 - 1500 CE)**

In 380 CE, the Roman Empire adopted Christianity as the official faith of the Empire. The age of Christendom ensued, and additional leadership structural changes unfolded as monasticism further divided the laity from positions of spiritual leadership. Augustine developed a lasting model called "three kinds of man."<sup>47</sup> The model distinguished between clergy, laity, and the religious, with the latter representing the most significant commitment to live a life of faith apart from the world's influence. Thereafter, truly devout followers of Jesus denounced the external world, including local churches, and voluntarily entered a monastery's strictly structured life.

Monasticism institutionalized a two-tiered culture within Christianity marked by obedience and self-denial. Mark Noll maintains, "Soon monks, or the 'athletes of God,' seemed to be pursuing the true Christian faith, while ordinary people in ordinary human circumstances were consigned to a subordinate spiritual status."<sup>48</sup> Clergy focused on the church's sacraments, leaving the laity as merely participants and unable to attain leadership roles.

During the Middle Ages, the laity became synonymous with one under authority and unconsecrated versus spiritual authorities and clerics.<sup>49</sup> The negative attitude toward the laity contrasted with the term *laos* in the New Testament where it referred to a member of the people of God, a person baptized, and, thus, denoted clergy and laity alike.<sup>50</sup> Lay members could take on minor orders to occupy lay ruler roles, but lay leadership subordinated itself to the clergy and the religious.

### **THE REFORMATION (1500 - 1800 CE)**

Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk, initiated the Reformation, articulating numerous theological concerns and their resulting practices. Among Luther's many offered corrections, the role of clergy and the laity occupied an important position. Luther affirmed a calling for all believers that allowed

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<sup>47</sup> Gert Melville, *The World of Medieval Monasticism: Its History and Forms of Life*, trans. James D. Dixon (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2016), 6.

<sup>48</sup> Mark Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 82.

<sup>49</sup> "Laity in the Middle Ages," in *Encyclopedia.com*, Cengage, accessed March 8, 2021, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/laity-middle-ages>.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

fulfilling various leadership roles in the church and the community.<sup>51</sup> According to Luther, ordination did not put the clergy into a distinct spiritual class or separate them from the laity. He insisted that “all Christians are of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference between them except that of office.”<sup>52</sup> In the Lutheran view, apostle, prophet, shepherd, and pastor/teacher exist as gifts of those who hold the office.<sup>53</sup> The inclusion of laity in authoritative positions exclusive to clergy prior opened opportunities for leadership for many.

John Calvin emphasized the doctrine of the priesthood of believers less than Luther. In his opus, *Institutes*, Calvin only mentions the laity in any priestly role in passing.<sup>54</sup> Christ alone served as a priest in Calvin’s theology, leading to a strong emphasis in the Reformed tradition on ordination and those who hold offices within the church. The suppressed role of the laity left authority within the local church to those in recognized leadership positions.

The Anabaptists took the most radical approach to abolish distinctions between the clergy and the laity, taking the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers to its greatest extent. Anabaptists practiced a community where every believing member possessed the same rights and privileges as ordained clergy.<sup>55</sup> The only distinction between believers existed in a calling upon those serving in ministry. Occupying positions of leadership could belong to many within the local church. Modern-day baptistic and Pentecostal churches continue to emphasize the priesthood of believers, encouraging all to serve. All churches possess a tradition that impacts who can lead and how authority gets applied.

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<sup>51</sup> George Lotter and Timothy Van Aarde, “A Rediscovery of the Priesthood of Believers in Ephesians 4:1-16 and its relevance for the Missio Dei and a Biblical Missional Ecumenism,” *In Die Skriflig*, 51, no. 2 (2017): 3.

<sup>52</sup> T. J. Wengert, “Priesthood, pastors, bishops: Public Ministry for the Reformation and Today,” Ian A. McFarland Ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 408-409.

<sup>53</sup> Lotter and Van Aarde, “A Rediscovery of the Priesthood of Believers,” 4.

<sup>54</sup> William A. Dreyer, “The Priesthood of Believers: The Forgotten Legacy of the Reformation,” *HTS Teologiese Studies* 76, no. 4 (October 1, 2020): 3.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

## Key Contemporary Voices in Leadership Development

This section examines influential voices known for leadership development inside and outside of the church. While not literally a key voice, the topic of digital natives and their emerging culture also receive attention.

### **JOHN MAXWELL**

An influential Christian voice, John Maxwell authored over fifty books on leadership. Maxwell stresses a critical issue in the topic of leadership development through acquired skills. Leadership resides naturally within those gifted to lead. Others, however, can learn the traits that comprise the raw materials of leadership. When leadership learning and desire combine, leaders develop.<sup>56</sup> The principle of learned leadership exists not only in the church culture but also in secular culture. For example, Nancy Koehn detailed the development of five influential American leaders and she concludes, "these leaders were made. They were not born. Nothing was genetically or divinely ordained about what they accomplished, or how they motivated other people to meet serious challenges."<sup>57</sup> While both the spiritual and the secular arenas refer to leadership as a gift, both affirm acquired leadership behaviors that produce personal leadership growth.

### **ROBERT GREENLEAF**

Robert Greenleaf worked in the corporate world and made the term "servant-leadership" standard in secular organizations. His theoretical framework argues for a leader's primary motivation and role as serving others. With intentionality, Greenleaf combined two seemingly contradictory words in order to challenge the common perception of leadership. The concern for the wording of his organizational theory reflected in his article, "*The Servant as Leader*," demonstrates his emphasis on service before leadership.<sup>58</sup> Current Executive Director of the Servant-Leader Center, Larry Spears, defines servant-leadership as "a model which puts serving others as the number one priority. Servant-leadership emphasizes increased service to others; a holistic approach to work; promoting a sense of community; and the sharing of power in decision-making."<sup>59</sup> In his book,

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<sup>56</sup> John Maxwell Company, "How Leaders Develop," May 2, 2012, accessed March 22, 2021, <https://www.johnmaxwell.com/blog/how-leaders-develop/>.

<sup>57</sup> Nancy Koehn, *Forged in Crisis: The Making of Five Courageous Leaders* (New York: Scribner, 2017), 6.

<sup>58</sup> Robert K. Greenleaf, "The Servant as Leader," accessed March 21, 2021, [http://www.ediguys.net/Robert\\_K\\_Greenleaf\\_The\\_Servant\\_as\\_Leader.pdf](http://www.ediguys.net/Robert_K_Greenleaf_The_Servant_as_Leader.pdf), 4.

<sup>59</sup> Carol Smith, "Servant Leadership: The Leadership Theory of Robert K. Greenleaf," December 4, 2005, accessed March 15, <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/36326496/the-leadership-theory-of-robert-k-greenleaf-carol-smith-home-page>, 4

*Servant Leadership*, Greenleaf states his thesis as “more servants should emerge as leaders.”<sup>60</sup> A servant-leader desires to serve first, followed by an aspiration toward leadership.<sup>61</sup> In contrast to those who desire to lead first, the servant-leader seeks meeting the needs of others. Greenleaf offers a straightforward test to discern servant-leadership: are those served growing as people marked by increased wisdom, freedom, autonomy, and benefit to the underprivileged?<sup>62</sup> Rather than focusing on specific leadership techniques, servant-leadership emphasizes core personal characteristics such as listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.<sup>63</sup> Of those ten core principles, a commitment to the growth of people, or, putting followers first, stands as the defining characteristic of the servant-leader organizational theory.

Greenleaf discovered Quakerism at the age of thirty, an expression of Christian faith that influenced already developing thoughts on service and authentic leadership.<sup>64</sup> His leadership theory echoes the less structured movement described in the New Testament. Writing specifically about spiritual leadership, Greenleaf states, “This is the essence of religious leading ... to bring people together and sustain them as an effective force for the building of faith as trust under conditions in which powerful forces may be operating to destroy that faith.”<sup>65</sup> He argues for raising many servant-leaders who stand against the destructive forces of their day. In doing so, Greenleaf contends for character over hierarchy, the team over the individual, and purpose over pleasure.

### **PETER NORTHOUSE**

University professor and author Peter Northouse ranks highly among those seeking to understand, communicate, and develop leadership. Northouse defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.”<sup>66</sup> He views leadership as a

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<sup>60</sup> Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 10.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>63</sup> Larry Spears, “Ten Characteristics of a Servant-Leader,” *The Spears Center for Servant-Leadership*, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://www.spearscenter.org/46-uncategorised/136-ten-characteristics-of-servant-leadership>.

<sup>64</sup> Robert K. Greenleaf, “The Servant as Religious Leader,” in *The Power of Servant Leadership* ed. Larry Spears (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc., 1998), 112.

<sup>65</sup> Greenleaf, “The Servant as Religious Leader,” 115.

<sup>66</sup> Amber Johnson, “Five Leadership Theories and How to Apply Them,” *Benedictine*

complex idea with many dimensions. The facets of leadership include traits, abilities, skills, behaviors, relationships, and processes.<sup>67</sup> Northouse writes extensively about many aspects of leadership, but space in this essay focuses on two themes, the development of leadership skills and servant leadership.

Leadership skills result from learned competencies that allow a leader to influence others. Northouse divides core leadership skills into three categories: administrative skills, interpersonal skills, and conceptual skills.<sup>68</sup> Administrative skills include the aspects of running an organization in a way that accomplishes its purposes and goals. Administration includes planning, organizing work, assigning work to the right person, and aligning work activities for maximum effectiveness. Interpersonal skills help a leader work effectively with followers, peers, and supervisors to achieve the organization's goal.<sup>69</sup> More specifically, interpersonal skills include social perception, emotional intelligence, and managing conflicts.

Conceptual skills refer to the ability to work with ideas and concepts. Included in this skill, solving problems, planning strategically, and vision casting marks a successful leader. Northouse writes, "Through practice and hard work, we can all become better leaders by improving our skills in each of those areas."<sup>70</sup> Leadership traits come naturally to some. Others, through intentionality learn leadership skills.

Northouse also writes about servant-leadership as a behavior. He introduces antecedent conditions that allow servant leaders to flourish: context and culture, leader attributes, and follower receptivity.<sup>71</sup> Context and culture refer to the varying dynamics within organizations. Ethnic cultures also vary and affect the ease or difficulty in establishing a servant-leadership culture.

A leader's disposition and qualities naturally influence the servant-leadership process. Northouse cites emotional intelligence as a significant attribute for a leader implementing a servant-leader

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University, August 15, 2017, accessed March 25, 2021, [https://cvdl.ben.edu/blog/leadership\\_theories\\_part1/](https://cvdl.ben.edu/blog/leadership_theories_part1/).

<sup>67</sup> Peter G. Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Thousand Oaks: CA, SAGE Publications, 2017), 9.

<sup>68</sup> Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership*, 118.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>71</sup> Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* 8<sup>th</sup> edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2019), 357.

culture of the many aspects of leadership traits.<sup>72</sup> Emotional intelligence includes a leader's ability to govern one's feelings, beliefs, and internal states of the self and their followers. He cites a study by Sousa and van Dierendonck that determined humility more impactful to the servant-leader regardless of their position within the organization.<sup>73</sup>

### **PATRICK LENCIONI**

Writing primarily to the business world, Patrick Lencioni stresses organizational health. His principles found application within the church culture through church leadership seminars and podcasts. Each of Lencioni's twelve books presents a vital theme meant to increase effectiveness through reducing politics, confusion, and dysfunction and increasing clarity, alignment, and productivity.<sup>74</sup> His thesis in *The Advantage* states, "The single greatest advantage any company can achieve is organizational health. Yet it is ignored by most leaders even though it is simple, free, and available to anyone who wants it."<sup>75</sup> Rather than focusing on finances, strategies, technology, or other topics for organizations, Lencioni states, "It is teamwork that remains the ultimate competitive advantage."<sup>76</sup> Lencioni's two main emphases will be examined in more detail, namely, building a unified team and pursuing leadership for the right motives.

Lencioni believes high functioning teams get built through relational and communication principles, not through sophistication or innovation. He cautions, "The fact is, building a leadership team is hard. It demands substantial behavioral changes from people who are strong-willed and often set in their ways."<sup>77</sup> Rather than focusing first on the structural aspects of organizations, Lencioni articulates a fundamental need to build trust. Trust must include vulnerability by team members that acknowledge mistakes, weaknesses, failures, and needs for help.<sup>78</sup> Showing vulnerability proves difficult amongst leaders raised and trained to project confidence, capability,

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 357.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 357-358.

<sup>74</sup> Patrick M. Lencioni, *The Motive: Why So Many Leaders Abdicate Their Most Important Responsibilities* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 2020), 141.

<sup>75</sup> Patrick M. Lencioni, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 2012), 1.

<sup>76</sup> Patrick M. Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 2002), 12.

<sup>77</sup> Patrick M. Lencioni, "The Trouble with Teamwork" *Leader to Leader Institute* 29 (Summer 2003): 35-36.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 36.

and strength. The importance of trust not only ranks high but proves essential for Lencioni. Writing about trust, he claims, "it is by far the most important five (behaviors) because it is the foundation for the others. Simply stated, it makes teamwork possible."<sup>79</sup>

Pictured as a pyramid, built from the bottom-up, each issue lays the groundwork for the next. On a foundation of trust, healthy conflict creates the environment for commitment by a group. Ambiguity hinders commitment due to confusion about the direction or goal.<sup>80</sup> Commitment born from clarity allows for accountability toward the agreed-upon goal. Finally, results provide an assessment of the team's effectiveness.

Lencioni's latest contributions to leadership as it pertains to effectiveness in organizations center on the leader's motivations. In his introduction of *The Motive*, he contends:

the primary motive for most young people, and too many older ones, is the rewards that leadership brings with it. Things like notoriety, status, and power. But people who are motivated by these things won't embrace the demands of leadership when they see little or no connection between doing their duties and receiving those rewards. They'll pick and choose how they spend their time and energy based on what they are going to get, rather than what they need to give to the people they're supposed to be leading. This is as dangerous as it is common.<sup>81</sup>

Over the years, Lencioni observed certain leaders who tackle the hard aspects of leadership and others, often quite capable, who abdicated vital leadership aspects. He discerns only two motives that drive people toward leadership. First, some want to serve others, doing whatever the task requires for the wellbeing of the people they lead. They understand the cost and make the sacrifices necessary for the sake of their team and its purpose. He sees no reason to praise someone for being a "servant leader" because Lencioni does not believe another leadership option exists.<sup>82</sup> His description of leadership bears a strong resemblance to Jesus' challenge to His disciples that greatness results from serving (Mark 10:43).

A second leadership motive seeks the rewards of leadership. A position gets viewed as a prize for hard work. The rewards-centered motive thwarts effective leadership because the uncomfortable or tedious responsibilities that only a leader performs get left undone. Leadership avoidance leaves a team without direction and guidance. A false belief that their role only includes convenience and enjoyment leaves numerous important leadership tasks unfinished. Superior leadership skills

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<sup>79</sup> Lencioni, *The Advantage*, 37.

<sup>80</sup> Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 136.

<sup>81</sup> Lencioni, *The Motive*, 13.

<sup>82</sup> Lencioni, *The Motive*, 143.

without the proper motive create a dangerous potential for dysfunction toward any desired goal or purpose.

Lencioni's discernment about motivation echoes biblical criteria. I Timothy 3:1 states, "The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task." Aspiration, or motive, for leadership in the local church must manifest itself in the person seeking the role's responsibility. On some level, a person must desire leadership.

### **DIGITAL NATIVES (1995 - PRESENT)**

Educator Mark Prensky crafted the phrase "digital native" in 2001 to describe a generation growing up immersed in technology. Prensky wrote, "Our students today are all "native speakers" of the digital language of computers, video games, and the internet . . . They've been networked most or all of their lives. They have little patience for lectures, step-by-step logic, and 'tell-test' instruction."<sup>83</sup> Immersion in technology makes a significant impact on the lives of those who use it. Donald Tapscott notes technological outcomes for digital natives as a shorter attention span,<sup>84</sup> and a worldwide youth generation.<sup>85</sup> Tim Elmore describes digital natives as the first generation that does not need leaders to access information.<sup>86</sup> While every generation differs from the preceding one, digital natives present more than a typical generation gap.

Research shows generational differences include physical distinctions. Those immersed in technology experience unique wiring of the brain. Tapscott wrote, "Children think differently from the rest of us . . . it's as though their cognitive structures were parallel, not sequential. This is one way that digital immersion has literally rewired brains under 40."<sup>87</sup> He goes on to say, "Evidence is mounting that Net Geners process information and behave differently because they have indeed develop brains that are functionally different than those of their parents. They're quicker, for example, to process fast-moving images than their parents."<sup>88</sup> Carolyn Crist adds, "Data from the same University of California at Los Angeles brain institute . . . says that Digital Natives brains were

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<sup>83</sup> Mark R. Prensky, *From Digital Natives to Digital Wisdom: Hopeful Essays for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2012), 3-4.

<sup>84</sup> Don Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation Is Changing Your World* (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2009), 32.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 54-55.

<sup>86</sup> Tim Elmore, *Gen iY: Secrets to Connection with Today's Teens & Young Adults in the Digital Age* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 125.

<sup>87</sup> Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital*, 29.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 21.

more actively engaged while scrolling through a webpage than while reading printed text. Social interactions, friendship, and civic activities may operate differently in the brain too.”<sup>89</sup>

Culturally, Jean Twenge lists ten characteristics exhibited by digital natives. She writes about the extension of childhood into adolescence, vastly increased time with technology, a sharp decline of in-person social interaction, a steep increase in mental health issues, a decline in religion, desire for safety and waning civic involvement, new attitudes toward work, different boundaries for sexuality, and inclusiveness and a desire for equality.<sup>90</sup> As with every generation and culture, strengths and weaknesses exist. Positive aspects of digital native culture include innovation and independent thinking. Negative aspects include high anxiety and an overestimation of self-esteem.<sup>91</sup> In general, this new generation lives visually, creatively, through story. Digital natives expect non-hierarchical structures within organizations, including the church. Pastors and other leaders effectively reach digital natives as mentors and coaches rather than authority figures who make all the decisions.

Learning in a digital native culture happens interactively. Tapscott cites a case study that asks if internet screen time affects how Net Geners receive information best. He reports,

Researchers played the same newscast in four different ways – as a traditional radio newscast, as an online newscast played with one click, as an interactive Webcast where you click to get each news item, and as a Webcast that included links for details. Net Geners remembered less from the traditional newscast – told from beginning to end – than they did from the interactive versions that gave them a chance to click to hear the news or learn more details.<sup>92</sup>

In a digital culture, learning happens through participation, not observation. Twenge notes that any type of classroom setting “means catering to this short attention span, toggling among lecture, discussion, videos, and demonstrations.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Carolyn Crist, “On the Mind: What Science Says About Digital Natives,” *Pastemagazine.com*, April 24, 2017, accessed March 17, 2021, <https://www.pastemagazine.com/science/neuroscience/on-the-mind-how-companies-influence-us-with-brain/>.

<sup>90</sup> Twenge, *iGen*, 3.

<sup>91</sup> Jean M. Twenge, *Generation Me: Why Today’s Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled—and More Miserable Than Ever Before* (New York: Atria Publishing Group, 2014), 145.

<sup>92</sup> Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital*, 104.

<sup>93</sup> Twenge, *iGen*, 307.

A church culture steeped in an analog (print, lecture format) approach to teaching and leadership development needs to understand the colossal culture shift underway to engage a whole new way of thinking effectively. The goal for existing church leaders remains the same, to develop new, young leaders to govern and to guide the local church. How that task manifests itself in a digital age must speak a digital native language.

## SECTION 3: SYNTHESIS

### Areas of agreement

Leadership development in any organization performs a vital task for future success. The church of the twenty-first century faces a leadership crisis. A rapidly changing culture toward digital presents an additional challenge that may well define the next chapter of church history in North America. There is the potential to engage a digital culture relevantly or to allow that cultural shift to further distance the church from the youngest generations. Certain themes of agreement emerge from the literature.

First, the principles of leadership span the spiritual and secular realms. Many definitions of leadership exist, but as the emphasis by those in the corporate and church world reveal, servant-leadership principles prove effective regardless of the environment. To put it another way, leadership is leadership. Many behavioral similarities exist in the secular and spiritual leadership worlds. Leadership principles and behaviors transfer into all organizations.

Second, leadership development must not become an end unto itself. Regardless of its location, new leaders produce a result beyond their position and actions. In the secular sphere, leadership development produces monetary gain or greater effectiveness toward an organization's goals. The ultimate goal of new, young leaders in a church setting means greater effectiveness in fulfilling the Great Commission. In other words, new digital native church leaders will produce more followers of Jesus, more who experience spiritual formation, including the development of more leaders. A change in culture does not change the mission of the church.

Third, leaders across the spectrum recognize a massive cultural change to digital underway. Those who are "immigrants" to this new day must resist the temptation to keep past culture or techniques in practice. The digital age arrived quickly and promises to dominate North American culture for some time. David Kinnaman, President of the Barna Group, opines about the exodus of young adults from the church of their youth when he concludes, "the church is not adequately preparing the next generation to follow Christ faithfully in a rapidly changing culture."<sup>94</sup> Educators, such as Dr. Charles Kivunja, insist on a paradigm shift toward digital as an essential, not optional.<sup>95</sup> The church

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<sup>94</sup> David Kinnaman, *You Love Me: Why Your Christians Are Leaving Church . . . And Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 21.

<sup>95</sup> Charles Kivunja, "Theoretical Perspectives of How Digital Natives Learn," *International*

approach to spiritual formation and leadership development generally includes a master-teacher, specific content to be communicated, and a linear flow. By contrast, the digital age already offers self-learning through technology, with content freely available, and a non-linear, discussion-oriented environment. A digital culture demands innovations, not additions to previous methods.

### Tensions, Disagreements, and Tension Points

Due to a plethora of leadership definitions, a precise understanding of meaning and behaviors will aid any exercise of leadership.<sup>96</sup> In the church, developing men and women who govern over and guide the lives of followers of Jesus serves as an important goal. Amid the many expressions, servant-leadership, as depicted in the New Testament and applied in secular organizations, offers a biblical and effective strategy. Not only does servant-leadership imitate the example set by Jesus, but it also promises to create a fertile context in which digital natives thrive and grow.<sup>97</sup>

Biblically, leadership as a role and a practice receive more attention than its structure. History reveals that various church structures emerged for practical and spiritual reasons. Cultures inevitably shift, and strategies adapt in order to remain relevant. Various forms of church leadership structures claim biblical precedent. Rather than argue for a correct biblical leadership structure or development process, time and energy spent on servant-leader traits and development results aid the ongoing imperative of leadership development better.

### Gaps, Missteps, Scholarship Problems and Limitations

The study of digital native culture exists in the early stages as of the writing of this essay. Awareness of new findings helps the effort to remain relevant and effective in digital native leadership development. The urgency expressed toward change in the educational field by Prensky, Twenge, Kinvenja, and others does not find universal agreement. An ongoing debate about the future of educational principles and practices promises to continue in the years to come.

An area of the study discovered late in this essay writing process, the connection between digital natives and oral learners, may prove vital. Walter Ong pioneered studies on oral cultures where literacy did not exist.<sup>98</sup> Before the advent of the Internet, Ong wrote about the impact of technology

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*Journal of Higher Education* 3, no. 1 (2014): 108.

<sup>96</sup> For example, in his book *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*, John Maxwell describes characteristics that few, if any, leaders could manifest well in totality.

<sup>97</sup> Carol Smith, "Servant Leadership," 9.

<sup>98</sup> In 1971, Ong wrote about "technological man" entering a new world of sound through telephones, radio, and television in *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture*.

versus written means. Oral cultures in the developing world may offer insight into learning methods that prove effective in the digital, developed world.

## Conclusion

The explicit goal of developing new church leaders can take many forms and employ many strategies. The time for another shift in strategy grows increasingly apparent. Rather than a focus on a teacher, specific content, and analog means, the future of leadership development involves a relational context, experiential learning, and digital integration. If the church seeks to remain relevant, it must learn to speak a digital native language.

My denomination, the Conservative Baptist Association, currently trends toward decline.<sup>99</sup> A recent name change to Venture Church Network reflects an urgency to change. Changing a church culture extends far beyond changing a name. The platform through which communication occurs offers a large-scale opportunity to communicate relevantly. As Marshall McLuhan famously stated as early as 1964, “the medium is the message.”<sup>100</sup> The church and its leaders would do well to learn to use a new medium that enables them to speak to a new, digital language.

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<sup>99</sup> In a conversation with our regional Director, Stan Rieb, on November 15, 2020, he shared his concern about a lack of willingness for change in the vast majority of churches under his supervision. Change, he stated, amounts to “selling out to the culture” on the part of many pastors in the region.

<sup>100</sup> First cited in *Understanding Media: “The Extensions of Man.”*

# Appendix C—Milestone 3 Design Workshop Report

## INTRODUCTION

This Design Workshop Report captures the input, interactions, and ideas generated as part of a Design Workshop, held on November 13, 2021. Seven participants attended, an administrative assistant, and myself. The Workshop proved to be filled with energy and important additions to my project development.

## NPO STATEMENT

The church needs to develop digital natives into leaders for the next generation.

## NPO SCOPE AND CONSTRAINTS

The scope of this project seeks to address the issue of church leadership develop in a time of significant cultural shift toward digital. Based on past research and confirmed by the Design Workshop, the project will include three non-negotiables: 1) a digital platform; 2) a relational environment; and 3) an experiential learning application. As for boundaries, the project aims for specific development in leadership, not spiritual formation. While leadership includes spiritual formation, the goal is to develop people who oversee others in a spiritual role. A cost of the project will include outsourcing the production of the digital platform. I will provide all the content and design ideas but will not create the digital product.

## NPO CONTEXT

The context of my NPO will be the local church. I plan to implement the digital product in our church in northern Utah. In addition, I will offer the product to our regional Director who has consulted on this project. He oversees over fifty churches in the Rocky Mountain region and wants to provide more resources to churches for effectiveness among younger generations. One of my 1-on-1 interviewees also asked to see the completed project for possible application in his 8,000 attender, multi-site church. The primary target of the NPO is Millennials and Gen Z. Those two generations have only lived in a digital world. This project seeks to speak in a digital language, addressing a new cultural reality that will only grow influence as time proceeds. A digital product offers scalability, making it useful for groups of any size.

## ROOT CAUSES

Several root causes have emerged through the process of project development to this point. First, a switch to digital culture cannot be underestimated. Beyond creating a generational gap, the digital culture includes changes in brain formation and learning styles. Attempts to develop new leaders with outdated methods do not promise future effectiveness. Second, the church found success in the past from analogue approaches to spiritual formation, especially with print information and master-teacher formats. Development among digital generations will benefit from visual content, relational learning communities, and mentoring by established leaders toward potential new leaders. Third, millennials and Gen Z express an unwillingness by older generations for opportunities to lead. Digital natives learn well by doing, not simply knowing. One comment from the Design Workshop stated, "Give us something to do and let us own it." Viewing the new digital reality as yet another generation gap would prove detrimental to the church's efforts to raise up new, young leaders for the next generation.

## DEFINITION OF 'DONE'

The ultimate goal of this project will result in an actionable leadership development tool for implementation within a church or ministry context with digital natives.

## 3 BIG IDEAS

Big Idea 1: A digital platform for personal and small group interaction and personal experiential learning applications.

Big Idea 2: A digital platform for personal and mentor-led interaction with ministry specific applications.

Big Idea 3: A digital platform for personal and mentor processing with ministry capstone.

## 3 CONCEPT PITCHES

### CONCEPT PITCH 1:

Big Idea: Create a digital platform for personal and small group interaction and personal experiential learning applications.

Audience: Potential new leaders among the digital native generations (Millennials, Gen Z) who benefit from group learning.

NPO: The church needs to develop digital natives into leaders for the next generation.

Benefit: Potential digital native leaders develop in their "native language," emphasizing the communal learning impact. I benefit by learning the new digital native language.

Approach: Digital content in a small group context with experiential learning assignments engages digital natives in communal and actionable learning environments.

Risks: Irrelevant content, ineffective groups, and improper application all present risks.

Assumptions to test: I will be testing the impact of digital content, small group processing, and experiential learning.

Benchmarks of success: I will employ: a 5 point Lickert scale and self-reporting through a digital journal all seeking to evaluate digital content, group work, and experiential learning.

Other Approaches: Some ministries emphasize content (Navigators), and other emphasize relationship (InterVarsity), but I cannot find a ministry blend of digital content, a relational context, and experiential learning.

### CONCEPT PITCH 2:

Big Idea: Create a digital platform for personal and mentor-led interaction with ministry specific applications.

Audience: Potential new leaders among the digital native generations (Millennials, Gen Z) who benefit from personal engagement with a current ministry leader.

NPO: The church needs to develop digital natives into leaders for the next generation.

Benefit: Potential digital native leaders develop in their "native language," emphasizing the one-on-one mentoring impact. I benefit by learning what works in a digital culture.

Approach: Digital content gets processed one-on-one with a mentor followed by application within a ministry context.

Risks: Irrelevant content, ineffective mentoring, and improper application all present risks.

Assumptions to test: I will be testing the impact of digital content, mentoring relationships, and ministry specific learning.

Benchmarks of success: I will employ: a 5 point Lickert scale, self-reporting through a digital journal all seeking to evaluate content, mentoring impact, and applications.

Other Approaches: This approach most resembles the InterVarsity model which works primarily through relational development of new leadership.

### **CONCEPT PITCH 3:**

Big Idea: Create a digital platform for personal and mentor processing with ministry capstone at the conclusion of the mentoring process.

Audience: Potential new leaders among the digital native generations (Millennials, Gen Z) who need spiritual and personal direction before entering leadership roles.

NPO: The church needs to develop digital natives into leaders for the next generation.

Benefit: Potential digital native leaders experience spiritual direction and growth, emphasizing the one-on-one mentoring impact for future ministry leadership.

Approach: Digital content processed one-on-one with a ministry leader toward personal and spiritual direction with an end goal of a capstone in a ministry role.

Risks: Irrelevant content and a leader with inadequate skills to facilitate spiritual direction both present risks.

Assumptions to test: I will be testing the impact of digital content, spiritual direction, and ministry capstone.

Benchmarks of success: I will employ: a 5 point Lickert scale, self-reporting through a digital journal all evaluating the assumptions above.

Other Approaches: I am not aware of any other approaches like this. Specific small groups ("Deep Waters") aims to bring healing and spiritual direction in a community context, not through mentoring.

## DESIGN WORKSHOP STAKEHOLDERS

1. Staff member leading 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Grade ministry.
2. Staff member leading online ministry.
3. Online school teacher
4. Staff member in Children's ministry.
5. Member of InterVarsity chapter.
6. WHC High School student.
7. Attender who serves in our coffee store.

## ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

1. Former Regional Director for our church association
2. Lead Pastor of eight site mega-church.
3. Leader of a Missions organization

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lave, Jean. *Learning and Everyday Life: Access, Participation, and Changing Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

In a collection of essays, social anthropologist Jean Lave writes about the learning within the context of practice. The focus of the essays examines various accounts of work and learning, apprenticeship and real life. Lave's purpose is to offer a critical theory of practice. Her primary thesis centers on learning as a collective, transformative process of change within relational contexts of life. She examines two decades of studies in apprenticeship, offering focused input for my research about the topic. Lave's work includes a lot of research, making application to a actionable ministry context uncertain. This resource potential informs my efforts to evaluate experiential learning within the scope of my project.

Prensky, Mark. *Teaching Digital Natives: Partnering for Real Learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing Company, 2010.

Mark Prensky coined the phrase "digital native" and from an educator's perspective offers a new approach to learning that recognizes the need for new approaches to make learning relevant for younger generations. Prensky notes that digitally literate students excel in finding content and analysis through various types of media when teachers guide student learning, design their

teaching relevantly, and assess the quality of the learning. As a pioneer in studying the digital culture and its learning styles, this resource can build my knowledge of approaches to digital learning. One limitation of this resource pertains to its educational focus. Whether or not the principles apply to a ministry remains to be seen. This book promises to inform the changing dynamics of teaching and learning in the digital age.

Wenger, Etienne, Richard McDermott and William Snyder. *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002.

The focus of this book centers on systematically organizing and leveraging knowledge within a organization. Communities of practice form naturally around expertise and common interests and share knowledge informally. This book proposes a systemic approach of developing and integrating communities of practice into the strategy of the organization. Cases studies provide examples of the benefits and steps toward increased intentionality for benefit to the organization and the individuals within it. One of the limitations of this book includes its technical nature, making it potentially difficult to understand or apply. This research can inform the communal learning aspect targeted in my project.

Wurdinger, Scott D. and Julie A. Carlson. *Teaching for Experiential Learning: Five Approaches that Work*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2010.

This book examines multiple applications of experiential learning. The authors point out five keys to effective learning: motivation, moving beyond regurgitation of information, doing and applying for enhanced long-term memory, new skill sets for educational settings, and measurements of learning impact. The authors both come from an educational perspective and seek to evaluate the efficacy of various approaches to learning through action-oriented application. The educational context of this work limits the scope of the findings and demands a process that applies the findings to ministry. This book offers several approaches to experiential learning that can inform one of the non-negotiables within my project.

Guthrie, Kathy L. and Tamara Bertrand Jones. "Teaching and Learning: Using Experiential Learning and Reflection for Leadership Education." *Developing Students' Leadership Capacity* 140, (Winter, 2012): 53-63.

This scholarly article argues that experiential education and learning should find application within education focused on framing leadership. The scope of the article includes the field of higher education. The research seeks to determine student developmental levels and which learning methods prove most effective to ensure maximum student learning. This article can inform my understanding and evaluation of the experiential learning components within my project and the resulting attempt to quantify various methods' effectiveness. This article is short, leading toward a potentially limited amount of input to my project.

# APPENDICES FOR DESIGN WORKSHOP

## DESIGN WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

My Design Workshop took place on Saturday, November 13, 2021. Washington Heights Church (WHC) in Ogden, Utah served as the location. I am the Lead Pastor at this church. The Workshop took place from 9:00 AM until 1:00 PM MST. In addition to me and an administrative assistant, seven stakeholders attended the Workshop. The seven attenders included: 1) a twenty year old male staff member who oversees WHC's online church efforts; 2) a twenty-one year old male part-time staff member who leads WHC's ministry to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders; 3) a thirty-six year old female online school teacher; 4) a twenty-two year old male leader of the local InterVarsity ministry at Weber State University; 5) a twenty-four year old female staff member who serves in WHC's Children's Ministry; 6) a seventeen year old male high school student who attends WHC; and a twenty-six year old female who works in the service industry and attends WHC.

The agenda for the Workshop:

Welcome and introductions

Revisiting and reframing the NPO: what is the need and how did we get here?

Break

Opening game: 3-12-3<sup>101</sup>

Break

Exploration game: Elevator Pitch<sup>102</sup>

Exploration game: Help Me Understand<sup>103</sup>

Break

Closing game: \$100 Test<sup>104</sup>

Conclusion, Thanks, Dismissal

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<sup>101</sup> Dave Gray, Sunni Brown, and James Macanufo, *Gamestorming: A Playbook for Innovators, Rulebreakers, and Changemakers* (Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media, Inc., 2010), 78-79.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 166-169.

<sup>103</sup> Gray, Brown, and Macanufo, *Gamestorming*, 181-183.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 232-233.

The games served as the generators of ideas, input, and challenge to my unfolding project. The first game was called "3-12-3." The participants received three short phrases that seek to engage everyone and to generate as many ideas as possible at the outset of the Workshop. I created three teams and each team got three minutes to write down as many ideas to a phrase on a Post-It. After the three minutes expired, the team discussed together how to present their combined ideas as a rough concept to the other two teams. The three phrases included: 1) "Ways to develop leaders;" 2) "Tomorrow's church;" and 3) "Leadership traits."

The second game, "Elevator Pitch," challenges participants to insert wording into one sentence that conveys the project to someone inquiring about it. I created a template of the elevator pitch sentence structure for reference. Participants worked individually and wrote answers to each blank space on a Post-It. On the walls, each blank space had a flip-chart paper where the Post-Its were placed.

The third game, "Help Me Understand," invites participants to ask as many questions as possible that begin with the words: "Who?," "What?," "When?," "Where?," and "How?" This game seeks to discover additional issues that require attention, information, or answers. This exercise proved very helpful regarding issues surrounding the development of new, young leaders that I had not considered before that day.

The fourth and final game, "\$100 Test," asked the Workshop participants to allot a hypothetical \$100 dollars onto the major concepts of the project. The goal of this game seeks to rank concepts from the greatest value to the project to the least value. We discussed the major concepts together that emerged during the Workshop and the participants spent at least fifteen minutes trying to place values.

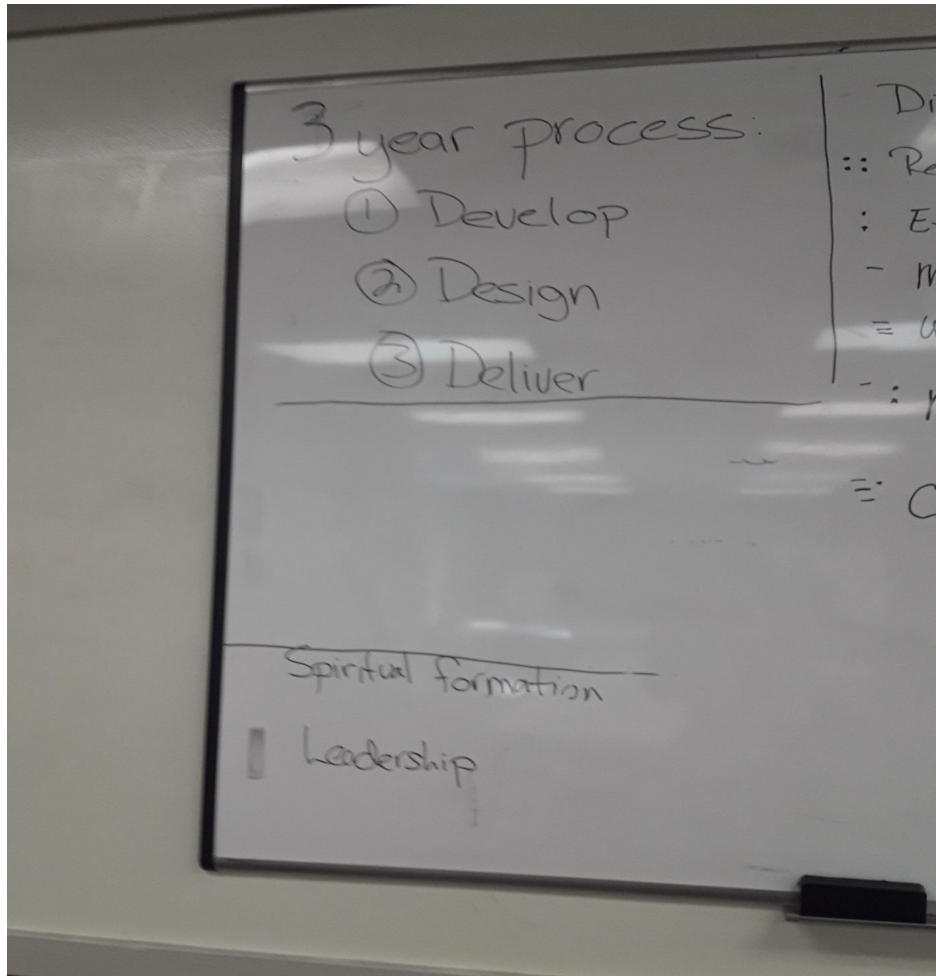
Likert 5-point scale to assess my Design Workshop:

Failure	Poor	Mediocre	Very Good	Outstanding
1	2	3	4	5

I would select a "4" as an overall assessment for my Design Workshop. The one aspect that keeps me from selecting a "5" is due to a repeated emphasis from the group to try to make the project all-encompassing and beyond any reasonable scope for the project. I felt tension as the facilitator between wanting to let the participants run with idea versus shutting down ideas that do not fit the scope of the project. All other aspects of the Workshop proved very effective. The feedback from the participants received high praise for the engaging format and energy created.

## DESIGN WORKSHOP DOCUMENTATION

In the introduction to the Workshop, an overview of the project development was shared and a conversation distinguishing leadership from spiritual formation. I also shared the three-year Portland Seminary process to producing a final project.



Opening Game, "3-12-3," First phrase: Generate as many ideas as possible to this phrase: "How to develop leaders." The ideas generated on sticky notes are represented below.

think tank	leadership small group	Training
Relationship	leadership class	finding already influential leaders and giving them leadership roles
Provide wisdom	find existing youth and elevate them to leadership	leadership outreach at local college
Give them tasks and guide them in completing it/them	Talk about challenging questions and topics w/ them	Personal Example
discover together leaders spiritual gifts.	Study bible w/ them	talking / developing a relationship w/ people / groups
clear vision of what a leader is	meet very often w/ them	working w/ older people

Podcasts	 Take them on the trips with the students to show the fun in it before they decide to commit.	encourage and equip people
Books	Show that it does not have to have high commitment rate (come when you can) (not obligated to go)	leadership courses
Videos	Mentoring	Advertise Outdoor activities

<u>identify a need.</u> leadership training <sup>digital</sup> ↳ invited by staff members <u>pool ideas</u> <u>quantified IMPACT</u>	Show the impact it has on students	Hands on experience
<u>Discipleship/Spiritual Formation</u> • Growing less experienced (younger) people by inviting them to join you in job or leadership opportunities. - Joining leadership meetings w/ interarsity before I was a leader	lead by example	Praying together
Main theme: <u>discipleship/spiritual formation</u> Growing less experienced (younger) people by inviting them to join you in job/leadership opportunities. Small groups → baby steps ↳ opening prayer ↳ scripture reading ↳ ice breaker ↳ facilitate discussion <b>*DWELL</b>	Personal Experience	① leadership training (digital) • staff initiated ② ↳ in-person pooling of ideas that put (think-tank) ↳ ACTION to fill need ③ <u>QUANTIFY the IMPACT</u>

invite them into your  
life and the things you  
do as a leader

Discipleship

12 mins - Create a 2 min presentation

Let them have a role model/example

Build the personal relationship  
- understand every leader can make mistakes  
or have their own issues

Assign them projects/tasks or engage and let  
them figure out how to get there  
With that personal relationship you will be more  
motivated to do it well.

Let them fail and learn by their mistakes.  
don't give them insight until after completion.

Let them fail

Working w/ <sup>younger</sup> ~~younger~~ age  
groups

~~working~~

Projects/tasks

Taking them w/ you  
at your job/leader things

Opening game, 2<sup>nd</sup> phrase: Generate as many ideas as possible to this phrase: "Tomorrow's church."

increased efforts that allow for more action and less head knowledge	Is it digital?	Relational
younger leaders	outreach to younger communities (Weber State)	Growing
growing population in on line church	collaboration w/ other local churches	Action oriented



More trips around  
country and world

Digitally equipped

Continually learning

Have more weekly events  
(like the landing on Tuesday nights)

Bible based

Community Centered

more connections  
~~between~~ with  
each other

Lots of projects to  
get people ~~get~~ involved

Livestreaming

website development  
with videos of what  
the church looks like  
(what you can expect)

VR services

more learning opportunities

VR church  
events

online services.

online serve  
(VR)  
projects

online small groups

Metaverse Campus /  
Ar Campus live time

Online Community/ies

tomorrow church

- needs to be better than yesterday  
improvement, should never  
remain steady.

- future of tomorrow is the younger  
demographic - should be aimed  
towards

Online! physical audiences are  
all 1 audience not two

Online interaction

Younger Demographic

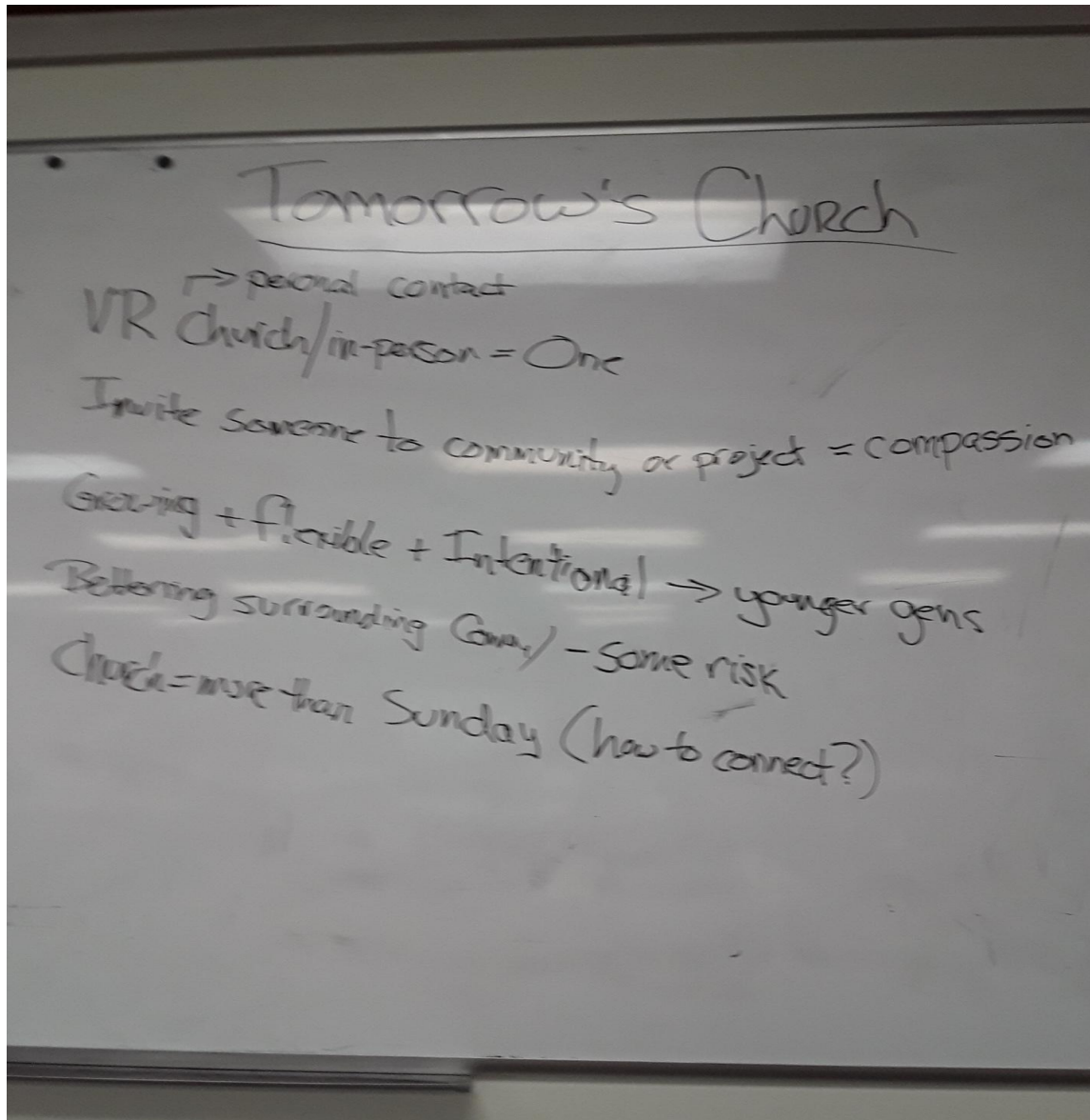
Flexibility

Digital and Physical Content

MISSIONS

community → 3 way  
connection  
phone call

A discussion about themes led me to put ideas on the whiteboard in an attempt to draw more meaning behind the sticky note ideas:



Opening game, 3<sup>rd</sup> phrase: Generate as many ideas as possible to this phrase: "Leadership traits"

Faithful	more connected with the world (not just the community)	inviting a friend to virtually attend church with you (share button) live
different than today	Missions team • if you invite a nonbeliever to a mission they go for free	greater use of digital means of communication
Change the <del>env</del> surrounding community	Set on Fire for the Gospel	Growing

ability to take ownership  
of area of leadership  
and know that failure  
is OKAY!

gets behind and lives  
out the mission of  
the church or organization

Vulnerability

lead by example

assertive, but not hostile

spiritual maturity

Flexible  
(not literally)

R. E. S. P. E. C. T.

willing to take criticism...  
good or bad.

been through struggles  
(divorce, substance abuse, addiction)

Relatable

Good to be around

compassionate

Excepring and understanding

Strong minded

social

Welcoming

Human

Open to Feedback	witty	casts vision ↑ clear
Caring	versatile	engaging
Relational	Willing to take risks, fail, and try again	dynamic
giving of time	non-judgmental	Strong vision
courageous	invested	Curious
knowledgeable	non-complainers	Reflective

dedication

diverse

vocal

outgoing personality

man of <sup>their</sup>~~their~~ word

good listener

Looking/seeking opportunities  
to be involved

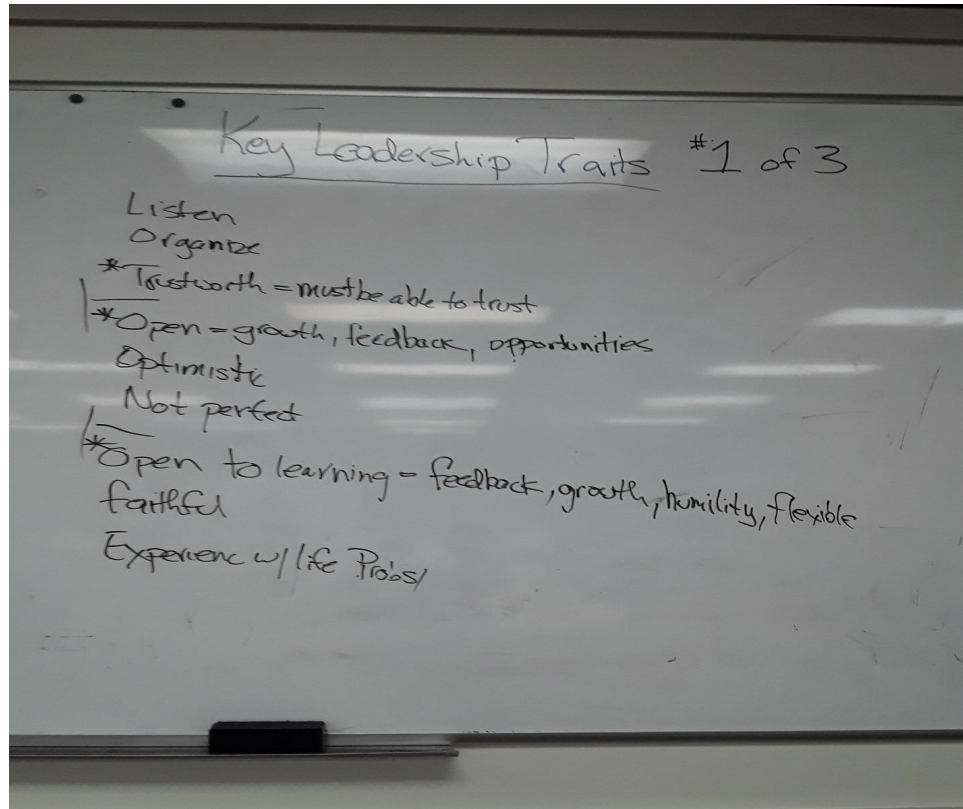
has goals

kind

Intelligent	Loving	Has a relationship w/ God
Loving	Teachable	Wants to spread the Gospel
Friendly	Willing to grow and be challenged	Welcoming
Approachable	Kindness	Respectful
Open to learning	A Learner	Honest
experience with life problems	Caring	Loyal

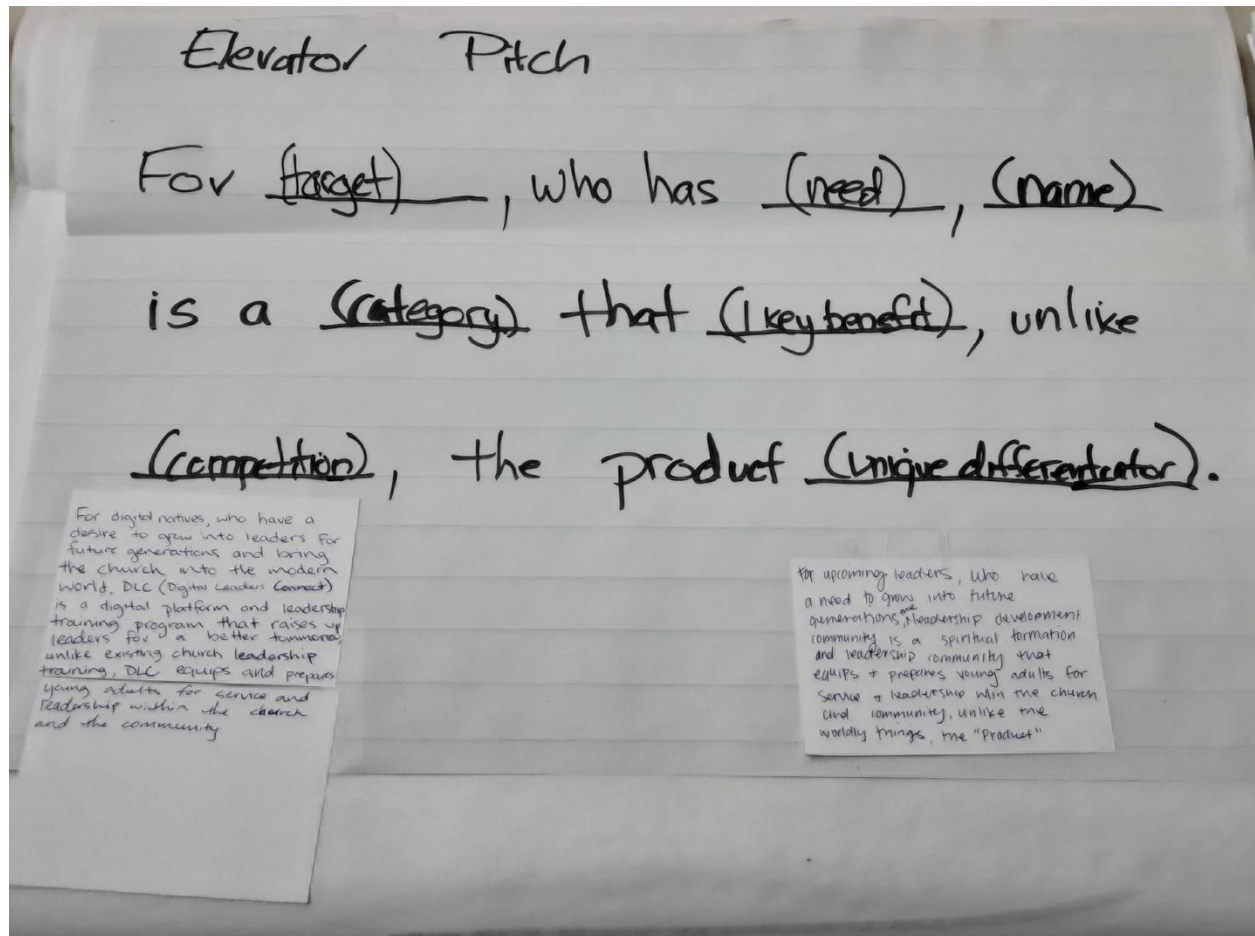
Open	Listens	Faithful
	optimistic	Trustworthy
	Not perfect	organized

A discussion of themes surrounding leadership traits led me to try and narrow the themes down to a smaller amount of key ideas. The amount of ideas to this point felt overwhelming to me and I wanted to distill the many ideas into fewer but broader principles.



## Exploration game: "Elevator Pitch"

Below is the template for the sentence structure requiring participants to fill in the blanks.



Answers to each blank now follows in order based on the template. Answers to each part of the sentence were grouped according to themes. I formed two groups to engage all the ideas presented and create a pitch to share with the other group. Each group's final pitch is visible above below the template.

# Target

Future leaders  
WMC  
up-coming  
leaders

Young  
Adults  
young adults  
millennials  
Spiritual young  
Adults  
Young adults  
18-30  
Young  
Church-going  
Adults

the future  
of  
the church  
Tomorrow's Church  
Future church  
attendees

Gen Z  
Next generation  
Future teenagers  
Younger  
millennials  
Young  
Leads  
Followers  
Younger  
demographic

Digital  
Natives  
digital natives  
DIGITAL  
NATIVES

# Need

a need for  
more relationship  
and growth in  
the local  
church

desire personal  
growth

Passion to  
grow

Who struggle  
with world issues

Struggling with  
addiction

Change

New Ideas

CHANGE  
MAKERS

EVOLUTIONARIES

Wanting to feel  
and be free

want to  
develop  
leadership  
skills

New leaders

a need to grow  
into leaders  
for future  
generations

LEADERS

Starting life  
(future jobs, marriage, starting  
family)

a need for  
identity in  
christ

willingness  
to  
learn

Knowledge

want to bring  
the church into  
the modern  
world

want to actively  
participate in  
church

desire  
connection  
in church

Name

Digital Values

Project  
You

BLC

Compassion  
Project

Uplifting  
Leaders

Leadership  
Forum

Leadership  
development

Leadership  
TRAIL BLAZES

Leadership  
GROWTH  
TRACK

Leadership  
SMALL GROUP

Leadership  
Connect

Leadership  
Institute

# Category

community  
group of  
young adults

LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT

leadership  
development  
tool

Next generation  
leadership development

CHARACTER  
DEVELOPMENT

leadership  
program

spiritual  
formation  
and leadership  
growth app

Virtual  
small group  
app

digital  
platform

Learning Tool

Podcast

TRANSFORM  
PROGRAM

Develop ways to  
free people of  
discernment

help them develop ways  
of finding themselves  
from these issues

help them through  
the issues

development of  
young people from  
these issues

# 1 Key Benefit

Bringing up  
rattles  
for a  
better  
tomorrow

→ New generation  
of church leaders

Church more appealing  
to the next generation

create  
raise up  
new leaders

Growing church instead  
of declining

family

Positive  
environment

Safe place

→ a more free and  
happy life

creates  
connection

Gain knowledge from  
Experienced leaders

grow together,  
encourage each  
other, and lead  
by example  
1 Timothy 4:12

Spiritual  
formation  
based

encourages honest  
conversations  
about leadership  
and gives valuable  
tips and tools  
to lead others

# Competition

existing church  
leadership training

society

PAID  
POSITIONS  
ASSISTANTS

the world's view

OVERSIGHT  
STRESSSES

Worldly things  
- money  
- power  
- status  
- success

OTHER FACTIONS  
VIEWS

LIFE

the church  
of today

getting rid of the  
issue completely

Lectures/Seminars

existing  
leadership tools

previous ways  
of thinking

LACK OF  
COHESION  
w/in the  
group

Busy  
SCHEDULES

# Unique Differentiator

individually  
based

new leader  
having an  
opportunity to  
have their  
voice heard.

always striving  
to improve

seek out events  
or road blocks  
with the church  
& be able to  
break them  
down to appeal to  
a diverse audience.

results in  
hands on  
experience

OPPORTUNITY  
TO HAVE  
INPUT  
OR  
to buy into  
something bigger

show them  
how to lead  
and live like  
Jesus

equip and  
prepare young  
adults for  
service and  
leadership within  
the church and  
in the community

create a  
community  
that is  
always seeking  
out new leaders

Ability for the  
unexperienced to  
ask questions

create  
a better  
more exciting  
church community

builds one another  
up ~~and~~

results in leaders  
who are ready  
to take the  
church into the  
modern world.

create  
change

create a  
UNIFIED  
VISION

Wanted community  
of ready  
participants  
to be the next  
heralds of  
WHC.

Living Community  
but people you  
no matter what

Exploration game, "Help Me Understand:" Write down as many questions as you can to the following as they pertain to the project discussed: "Who?, What?, When?, Where?, and How?"

Who does this impact?	Who needs this?	Does the person in charge of this get a team?	Who is allowed to Participate?	Who will be in charge?
Who can be a part of this?	Who is going to design and make this online?	Who can we love through this?	Who leads it?	Who will be in charge?
	Who else is going to be involved in seeing this carried out?	IS IT A TEAM OF LEADERS, NOT JUST ONE PERSON?	Is this a young person leading this?	Who facilitates this? (Are they paid?)
	Who is invited?	Who is going to head up the project?	Who will be invited?	What age group?

What is the purpose?	Will this look like a small group format? OR more of a creative team?	Will this team have teams? (times of service limitations)	What do digital natives like to do?	What resources are available to those involved?
What will be the budget for this?	What responsibilities will a participant have to feel encouraged to complete or continue with the program?	What does this look like?	What kind of online platform? - website? - app?	What will happen after the program?
What other groups or organizations will need to be involved?	Will there be events?	What are we hoping to see as a result?	What is the end result?	Is this a team of leaders? OR an app
What technology and materials will be needed for this?	What does the training/look program like?	What platform are you going to use?	Is this team selected by board members?	What platforms will this program be made available?

When will this be implemented?	When will this take place? quarterly, monthly, weekly, etc?	When can learning/upcoming leaders become leaders?	When will there be new groups?
When will this start and end?	Is this 24 hours 7 days a week? Or just in certain time frames	When will leaders be developed as a result?	When will this be a real app/ platform?
	When will you see the results or products?	When does the training occur?	When will this be put into affect?

Where do we go  
from here?

Where does it  
occur? Online?  
In-person?

Where do  
digital natives  
find their worth  
and identity?

Where do we  
find our target?

Where are  
digital natives  
now?

Where do we  
start?

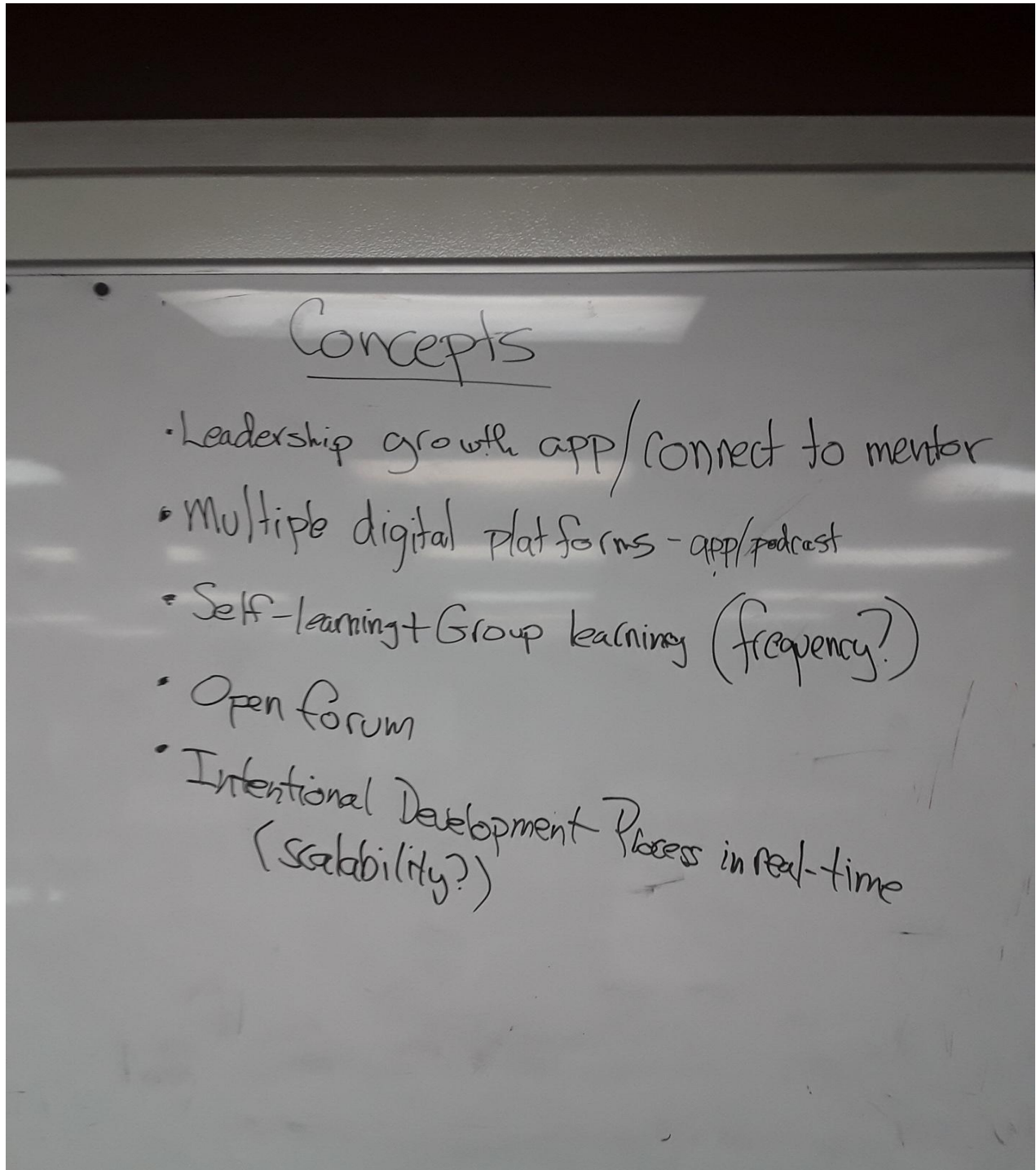
Where does this  
program take place?

Where will this be worked  
on? Only WHC or other  
churches too?

Where will  
this take  
place?

How will you get others on board?	How can an individual get involved?	How can a leader continue to grow with this program?	How often is the training/program offered?	How can we be more involved in their life?
	How will we know it is working?	How much will it cost?	How long does <del>it take</del> the training/program last?	How many people are in this team?
How will you know when it is complete?	How is this team selected?	How are they invited?		How will people find out about this?

Next, key concepts from the day were identified by the participants in preparation for the final game. I asked, "Of all the ideas discussed today, what is the most important idea to you right now?" The answers given to that question are shown below.



Digital platform

:: Relational Context

: Experiential learning/growth →

- Mentor/apprentice/know

≡ Way to evaluate/feedback/s

- : Motivator/Vision/Action

≡ Community involvement

Closing game, "\$100 Dollar Test:" Assign value to the key concepts we discussed.

Digital platform - 10 Relational context - 15 experiential learning/growth - 15 mentor/known/apprentice - 5 way to evaluate/feedback - 10 motivator/vision/action - 20 community involvement - 20	$\frac{15}{30}$ Digital Platform $\frac{30}{30}$ Relational Context $\frac{30}{30}$ Experiential Learning/Growth $\frac{10}{30}$ Mentor/Apprentice/Known $\frac{10}{30}$ Way to evaluate/feedback share $\frac{10}{30}$ Motivator/Vision/Action $\frac{5}{30}$ Community Involvement	Digital Platform <del>\$25</del> Relational Context <del>\$35</del> Experiential Learning/growth \$15 mentor/apprentice/known \$5 Way to evaluate/feedback/share \$5 Motivator/vision/action \$5 Community involvement \$10
• Digital Platform \$10 • Relational Context \$25 • Experiential learning/growth → \$25 • Mentor/Apprentice/Known → 10 • Evaluate/feedback/share \$5 • Motivation/vision/action \$10 • Community involvement \$15	Digital Platform - \$30 Relational Context - \$5 → -switch Experiential learning/growth - \$10 mentor/apprentice/known - \$10 way to evaluate/feedback/share - \$5 → -switch motivator/vision/action - \$10 community involvement - \$30 <hr/> \$100	$\frac{10}{15}$ Digital Platform $\frac{30}{15}$ Relational Context $\frac{30}{15}$ Experiential Learning/growth → $\frac{10}{15}$ Mentor/Apprentice/Known $\frac{10}{15}$ Ways to Evaluate/Feedback/share $\frac{20}{15}$ Motivator/Vision/Action $\frac{5}{15}$ Community Involvement <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">           10 15 30 10 10 20 5         </div> <div style="margin-left: 10px;">           FINAL         </div> </div>
		• Digital Platform (\$20) • Relational Context (\$30) • Experiential learning/growth (\$20) • mentor/apprentice/known (\$10) • way to evaluate/feedback/share (\$10) • Motivator/vision/action (\$5) • Community involvement (\$5)

Thank you letter sent to all Design Workshop participants

December 11, 2021

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for your participation in my Design Workshop on November 13. Your excitement, input, and ideas served to help in this step of my project development. I am in the second year of three year process at Portland Seminary to produce an actionable application that offers one solution to my Need, Problem, Opportunity (NPO) statement: *The church needs to develop digital natives into leaders for the next generation.* I love the local church and want to see it thrive in future generations. At the same time, a major shift is taking place toward a digital world. How will the church respond and nurture new, young leaders to guide the church toward effectiveness in a rapidly changing world? I believe the church, more specifically its leaders, need to learn to speak a digital language and intentionally develop those who speak digital as their "native tongue."

A few key learning points emerged for me out of our time together at the Design Workshop. You affirmed my NPO as it was first developed last year. You also affirmed three main themes: digital content, a relational context, and experiential learning. Those three elements serve as non-negotiables for the project. From the many ideas generated, you helped me generate three prototypes that I will be testing in my next semester in the new year.

- Big Idea 1: A digital platform with original content that gets processed in a small group context, and applied in real-world scenarios in the life of the participant.
- Big Idea 2: A digital platform with original content that gets processed with a mentor who serves in a church leadership role, and ministry specific application.
- Big Idea 3: A digital platform with original context, processed 1-on-1 with a mentor producing spiritual direction, and concluding with a ministry capstone.

The next phase of project development includes testing those prototypes, resulting in the selection of one of them to become the actionable item produced at the end of year three. Your involvement in this process helped to narrow a broad concept into three potential applications. I thank you for your valuable contributions to this effort. I hope the time proved engaging and meaningful for you as it did for me.

As the project continues to unfold, I plan to stay in touch with you about the progress toward a conclusion. If you have any questions or comments about the Workshop or anything contained in this note, please e-mail me at: [Roy@whc.faith](mailto:Roy@whc.faith)

With much gratitude,

Roy Gruber

## ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS DOCUMENTATION

**INTERVIEW #1:** former Regional Director of our association of churches. This interview was held on November 15, from 2:00-2:45 PM MST.

- Need to distinguish those with a leadership gift from those who can learn leadership behaviors.
- Affirmed that small groups can be done virtually – does not have to be in person.
- It is easier to come up with a program than it is to mentor. How do you train the mentors to be effective? That will add to the challenge.
- Small group learning can lean in the direction of those who naturally engage while others tend to hold back. How will you know if all are learning?
- Providing spiritual direction sounds easy but it is not. That is not a role everyone can fill.
- The best synonym for “disciple” is “apprentice.” Need to define what apprentice will do and not do in their role.
- Of my three big ideas: chose number 2 because of practicality. Least favorite choice was big idea number 3 because it asks the mentor to fill a very specific, difficult role.

**INTERVIEW #2:** Lead Pastor of an eight-site mega-church in the Phoenix metroplex. This pastor mentored me and our church in recent years so he knows our context to a degree. This interview was held on November 17, from 8:00-9:00 AM MST.

- Strong affirmation for the three elements: digital platform, relational context, and experiential learning.
- Key challenge in developing people is how information becomes application.
- His church uses a model similar to my big idea number 1. He finds it lacking effectiveness and he plans to change their model.
- “The way to develop leaders is to let them lead.” Leadership gets proven in its actions, not its knowledge.
- The small group approach to leadership development can be a “fishing pond” where potential leaders can be identified because you learn about them there.
- 1-on-1 meetings tend to become rigid while an apprentice role is more fluid and flexible.
- I asked: “would you emphasize leadership behaviors or leadership character?” His answer: “I would put 70/30 emphasis on character over behavior.” If a person does not have the character, the behavior does not matter.

- He would choose big idea number 2, then number 1, and number 3 last.

**INTERVIEW #3:** a leader of a Mission organization that I have known for almost twenty years. He has been to our church and knows the Utah culture. This interview was held on November 22, from 1:00-1:45 PM MST.

- Strong proponent of releasing people for ministry, including leadership. "Empowerment is key!"
- "Mentoring goes without saying." It is difficult to structure good mentoring.
- I asked, "What did you mean when you said, 'the American church empowers processes and the developing world church empowers people?'" His answer, "American culture values structure. In the developing world, people get to serve or lead quickly. That does not always end well, but it does produce leaders quicker."
- He would choose big idea 1 or 2 for the project, leaning toward 2.

## Appendix D—Milestone 4 Design Research Report

Aristotle stated, "What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing." This research paper seeks to fill a gap in my understanding of experiential learning. My NPO to this point in my journey read, "The church needs to develop digital natives into new leaders for the next generation." In light of the ongoing study, I amend the word "native" to now read "learner." Since this paper focuses on learning within a digital culture, I will employ the phrase "digital learner," a term deemed more suitable than digital native because it offers a more global vision of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century student.<sup>105</sup> Another related topic included is mentoring as it will also be measured as part of my prototyping process.

The first aspect of experiential learning explored centers on paradigms of learning theory. Various well-known approaches to learning in light of research about the nature of the interplay between dynamics to make up the human experience receive a brief overview. Paulo Freire created a theory of learning influenced by his focus on emancipating oppressed people. He believed that the oppressed become empowered to change the world through critical reflection in a community of learners.<sup>106</sup> Action and reflection, sometimes called praxis, provide a way forward to overcome oppression. Freire challenged the "banking model" of education, where students exist as passive objects of their learning as passivity excludes active participation and creativity from the process.<sup>107</sup> Freire suggests that teachers and students become co-investigators and partners in educational pursuits, granting an actual aspect of liberation.<sup>108</sup> For Freire, authentic learning always happens in the context of political action.

Daniel Kahneman pioneered the concept of System 1 and System 2 thinking, or "thinking fast and slow."<sup>109</sup> Thinking fast refers to input for which our brain already possesses a category. Humans tend to think as fast as possible since it requires less work. When, however, the brain contains no category or connection to input, System 2, or slow thinking, takes over. System 2 thinking necessitates more work for the human brain, so the tendency to default to the easier System 1 often occurs. Kahneman recommends learning to recognize the situations in which mistakes may happen

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<sup>105</sup> Eliana Esther Gallardo-Echenique, Luis Marques-Molias, Mark Bullen and Jan-Willem Strijbos, "Let's Talk about Digital Learners in the Digital Era," *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 16, no. 3 (June, 2015), 173.

<sup>106</sup> John D. Holst, "Paulo Freire in Chile, 1964-1969: Pedagogy of the Oppressed in Its Sociopolitical Economic Context," *Harvard Educational Review: Cambridge* 76, no. 2 (Summer, 2006), 259.

<sup>107</sup> Debora B. Agra Junker, "Facing Rupture: Paulo Freire's Pedagogical Constructs," *Encounter* 72, no. 1 (Spring, 2011), 147.

<sup>108</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1997), 56.

<sup>109</sup> Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), 13.

and, especially when the stakes are high, learn to do the hard work of slow thinking to avoid mistakes.

David Kolb, in his “experiential learning cycle,” revolutionized formal education. Contradicting Paulo Freire’s “banking model,” Kolb posited that the learner builds knowledge by experiencing an event, reflecting on the event, developing an abstract interpretation, and acting on the interpretation. Kolb stated that “learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.”<sup>110</sup> That cycle generates further experience, reflection, theorizing, and action.<sup>111</sup> The key to embodied learning is that people do not learn *from* experience but *in* experience. Adding to Kolb’s learning cycle, dialogue among peers offers the potential to provide “one avenue of inquiry that extends current conceptualizations of experiential learning.”<sup>112</sup> Thus, experiential learning may happen individually or in the context of relationship.

Jack Mezirow developed a more recent approach to learning called “transformative learning theory,” likely the dominant approach among today’s adult learners. Mezirow states that adults become “critically aware of how and why our presuppositions. . .constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world. . .and of making decisions or otherwise acting up these new understandings.”<sup>113</sup> Mezirow’s focus extends to helpful, deep, and constructive learning that supersedes merely knowledge acquisition. Successful learning outcomes result in a lasting change of thoughts, feelings, perspectives, convictions, and behaviors. Central to Mezirow’s theory stand two approaches to learning: instrumental and communicative.<sup>114</sup> Instrumental learning seeks applied learning through task-oriented problem solving to determine cause and effect relationships. Communicative learning refers to the social aspect of the learning process and how people communicate their desires, needs, and emotions. One other vital factor to his theory, Mezirow states, “I would argue that CRA (critical reflection of assumptions). . .are the emancipatory

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<sup>110</sup>David Kolb, *Experiential Learning* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984), 26.

<sup>111</sup> Jon F. Wergin, *Deep Learning*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 26.

<sup>112</sup> Russ Vince, “Behind and Beyond Kolb’s Learning Cycle,” *Journal of Management Education* (June, 1998): 306.

<sup>113</sup> Jack Mezirow, “Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory” in J.A. Mezirow, ed., *Learning as Transformation; Critical Perspectives on a theory in Progress*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000, 14.

<sup>114</sup> Jack Mezirow, “On Critical Reflection,” *Adult Education Quarterly* (Spring, 1998) 48, no. 3, 186.

dimensions of adult learning.”<sup>115</sup> Challenging one’s belief creates the dissonant context in which learning thrives.

Several conclusions emerge from the research on theories of learning. First, learning includes more than mere cognition. Emotion plays a vital role in not only the acquisition of learning, but also to its retention. Second, motivation by the learner must exist for ongoing learning to occur. Related to motivation, a challenge to a person’s existing beliefs, creating cognitive dissonance or tension leads one to reflect on their belief system and create a new meaning. Third, learning that lasts involves making meaning of experience. When dissonant experiences are processed with curiosity, the door to learning opens before a motivated student, regardless of their age.

Next, five researched models of adult education will be explained: Active Learning, Problem-Based Learning, Project-Based Learning, and Service Learning. Active Learning means “anything that involves students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing.”<sup>116</sup> The goal of this approach intends to cause students to reflect on what they are learning through classroom strategies, including debates, role-play, simulations, case studies, and drama. Research indicates that active learners grasp complex material better and transfer their learning from one context to another.<sup>117</sup>

Problem-Based Learning refers to “finding solutions to authentic problems through in-depth investigation.”<sup>118</sup> In this model, students apply knowledge from multiple disciplines toward solutions while teachers serve as coaches. The goal seeks to enhance critical thinking, skills of collaboration, development of hypotheses, and formulation of solutions. Evaluation of this model shows “learning is increased when self-directed learning includes guidance and structure provided by instructors or facilitators.”<sup>119</sup> The interplay between student and teacher proves vital to this model. Project Based Learning employs student interest as a motivator for learning. On an adult level, this model seeks to teach post-high school adults in decision-making and problem solving

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>116</sup> C. Bonwell and J. Eison, “Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom,” *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 1* Washington DC, The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development, 1991. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED336049.pdf>, accessed January 18, 2022.

<sup>117</sup> J. D. Bransford, A.L. Brown and R. R. Cocking, eds., *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1999), 49.

<sup>118</sup> Scott D. Werdinger and Julie A. Carson, *Teaching for Experiential Learning* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2010), 31.

<sup>119</sup> Werdinger and Carson, *Teaching for Experiential Learning*, 35.

processes by utilizing actual world issues to master learning content in either a small group or facilitator/student relationship. This approach to adult learning intends to promote critical thinking and self-directed learning.<sup>120</sup> This model includes the benefits of higher-order problem solving and improved cognitive thinking abilities. Service Learning includes the phases of meeting a need, taking action to do so, and reflection.<sup>121</sup> The reflection phase separates this model from simply serving. Research points toward a result that “helps young people have a greater likelihood of achieving a sense of self.”<sup>122</sup> The student’s development stands as the primary goal more than any specific measurable learning result.

A research study comparing adult learning methods conducted by Trivette, et al. concluded that “the more adult learning characteristics that are incorporated into a training program or practice, the more likely the learning experiences will have optimal positive benefits.”<sup>123</sup> Active learner participation proved a common element in the effective learning process regardless of the method employed. “Training opportunities are likely to be most effective if they include multiple learning experiences, large doses of learner self-assessment of their experiences....”<sup>124</sup> The study also encouraged a small number of learners in ratio to the trainer. The lower number of students allows for more personal attention to processing, reflection, and learning outcome assessment.

The next section of this paper addresses the specific learning needs to digital learners. Educator John Dewey stated over sixty years ago, “If we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow.”<sup>125</sup> With the advent of the digital age, more changed than just how information gets accessed and processed. Educator Marc Prensky coined the term “digital native” in 2001, backing up his sociological implications with brain research. Prensky quotes C. Bruce

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<sup>120</sup> Burton W. Hancock, William C. Coscarelli and Gregory P. White, “Critical Thinking and Content Acquisition Using a Modified Design Process for Large Course Sections,” *Educational and Psychological Research*, 3, no. 3 (1983), 142.

<sup>121</sup> Werdinger and Carson, 67.

<sup>122</sup> Kaye C. Berger, *The Complete Guide to Service-Learning* (Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, 2004), 215.

<sup>123</sup> Carol M. Trivette, Carl J. Dunst, Deborah W. Hamby and Chainey E. O’Herin, “Characteristics and Consequences of Adult Learning Methods and Strategies,” *Research Brief* 3, no. 1 (2009), 3.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>125</sup> Charles Kivunja, “Theoretical Perspectives of How Digital Natives Learn,” *International Journal of Higher Education* 3, no. 1 (2014), 108.

Perry, "Different kinds of experiences lead to different brain structures."<sup>126</sup> In the digital age, more than a generation gap exists.

Even though research among those living only in a digital age just begins to emerge, growing evidence indicates physiological and cultural changes underway. Don Tapscott writes, "Evidence is mounting that Net Geners process information and behave differently because they have indeed developed brains that are functionally different than those of their parents. They're quicker, for example, to process fast-moving images than their parents are."<sup>127</sup>

Anecdotally, the cultural shift away from print to digital content receives significant focus on negative implications. In 2001, Prensky determined that average college graduates spent less than five thousand hours reading and over ten thousand hours playing video games.<sup>128</sup> The attention span of the average college student ranges between fifteen and twenty minutes.<sup>129</sup> Research shows specific positive outcomes from the time spent engaging in digital content. For example, C. Shawn Green shares results of studies that "demonstrate that action video game play improves visual attentional skills . . . action video games can give rise to benefits on a wide array of tasks that rely on perceptual/attentional abilities."<sup>130</sup> Tapscott adds that improvements through video game playing include "improved hand-eye coordination, quickens reaction times, and benefits peripheral vision. It improves spatial skills, the ability to mentally manipulate a 3-D object."<sup>131</sup> A UCLA study states, "Digital Natives' brains were more actively engaged while scrolling through a web page than while reading printed text."<sup>132</sup> One conclusion to draw from the research and the increased

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<sup>126</sup> Marc Prensky, *From Digital Natives to Digital Wisdom: Hopeful Essays for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2012), 3-4.

<sup>127</sup> Don Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation Is Changing Your World* (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2008), 87.

<sup>128</sup> Prensky, *From Digital Natives to Digital Wisdom*, 3-4.

<sup>129</sup> Sandy D. Hoover, "Popular Culture in the Classroom: Using Video clips to Enhance Survey Classes," *History Teacher* 39, no. 4, 468.

<sup>130</sup> C. Shawn Green and Aaron R. Seitz, "The Impacts of Video Games on Cognition (and How the Government Can Guide the Industry)," *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 2, no. 1 (October 1, 2015), 4.

<sup>131</sup> Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital*, 29.

<sup>132</sup> Carolyn Crist, "On the Mind: What Science Says About Digital Natives," *Pastemagazine.com* April 10, 2017, <https://www.pastemagazine.com/science/neuroscience/on-the-mind-your-brain-on-social-media/#key-takeaways>, accessed February 9, 2022.

utilization of digital content finds that digital natives learn through trial and error and personal engagement rather than from written content.

Digital natives learn more visually than preceding generations, but they also learn more interactively. One study found digital natives geared to learning environments that include "active learning" rather than reading or listening and "collaborative learning," a preference for teamwork and connectivity to peers.<sup>133</sup> A LifeCourse study found that digital learners want "hands-on guidance" and mentors.<sup>134</sup> Jon Wergin argues that learning happens best "when that learning is facilitated more than dictated."<sup>135</sup> A cultural learning shift from the teacher to the student unfolds in the digital age. One study tested students in a peer-lectured and peer-discussion cohort. Both groups of students demonstrated improved sustainability knowledge and confidence. However, the peer-lecture students showed significant improvements in knowledge connectedness than the peer-discussion groups.<sup>136</sup>

Since my prototyping process includes a mentor, that role receives attention next. As defined by Hargreaves and Dawe, "Coaching is a . . . method of transferring skills and expertise from more experienced and knowledgeable practitioners. . . to less experienced ones."<sup>137</sup> The mentoring role fits the emerging digital learner culture where relationship proves vital. Dr. Tim Elmore, a researcher of younger digital learners notes, "They want a guide on the side before they want a sage on the stage."<sup>138</sup> A study in the classroom concluded that small group learning experiences demonstrate "positive associations to the extent that group members share, build on and constructively evaluate each other's ideas, strive towards consensus, and when they disagree give

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<sup>133</sup> Nina Sarkar, Wendy Ford and Christina Manzo, "Engaging Digital Natives Through Social Learning," *Journal of Systemics, Cybernetics and Informatics* 15, no. 2 (April, 2017), 2.

<sup>134</sup> Neil Howe and Reena Nadler, "Why Generations Matter: Ten Findings from LifeCourse Research on the Workforce," *LifeCourse.com* February 28, 2012, accessed January 30, 2022.

<sup>135</sup> Wergin, *Deep Learning*, 19.

<sup>136</sup> Mary Katherine Watson, Joshua Pelkey, Caroline R. Noyes, and Michael Owen Rodgers, "Use of Concept Maps to Assess Student Sustainability Knowledge." *Association for Engineering Education - Engineering Library Division Papers*, 2014, 24.

<sup>137</sup> Andy Hargreaves and Ruth Dawe, "Paths of Professional Development: Contrived Collegiality, Collaborative Culture, and the Case of Peer Coaching," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 6, no. 3 (1990), 230.

<sup>138</sup> Pamela Jean Hiscock Braman, "Oral Culture and Digital Natives: What the American Church Can Learn from the Mission Field" (DMin., George Fox University, Portland, 2018), 11. Digital Commons @ George Fox University.

reasons for their views.”<sup>139</sup> Small group interaction serves as a learning outcome beyond actual engagement. Asynchronous interaction after small group time “enables students to engage in ways not currently afforded by the face-to-face implementation,” including mentor evaluation and feedback.<sup>140</sup>

In conclusion, three implications arise. First, the greater the diversity of presentation, the greater the potential for learning and retention. Digital learners employ multiple senses in shorter periods. Second, a relational environment appears best for digital learners. Whether the relationship includes groups or individuals guided by a mentor may depend on the situation and the learning goal. Third, the field of digital learning requires ongoing attention as the research stands in its early stages. Recent researchers implore ongoing engagement with a field of study around digital learners in an effort to understand and implement effective teaching environments and delivery.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Christine Howe, “Strategies for Supporting the Transition from Small-Group Activity to Student Learning: A Possible Role for Beyond-Group Sharing,” *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction* 28 (2021), 7.

<sup>140</sup> Kathleen Weiss and Brian Pinney, “Strategy: Small Group Learning” *The Journal of Faculty Development: Madison* 34, no. 3 (September 2020), 65.

<sup>141</sup> Theodore B. Creighton, “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants, Digital Learners: An International Empirical Integrative Review of the Literature,” *ICPEL Education Leadership Review* 19, no. 1 (December 2018), 138.

# Appendix E—Project Appendix Documentation

The process of producing digital content includes five steps:

## Step 1: Produce Eight Scripts

The sessions contain information and language that assumes no background or framework of the Christian faith on the participant's part.

### Script 1: The Mission of the Church

Mission. What does that mean? According to Webster's Dictionary, it means "a specific task with which a person or a group is charged."<sup>142</sup> It also refers to the objective or purpose of a person or a group. OK, so what does mission mean in the church? Well, first things first. The church was Jesus' idea before it ever existed, Jesus predicted, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18 ESV) Church means a "gathering" or a "congregation." Jesus predicted a Jesus-gathering - people who get together, and it's all about Jesus and their commitment to Him. That prediction came true not too long after Jesus' death on a cross, resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven. In Acts 2 we see Peter present the news about Jesus, and on that day some 3,000 people put faith in Jesus, and the church began. Since Jesus created the church, He set the mission for the church - the "task with which a person or group is charged." From the verse in Matthew we know that, at the highest level, matters of eternal consequence are included. The "gates of hell" pictures a defensive stance, implying the church on the advance. The church exists to decrease the census of hell and increase the census of heaven.

What does that mean for people who follow Jesus? How does the mission of the church unfold on a human level? Just prior to Jesus' ascension He gave His followers instructions, often called the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20) Each of the Gospels includes some version of the Great Commission "And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations." "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you." (Luke 24:44-49) Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." (John 20:21) Jesus reiterated outward focus in the book of Acts on the verge of His ascension, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8) Would that much focus indicate the importance of those words? Uhhh, yes! Big time, top of the list importance. Of all those words,

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<sup>142</sup> Webster's Dictionary, "Mission," <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mission?src=search-dict-box>, accessed October 18, 2021.

"make disciples" is a phrase that may not carry meaning today. What is a "disciple" anyway? It means a "student" or a "follower." When Jesus invited people to follow Him, He simply stated, "Follow me." It was an invitation to do life with Him. Since Jesus wanted His followers to "make disciples" or "followers," it is clear that it begins with those who are not yet followers. The focus of Jesus' command points the "arrows" of the church outward, not inward! What is the impact of that outward focus? One day, Jesus prayed that things would be "on earth as they are in heaven." (Luke 6) The church's influence results in more of God's ways, values, and people experiencing life together with God and all that comes with it. To put all of that into one short sentence, we could say the mission of the church is to help people meet and follow Jesus.

OK, but how does the church carry out the mission of the church? By the time Jesus ascended to heaven, the idea of outward focus and inviting others to follow pervaded Jesus three years of ministry. Jesus engaged the religious as well as those far from God. Everyone mattered to Him, everyone was welcome, and with God, anything was possible. Jesus met spiritual and physical needs, body and soul. When He spoke, He had a clear sense of His mission in coming to earth. And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons. (Mark 1:38-39) "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19) "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:10.) Ultimately, His purpose was to make a once-and-for-all-time sacrifice for the sins of His people. "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21) "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45) Jesus gave compassion with no strings attached.

The mission of the Master must become the mission of His men and women. Because God loves us, God made a way for us to be in a relationship with Him. Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves. The church carries that message, and it is also called to live in way that demonstrates the relationship. Jesus did not come to judge the world but to save it. The church does not exist to judge the world but to live out a joyful relationship with God. Jesus did not curse the darkness in the world but proclaimed the light of God's love. The church does not exist to curse the darkness but proclaim the light. Jesus extended compassion, often to those far from God. The church can extend compassion that can allow people to see God's love in practical ways. Here's what Jesus said about what His followers should do, "let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16) What we do for God's sake can connect the dots for people that God is behind it all, in it all, and the focus of it all.

## Script 2: Jesus and Prayer

Prayer - it's one of those parts of church life that comes with the territory. What is it all about, and what does it mean to a leader? The Bible records only one request by the disciples to Jesus about what He could teach them: How to pray. Interesting in light of all they heard and saw from Jesus

during their three years of walking with Him. What was it about Jesus and prayer that led them to ask Him only to teach them that?

Let's start with Jesus' belief in the power of prayer. Jesus believed that prayer works. For example, Matthew 7:7-11, John 14:13-14 and John 16:23-24 show us Jesus highly valued prayer. He believed in it. He practiced prayer regularly and demonstrated the power of it on numerous occasions. OK, so how did Jesus practice prayer? How did He make it a regular part of His life? First, Jesus prayed alone at times. (Matthew 6:6; Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16; Luke 22:32) Prayer was not on the fringes of Jesus' life but at the center. When we pray alone, any motivation to show off or pray for the benefit of others goes away. Praying alone also lessens distractions. Jesus seems to have a place where private prayer happened. It would be wise for us to find a place for that too.

Jesus also prayed with others. Luke 9:28 and Mark 9:2 show us that a relationship with God contains a public aspect and a personal belief. Matthew 18:20 tells us that Jesus shows up when people seek God in community. Interestingly, the Lord's Prayer that Jesus used to teach the disciples how to pray does not begin with, "My Father" but with "Our Father." In the New Testament we read a number of prayers that Jesus prayed. What do those recorded prayers reveal to us? Eyewitnesses were there to hear those words and write them down.

Jesus prayed before meals. Mark 6:41; 8:6-7; Luke 24:30 all show Jesus praying before food is served. Part of the Lord's Prayer includes giving thanks for daily bread. Praying before meals reminds us that we receive gifts every day, even in the ordinary things we may take for granted. Expressing thanks for God's many provisions doesn't need to happen only when we enjoy food and recognize God's part in its provision. We can pray driving to the gym, filling up the car with gas, sitting down at our desk for a job or school.

Jesus also prayed before making important decisions. Luke 6:12-13 shows one time when Jesus prayed all night. Why would He do that? Jesus knew He had an adversary, someone and something working hard against Him and His purposes. That opposition ultimately led to Jesus' death on a cross. A regular part of Jesus' life sought out power found in prayer and connection with God, the Father. Before selecting the twelve disciples, Jesus prayed for discernment. Jesus prays at defining moments in His life, showing us how to connect with God's direction for us in real-life moments. Prayer is not a way to get what we want. Instead, it helps us know what God has for us. It aligns us with God and helps us to ask, "What does God want for me?" "What is His mind and wisdom about this opportunity?" "Why have I been placed in this circumstance?" "What gifts has God called me to exercise?"

Jesus prayed for His followers, the disciples, sure, but not just them. He also prayed for all those who would come after. Specifically, what did Jesus pray for them and you? Jesus prays for our perseverance as followers of Him. (John 17:11, 15, 24) Living a life of following Jesus is hard at times. Jesus prays for endurance. Jesus also prays for unity. (John 17:11, 21-23) Disunity harms the message about Jesus. Unity demonstrates a common commitment to Jesus and one another. Jesus prays for spiritual satisfaction (John 17:13). Jesus prayed for fullness of joy found in Him for those who follow. Jesus prays for growth in personal holiness. (John 17:17) No one in this life "arrives,"

meaning they are done growing. While faith in Jesus makes us right with Him, the Holy Spirit transforms hearts – a process referred to theologically as sanctification. The work of transformation in the human heart is a matter of prayer and seeking God in that way. Finally, in this amazing prayer Jesus prays for His follower's impact on those who are not followers of Jesus. (John 17:20) God does not want anyone to perish. God desires everyone to follow Him. That's why the mission of "helping people meet and follow Jesus" stands so prominently in what we do.

Have you ever wondered, "what is Jesus doing now?" Hebrews 7:25 states, "he always lives to make intercession for them." Right now, Jesus prays for you. Jesus is our mediator in heaven. Notice the permanence of that statement that says "always." Jesus never stops praying for you. Jesus is alive to fulfill His role. Currently, Jesus intercedes for you. The fancy word for prayer, "intercession," means "to meet, to approach, to appeal, to make petition." There will be times we do not know what to pray, but the Holy Spirit always knows. In addition, Jesus, the Son who resides with God, the Father, is presenting your concerns.

Whew, that's a lot about prayer and Jesus. In light of what Jesus believed and practiced with prayer, what role should it play in your life?

### Script 3: Spiritual Gifts

Ever heard of "spiritual gifts?"

Discovering and applying our spiritual gifts are important subjects because those gifts represent God's work in, and opportunity for, our lives. Let's start with a definition: a spiritual gift is a God-given ability that allows followers of Jesus to make an impact within or through the church. Those gifts are not given for the person who possesses them. Rather, in the community God establishes in the church, spiritual gifts are given to people for the service of others. As people serve one another, they honor God.

So, let's start with understanding what spiritual gifts are.

God chooses people to carry out His work in the world. Why God chose to work through people has been the subject of conjecture for centuries. Ultimately, the reason for that choice remains hidden in the mind of God. From our imperfect perspective, we may wonder if this was the best choice. After all, humanity struggles with a nature that contains sin and the junked-up results that accompany it. Why did God not simply choose to do His work on His own? Why did God not create a special category of being to accomplish His purposes in the world? Why did God not work through His messengers, angels, more than He did as described in the Bible? All of these great questions do not change the reality of God's call to people to join Him in His work. Followers of Jesus need to know that what He calls us to do, He equips us to do. That's where spiritual gifts come in.

Spiritual gifts do not negate a person's natural abilities, which are also God-given, nor do they lessen the value of experience as a teacher. Spiritual gifts, however, do enable us to take advantage of another of God's many gifts. When we place our trust in Jesus, we receive the gift of eternal life

- salvation. At the same time, we receive spiritual gifts through the Holy Spirit. The Bible not only tells us what the gifts are, but it also gives us an understanding of their purpose in the life of a follower and the bigger picture of the church.

Two passages in the New Testament list specific spiritual gifts. Romans 12:6-8 states, "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness."

I Corinthians 12:4-7 says, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

It is interesting to note the two lists of spiritual gifts are not identical. This observation leads many Bible scholars to say that the totality of both lists does not exhaustively give all the gifts available.

In order to understand the role of the gifts, I Peter 4:10-11 gives us a short version of their purpose. The church is a "one another" community in which people are meant to be connected to each other in relationally vital ways. Spiritual gifts provide a significant gateway toward fulfilling the service rendered to "one another."

How did I get the gifts I have? I Corinthians 12:11 states, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Nobody gets to choose their spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit determines who gets what. So the goal is not to strive for certain gifts, but rather to discover the gifts we have and put them into practice. Just as the gifts are not our choosing, they are also not for our own glory but for God's glory.

*Spiritual gifts are meant to be used.* This seems like an obvious statement, but it is possible to allow a gift to go unused. If we receive a gift card and just let it sit, we don't get the intended results. Not using our God-given gifts lets a major opportunity to honor God sit idle.

*Every spiritual gift is equally important.* Did you notice in the list of gifts that some are "up-front" gifts like leading and teaching while others are "behind-the-scenes" gifts like hospitality and counseling? It's easy to think that high-profile gifts are more important, but that would be a mistake. In God's economy, it's all important. When you look at a plane, the wings are obviously important. But are they more important than the unseen bolts that hold the wing together? In the same way, every gift matters and fulfills a purpose that does not give room to prioritize or assign value to certain gifts and a lesser place to others.

Let's define each of the gifts listed in the New Testament.

**ADMINISTRATION:** The ability to support guiding the church, a ministry, or a person toward the positive accomplishment of God-given goals, with talents in planning, organization, and management.

**APOSTLE:** The ability to pioneer new efforts, often in new places, for the gospel. In the modern context, missionaries who cross cultural boundaries are called apostles. This role can also describe those who oversee large-scale networks or associations of churches.

**DISCERNMENT:** The ability to recognize truth from error by accurately assessing if certain conduct or teaching comes from God or an ungodly source.

**EVANGELISM:** The ability to effectively share the message of the gospel to those outside of faith in the Jesus of the Bible.

**EXHORTATION:** The ability to offer inspiration, relief, and support that helps someone to continue pursuing all that God has for them.

**FAITH:** The ability to have great confidence in the power and promises of God that allow them to endure in their belief, regardless of anything else.

**GIVING:** The ability and willingness to share what resources they have - financial or otherwise - with joy, without pressure, and with no expectation of any return.

**HEALING:** The ability to be used by God to restore others physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually.

**HELPS:** The ability to support or help members within or outside the church by meeting a specific need in a practical way.

**HOSPITALITY:** The ability to make any person feel welcome in one's own home or church as a means to serve them or facilitate their journey toward or with Jesus.

**KNOWLEDGE:** The ability to actively pursue deep and broad understanding of the Bible. This person may also possess the ability to assess biblical data.

**LEADERSHIP:** The ability to direct the church toward God's mission with care and attention, and motivate followers of Jesus to achieve the church's mission of making disciples.

**MERCY:** The ability to discern with great sensitivity those who are suffering. Mercy manifests itself in offering compassion and support and by a joyful desire to give practical help to those in need.

**PROPHECY:** The ability to communicate the message of God to others. Prophecy can involve the future but more often centers on God's truth. This ability should offer encouragement or warning.

**SERVING:** The ability to see what needs to be done within the church and the ability to gather the needed resources to meet the need.

**SPEAKING IN TONGUES:** The ability to speak in another language. “Tongues” is an old-fashioned word for languages, and in the Bible, it refers to speaking a language that has not been learned.

**TEACHING:** The ability and skill to explain biblical truth and communicate it effectively so that people understand truth and grow in their faith.

**WISDOM:** The ability to sort through facts and data to discern what needs to be done in the real world in real-time. This gift applies God’s truth to life.

It is good for you to know that not every follower of Jesus believes all the gifts are still in play today. Some believe that certain gifts were given for a time but ceased when the Bible was completed. We will not take a deep dive into that issue, but felt you need to know about that.

How do people discover their specific spiritual gifts?

- As you heard the list of gifts, did one or more jump out to you? Sometimes it is obvious what gift we possess.
- Another way to discern your gifts is to give the list to friends who know you very well. Sometimes others see clearly what is not obvious to us.
- Make spiritual gifts a topic of prayer. Remember, we don’t ask for certain gifts because the Holy Spirit makes the call about what yours are. We can ask God to reveal our gifts to us.
- There are also numerous online spiritual gifts tests. One of the challenges with these is that if we know what the gifts are, the test’s questions will easily line up. If we desire certain gifts, we can skew the results in that direction.
- The best way to know your gifts comes last on this list: start serving, get involved, get “plugged-in.” The best way to know your gifts is to use them. Once you are using your gifts, it will become evident to you and to others.

Make sure to keep spiritual gifts in their proper place of your journey with Jesus. It can be easy to get caught up in the definitions and details but those gifts are for the purpose of honoring God by serving others.

In addition, once we discern our spiritual gifts, we can make some wrong applications with them. For example, if we find that we possess the gift of teaching, does it mean we should pursue becoming a pastor? Not necessarily. A teaching gift can be used in many ways without an official staff role. On the flip side, a spiritual gift should not be a reason to turn down opportunities to simply serve. For example, someone may say, “There’s a family that can use some help around the house.” That sounds like the gift of serving but if we do not possess that gift, we may be tempted

to say, "That's not my gift." Often, we should serve when we have the opportunity, regardless of our gifts.

Another consideration: your gifts can grow and even change with time. Let's not put God in a box about anything, including gifts. As you mature in your faith, it may be that you see a faith gift emerge that you did not possess earlier. Perhaps there's an immediate need, and you never considered yourself equipped for that role. Someone once said, "Where God guides, God provides!" Keep the bigger picture of God's power and provision in mind as you serve Him.

Let's end where we began: why does God choose to do a lot of His work through people, broken people? There's a mystery about that. But we know this: if you follow Jesus, you are gifted! God enabled you to make an eternal difference for His sake.

### Script 4: Integrity

What drives us crazy in the workplace - or anywhere, for that matter? When someone doesn't do their work the right way. Another way to say that is lacking integrity. What if Bill decides to subtly change some data on his report? What if Susan decides to do less than her part on a group project, making others take up the slack and more than their share. When we see an integrity issue in others, it makes us frustrated, but let's be honest - it also takes a lot of effort for us to live with good integrity ourselves.

We live at a time when our culture promotes taking the easy way, the shortcut, the path of least resistance. We idolize influencers who did relatively little or nothing to amass wealth and fame. And again, in all honesty, we often wish we had the same results they enjoy. However, walking with God and His direction for us calls us to go another way. As a follower of Jesus, we should always do our best, and whatever we do, we should do that as if we are doing it for God. Just one example from the Bible is found in the Old Testament story of Joseph. He did everything right, and people with no integrity made sure he got blamed for something he did not do. As a result, he suffered for some time before he was vindicated by God and elevated to power.

Integrity is hard and often does bring an immediate reward. But following Jesus is not meant to be the easy road, just a better road, the best road. Let's take a closer and deeper look at the idea of doing right things and bringing our whole heart with us.

Jesus said many things about integrity. Lacking integrity is nothing new, and Jesus called it out 2,000 years ago. Two of the Gospels in the New Testament record Jesus speaking what is often called The Sermon on the Mount. Some of the issues raised by Jesus in that message speak to the issue of integrity.

This passage addresses many issues connected with spiritual integrity. One of Jesus' main points is not making a big public show after carrying out some actions that are meant to reflect God and His goodness. It's easy for us to see the face of someone who tends to brag and make sure others know whenever they go out of their way to help a person in need or share details of how much they gave to help someone out. Jesus pulls no punches when He speaks to this issue.

"Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you." (Matthew 6:1-4)

Obviously, Jesus is not taking issue with good deeds or practical help given to someone in need. Passages like Micah 6:8 encourage meeting needs by extending mercy. But Jesus does call out people who carry out good actions for the sake of personal promotion and their own pride. We don't do good deeds to build our reputation or manage other people's perceptions of us.

History teaches us that in ancient Greece, the needy sometimes pleaded for a hand-out from those who were wealthy and well-fed. The rich men would often respond by giving some leftover scraps to those begging. Sounds great, right? The food was given not from a heart wanting to serve, but because the rich feared the gods as ones who, at times, would come incognito and test whether or not the rich were ignoring the poor. So the action happened, but their hearts were not in it. What they did on the outside was not matched by the inside. They acted for a reward, not simply for the sake of doing the right thing.

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, points us in an entirely different direction from that example. Do the right thing, not only for the right reason but without seeking a reward. Don't draw attention to yourself so that others are sure to know what you did. Doing the right thing for the right reasons is a reward in itself. We give of ourselves because God gives himself to us. And as followers of Jesus, we want to become more like Him. One way we reflect Jesus' character is to develop integrity. Another way to picture integrity is to see what is on the outside of us aligned with what's on the inside. There is no disconnect between the actions we see and the motives behind them.

Are you familiar with the verse that says, "faith apart from works is dead?" (James 2:26) This verse does not teach us that we earn our way into a relationship with God or gain entrance to heaven. What we do cannot make us right with God. The Bible makes that abundantly clear in numerous places. But someone growing in their faith becomes more and more like the One they follow. A genuine faith in Jesus results in transformation toward the character of Jesus.

Someone once said, "Integrity is who you are when no one is looking." We don't act a certain way in public, only to act like someone else in private. Can you think of an example of a person who used spiritual words and claimed faith but then their private life was something altogether different? One day, Jesus spoke about the Pharisees - religious leaders of His day - and referred to them as "whitewashed tombs" that look impressive externally but are dead internally. Yes, Jesus called out that disconnect between what can be seen on the outside by all and what only God can see on the inside.

Integrity is one of the great identifying marks of those who follow Jesus. It shows itself in how we talk to others, treat others, love others. Jesus gave a clear goal for how His followers are to engage others:

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

The irrefutable proof to the world of following Jesus is love. Jesus words do not give us an "out" to decide who receives our love. Everybody loves the people close to them. The challenge of Jesus' words is made real in loving those who are difficult to love. If we wonder why Jesus calls us to this, it is because that is what He does with us.

In this cultural moment, Jesus' direction is not the way it often goes. We cancel people who offend us - we seek to get even with those who wound us. This is not the gospel. Let's also note that the gospel does not call us to be friends with everyone nor to be naïve about people or situations. However, it invites us to be counter-cultural, even showing love for our enemies - to demonstrate our commitment to follow Jesus not only with our beliefs but our actions, even when there is nothing good coming back in return.

Proverbs 10:9 says, "Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out."

People often live in fear that others will find out the truth about them. One way to get rid of that fear of being "found out" is to walk with integrity. God's direction leads us toward health emotionally and spiritually. Those who live with integrity do not need to live in fear. When what we do lines up with our internal motives, we gain confidence and assurance. There is nothing to fear in integrity.

The Apostle Paul wrote this in 2 Corinthians 8:21: "For we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man."

The Apostle Paul wrote about issues of integrity in his letter to the Philippians.

Philippians 4:8 encourages, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

This present time includes many people who yearn for what is real, what is true, and what is right. It is easy to think that means our words, and it certainly includes them. But more impactful than our words is a life full of integrity. As the old saying goes, "Talk is cheap." Perhaps today, actions speak louder than our words.

Paul challenged a young pastor named Titus in Titus 2:7 with these words: "Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity."

Embrace integrity. Value integrity. Build integrity. Live integrity. This is one major way to walk in the footsteps of Jesus – one full of integrity.

### Script 5: The Bible

The Bible is the most read book in human history and THE bestseller every year. What is so special about it, and why do followers of Jesus make it a priority to read it regularly? Let's look at some relevant reasons to make time for the Bible in our lives.

One of the big questions people ask goes like this: "What is God's direction for my life? What does He want me to do?" There is no one Bible verse that tells us what job to take or the name of the person we should marry. But, the Bible gives direction, guidelines, commandments and encouragements that do allow us to journey with God each day. The Apostle Paul wrote this in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness..." That verse pictures the words of the Bible coming from the very mouth of God – they are His words to us. What an amazing reality – the Bible is inspired by God Himself! While written by over 40 authors over 1500 years on three continents, the Bible contains God's wisdom, intentions, heart, and goodness. Well, that's a great reason all by itself, but wait...there is more.

Imagine going a day without eating. That's hard enough. Now imagine going a week – a month. How would you be feeling as time went on? Weaker and weaker, no doubt. Our bodies need fuel to thrive, and so does our spiritual life. God made humanity with the ability to have spiritual contact with God. The Word of God makes our spirit alive to the will, the direction, of God for us. One day, Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4) On another day, He also said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." (John 6:63) Fueling our spirit from God's word takes us to the source of spiritual life. There is no spiritual growth apart from God's nourishing words.

Another reason: Have you ever faced a hard decision? Have you longed for discernment to the right call when it was not an easy choice? We all have. The Bible helps us with a gray world that can be hard to navigate. Hebrews 4:12 reads, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Wow, that's a lot of work the Bible is doing! Even when people want to do the right thing, we can also choose our own desires and direction. Our natural judgments get clouded by our emotions, motives, and opinions in ways that go against God's direction for us. God's word cuts through our brokenness, allowing us to discern truth from error and God's will versus our own. The prophet Jeremiah recorded God's words to him this way, "Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29)

Still need another reason? The Bible helps us live righteously. OK, that sounds like one of those church words...what does it really mean? Simply, it means to live right, the right way, God's way. King David in the Old Testament wrote, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it

according to your word.” (Psalm 119:9) We already talked about 2 Timothy and the words of the Bible coming from the mouth of God. Right after that, it tells us more about what those words can do. The Bible is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness...” (2 Timothy 3:16) To put that into street terms – the Bible informs us, reforms us, corrects us, and preps us for all that God has for us.

Since we’re on a roll, let’s keep going. The Bible allows us to win the battles within ourselves – sometimes we call that battle “temptation.” Even after we commit to follow Jesus with everything we have, we still face a battle. James wrote, “...each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.” (James 1:14) We also understand from the Bible, that Satan, God’s adversary, makes use of our natural lusts and desires. If we think we are alone in that, get this – Satan tried to tempt Jesus to choose ego, pride, and self-promotion. For each temptation pitch, how did Jesus respond? You can probably guess as this session focuses on the Bible. He countered temptation with God’s word. One example reads, “Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” (Matthew 4:7) A little later, Jesus said, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’” (Matthew 4:10) Notice how he knew “It is written.” Jesus knew the Bible, and it meant a lot more than information. All people battle temptation. There is a way to be prepared and defended. Paul writes this in Ephesians 6:17 when he lists the “armor of God,” “take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” The Bible serves as a weapon against attacks of all kinds. As you face temptation, are you well-defended with a powerful sword?

OK, just one more. The Bible contains God’s promises. What will God do going forward? Where is this world going? What can we hold on to in a changing world? What we see and hear each day is not all there will ever be. God reveals a much bigger picture to us in His word. Revelation 2:7 says, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

As we said at the start, the Bible gets sold plenty. Whether or not it gets read is up to you and me.

### Script 6: The Church is a Community

When you hear the word church, do you, in your mind, picture a building, a service, or something else? While the church has those other things, the church is people – people who follow Jesus. The church is not a building you walk into but a movement – a Jesus movement – you choose to join. That means faith is about something bigger than ourselves. One of the bigger things isn’t a thing at all, but people. When we trust Jesus, we are invited to join the ranks that include “me,” but it isn’t all about “me.” It’s about “us” and what God is doing in His people, including “me.” We are better together.

Community goes way back – seriously, all the way back to the beginning. “In the beginning, God...” We should never change any word in the Bible, but we should understand fully what the words mean. The first community belonged to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In Genesis 1, the word for God is “Elohim,” a plural form of the word, meaning God is both one and plural. The

community offered to humanity flows from the oneness experienced within the Trinity before time began. Community is not just a good idea but a reality grounded in the character of God.

After creation - In the Garden of Eden - God's plan for people was a vital connection to God and each other. Life was meant to be lived in perfect harmony, peace, love, respect, and joy in the company of others. Sin broke that ideal world, and we know the reality of that still today. The brokenness of sin makes community a challenge, even a battle, but community is a battle worth fighting for.

In a passage written to people in a church, the Apostle Paul wrote this in Philippians 2:3-4, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." While our faith in Jesus may well begin with what He did for "me," that's just the beginning of a much bigger picture. C.S. Lewis wrote, "Deep community is not the goal a church seeks, but the result of people living for something greater than themselves." That all sounds fine at a high altitude but...

If we're talking about people, it also means that we're talking about relationships at a ground level of everyday life. Let's face it, people are a mess, and that's still true after starting to follow Jesus. People are complicated, relationships are tricky, communication is a challenge, and our own baggage often feels best left out of sight of others. Put bluntly, isolation is never the answer. While there were times Jesus sought solitude, a lot of His ministry happened in the context of community. Jesus specifically chose to surround Himself with people - people He invited to join Him in what He was doing. Why would Jesus value that? One of God's great values right from the start of time centers on community - connection with God and others. Jesus lived out what expresses the heart of God and the wiring of humanity.

By the way, we might believe that community is needed here because life can get so jacked up. Eternity is a real thing, and the picture of that day includes a big community of people who belong to God...and each other. If that's what forever will be like, why not start acting like that here and now? Jesus put a "bulls-eye" on the target of community during His three-year ministry on earth. While He didn't use the word community, He put a lot of emphasis on "one another." "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." (John 13:34) Obviously, you cannot "one another" by yourself - it takes a community to make it happen. One hundred times in the New Testament, there is a command to "one another." We live in a culture proud of its individualism. That's great, but let's not let that define our faith, which is meant to be lived connected to others.

Let's unpack some of the benefits of community. Why is it so important to faith and life? Hebrews 10:24-25 says, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." Community challenges us to become more like Jesus. Among the ways our faith grows includes the power of relationships. There are lessons learned in the day-to-day grind with others. As the verse specified, encouragement toward the pursuit of God and all

that He has for us comes from community. Relationships serve like a spiritual sandpaper that smooths out some of our rough edges. Those kinds of lessons don't come from a lecture but from a life lived with others.

Living as part of a community also meets practical needs. In the earliest days of the church – shortly after Jesus' life, death, and resurrection – one of the characteristics of the church was that it sought to help people where needed. "...they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need." (Acts 2:45) People did this voluntarily, not out of guilt or force. People recognized they belonged to something bigger than just themselves and their own journey with God. They were in it together, prioritizing God first, then others, and finally, themselves.

Community can also help us in difficult moments. Life gets hard at times. The hard times are made even harder when we go through them alone. Hard times are never easy, but when others shoulder part of the load, it gets easier. Part of what it means to be connected to others sounds like this: "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2) Followers of Jesus carry a responsibility to support each other through all the times of life. One sad statement sometimes heard says, "Christians shoot their wounded" (not literally, of course), meaning they get down on people who are already down. That cannot happen. Our goal must be help, healing, and hope for hurting people. That outcome needs people to "get real" with each other – to be honest about what's really happening in their lives. It's a challenge to share our struggles with others. There's a big risk that takes real courage, but a huge reward waits on the other side of taking that step.

Jesus came to establish a new kind of community – one where everyone is welcome and anything is possible, not because of the people in it, but because of the God behind it. Community continues to be an identifying mark of those who follow the Jesus of the Bible.

### Script 7: Sharing Our Faith

When it comes to faith and following Jesus, there's a personal part to that. That's the part where we pursue Jesus and learn more about what He has for us. There's also a corporate part – the church – where we get connected to others in vital relationships. There's a third part – one that engages us with the people around us who do not follow Jesus – our community, our neighbors. In all honesty, this is a difficult part of faith for many. Why? Because it can feel like we are called to become spiritual salespeople. Or maybe it sounds like we are forcing our beliefs on others. Other people are just introverts who prefer to keep to themselves most of the time. There are other reasons, too, that make this part of faith a challenge.

Let's answer two questions: 1) Why should we share our faith? And, 2) How do we share our faith (in ways that are NOT like what we talked about a minute ago). So, the first reason to share our faith is because spiritual realities exist, and people matter to God. The One who talked about the realities of heaven AND hell is none other than Jesus. In this day, it is common to resign hell to outdated and uneducated times. But Jesus spoke about heaven and hell more than anyone else in the Bible. He revealed one of two eternal destinies for people – eternity in communion with God and other followers, or eternal separation from God and others. One example is found in Matthew 25 where

Jesus speaks about the day He returns in the future. "Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." (Matthew 25:32) "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" (Matthew 25:34) "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" (Matthew 25:41) It's a very sobering picture from the same Jesus who talked about the love of God for the world. 2 Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord...is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." God wants all people with Him but that decision rests with the heart and mind of every person.

Speaking of God's love for those lost, you may know His story about the ninety-nine sheep who are present and accounted for, but one is missing. The shepherd, representing God, leaves those who are safe and searches for the one lost lamb. That is the heart of God for those who are far from Him. Following Him means developing that "whatever it takes" heart for people far from God.

Beyond eternal spiritual realities, another reason to share our faith is because it strengthens our faith. To share our faith with others requires us to know what we believe and why. It does not mean that we need to know the answer to every question asked, but it does mean we "own" our faith on a deep level. Sharing often results in questions coming our way. It's OK to say, "I don't know the answer to that...but I will get back to you with an answer." As we study the difficult or unknown parts of faith, we grow. And let's be honest, there are tough questions about faith, and we should hear those and know what we believe.

OK, so how do we share our faith in ways that are respectful and natural, not weird or being a jerk? Let's be clear - no jerks for Jesus! Let's start with something basic. Sharing our faith means sharing the gospel. That word, gospel, can sound churchy and out-of-date, but it's an English version of the Greek word *euangelizo*, which means "to announce good news." At its very core, sharing faith is sharing good news, not bad. The gospel does include bad news about all humanity - sin and separation from God - but it's more about what God has done to conquer sin through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. That is, well, good news!

One way to share your faith is to invite others into your life. Real friendships must exist to effectively share our faith. When we look at Jesus' life, He spent time with people far from God? Why? Because they mattered to Him, and He treated them with respect, dignity, and compassion. They were not a project or looked down on by Him. Jesus invited people to follow Him - He invited them into His life.

We need to be careful here. Relationships can never be a "bait-n-switch," where we place conditions upon anyone. We need to genuinely love them. That looks like having dinner with them, spending time with them, doing life with them. Some people may never follow Jesus, but that's not your job. You are not God, and only He can change a heart. But you can love them, and you can share with them the good news of God's love.

Another way to share your faith is to tell your story. Many people don't think they know enough to enter into a spiritual conversation with others. "What if I get asked a question I can't answer?" You will get asked one of those in time. But you are the expert on your story. How did God change your life? What was your journey toward faith? What questions did you have? Sharing your faith is not memorizing material and presenting it word-for-word. It's more personal than that. It includes your story.

Many people today are asking the "big" questions – questions like: Why am I here? Does my life have a purpose? What can transform me for the better? Those questions don't come up in surface relationships. As we already said, we need to be in real relationships with others for that to happen. We cannot reach people we do not love...and we cannot love people we do not know on a deep level.

It is also important to share God's story. What did God do to make it possible for people to be in a relationship with Him? One way to do that is to have a visual way to explain this. If God is at the top of a ladder because He is holy – perfect, how do people like us get there? We could draw a ladder and ask the person we're speaking with, "who are some good people you've heard of?" Mother Teresa and Billy Graham are people who would never place themselves at the top of the ladder. Where would we put ourselves? Of course we would put ourselves somewhere below the good people we know. How does the gap between us and God get bridged? That's why Jesus came to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. John 3:16 makes it clear that Jesus, not us, makes us right with God: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." It begins with God's love and ends with eternal life. What's our part? "Believe!"

At some point, we want to invite people to make a commitment. That invitation should never be pushy. If someone is not ready to make that commitment, keep loving them and journeying with them. Keep being a friend with no strings attached.

### Script 8: Christian Leadership

Leadership – it's needed everywhere, talked about often, and written about continuously. Specifically, what does it mean to lead in the church? What are the qualities of Christian leadership? Let's begin with a definition. There are hundreds, maybe thousands, of definitions of leadership given. An excellent definition comes from Robert Clinton in his book "The Making of a Leader." He defines leadership as "a dynamic process in which a man or woman with God-given capacity influences a specific group of God's people toward His purposes for the group." (Kindle, 60) This definition helps us understand that leading flows from God's grace. His gifting is intended for God's purposes, and includes influencing others.

This definition also incorporates ideas from images shared by Jesus about the topic of leadership. First, leaders are to be servants. When the disciples of Jesus argued about who among them was greatest, Jesus stated, "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else." (Mark 9:35) Jesus, the ultimate leader, shortly after washed the feet of those disciples – the job of a servant or slave – to give them an example to follow. A leader who follows

Jesus is willing to do whatever is needed to express His nature. Second, leaders are caretakers, not owners. Jesus told a parable, a story, about three men given gifts to put to use for the Master. Two did, and one did not. Each was held accountable for what they did with what they had been given. They were never the owners of those resources, but caretakers working on behalf of the Master. Christian leaders recognize God's generous gifting to them and their accountability to God. Third, leaders are shepherds. That role may sound strange in our day, but in the Bible, it was rich with imagery and responsibility. Writing to leaders in the church, Peter wrote, "Shepherd the flock of God among you..." (1 Peter 5:2) Shepherds guide, feed, protect, and sacrifice for the flock. Leading is a role that benefits others in their journey toward and with God.

There are qualities that belong to Christian leadership that may or may not be present in the secular realm - but they are essential in the church. There are four "C's" of Christian leadership. The first "C" is character. Since we talked about what that means in an earlier session, let's just point out here that when the criteria for leaders in the church are given, it focuses greatly on character issues. "...an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money." (1 Timothy 3:2-3) Notice the emphasis on character and the resulting behaviors. Character is who we REALLY are and must ultimately express itself in how we live, and how we act.

Character includes being an example. Leadership is also not the place to expect things from others while those same expectations do not apply to us. Someone once said, "Leaders are the example, not the exception." Whatever a leader asks of others needs to be something they themselves are willing to do.

The second "C" is an older word that needs some explanation - calling. Back in the passage about leaders in the church, Paul writes, "...If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task." (1 Timothy 3:1) The word "aspire" means that a person should possess a sense of God's leading - God's direction - to a leadership role. No one should ever feel forced or coerced into leadership. God gifts people to lead and calls them into it. This gets to the heart of the purpose - the "why?" of leadership. Before a leader carries out the "what" of the responsibility, there is an important reason to ask, "why am I doing this?" It may be that people think leadership brings attention, perks, or power. It may be that people like to control others. Jesus made it clear that leadership in the Kingdom of God includes service, sacrifice, and challenge. A leader in the church needs a strong sense of compelling from God to join the work He is doing to help people meet and follow Jesus. Leading in the church is not ultimately about the leader but about the work God does in the lives of people to bring them into a relationship with Him, to restore brokenness, and to redeem what has been lost. Leadership is a spiritual gift offered for the sake of others.

Calling also serves a personal purpose for every leader following Jesus. In the difficult moments of leadership - and there will be some of those, calling propels a leader to continue, to endure, and to stay focused on the mission God has for the church. In tough times, a leader may ask, "Who needs this?" But when the question of "Why am I doing this?" has been asked and answered before, a leader can continue despite challenges.

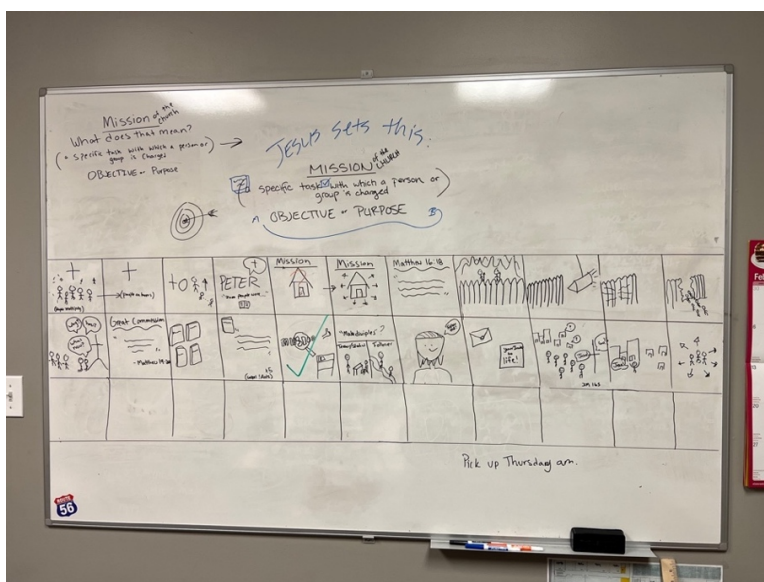
The third “C” is competence. Competence means we do our work well, with excellence. Psalm 78:72 states, “With upright heart (that’s character) {David} shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand (that’s competence).” Excellence does NOT mean that we pursue perfectionism, but it DOES mean we do the best we can with what we have. Leadership is not a reason to settle for mediocrity. Throughout the Bible, leaders grew in competence. Moses learned how to delegate, and it helped everybody in Israel, including himself. Nehemiah led with an ability to manage a large project and many people. The Apostle Paul communicated spiritual truth to different groups of people needing reliable instruction. Competence cannot be separated from character and should never be thought to be less spiritual than the heart of the leader. An upright heart and skillful hands are both aspects of leading in the church.

The fourth “C” is community. We’ve talked about connection before, but this time community refers to a leader’s impact on others. Leadership in the church gets evaluated by the positive results in the lives of others. Let’s remember our definition of leadership: “a dynamic process in which a man or woman with God-given capacity influences a specific group of God’s people toward His purposes for the group.” A leader in the church is never without others. An old saying goes, “If you think you’re a leader, but no one is following you, you’re just out for a walk.” Successful leadership in the church means that others experience more of what God has for them. The influence a leader exerts must always direct others toward a God-given goal. Leadership is not about titles or power but influence toward the purposes of God.

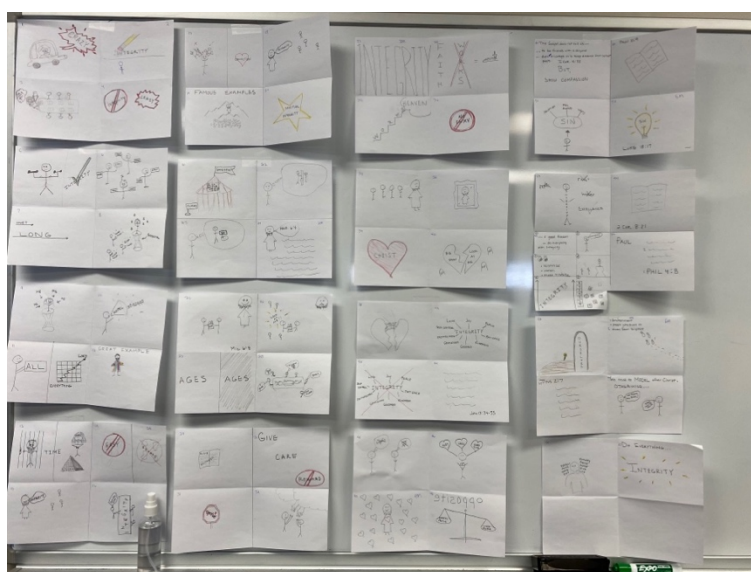
Leadership is a God-given privilege for the purposes of God. Never take it lightly, but once serving as a leader, do it with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength!

## Step 2: Turn Script Text into Storyboard Images

I gathered a group of three to four to storyboard the session scripts. The group included two or three Gen Z staff members and myself. The storyboarding process averaged eighteen to twenty-two hours per session script.



There were thirty-one images created to reflect the script for session 1 shown above.



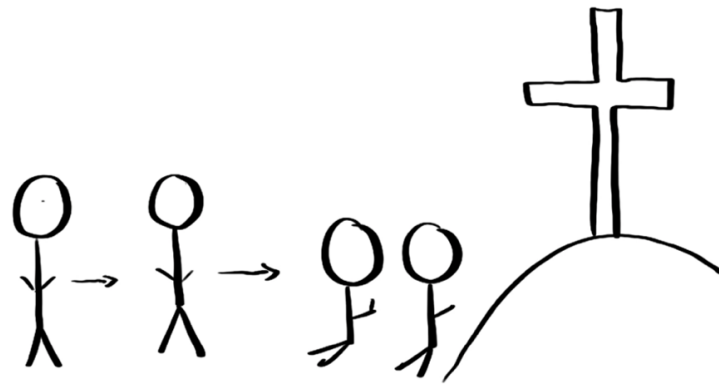
There were sixty-four images created to reflect the script of session 4 shown above.

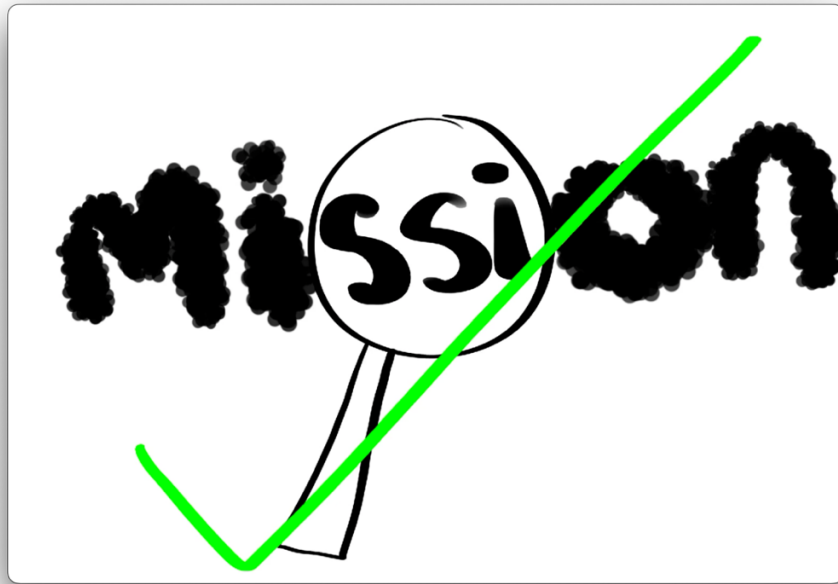
## Step 3: Storyboard Images to Rough Drafts

Below are three examples of rough draft drawings from session 1. I sat with a staff member as these images were created.



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Fifty rough draft drawings were created for session 1.

Sixty-four rough draft drawings were created for session 4.

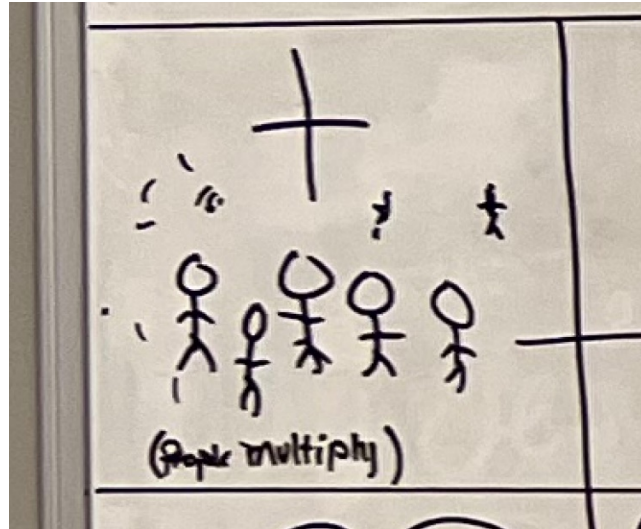
## Step 4: Rough Draft Drawings into Final Drawings

An animator was employed to hand-draw the typographic images. The time to complete one session in its final form varies from three to four weeks.

## Examples of process from text, to storyboard, to rough draft, to final image

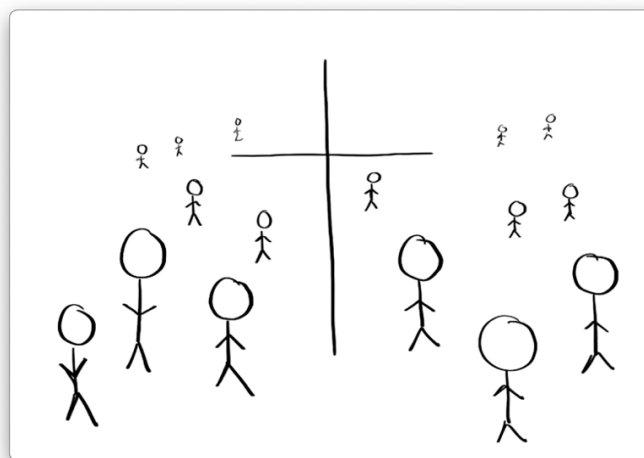
### EXAMPLE 1

Selected text from session 1: "Jesus predicted a Jesus-gathering - people who get together and it's all about Jesus and their commitment to Him." Brainstorming a way to represent those words in images resulted in the drawing below.



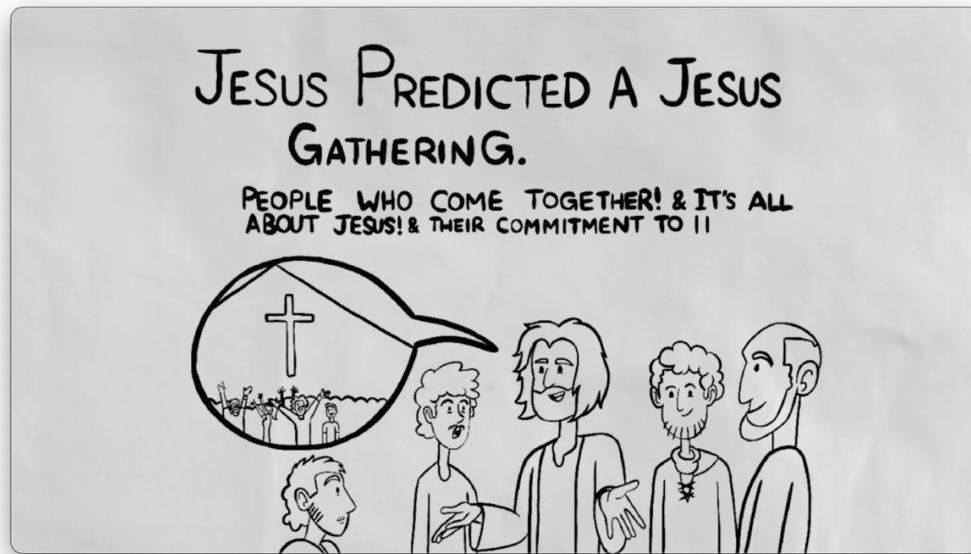
### STORYBOARD IMAGE

The storyboarding images were photographed and stored. I sat with a staff member who drew the rough draft images onto the *Procreate* app on an iPad. I approved the images created and offered input about edits along the way. The time to turn storyboarding images into rough drafts averaged eighteen to twenty hours per session.



### ROUGH DRAFT

An animator from within Washington Heights Church was employed to produce the final version of the animation. I learned that there are multiple types of animation and people tend to focus on one style.

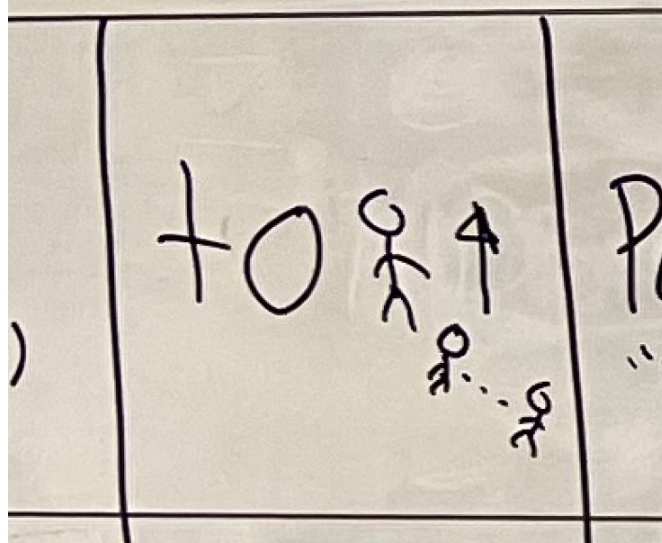


**FINAL IMAGE**

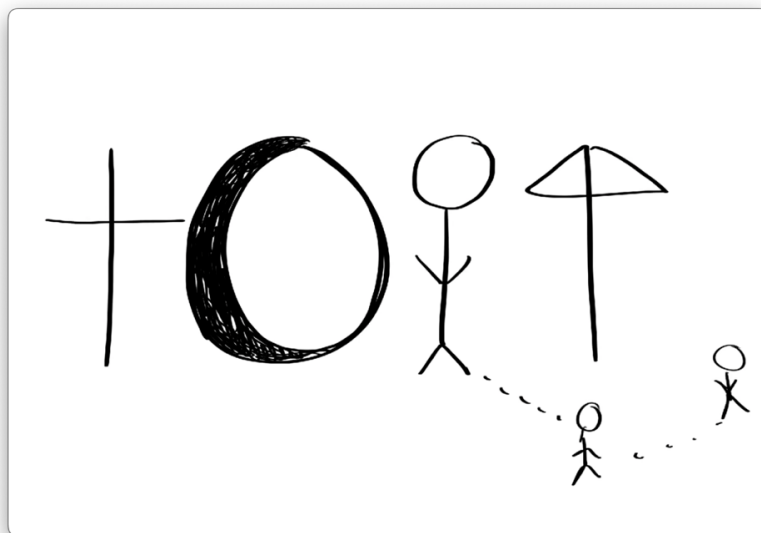
**EXAMPLE 2:**

Also taken from session 1, the following images show the progression from text, to storyboard, to rough draft, and to a final version of the animation.

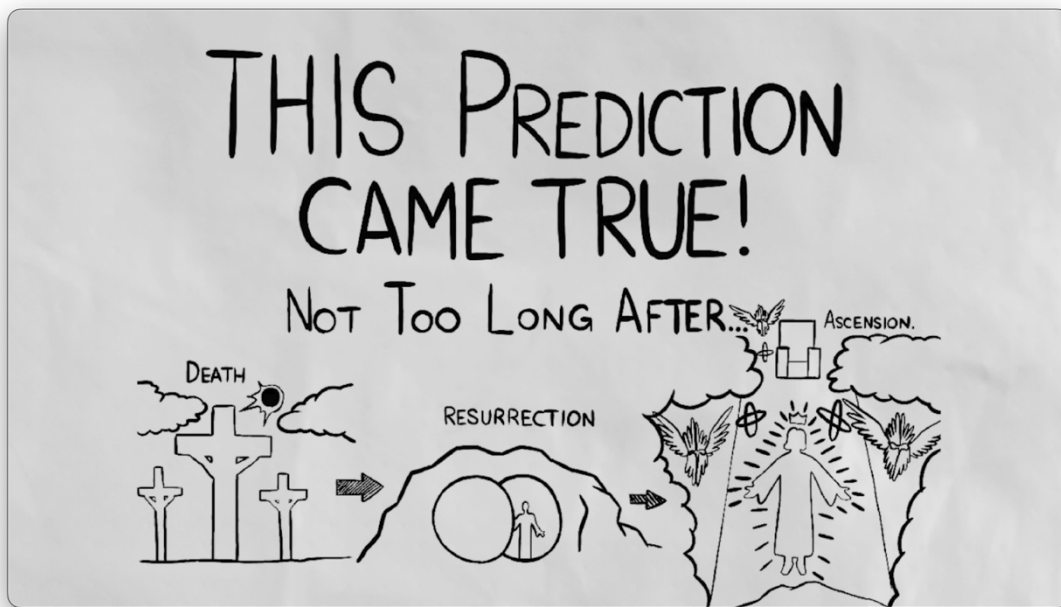
The text portrayed below: "That prediction came true not too long after Jesus' death on a cross, resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven."



**STORYBOARD IMAGE**



**ROUGH DRAFT**



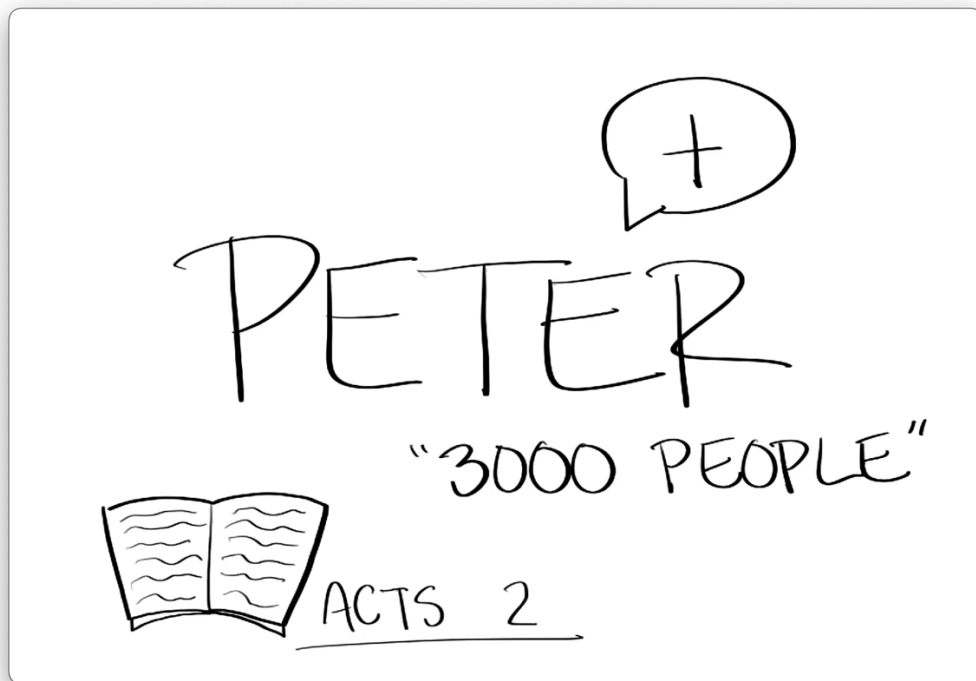
**FINAL IMAGE**

**EXAMPLE 3:**

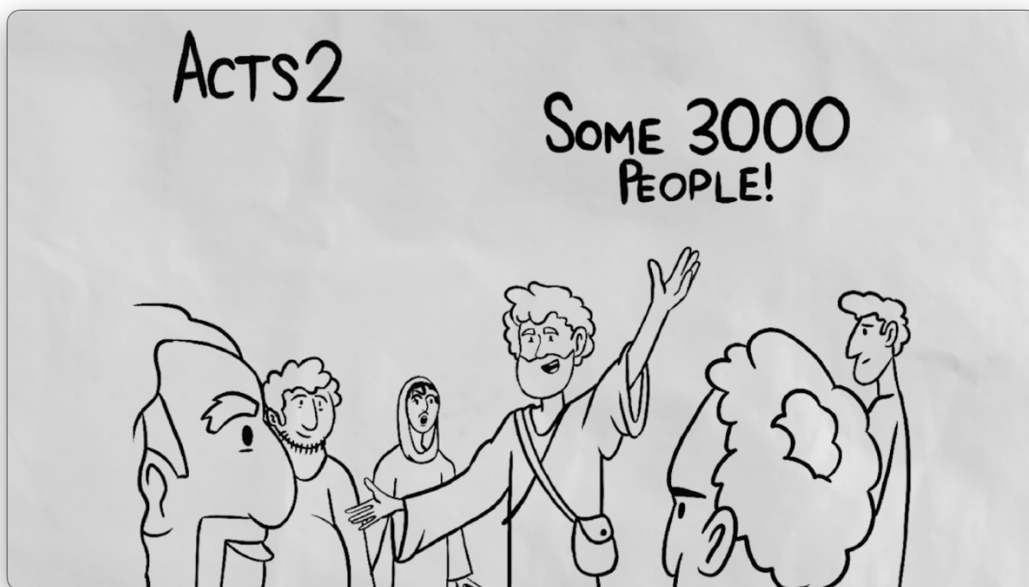
"In Acts 2 we see Peter present the news about Jesus and that day, some 3,000 people put faith in Jesus and the church began."



**STORYBOARD IMAGE**



**ROUGH DRAFT**



**FINAL VERSION**

## Mentor Job Description

Goal of the “Leadership Onramp” process: onboard new believers toward future leadership within the church.

The parameters of the process:

- Eight animated sessions provide the topics to discuss with a participant.
- Three questions after each animated session allow the participant to engage the information.
- In your meeting with a participant, discuss their answers to the questions and share your views as well.
- Find a place of service for the participant during the process if they are not already serving.
- During your meetings, discuss their service and how it relates to the day’s topic.
- Pray with and for the participant.
- Cast vision for the church as a whole and your ministry’s role in fulfilling the mission.

Mentor responsibilities:

- Identify and invite a prospective future leader into the Leadership Onramp process.
- Explain the process to them and secure their commitment.
- Set up regular meeting times.
- Pray for the participant regularly.
- Practice deep listening as the participant shares.
- Add your own answers to the questions on the app.
- Ask open-ended questions to the participant to draw out their passion and “wiring.”
- Be appropriately vulnerable about yourself and your spiritual journey.
- By the end of eight sessions, share your sense of future leadership potential for the participant and immediate next steps.

Participant responsibilities:

- Keep the meeting commitments as much as possible.
- Engage meaningfully with the process.
- Be teachable and open to mentor input.
- See the process through to the end of eight sessions.
- Pray about what God has ahead for you as you follow Him.

# Appendix F—Milestone 6 Project Launch Plan Documentation

Below is the letter of response by the Regional Director of our Association of church after viewing the Session One video and the request to provide feedback.



December 11, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

This feedback concerning the video component of Roy Gruber's doctoral project will focus on its effectiveness in developing leaders and usefulness for broader use within the Rocky Mountain Church Network (RMCN). Any stylistic or grammatical feedback will be given to Mr. Gruber directly.

The first video excels in two areas. First, the initial section, which roots the church's mission in the truth that the church belongs to Jesus, is crucial in maintaining the church's focus on what Jesus desires for it to accomplish. This hinders one's personal mission from supplanting Jesus' mission. Second, the section emphasizing the Great Commission as the church's mission reminds the viewer that if the church belongs to Jesus, he sets its mission.

Mr. Gruber effectively communicated the outward nature of Jesus' call to make disciples. The manner in which he tied Jesus' call of the Twelve to follow him with the believer's call for others to follow Jesus was concise and persuasive.

As RMCN serves 55 churches in four states, I have observed many diverse ministry settings. In many of those, missional focus and leadership development have been weak, leading to less Kingdom effectiveness. In order to reverse this, our churches must put strategies and tools in place to raise leaders, including those who are new to church life, and help congregants maintain an outward, missional mindset. After reviewing Mr. Gruber's initial video presentation, I believe that the completed project may be of use to churches searching for a way to accomplish this.

Sincerely,

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