

1-1-2018

# Discipleship for the Next Generation: Engaging the Emerging Generation

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## Recommended Citation

Norwood, Kevin, "Discipleship for the Next Generation: Engaging the Emerging Generation" (2018). *Doctor of Ministry*. 255.  
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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

DISCIPLESHIP FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:  
ENGAGING THE EMERGING GENERATION

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF PORTLAND SEMINARY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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PORTLAND, OREGON

MARCH 2018

Portland Seminary  
George Fox University  
Portland, Oregon

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DMin Dissertation

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This is to certify that the DMin Dissertation of

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has been approved by  
the Dissertation Committee on February 9, 2018  
for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Global Perspectives.

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## DEDICATION

To my wife, Ann, who inspired this 25-year journey of making disciples and to all the hundreds of students who are our family today.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the incredible cohort of friends who have gone on this journey with me: Aaron Cole, Phil Goldsberry, and Jason Kennedy, who are a true band of brothers. Denton Field: you have helped me to take a dream to reality with our little website and cohort idea. To my parents, Mickey and Shirley Norwood, for believing in me always and making this a reality. Thanks to Maci and London, who have sacrificed their time for me to accomplish this goal. Thank to Pastor Bruce McCarty and Owasso First Assembly of God for supporting and believing in me to practice Youth Ministry for so many years.

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## ABSTRACT

Go into all the world and make disciples: the great commission given by Christ to his disciples. At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus invited them to drop everything and follow him. By his example, he taught them how to fulfill this commission. Discipleship is the key element of faith that determines the future of the church. It is imperative that the great commission continue to be carried out to the next generation. Discipleship for the emerging generation has consistently happened since Jesus first gave his commission. The principles of discipleship stay the same, but the methods must be relevant to each generation's specific needs and communication styles. There are multiple methods and platforms for discipleship today, but they share five principles. Family, authenticity, intentionality, time, and hope are the foundation for discipleship. Jesus is our example. Jesus created *family*, he was *authentic*, and he was *intentional*. He gave *time* and he created *hope*. His pattern is the blueprint for next-generation discipleship. Making disciples today will require different language and different environments. The connectivity of social media provides a means to develop relationships, which leads to discipleship. Moving from neighbor to friend, friend to family, and then family to *faith* is the process of discipleship for this emerging generation.

## SECTION 1: THE PROBLEM

### **Introduction**

Dee Hock, the founder and CEO Emeritus of Visa, makes a compelling case that all organizations are fundamentally based on flawed seventeenth-century concepts no longer relevant to the vast systematic social and environmental problems experienced daily. He delineated a path to organizations based on chaordic principles: organizations that harmoniously blend chaos and order.<sup>1</sup> He introduced a new way, a chaordic structure, wherein 22,000 banks compete with each other for 750 million customers and must cooperate by honoring one another's \$1.25 trillion in transactions annually across borders and currencies.<sup>2</sup> Hock developed his own leadership language to guide his organization to a place of doing something new. All of this happened while there existed a banking business that had operated one way for hundreds of years. He transformed how money was thought of and how it was used on a daily basis. He reshaped the culture of money around the world. Dee Hock affected the culture of money by bringing a new language and a new way to an old and trusted system. He transformed the world financially by using the foundations of the old school way and integrating it with a new way to spend money.

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<sup>1</sup> Dee Hock, *Birth of the Chaordic Age* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 1999), ix: Chaordic is a word Hock created. It blends the words chaos and order and is defined as the behavior of any self-governing organism, organization, or system which harmoniously blends characteristics of order and chaos.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ix.

The same gap exists within the culture of Christian discipleship. Some discipleship is based on a flawed eighteenth-century concept, no longer relevant to the problems faced daily. Bringing order to the chaos of this next generation requires a newly developed language and a new way to forward the good news. The world is in transition and it is necessary to understand the foundational principles of discipleship as well as the need for something new. What is the next generation searching for?

The next generation is searching for a culture that is “spiritual but not religious.”<sup>3</sup> The Good News, which is the news of the coming of the Kingdom of God and the death and resurrections of Jesus, has not changed, but the delivery of the message must change. The current culture is looking for meaning and purpose, but not religion. Can they look back and find something in the traditional that is spiritual and meaningful--not labels, but real content? The biggest question of this spiritual quest might just be about God. “The essential human need might just be proof that God exists. We have cravings for food, sleep and love, so perhaps a desire to identify with a higher power is not an accident of our design. That built-in yearning is there because there’s something worth yearning for.”<sup>4</sup> So how does the next generation find something spiritual?

They are in transition because their world changes quickly and often. They are into change of communication and process. They are searching for something that has authority and has substance. The disciplines that go with spirituality are not lost on the next generation. Yoga, meditation and other spiritual activities are being practiced. Teaching that involves discipleship still has an attractiveness to it. So how do these

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<sup>3</sup> Susanna Schrobsdorff, “My Life as a ‘None’ and Other Tales from the Ranks of the Unaffiliated and the Agnostic,” *Time Magazine*, September 26, 2016, 63.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

transitions and change affect Christian discipleship? Is there “a way to be spiritual” within the Christian culture for the next generation?

### **Tradition**

It is imperative to remember that Jesus himself operated within a specific culture, the Jewish culture of 2000 years ago.<sup>5</sup> This tradition was defined by the word rabbi. In the Old Testament, there is no mention of rabbis, synagogues, Pharisees, Sadducees, or Zealots. Why would Jesus, the son of God, choose to enter the world of a Jewish rabbi?<sup>6</sup>

The outside culture he arrived in was a brutal Roman one that devalued Jewish people. The inside culture had a typical spiritual pattern for young Jewish boys. The cultures of Roman brutality and Jewish tradition were inherently opposed, and many Jews looked for a messiah to relieve the tension between them. God chose this time to insert Jesus into this culture because He was going to forever transform the future. Jesus’ Jewish culture shaped his life and ministry.

In their book *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus*, Spangler and Tverberg recount the tradition that existed during his childhood.

Jesus probably began to read and memorize the Torah, learning much of the Hebrew scripture by the time he was five or six. After the age of ten, he would have started to learn the Oral Torah, the rabbinic traditions handed down for interpreting the Written Torah. By the age of thirteen most boys would have concluded their formal study and then begun to learn a trade. The most talented among them would have been encouraged to continue studying throughout their teenage years at the *bet midrash* (“house of interpretation”) at the synagogue until

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<sup>5</sup> Ann Spangler and Lois Tverberg, *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus: How the Jewishness of Jesus Can Transform Your Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 13.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 23.



they married at the age of eighteen or twenty. Only the most brilliant would go on to become disciples of a great rabbi.<sup>7</sup>

In every Jewish home, tradition was cherished, treasured and upheld. Jesus' birth may not have been traditional, but the culture he was born into was. The traditional rabbi of Jesus' day would have followed a designated path to be qualified to be a teacher of Torah and scripture. The aspiration of every Hebrew boy was to become a rabbi.<sup>8</sup> Dwain Miller, in his book *Jesus the Rabbi*, spells out the three stages required for advancing to the status of rabbi.

The first stage would be to memorize Leviticus. This would usually be accomplished with oral teaching, learning from his father as his father had learned from his father before him. The ability to memorize was a vital component on the journey to becoming a rabbi.<sup>9</sup>

Stage two would be Bet Safer, or The School of the Torah. He would be taught by rabbis. He would have to demonstrate to the rabbis an understanding of the first five books of the Torah. Not only did he have to memorize them, he had to have a working knowledge of what they meant. This would be followed by the student's exam. Only the brightest students were invited to stand before the rabbis. At the age of twelve, we witness Jesus passing his exam. He was in the temple astounding the teachers and the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>8</sup> Dwain Miller, *Jesus The Rabbi, Unlocking the Hebraic Teaching of Yeshua* (Charlotte, NC: Lifebridge Books, 2013), 33.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 34.

rabbis were amazed at this knowledge. He asked them questions for which they did not have the answers, and they were overwhelmed at his understanding of Torah.<sup>10</sup>

After three days they found him in the temple courts sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”

“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand what he was saying to them.<sup>11</sup>

This gives us an insight into the culture in which Jesus was trained. While we don’t know specifically what Jesus was doing between the ages of 12 and 30, if he followed the tradition of the culture, the next step would have been the third stage.

The third stage was Bet Talmud, The School of the Disciple. There were five levels of the Bet Talmud that had to be passed. If a young man failed in this area of his education, he would be told to return to his home and follow his father’s trade. The selection process was so intense, only a handful were ordained as a rabbi.

And yet, Rabbi Jesus is a title recorded in the New Testament.<sup>12</sup> Who called Jesus rabbi? His disciples (Mark 9:5.); the Pharisees (John 3:1-2); John the Baptist’s disciples (John 1:35-38); common people (John 6:24-25); Torah teachers (Matthew 8:19); Herodians (Luke 3:12); and the Sadducees (Matthew 22:23-32). Jesus refers to himself by this title in John 13:12-14. Jesus was qualified and he taught in the synagogue. This would not have been allowed if he was not at this level of leadership.

In John chapter three, Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night to have a conversation.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>11</sup> Luke 2:46-50 (NIV).

<sup>12</sup> Dwain Miller, *Jesus The Rabbi, Unlocking the Hebraic Teaching of Yeshua* (Charlotte, NC: Lifebridge Books, 2013), 36.

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.” Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”<sup>13</sup>

This Pharisee’s address illustrates the level of respect Jesus had from those within the traditional culture.

The highest level of rabbinic authority was to graduate with the highest honor.

Semicha literally means “a rabbi with authority.”<sup>14</sup> Jewish Bible scholar Brad Young points out:

Among these scholars there was a very small subset, who were seen as having Semicha (authority.) This authority allowed them to make new interpretations on how to live out the Torah. (It is important to note that they could not change Torah, but that their interpretation was on how to view it correctly to know how to live and act correctly, to please God.)

These Semicha Rabbis were also unique, because they lived a more itinerant lifestyle and took on followers—called talmidim (disciples)—who lived with them most of the time, thought they would be sent out on their own later in their learning. The Rabbis had a yoke, their method of interpreting scripture, in which they would order the commandments of Torah from the greatest to the least. The talmidim of the Rabbi would be expected to live by that yoke and to memorize key teachings of the Rabbi. Living with their Rabbi, these talmidim would also learn to live in the same manner—with their greatest desire to be to learn to follow God just like their rabbi. In all of this, the talmidim were also in complete submission to the authority of their Rabbi.<sup>15</sup>

Ray Vander Laan, in his book *In the Dust of the Rabbi*, described the relationship of the talmidim to the Rabbi. “The talmidim willingly left home, family and occupation to be with the Rabbi because he wanted more than anything else in the world to be like the Rabbi (teacher) in his walk with God. As the Rabbi lived and taught his

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<sup>13</sup> John 3:1-3 (NIV).

<sup>14</sup> Ray Vander Laan, *Discovery Guide: In the Dust of the Rabbi* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 17.

<sup>15</sup> Dwain Miller, *Jesus The Rabbi, Unlocking the Hebraic Teaching of Yeshua* (Charlotte, NC: Lifebridge Books, 2013), 39.

understanding of the Scripture, his talmid listened to him, watched him, followed him, memorized his words and imitated his walk with God.”<sup>16</sup> Jesus, the rabbi, invited disciples, talmidim. They made the decision to follow him. So, what made Jesus so different as a Rabbi?<sup>17</sup>

Jesus was identified as a rabbi because of his authority, which was recognized by many people, among them the Chief Priests and Elders. In Matthew 21:23-27, they wanted to know by what authority Jesus did these things and who gave him authority. Jesus replied with a question that stumped them and didn’t answer them. Additionally, the common people to whom he taught spoke among themselves and identified him as someone who taught with authority, unlike the scribes (Matthew 7:29). Third, his talmidim (his disciples) recognized his authority when in the middle of a storm, he rebuked the winds and the waves and it went completely calm, “what kind of man is this? Even the winds and waves obey him!”<sup>18</sup> Even after this demonstration, Jesus knew that they doubted, so he spoke these words, “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”<sup>19</sup>

This brings us back to the disciples that Jesus called, his talmidim. They had followed him and now this was their commissioning to carry on the authority and

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<sup>16</sup> Ray Vander Laan, *Discovery Guide: In the Dust of the Rabbi* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 17.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>18</sup> Matthew 8:26-27 (NIV).

<sup>19</sup> Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV).

interpretation of Torah that he had invested in them. This was the transition from the old to the new. Jesus' interpretation of Torah and the example he set for his disciples was a *transition* from *tradition* that had been *translated* for the new. Jesus showed how discipleship could be culturally relevant even if the religious audience rejected him. He was preparing for a whole new audience to hear his teachings.

### **Translation**

Jesus took words, actions, and phrases and translated them differently than any other rabbi. He did it with authority. The common man, the chief priest, the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and even the critical skeptic recognized the authority of Jesus. He performed miracles that solidified the authority of his translation. They couldn't overlook the power and authority from which he operated. He did the impossible, so when he spoke they had to listen. They questioned him, they tried to trap him, but they listened. Even those who were not of Jesus' Jewish tradition listened and believed.

Jesus redefined the words and traditional language of the Torah. For example, when someone tried to trick him into choosing the greatest commandment, his response was, "Love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself."<sup>20</sup> He didn't give the ten commandments; instead he clarified them from ten to two. There was a transition from tradition to a new translation. What is lawful on the Sabbath? Hold out your hand (Luke 6:8-10). Jesus healed on the Sabbath. He breached the Sabbath by this action and moved past historical tradition to a new definition.

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<sup>20</sup> Mark 12:28-34 (NIV).

What about adultery? Jesus took adultery from an act to a look by his words, “But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”<sup>21</sup> The Pharisees and the teachers of the law brought a woman caught in the act of adultery to Jesus, threw her at his feet. They declared she should be stoned to death because she was caught “in the act” of adultery. Jesus, who responded instead of reacted, stooped down and wrote on the ground. They continued to question him about her verdict. Then his language froze all of them in their tracks, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”<sup>22</sup> At his words, they left, oldest to youngest. This type of interaction infuriated the religious leaders to react with a determined death sentence for him. Jesus then looked at her and asked, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”<sup>23</sup>

Jesus pointed out the error of the religious. He observed two people praying, a Pharisee and a publican. The Pharisee gave a status report on how great he was. The publican beat himself and asked, “God be merciful on me, a sinner.”<sup>24</sup> Jesus declared one was justified. “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”<sup>25</sup> This simple illustration shifted the understanding of prayer. A change in language and definition caused the common man to have hope and the religious to become angry and murderous.

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<sup>21</sup> Matthew 5:28 (NIV).

<sup>22</sup> John 8:3-11 (NIV).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Luke 18: 9-14 (NIV).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

The end of first-generation discipleship is the ascension of Jesus into heaven with his disciples looking on. Jesus had infuriated the religious leaders until they accused him, arraigned him, crucified him. His death was to be their conclusion for him but Jesus was buried and then rose again from the dead three days later. This was confirmed by over 500 witnesses. When he ascended, though, everything changed. With his ascension, second-generation discipleship began.

When Jesus had called his disciples, he told them that he would make them into “fishers of men.”<sup>26</sup> He would develop them to continue his mission. They were sent out, taught, equipped, rebuked, and then trained some more for this mission. Jesus corrected their errors, forgave their sins, and promised the Holy Spirit. He translated the scriptures differently than anyone else and commissioned them to continue in his teachings and in the way. The disciples would now take on the mantle of leaders calling the next disciples.

Second-generation discipleship was supernatural in nature. There are three specific stories in the book of Acts that clarify the partnership between God and man in this second generation. These three stories very clearly address God’s desire to continue the process of making disciples after Jesus had ascended back to his right hand.

The first story is of Philip. Philip was a Hellenistic Jew and one of the seven men appointed by the church in Jerusalem to oversee the daily ministry to widows in the new Christian community.<sup>27</sup> His pedigree was a “man of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom.”<sup>28</sup> Philip went to the city of Samaria and preached the gospel with power. There

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<sup>26</sup> Mark 4:19 (ESV).

<sup>27</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1676.

<sup>28</sup> Acts 6:3 (NIV).

were a great number of people who came to know Christ because of his message. In the middle of his revival work, Philip was divinely directed to go down to the desert area. Philip responded to the spirit with active obedience. In the desert place, Philip doesn't have the crowds of Samaria. Instead, he comes across one person, an Ethiopian eunuch driving by in his chariot reading Isaiah 53. He had been on a journey to Jerusalem and was returning to Queen Candice. Philip is instructed to join the eunuch in his chariot. He does and begins to explain the gospel. After he has shared the good news of Jesus and they are coming to a body of water, the eunuch asks what would keep him from becoming baptized. After his conversion and his subsequent baptism, Philip was transported to another location. "The conversion of this one person meant not only that Philip was the first to proclaim the gospel to a Gentile, but also that the gospel was taken by this Ethiopian courtier to the continent of Africa."<sup>29</sup>

Discipleship expanded to the diversity of the global community by a supernatural directive. Water baptism, one of the outward signs of discipleship, was globally inclusive. The sexuality of the Ethiopian, being asexual or unisex, emphasizes the inclusiveness of the Gospel. The gospel moves quickly to those outside the traditional Jewish culture. This was the beginning of second-generation discipleship. It looked different than the first generation, but it included the same elements of the divine and human intertwined.

Second is the story of Saul. Saul, who witnessed the stoning of Stephen, created chaos for the newly founded Christian faith. He wreaked havoc on the church using terroristic strategies to drag men and women from their homes and brutalize them. He was authorized to do these terrible acts by the religious leaders of the day. On the road to

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<sup>29</sup> Philip Wesley Comfort and Walter A. Elwell, *The Complete Book of Who's Who in the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale Publishing House, 2004), 492.



Damascus to persecute more Christians, God spoke to him and questioned his intentions. “‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ ‘Who are you Lord,’ Saul asked.”<sup>30</sup> Those with him heard the conversation but saw no one. Saul ended up blind and is led into Damascus to go stay on Straight Street. At the same time, God was speaking to Ananias, sending him to pray for Saul, even giving him the exact address on Straight Street. The first use of GPS tracking happened when Ananias said yes. God told Ananias that Saul saw him coming to pray for him. God supernaturally joined together two people by divine intersection. When Ananias prayed for Saul, the miraculous happened.

Scales, like contact lenses, fell from Saul’s eyes as he was converted to faith in Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit. This transformation was an equation of Ananias and the Holy Spirit jointly working together to be a part of the spiritual transformation of Saul. A radicalized Christian terrorist supernaturally became the voice of the Church. His transformation was foretold to Ananias and then revealed to Barnabas.

Barnabas was the second part of the discipleship process. He came alongside Saul to help him become a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. He was instrumental in the next steps for Saul. He introduced him to the disciples in Jerusalem. His advocacy transformed Saul’s reputation from a feared murderer to a fellow follower, a fellow missionary sharing the gospel with the world. Barnabas journeyed with Saul as he became Paul. They became one of the strongest missionary duos recorded in all of scripture. They acquired new disciples as they went on their journey, teaching them and equipping them.

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<sup>30</sup> Acts 9:4-5 (NIV).

The third story is Peter and his supernatural directive to go to Cornelius's house. A complete change of discipleship happened when Peter had a food-driven dream. God's timing was impeccable, as Cornelius's men arrived at exactly the right time to invite him to come. Wouldn't it have been easier for Jesus to tell Peter to go to Cornelius's house instead of the prophetic trifecta of "feed my sheep?" The dream's directive took Peter directly outside of his religious boundaries and into uncharted waters.

The other side of the story is incredibly supernatural.

Cornelius answered: "Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."<sup>31</sup>

God was supernaturally orchestrating two things simultaneously to bring these two men together for a spiritual encounter. God was calling a man and his whole household to Him. God was preparing one of his first-generation disciples to come and make the connection for the second generation. The first generation had acquired knowledge and understanding by being with Jesus and now they took that understanding and explained it to others.

So how does all of this historical information connect to discipleship for the next generation today? Jesus equipped the first generation personally and then supernaturally empowered the connection of those who "did not know" with those who did to perpetuate discipleship to the next generation. How does that work in this time and age? Is this just a historical perspective or is it a living phenomenon?

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<sup>31</sup> Acts 10:30-33 (NIV).

In the new book *I am N*, by Voice of the Martyrs, President Cole Richards tells multiple stories of people having the same phenomenon happen to them as what Cornelius experienced. They have a vision of a man in shining clothes coming to them. They are asleep and have a dream of Jesus approaching them. As he approaches them, he invites them to become his disciples. He invites them to know him. They know the risk and the outcome. Jesus knows the risk and the outcome, but he still invites those within a Muslim culture to follow him. Jesus supernaturally provides for them a courageous Christian to come alongside them to help them become disciples. They both understand the risk and do it anyway. The letter “N” is a mark of being a disciple of Christ in the face of terrorism being carried out once again against Christians. Saul, so long ago, did it, and now groups like ISIS do it. Instead of becoming cowardly, these followers of Christ rise up in courage and stare boldly into the face of death. They wear it as a badge of honor, not as a badge of doom.

Here is one special story from the book.

“Afrooz, an Iranian Muslim, was not looking for Jesus when she found him. She was looking for help, for peace of mind. For something to ease her pain.

She cried out to Allah when feeling overwhelmed by life. No, she admitted later, she did more than that. She threatened. “If you are going to help me, she prayed, tonight you should show yourself to me. If you don’t show me a sign tonight, I will turn to this material life and be a sinner.”

Then she fell asleep and had a vision: “The room was full of light, I thought it was morning, but later I realized it was midnight. I lifted my head and was seeing Jesus Christ. He was wearing white. Although I had never seen a picture of the Messiah, I recognized that this could be no one else.

She pulled out a pen and paper to take notes if he spoke, and he did, saying, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”

Then the vision ended. This angered her. She had no context whatsoever for the words he spoke. “I was looking for Muhammad’s god,” she recalled, “and Jesus the Messiah comes to me! What is this? So I closed up my prayer mat and said ‘I am done with this! I am going to sleep.’”

The next night she again saw the Messiah in a vision, “Didn’t I tell you to come under my shadow and come with me and be safe?” he asked her.

Now she was truly perplexed. When the vision ended she thought, “This is the Messiah coming to me? Is this the real God? I should be seeing Allah or Muhammad.”

At Afrooz’s office job, a co-workers noted that she seemed out of sorts. She lied, telling him that she hadn’t seen her mother who was in the America for some time and that it was bothering her.

Suddenly the young man blurted out that he was a follower of Jesus and said “God is always with you. God is love. Bring your complaints to him.”

She was stunned. “Usually in Iran, people working in a company don’t come up to you and say, ‘I am a Christian.’”

So Afrooz showed him the words that had come to her. He discreetly opened his Bible, she had never seen one before, and pointed to Matthew 11:28. She was amazed as she read. “Come to me, all who labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “That,” she revealed “was the beginning of my faith.”<sup>32</sup>

God still loves the world and has given everyone who calls on his name an opportunity to be saved. The continuation of the relationship between God and humans, even today, is freely given. The story of salvation continues into the twenty-first century: God still so loves the world that he continues to give eternal life to all who call on his Son. The second-generation principles are still true. God has not changed, but the next generation today is different than any other generation. They will require a new language and a new platform for communication.

### **Next-Generation Discipleship**

The world is changing. It is changing politically, socially and morally. Three traditions, identity, gender, and marriage, are being challenged. According to Howe and Strauss in their book, *Millennials Rising*, millennials will shift their focus to the needs of the community more than the individual, so it is likely to induce large-scale institutional

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<sup>32</sup> The Voice of the Martyrs, *I Am N: Inspiring Stories of Christians Facing Islamic Extremists* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2016), 97-99. There is no author of this book because of the risk to those who work with the persecuted Church. Even the president of the organization doesn’t put his name on any of their publications to protect those whom they serve. This is a small portion of the larger story.

change.<sup>33</sup> The moral shift for the millennial and post-millennial generations is one of the greatest in history. Making disciples in this changing landscape is a great challenge.

Identity along the establishment lines is being challenged. “Nones” are opposed to marking any established check box concerning their affiliation. They want to be known as “none of the above.”<sup>34</sup> This is especially true concerning religion and religious preference. Identity, how you see and define yourself, is becoming very personal, and does not align naturally with an individual’s past or their family’s identity. According to the Pew Research Center, young adults are less likely to be affiliated with a particular faith than their parents’ and grandparents’ generations were when they were young.<sup>35</sup> Very often, the pushback against the establishment is from those who were raised within the very culture they challenge. The pushback against the establishment was revealed in the recent elections. President Obama connected with and unified the next generation with a promise of hope; Bernie Sanders listened to them but couldn’t overcome the establishment. Brexit and the election of Donald Trump are two of the most recent examples of the establishment “checking a different box.” This pushes the next generation to become more identified as individuals.

Gender is being challenged in the same way. The traditionally established male and female check boxes are under pressure. Some want to establish their own box:

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<sup>33</sup> Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2000), 67.

<sup>34</sup> James Emery White, *The Rise of the Nones: Understanding and Reaching the Religiously Unaffiliated* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014), 23.

<sup>35</sup> Allison Pond, Gregory Smith, and Scott Clement, “Religion among the Millennials: Less Religiously Active than Older Americans, but Fairly Traditional in Other Ways,” February 17, 2010, accessed April 2, 2017, <http://www.pewforum.org/2010/02/17/religion-among-the-millennials>.

agender or unisex to be the new “box.”<sup>36</sup> Transgenderism has come to the forefront across America, inciting hot-button political debates involving public schools and restrooms. The NCAA’s advertisements are pushing the envelope concerning gender types. They are making decisions, such as where they will host their championships, based on acceptance of non-standard genders. Gender has been a “two-choice box” and now it is being challenged. Pew Research found that “in their social and political views, young adults are clearly more accepting than older Americans of homosexuality, more inclined to see evolution as the best explanation of human life and less prone to see Hollywood as threatening moral values.”<sup>37</sup> The next generation sees these changes as natural.

Marriage is changing globally. According to the Washington Post, same-sex marriage is allowed in twenty-two countries. America followed behind Ireland, which was the first country to legalize gay marriage by national election on May 22, 2015. It became legal in America by its highest court on June 26, 2015. On the other hand, there are ten countries where homosexuality is still punishable by death.<sup>38</sup> Marriage is a globally accepted institution and has been traditionally accepted as being between a man and woman. The push globally, to expand marriage beyond that foundation, is a factor in a changing world.

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<sup>36</sup> Katy Steinmetz, “Beyond He or She: How a New Generation is Redefining the Meaning of Gender,” *Time Magazine*, March 27, 2017, 48.

<sup>37</sup> Allison Pond, Gregory Smith, and Scott Clement, “Religion among the Millennials: Less Religiously Active than Older Americans, but Fairly Traditional in Other Ways,” February 17, 2010, accessed April 2, 2017, <http://www.pewforum.org/2010/02/17/religion-among-the-millennials>.

<sup>38</sup> Darla Cameron and Bonnie Berkowitz, “The State of Gay Rights Around the World,” *Washington Post*, June 14, 2016, accessed April 4, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/world/gay-rights>.

In a short period of time, these three fundamental changes to identity have pushed the world into a time of transition. The fact that they all push against church tradition makes it a new day for discipleship. Where does scripture stand as truth on these issues? What if April 3, 2017 cover of *Time Magazine* was right: “Is Truth Dead?”<sup>39</sup>

The introduction of new phrases like “post truth” and new meanings assigned to established words like “amoral” are part of this change. “Amoral is not involving questions of right or wrong; without moral quality, neither is moral nor immoral. It is having no moral standards, restraints, or principles; unaware of or indifferent to questions have right or wrong: a completely amoral person.”<sup>40</sup>

These drastic changes to American culture are being promoted as the new normal. Anyone who would resist these transitions or dare to speak out against them from a Biblical viewpoint could be considered intolerant. The new normal pushes against church traditions, but this struggle is neither new nor original. In Matthew 7:13-14 (NIV), Jesus spoke these words: “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”<sup>41</sup> Culture is going to change; tension happens when these changes affect Christian principles and discipleship. Cultural changes affected Jesus’ first disciples, as well. How did they handle it?

They continued the teaching and examples Jesus had given to them. They immediately faced the cultural dilemma of the Christian faith moving beyond the Jewish

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<sup>39</sup> Michael Scherer, “The State of Truthfulness,” *Time Magazine*, April 3, 2017, 32.

<sup>40</sup> Merriam-Webster.com, s.v. “amoral,” accessed April 4, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/amoral>.

<sup>41</sup> Matthew 7 (NIV).

community. Taking the gospel to the Jews, Gentiles, Samaritans, Africans, and the whole world was their mission. It was their directive, despite being directly against the tenants of Judaism. So, they knew the tension that Jesus had experienced was going to continue if they followed His commission to make disciples.

To clarify how that was supposed to happen, Christ himself gave instructions. They would have the power to do this through the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8 (NIV) says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” They established the process of discipleship when it was easy, and yet, when the persecution of Saul started, they continued in the face of his terrorism. They adapted to the changes and kept sharing their message. The book of Acts records their journey of developing the church and making disciples. Before jumping forward to the issues that are faced today, there must again be a glance back to the past.

Organized religion, within its institutional denominational structures, has had a systematic way of doing discipleship since the Sunday School movement began in Britain in the 1780s. It was the fundamental eighteenth-century way to make disciples. This was originally a place for children who had been working all week in factories to become literate. English Anglican evangelical Robert Raikes (1725-1811) was the key promoter of the movement. Denominations and non-denominational organizations caught the vision and energetically began to create Sunday Schools. This weekly time within the institution was the bedrock for developing children, teens, and adults into Christians. It



developed future Sunday School teachers and is credited with shaping the nineteenth-century working class.<sup>42</sup>

As the church has progressed into the twenty-first century, the landscape has changed. In the 1960s, parents, even those who did not attend church, would still send their children to Sunday School so they would obtain a spiritual education. As institutions have progressed, just like our society, things have continued to change. Some organizations have dropped the eighteen-century systematic process of Sunday School completely. Others have modified it, and some have embraced total change. Connect groups, family groups, cell groups, Alpha groups or small groups have become the latest “visa card” to carry on this vital role. David Kinnaman, president of Barna Group, pointed to one of the implications of their research on Sunday School and small groups, which is “recognizing that not everyone is spiritually nurtured in the same spiritual environments. Clarity in vision and purpose is crucial to providing relevant and transformational settings where people can grow spiritually.”<sup>43</sup>

With Dee Hock in mind, how can religious organizations create new language and new processes that transform the eighteenth-century way of discipleship to a powerful new way for the next generation? This next generation demands real and purposeful relationships. How can discipleship be authentic for a generation who is very interested in

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<sup>42</sup> Timothy Larson, “When did Sunday School Start?” *Christianity Today*, August 2008, accessed January 1, 2017, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/2008/august/when-did-sunday-schools-start.html>

<sup>43</sup> Barna Group, “Who Is Active in Group Expressions of Faith? Barna Study Examines Small Groups, Sunday School, and House Churches,” Barna.com, June 28, 2010, accessed January 9, 2017, <https://www.barna.com/research/who-is-active-in-group-expressions-of-faith-barna-study-examines-small-groups-sunday-school-and-house-churches>.

being spiritual instead of religious? How can discipleship be developed within the church's existing culture and bring the most relational impact into the future?

These questions will be explored in the next section of this dissertation.

There are many, like Christian Smith and Kenda Creasy Dean, who have felt the urgency of this issue and have written about it. Others have developed ideas for addressing this disconnect in discipleship. Examining how they have been successful in implementing a new way of making disciples by researching their methodology is the purpose of the next section. One of the questions to be explored will be if the most impactful organizations leaders, who are closing the discipleship gap, have been mentored in a discipleship relationship?

What I am proposing, which will be explored in the third section of this dissertation, is that even within these structures there must be a return to the basic principles of first-generation discipleship and the supernatural elements of second-generation discipleship. Personal invitation into becoming a disciple is the most powerful way to initiate discipleship. The new language of this would center around a "cohort." This dissertation will explore discipleship to grow students into their faith and a new methodology specifically for the next generation and their leaders.

## SECTION 2:

## RESEARCH

### **Introduction**

Research is the key to knowledge. This chapter examines the work others are doing to disciple the next generation. Regarding each organization, we will discuss the leader of the organization, their purpose and their direction for addressing this purpose, their location, their methodology, where discipleship happens, whether there is a financial cost, and the reasons behind the formation of each organization.

By addressing the same questions of each organization, it is possible to note any recurring ideas or themes among the organizations. These common threads will then provide a baseline from which to discuss future research and methodologies. While the organizations chosen are not the only ones seeking to disciple young people, they share a common passion for equipping the next generation.

### **Organizations**

The following organizations will be examined: Alpha Course, Catalyst Conference, Orange Conference, Habitudes, John Maxwell Inc, Youth Alliance, Owasso Rams Football, Five Star Man, and Leadership Box. While some of these organizations are high-profile, others are local. Additionally, their founding date varies from more than 50 years ago to having been introduced in the last year. All of them have intentional leadership who are influential and have been focused on their ideas within their organizations. They have used all of their resources to reach out and to reach their goals.

### *Alpha Course*

Alpha was started in 1977 by Reverend Charles Marnham, in London.<sup>44</sup> Three leaders since then have helped modernize the course. The current leader, Nicky Gumbel, is an ordained Anglican priest and author. Under his leadership, Alpha has changed from a course designed for new Christians to one primarily for those outside the Church who would not consider themselves Christians.<sup>45</sup>

Gumbel was an avowed atheist. He converted to Christianity at Trinity College, Cambridge while reading through the New Testament. He found what he was searching for in his life and he wanted to create a source for others to find the truth.<sup>46</sup> His mindset has brought this course into the present with a clear focus and purpose.

The purpose of Alpha is to explore the Christian faith within a weekly session. Conversation is the catalyst, and relationship is the return. Every person is welcome to participate, and it happens at neutral sites such as a home, a Starbucks, a student union, or even at a local bookstore. There are three things that make it an Alpha meeting: food, a talk and a good conversation.<sup>47</sup>

Alpha happens within this three-strand structure to start a conversation with the unchurched. Food is a universal barrier breaker and a language people speak. It is global as it reflects the nature of the country or location that it is in. Hospitality is part of having a conversation. The talks at Alpha meetings are usually thirty minutes long and is

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<sup>44</sup> Jackie Georgiou, "The Unassuming Evangelist: Nicky Gumbel," Joy Magazine, May 20, 2013, accessed April 18, 2016, <https://www.joymag.co.za/article.php?id=441>.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Alpha, "What is Alpha?" Alpha International, accessed April 16, 2016, <https://alphausa.org/about/>.

designed to engage instead of just inform. The facilitator can give the talk or host the conversation. This talk can be in person or it can be a video that the group watches. Either way, they explore the big issues around faith and unpack the basics of Christianity, addressing questions from ‘Who is Jesus?’ to ‘How can we have faith?’ to ‘Why and how do I pray?’ and ‘How does God guide us?’ Discussion is the key ingredient of Alpha: the opportunity to tell thoughts and ideas on the talk. In the small group, there is an open forum to discuss the topic. No one is required to talk, but at the same time nothing is off limits to say. To hear other people and to have an honest, open and friendly conversation to explore ideas is the goal and this follows their “No pressure. No follow up. No charge” saying.<sup>48</sup>

Alpha exists to reach the unchurched. According to Gumbel,

the purpose of the course is to give as many people as possible the opportunity to explore these things. I was an atheist and I came to experience a relationship with God which had a radically transforming effect on my life, on my relationships, on every aspect of my life, for the better. So, obviously I hope other people will experience that. But it’s very important to me that they have a sense of freedom while they’re doing the course and they don’t feel in any way pressurized in to it.<sup>49</sup>

This approach has made Alpha a global vehicle to present the “good news.” It does not have a cost except for time.

Alpha is an incredibly fluid course that has impacted the world, circling the globe, crossing boundaries and borders and belief systems. Alpha has continued its impact for Christ across denominations and demographics.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Jackie Georgiou, “The Unassuming Evangelist: Nicky Gumbel,” Joy Magazine, May 20, 2013, accessed April 18, 2016, <https://www.joymag.co.za/article.php?id=441>.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

What is Alpha's methodology? According to their website: "Alpha is a low key, relaxed, unthreatening, non-confrontational way for people to explore pretty big subjects. Many people do have questions about life: 'What's the purpose of my life?', 'What's the meaning of my existence?', 'Why am I here?'"<sup>51</sup> Sometimes it is hard to find a place to discuss these issues. Their ability to facilitate a place to talk about these questions and to build relationships is a key to their productivity. Alpha's great strength is their universal process.

Alpha is truly a global organization. It has been translated into 112 different languages. Millions of people around the world have tried Alpha. People from the Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and all mainline Protestant denominations have embraced Alpha's concept and material. People within the church and many others outside the church have been interested in exploring the Christian faith.<sup>52</sup>

The key principle of Alpha is that it is built on relationships. Alpha is global and user friendly, and presents the gospel in a non-threatening way. This method is very attractive to the next generation. The "no pressure" atmosphere develops relationships that lead to authentic conversations.

### *Catalyst Conference*

Catalyst launched in 1999 to bring a new conference for next-generation leaders. It was the dream of Andy Stanley and John Maxwell. They wanted to reach a segment of the church culture that was being ignored. Reggie Joiner, Lanny Donoho, and Gabe

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<sup>51</sup> Alpha, "What is Alpha?" Alpha International, accessed April 16, 2016, <https://alphausa.org/about/>.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Lyons were some of the younger-generation leaders who joined them to make sure that it stayed on point.<sup>53</sup> Leaders under forty were invited to be involved with this leadership conference created specifically for them. The current president is Tyler Reagin.

Catalyst conference was established to help the next generation local church leader. Here are six statements regarding their vision and goals.

1. Catalyst's vision is to create change agents of the next generation of Christian leaders that will usher in the necessary adjustments to an ever-evolving church and thus impact an entire generation.<sup>54</sup>
2. *Catalyst* unites the next generation of leaders, allowing their passions and gifts to flourish and have maximum impact in our churches and culture.
3. Catalyst believes in the impact that one changed life can have on another and this propels their focus on personal change with a community application.<sup>55</sup>
4. Catalyst exists to ignite passion for Christ and develop the leadership potential of the next generation, equipping them to engage and impact the world.
5. Catalyst equips young leaders to engage with those around them and be seen as relevant to their peers yet separate in Who guides them.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Catalyst, "About Us," Catalyst Leader, accessed April 20, 2016, <https://catalystleader.com/about-us>.

<sup>54</sup> Christopher B. James, "The Sociology of Catalyst Conference PT1: Anonymous Evangelicalisms Hip New Hub," March 2011, accessed April 20, 2016, <http://www.jesudust.com/2011/03/sociology-of-catalyst-anonymous.html>.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Catalyst, "About Us," Catalyst Leader, accessed April 20, 2016, <https://catalystleader.com/about-us>.

6. Catalyst encourages and equips young leaders to pursue life-on-life connection with other generations for the purpose of transferring wisdom from one generation to the next.<sup>57</sup>

Catalyst happens every year at the beginning of October in Atlanta, Georgia at the Infinite Energy Arena. It is a three-day conference with many breakout sessions, crazy events (such as shooting a human out of a cannon), and well-known evangelical speakers such as Billy Graham, Brian Houston, Andy Stanley, and Craig Groeschel. There are influential authors such as Malcom Gladwell and John Maxwell and top researchers like David Kinnaman of the Barna Group. There are also Catalyst One Day events that happen in cities across America throughout the year. There are live events, weekly podcasts, and a community-building app so leaders who are seeking to create change in the world are connected.

Their methodology is to develop relationships between leaders in a peer-to-peer environment. Through the events and interaction directed from the stage, there are many opportunities for attendees to start and build relationships with others in their same age category. Relationships are continued in an online environment through the unique culture cultivated by Catalyst team.<sup>58</sup>

Catalyst has equipped next-generation leaders for the past 18 years and has launched many key ministries of the next generation. With eighteen years of leadership development, Catalyst has moved from working with young Generation X leaders, to equipping millennials, to preparing to equip the post-millennial generation now reaching

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.



adulthood. Relationships for peer-to-peer development is facilitated in person and online. Catalyst works hard to connect on all platforms and through social media channels so that the October experience and One Day events can carry over to daily life.

### *Orange Conference*

Orange Conference was started in 1999 by Reggie Joiner. Reggie, who was one of the founders of Catalyst, launched Orange at the same time. Reggie founded the reThink Group, a nonprofit organization providing resources and training to help churches maximize their influence on the spiritual growth of the next generation. Reggie created this while being the executive director of family ministries at North Point Community Church in Alpharetta, Georgia. Reggie led a team to develop ministries for preschoolers, children, students, and married adults during his eleven years with them. All of this experience helped him to develop materials that fit the clientele of Catalyst.<sup>59</sup>

Orange Conference is a gathering of leaders who are passionate about engaging churches and families to influence the faith and character of the next generation.<sup>60</sup> Why the name Orange? According to their website:

Orange is a secondary color, created when you combine two primary colors—red and yellow. Orange is what red and yellow can do when they combine efforts. If you paint only with red, you will get what only red can do. If you paint only with yellow, you will get what only yellow can do. But when you paint with red and yellow, you’ll get new possibilities, fresh solutions and vibrant outcomes.

We believe the warm heart of the family can be represented by the color red and the bright light of the church can be represented by the color yellow. When

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<sup>59</sup> Orange, “Reggie Joiner,” The reThink Group, accessed April 20, 2016, <http://orangeblogs.org/orangeleaders/author/reggie-joiner/>.

<sup>60</sup> <http://orangeblogs.org>.

these two entities combine their efforts, for the sake of the spiritual growth of the next generation, the result is Orange.<sup>61</sup>

The integration of parents to the teaching process makes this a contemporary way to disciple this generation. The shift in concept has been embraced by churches all across the United States and around the world.

This has been one of the solutions to the outdated discipleship processes of Sunday School. Orange is a next-generation discipleship program that connects children to the *concepts from God's word*, instead of just the knowledge of *traditional Bible stories*. Orange changed from teaching random Bible stories to intentional discipleship lessons. The traditional Sunday School model teaches popular stories, but the application is often left to chance. Orange shifted away from just storytelling. Orange teaches three basic truths and repeats them. These lessons emphasize the principles of the lesson more than the story itself. "Orange is less interested in teaching the stories and more interested in teaching about the love of God shown through the stories!"<sup>62</sup>

Orange can happen during traditional Sunday School or Christian education time at the local church. It can be a part of the Children's Church curriculum or it can be used for small groups. There is a cost associated with this material. It is accessible online for download or it can be mailed in print format. It is specific by age and has many hosting elements to make it user friendly. It is adaptable to the size of the church and is priced accordingly.

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<sup>61</sup> Reggie Joiner, *Think Orange: Imagine the Impact when Church and Family Collide* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009), 23.

<sup>62</sup> Paula Forte, "Changing the Way We Disciple a Generation," Orange, September 24, 2015, accessed November 3, 2016, <http://orangeblogs.org/orangeleaders/2015/09/24/changing-the-way-we-disciple-a-generation/>.

Reggie Joiner's position allowed him to see the needs of this next generation and he immediately started to address it with a new concept. He is one of the authorities on this subject. His concepts have influenced many worldwide to think differently.

This summary from Orange is a great snapshot of the key principles that have led to a major change in this vital area of discipleship. Thinking differently keeps things fresh and relevant for the next generation.

***IF YOU BELIEVE...***

Every leader should treat every kid like they are made in the Image of God  
 Understanding child development actually helps you teach the Bible  
 Families who don't come to your church should be a priority  
 The gospel is bigger than any one church or denomination  
 No one has more potential to influence a kid than a parent  
 A parent is not the only influence a child needs  
 What Jesus said matters most, matters most  
 Consistent leaders disciple kids, not classes  
 Having fun with kids is not a sin . . . Then you're thinking ORANGE.<sup>63</sup>

*Growing Leaders/Habitudes*

Dr. Tim Elmore is the founder and president of Growing Leaders, an Atlanta-based non-profit organization created to develop emerging leaders. His best resources foster growth of young leaders who will transform the world. His method for teaching has been through images and stories that young people hear and then remember because of the power of their content. Some of the most influential books for the next generation have been written by Dr. Elmore. The three top books that he has written are *Habitudes*<sup>®</sup>: *Images that Form Leadership Habits and Attitudes*, *Artificial Maturity*, and *Generation iY*.

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<sup>63</sup> Orange, "A New Kind of Leader, a New Kind of Curriculum," Spring 2016, accessed November 1, 2017, [http://thinkorange.com/assets/uploads/content/Orange\\_Brochure\\_Spring2016.pdf/](http://thinkorange.com/assets/uploads/content/Orange_Brochure_Spring2016.pdf/).

*Generation iY* has been an incredibly helpful book for understanding research and interaction with a new generation and learning how they think and process life. The research compiled in it is incredibly valuable because it looks at both the secular and the spiritual. His connections with research organizations makes this a great research volume.<sup>64</sup>

Habitudes is one of the tools being used to transform next-generation leaders. It is a simple series of lessons that involve a picture then a story to connect back to it so that in everyday life a student is reminded of life principles. Every person is faced with unique obstacles and possibilities throughout his or her life. Their environments may vary greatly. What makes someone a leader is how they manage their issues and then leverage those experiences to positively influence others. The emerging generation often lacks this crucial life skill, but they have the ability to learn it.<sup>65</sup> Here are five teaching principles that makes the Habitudes material so powerful.

1. Break out of the herd mentality to influence others in positive ways.
2. Take initiative and set the pace for other team members.
3. Overcome complex problems through creative persistence.
4. Capitalize on personal strengths to be career-ready upon graduation.
5. Develop critical thinking skills that produce better life choices, such as choosing healthy friends, improving study habits, and setting meaningful goals.<sup>66</sup>

One of the powerful relationships Dr. Tim Elmore had to help him learn the principles of Habitudes was mentoring from Dr. John Maxwell. Tim was 23 years old at

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<sup>64</sup> Tim Elmore, *iY Generation: Secrets to Connecting with Today's Teens and Young Adults in the Digital Age* (Atlanta, GA: Poet Gardener Publishing, 2015).

<sup>65</sup> Growing Leaders, "Habitudes Leadership Curriculum," Growing Leaders, accessed April 19, 2016, <https://growingleaders.com/habitudes/#sthash.gRbhUHw6.dpbs/>.

<sup>66</sup> Growing Leaders, "Character Education Program," Growing Leaders, accessed April 19, 2016, <https://growingleaders.com/habitudes/habitudes-for-middle-and-high-school/character-education/>.

the time and John took him under his wing and mentored him first-hand in leadership. In Tim Elmore's own words here is how the experience went:

I cannot tell you how much I have learned from this *New York Times* best-selling author. He modeled so many great leadership qualities for me at such a young age, I didn't need to "unlearn" poor leadership habits that so many of my peers did. And while his style and mine are very different, many of the principles I picked up over the last 27 years are universal and timeless. Some people may not know that John and I shared a couple of decades together. I started as an employee in 1983 just out of college in San Diego and then later at Equip when the company moved across the country to Atlanta, Georgia. He hired me right out of college and took a chance on me. I believe that I owe so much of my development and productivity to his mentoring over the years.<sup>67</sup>

The mentor/mentee relationship between these two has affected multiple generations of young leaders, as they become mentors for the next generation. They developed nine principles for next-generation leaders. Three of these principles are required, three are flaws that can be overlooked, and three are things that are non-negotiable.

Required leadership principles:

1. A desire to make a difference: find someone who has got great passion; they will really make a difference in the world.
2. Teachability: if they are going to come along on the team, they must have a real heart to learn and a desire to grow.
3. Giftedness, because leadership is influence: leadership is influence in your giftedness.

Three flaws of leaders that can be overlooked:

1. Idealism. Leaders think things are going to be better than they are.

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<sup>67</sup> Tim Elmore, "An Interview with Dr. John C. Maxwell," *Growing Leaders Blog*, February 23, 2017, accessed March 8, 2017, <https://growingleaders.com/blog/an-interview-with-dr-john-c-maxwell>.

2. Make mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes, make them when you are young.
3. Can't see the big picture. It's impossible to see the big picture without experience.

Three things that cannot be overlooked:

1. Entitlement mindset: Nothing is given to you in life, you must work for it.
2. Breaking trust: They must demonstrate a sense of integrity, having the ethics or the level of trust so they can be depended upon.
3. Don't undervalue people: leadership gets old real quick if you don't value people.<sup>68</sup>

These principles mirror the principles that Jesus had with his leaders. It mirrors the conversations that Paul had with his disciples. Discipleship principles can translate through the changes of culture and even generational change, even the change that comes with the shift concerning identity, gender and marriage. John Maxwell addressed these changes:

When I think of timeless, I think of graciously accepting all genders, all generations, at any time, regardless of culture. In talking about timeless and timely, in 1975 I came to the conclusion that everything rises and falls on leadership. It is a fact proven by history. When you get to the timely subject, I am married to principles, but I am not married to methods. What am I going to do to be timely? Well, I can be teachable. I have got to constantly ask questions to younger generations because they are the ones who are going to lead me to the water. I also think to be timely; you have to believe in the younger generation. If I believe in the younger generation, I am going to invest in the younger generation. So how do I balance the two? I think it is simple—people change, principles don't. Trendy is for today and timeless is for every day.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

Principles are the foundation for this shift in the culture. Biblical principles do not change, but methods of teaching, speaking, or training others is going to change. To answer the questions raised by identity, gender, and marriage, there must be a way to communicate with these changes with love and hope instead of condemnation. Reactions are trendy; love and hope are timeless principles. Discipleship for the next generation is timeless as well.

Developing relationships between mentors and mentees is incredibly valuable. Relationship is a non-negotiable in the world of making disciples. John and Tim are a classic illustration of what happens when there is an on-purpose effort to be in a discipleship relationship that builds both sides. Influence is one of the key takeaways from this section. John's passion for investing and Tim's passion to learn combined have influenced millions of people. A discipleship mindset is the foundation that makes Habitudes one of the most effective curriculums for the next generation concerning leadership principles and spirituality.

### *The Youth Alliance*

Reggie Dabbs was born to an unwed teenager who at one time considered abortion as a viable option for solving her "problem." With no place to go, the pregnant teenager ended up living in a chicken coop in Tennessee. It was there she remembered a former school teacher, Mrs. Dabbs, who had said to her students, "If you ever need anything, call me," and gave the students her home phone number. The girl called.

Reggie considers himself fortunate to be alive. He understands what it is like for kids who are struggling with adversity.<sup>70</sup>

Reggie brings a message of hope to students within the public schools of America. His form of discipleship for the next generation is a message of encouragement and love. The public school is the funnel that American society flows through every year and within the walls of each school are every type of person. Each one of them needs hope. Reggie says it this way at every school assembly.

I don't have to know your name to know your pain.... I have my own,  
I don't have to know your shame.... I have my own,  
But someone loved me just the way I am,  
And someone loves you just the way you are.<sup>71</sup>

Reggie Dabbs has a platform to speak to them. He has a phrase that he shares with roughly 1.5 million students face to face every year: “You can’t change your past, but you can change your future.” He battled suicidal thoughts and inner issues throughout his school-age career. When he speaks, he has the ear of the next generation. They know a voice of genuine care when they hear it.

He does communicate a message of “just keep breathing” or a message of “on the roller coaster of life, even if it stops upside down, stay on the ride.” Students can hear this message of hope from someone who should have given up. His past would say to give up, feel sorry, even end it all, but somehow he made it through to a bright future. His message of hope has saved thousands of students from self-harm. In his second book, *Just Keep Breathing*, it records the letters, emails, and messages given to him in person

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<sup>70</sup> Reggie Dabbs, “Reggie’s Story,” Reggie Dabbs, accessed September 16, 2016, <http://reggiedabbsonline.com>.

<sup>71</sup> Reggie Dabbs, *Reggie: You Can’t Change Your Past, But You Can Change Your Future* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 1.



about the difference one person with a message of love and hope can make. So how does this connect with discipleship?

On the night after the school assemblies, there are two methods of bringing hope to the whole family. The first is a family night. At this family night, the same message of hope is shared with the whole family. This is hosted by the school district but is surrounded by help from counselling agencies, a job fair, and local churches and their volunteers. Practical help is offered at this night for anyone who shows up. The second is a faith rally at the school or at a local church where a message of faith is shared. Reggie share his message of hope but then includes the fact that the person who loves you today is Jesus. Both methods of discipleship for the next generation have been powerful and effective. It is not traditional and takes a lot of work by the promoter on the ground in each local city. This is a methodology that has worked for the past thirty years. Is there another way to bring discipleship to the next generation on the public-school campus?

Reframing what life has handed you is so incredibly important. There are things that cannot be changed. There are things in life that are unfair. What you do with what you have been handed is critical to your long-term success. Speaking this language to an audience that has been handed all kinds of difficulty is truly a short-term discipleship moment. To get a student to think about their future and make a decision to change from their past way of thinking within just a forty-minute window is pretty extraordinary, but it happens daily.

*Owasso Rams Football*

In January 2017, it was announced that Bill Blankenship had accepted the vacant head coaching position at Owasso, a Class 6A-I program in Owasso, Oklahoma.<sup>72</sup> He is a five-time state championship winning coach, most recently in Arkansas where he led Fayetteville High School to the 7A state championship. When he had the opportunity to return to Oklahoma and be near his family and grandkids, he made the decision to coach the Rams. He came to town with the theme of #RiseUp.

Coach Bill Blankenship has been a champion. He has led the Union High School Redskins to multiple 6A state championships. He has been the head coach at the University of Tulsa. He has won a championship in Arkansas. He is well respected in the state of Oklahoma and around the United States. Everything is an opportunity for competition. Every snap, every rep in practice, you name it, let's compete. But one of the most important things he brings to his football team is peer-to-peer leadership. He selects eight seniors for his leadership team. They choose one junior to be their co-leader, then they draft the rest of the players until everybody is on a team. Then the leader is required to direct his team to make attendance, make weight, to lift, to run, to basically do everything required to be a championship team. The weight of the responsibility lies on the shoulders of each individual leader. The excel spreadsheet that hits the bulletin board every day lets everyone know where they stand. Being in first place drives the culture of expectation. Mentorship, or discipleship, is being used in a secular setting to develop young men.

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<sup>72</sup> Porsha Richardson, "Bill Blankenship Resigns at Fayetteville For Head Coaching Job at Owasso," January 4, 2017, accessed October 15, 2017, <http://www.newson6.com/story/34186578/bill-blankenship-resigns-at-fayetteville-for-head-coaching-job-at-owasso>.

What makes Coach Blankenship so amazing is that he brings spiritual character training to the table. He has a Bible study for the coaches who want to stay over and be a part. He publishes a leadership book that explains character for the team and its leaders. He allows his eight senior leaders to post character direction to their bulletin board and to their social media group. If it is spiritual in content, so be it. Students can do that for their fellow students. This man is a force of leadership that is going to transform a football program, just like he has before, with the power of leadership. His next generation goal for the team's leaders is that the program will start to lead itself, with students' expectations fueling the fire. What a powerful example of leadership. Who was his example and mentor? His father, who was his sports coach, laid down a foundation of faith. All of this is in a public-school setting. Risk is different everywhere it is taken, but it is part of discipleship. The supernatural power of God is what activates all of these efforts to life change or salvation. It takes men and women who will take risks to make it happen.

With his arrival, the culture of Owasso football completely changed. The practice routine is now just like a NCAA Division one team. The difference of demand in practice and the competitiveness of every afternoon makes a world of difference.

Rex Blankenship, his brother, is the life development coach and he brings a level of respect to the whole team. There is a discipleship element that goes along with his role. He has helped with developing the character of the young men on the team. Character is one of the traits of the community of Owasso. This is a new brotherhood and the relationship aspect of the team is at an all-time high. Every afternoon at practice at Owasso High School there is a change in culture. Rise Up!

The coaching staff that Bill has recruited are former players who have been winners on the collegiate and NFL platform. They are his “football disciples.” They really bring something to the practice field. These are coaches who are working way below their paygrade because they believe in Coach and what he is going to do for these young men. The cost is sacrifice personally for the team.

This year, the Owasso Rams are 11-1 and are headed to the state championship game. They have defeated their greatest rival twice this year, the perennially ranked Jenks Trojans. They defeated them 48-10 the first game of the season and then 21-0 in the state semifinal game. What a cultural change in a year. A leader makes a huge difference when it comes to developing their own leadership abilities. Coach Bill Blankenship is one of the best at making young men believe that they can do the impossible by hard work, dedication, and accountability.

One person can make a world of difference. The introduction of a theme: #Riseup has changed the future for a group of one-hundred thirty students. Holding each other accountable to a higher standard than any of them have been challenged to reach before is exhilarating and life-giving. A leader who can inspire others to make these kinds of life changes is extraordinary. Discipleship that he has passed on to a generation of coaches is now being passed on to a group of young men in pursuit of their dream and their goal! Multi-generational process and purpose is being achieved.

### *FivestarMan*

FivestarMan was founded in 2008 by Neil Kennedy. Neil is a man who is passionate about the Bible and direct in his message. His practical application of the

Word resonates with men and his God-given strategy to encourage men daily is very applicable. He travels often and speaks on being a FivestarMan.<sup>73</sup>

Within the denominational church there has been some form of men's ministry active for years. Usually it includes something with food and then missions. FivestarMan is not to replace that but simply to come alongside and strengthen the local men's ministry.

What is FivestarMan's purpose?

1. Inspire
2. Instruct
3. Empower men to live the authentic and passionate life that God intended for them.

FivestarMan is not a program or a ministry. "It is a movement of like-minded men ready to do an about-face, turning from a life of mediocrity to a passion-filled life of authentic manhood."<sup>74</sup>

The life of authentic manhood can be developed when a man embraces the five distinct purposes or passions which every strong man has within himself. These five things, according to FivestarMan are:

1. Adventurous
2. Entrepreneurial
3. Gallant
4. Faithful
5. Philanthropic<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> FivestarMan, "About FivestarMan," Fivestar Man, accessed September 6, 2017, <https://fivestarman.com/about/>.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

Discipleship for the next generation takes on many platforms and this is one of the best examples of using technology. Kennedy had an idea of tapping into the smartphone that most carry with them daily. What if there was a way to connect a daily thought of the Word with the most common form of communication? This birthed his idea for discipleship, the Daily Champion.

Men today need a challenge and they need a path to go down. To that end, Kennedy was flying in to Tulsa International when he felt God arrest him in his spirit to make a difference for men in America. He has committed his career to promoting manhood with the practical teaching of the book of Proverbs.<sup>76</sup>

Using the tools that are being developed to communicate takes time and effort, but it does make you incredibly relevant and cutting edge when you do. The daily text message is powerful and encouraging. It fills a void for men in the area of discipleship. If there is not another man speaking to you daily, there is at least a virtual male voice speaking into your life daily. Signing up is the beginning of this daily discipleship.

### *LeaderBox*

Michael Hyatt, the former editor in chief for the Thomas Nelson publishing house, is the owner of LeaderBox. He is a best-selling author and has just now introduced this latest form of discipleship for leaders around the world. On his website, he writes about and builds platforms for communication.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Michael Hyatt, "About Michael Hyatt," Michael Hyatt, accessed November 1, 2017, <https://michaelhyatt.com/about>.

Michael has a three-level perspective on developing yourself as a leader. His vantage point is this:

1. Maximize **Your Time**
2. Grow **Your Leadership**
3. Accelerate **Your Results**<sup>78</sup>

The key principle to LeaderBox is the Learning Circle, a private community where you can grow and learn with other professionals. You can interact with a select group of like-minded individuals as you converse about key ideas, implement practical strategies, and improve your leadership skills. The point of bringing up Leaderbox is to highlight their delivery system. It is the newest format of developing a cohort. It is slick and polished, and uses the platform of Facebook to connect individuals who might never meet in person. The conversations that have already happened have enlightened those who signed up.

### **Conclusion**

With so many changes happening in our changing world, there is an interesting note concerning this topic of discipleship. Most of the organizations developing discipleship for the next generation in the church have been second-generation disciples of John Maxwell.

Tim Elmore started with John Maxwell before starting his Growing Leaders organization. A division called “Habitudes” institutes his next generation training. He

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

was formerly with John Maxwell's Equip organization. His book, *The iY Generation*, is vital research for discipleship for the next generation.<sup>79</sup>

Gabe Lyons, of *Q ideas* and the *Fermi Project*, is the co-author of *UnChristian*, a critical research handbook to identify changes happening in the church. He launched Catalyst conference with John Maxwell and three other influential Christian leaders. He was vice president of Maxwell's Injoy organization.<sup>80</sup>

Dave Kinnaman, the other co-author of *UnChristian* and the book *You Lost Me*, is the president of the Barna Group. Gabe and Dave worked together to give clear information of research for the next generation of the church.<sup>81</sup>

Orange Conference by Reggie Joiner was birthed out of Catalyst Conference in close relationship with John Maxwell.

So how important is the development of the next generation of leadership? Vital. John Maxwell is one example from my research who set out to make a difference—and he has! He has impacted discipleship for the next generation. His influence on Tim Elmore gives hope to anyone who takes on someone else to mentor and make them their disciple. The impact can change the lives of so many others just by the simple element of time, family, and intentional teaching.

Isn't it interesting how relationships can make that much of a difference? All of these effective organizations have been birthed through relationship and focus on relationships. So, I would say the biggest takeaway I have discovered about next

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<sup>79</sup> Tim Elmore, *iY Generation: Secrets to Connecting with Today's Teens and Young Adults in the Digital Age* (Atlanta, GA: Poet Gardener Publishing, 2015).

<sup>80</sup> Gabe Lyons and Dave Kinnaman, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity and Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.



generation discipleship is: Relationship. Relationship is most important. Nothing trumps relationship for discipleship. All of these organizations researched have a specific and strategic way to be *in* relationship.

Additionally, one person *can* make a difference. Elmore, Dabbs, Kennedy, Blankenship, Maxwell and Hyatt all are individuals who are making a difference. There are many ways to be in relationship, but having a focused and clear path on how to embrace change, to challenge life, and to be a champion is crucial. Leaders who lead can make a world of difference. Disciples will follow leaders who *know* where they are going.

These organizations make it clear that peer-to-peer discipleship is powerful. Leaders who are incredibly successful make space for other leaders to lead alongside and with them. Then the partnership of these leaders not only grows, but gains traction.

God gives men and women thoughts to impact other men and women. The question is, what will each individual do with the thoughts they have been given? The examples and illustrations of the leaders in this dissertation are examples of those who have been given much, taking it and giving it to others.

This research is not exhaustive, but when you move between the secular and sacred, there are common principles that apply. Hyatt and Kennedy are going the same direction, using social media platforms. Blankenship is on a public-school campus, and Dabbs goes into the same setting. They bring spiritual principles into a secular arena. They don't have to violate those boundaries; they simply have to work within the parameters they have been given. *Habitudes* is written in the sacred format and in the secular. Quite interesting to find that Christian discipleship principles can stand up on

either side of the equation. Discipleship for the next generation is desperately needed and there are those who are meeting that need. The final part of this dissertation will cover my approach to discipleship for the next generation.

## SECTION 3:

### PROPOSAL

#### **Introduction**

As we discuss discipleship for the next generation, it is worth noting that there has always been and always will be an emerging generation in need of discipling. This has been true since Jesus first introduced his example of discipleship. The principles of discipleship stay the same, but the methods must change to be relevant to each generation's specific needs and communication styles. This is especially true in today's rapidly changing culture, when the gaps in mutual understanding between generation keep getting bigger.

However, the basic principles for discipleship must remain the same. Effective discipling has always involved five basic principles, and, as discussed in section two, the most effective discipleship platforms today all use them. The first principle is **Family**. Family is critical to discipleship and there is a felt need for family, even if it is an adopted or "second" family. The "name" for this family might be cohort or family group, cell group or small group, or, as Jesus instituted, "disciples," but they all fulfill the same purpose. The second principle is **Authenticity**. The leader *being* what is taught is the crux of discipleship. The third principle is **Intentionality**. Attention is paid to what is valued. Intentional discipleship is attractive. The fourth principle is **Time**. Anything that involves discipleship is going to take time. The fifth principle is **Hope**. Everyone needs hope and discipleship brings hope to all individuals by relationship. Faith is what is established by this process.

Jesus is our example. Jesus created *family*, he was *authentic*, and he was *intentional*. Jesus gave his *time*, and he brought *hope*. Jesus demonstrated these five things and his pattern changed the world. Jesus had authority and his disciples accepted his invitation to follow him. In Luke chapter nine, Jesus challenged them to die and then to live like someone who was dead. In verse twenty-three, “he said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.’”<sup>82</sup> First-generation discipleship is our pattern, but an effective model for next-generation discipleship is the goal.

Discipleship for the next generation stares straight into the face of change. Things do not naturally stay the same; as a matter of fact, things change rather rapidly, especially today. According to the Barna Group, “real data confirms how drastically the moral, social and spiritual lives of Americans have changed and are changing.”<sup>83</sup> This generation has seen more change in the last five years than any other generation, especially in the areas of communication and connectivity. “Generation Z is the first generation to be raised in the era of smartphones. Many do not remember a time before social media.”<sup>84</sup> Social media, platforms, communication devices, and the smartphone have taken this generation to an all-time level of being connected. But with all the connection, there is often an absence of meaningful personal relationships. Stephen Marche clearly summarized this thought: “What Facebook has revealed about human

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<sup>82</sup> Luke 9:23 (NIV). Emphasis added.

<sup>83</sup> George Barna and David Kinnaman, *Churchless: Understanding Today’s Unchurched and How to Connect with Them* (Chicago, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2014), 3.

<sup>84</sup> Alex Williams, “Move Over, Millennials, Here Comes Generation Z,” *New York Times*, September 20, 2015, accessed November 2, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/20/fashion/move-over-millennials-here-comes-generation-z.html>.

nature—and this is not a minor revelation—is *that a connection is not the same thing as a bond*, and that instant and total connection is no salvation, no ticket to a happier, better world or a more liberated version of humanity.”<sup>85</sup>

Relationships take effort and time, which are sacrificed in the social media age. Going down the rabbit hole of YouTube and Instagram can consume hours, but time assigned to building relationships can be scarce. Purposeful relationships are vital, but they do not naturally come to the next generation. ‘Today, water cooler conversations are virtually unnecessary due to ubiquitous water bottles and social media, which has allowed folks to broadcast what they think and feel right from the comfort of their workstation or home.’<sup>86</sup> A lot of time is now spent scrolling through life, vicariously living through other people’s projected lives. This life, though real, may not be reality. Real relationships take effort and time to build.

In discipleship, the message must stay the same: Jesus, who, as the “good news,” came to seek and to save those who were lost.<sup>87</sup> He established this message and it must continue today. The message is non-negotiable, but the methodology is open to change. The message was given as the “great commission” to the disciples in Matthew 28:

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey

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<sup>85</sup> Stephen Marche, “Is Facebook Making Us Lonely?” *The Atlantic*, May 2012, accessed November 1, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/05/is-facebook-making-us-lonely/308930>.

<sup>86</sup> Tim Elmore, “Five Ways Millennials Change as They Grow Up,” *Growing Leaders*, July 15, 2015, accessed November 13, 2016, <https://growingleaders.com/blog/five-ways-millennials-changed-as-they-grew-up/#sthash.V5sD54qg.dpbs>.

<sup>87</sup> Mark 1:15 (NIV).

everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”<sup>88</sup>

The command to make disciples remains, but the delivery system—the disciple-making process—must change to fit the next generation.

And change it must. Drawing from the example given by Jesus, this section will focus on building relationships within the modern landscape of connectivity of this generation and making disciples with the authentic elements of relationship.

Discipleship for the next generation will be presented in principle first and then in practical application.

### **Principles of the Great Commission**

#### *Invitation*

The elevation from acquaintance to a personal relationship is facilitated by an invitation. Jesus came along the shoreline and invited a group of fishermen to drop their nets and follow him.<sup>89</sup> He approached the tax collector and invited him to drop his money box and follow him.<sup>90</sup> He promised he would transform their past profession to a new one. They would be fishers of men. They themselves would be changed in the process to be like Jesus Christ. His time and investment into their relationships would be world-changing and everlasting.

Invitation is by nature something that is understood. People are invited to a wedding, to a birthday party. Specific people are invited to special events like a doctoral

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<sup>88</sup> Matthew 28:16-20 (NIV).

<sup>89</sup> Matthew 4:19 (NIV) and Mark 1:17 (NIV).

<sup>90</sup> Luke 5:27 (NIV).

graduation, a kindergarten graduation, a bar mitzvah, a quinceañera, and an honoring ceremony. Most of these come with an expectation of an RSVP or some other response so the host or hostess can appropriately plan for their guests.

Invitation is a timeless tool for involvement into an event or process that has evolved for today's world. Receiving a Google calendar invitation with the response boxes of yes, no or maybe reminds of the hand-written notes in elementary school, hoping to find a girlfriend or boyfriend. There are other modern words for invitation, as well, like subscribe, follow, sign up, membership, etc. Some invitations are for a season of time, some are for a lifetime.

Invitation is a key element to discipleship for the next generation. This generation doesn't know how to activate relationship on their own, so an invitation is a perfect way to start relationship. According to Thom Rainer, "they [this emerging generation] are slow to join and slow to leave and they want to be involved," which increases the need for an invitation.<sup>91</sup> There are many sophisticated ways to present invitations, but the baseline for invitation is to ask someone to come along. Inviting someone in person is the best way, because it gives "felt" connection. That is the most personal approach, but for emerging generations, a text message is considered a personal invitation tool. It generally activates the quickest response and is, for this generation, as personal as an in-person meeting or a phone call would have been just a few years ago.

Strategic invitation is the most important point. If you are invited into relationship, it must be about the relationship, not about the content. Being listened to is

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<sup>91</sup> Thom Rainer, "Ten Ways Millennials Are Shaping Local Congregations Today," Thomas Rainer.com, August 13, 2014, accessed April 4, 2016, <http://thomrainer.com/2014/08/ten-ways-millennials-shaping-local-congregations-today>.

vital for this generation. They are not looking for another lecture but for a place to be heard. People are looking for the real thing, a relationship with a “real person,” not surrogate social friendships. Presence is the most important part of being in a relationship, and being fully “there” with the person is critical. Jesus invested his life into those he invited in. He lived life with them and shared his life with them.

One modern example of the *principle of invitation* is the cohort model of the DMin program at Portland Seminary. The doctoral program is built completely on this idea and premise of invitation. The invitation process to become a student was initiated with a phone call and then an interview. The questions asked were to make sure the invitee could navigate the language of the social-media-styled platform of the program. The necessity of the process has proven incredibly valuable over the past three years. Once the process was complete, there was a formal invitation to join. The RSVP was enrolling and making the initial payment.

### *Permission*

Invitation grants permission for the person who made the invitation to speak freely into the life of the person who accepted it. With this permission, there is an expected level of confidentiality and respect that is developed. The growth of a person who has given away their rights to be offended and let themselves be taught is measurable. Allowing someone else to stretch the act of thinking is priceless. When there is an invitation, there is a drawing into relationship that allows a commitment to the time that it takes to build discipleship. Discipleship doesn’t happen by accident; it is strategic in nature.



This generation understands granted permission because of the nature of their interaction with schoolwork or business being on an electronic platform. Most workplaces have the same implied standards. When they have been given access, then they have accepted the responsibility that goes with that password. They have been granted permission by being a part of a group.

When a football player signs up to be a part of the Owasso Rams program, they are granting permission to the coaches and, ultimately, Coach Blankenship to speak into their life. It might not be what they want to hear but it will make them a much better football player. With permission granted, the coach takes the liberty to improve the players on his team. They lay down their rights as a student as they come on the football field. Their relationship through this exercise develops an incredible bond.

### *Time*

Time marches quickly on. Each week everyone has the same amount of time, but it is not always used wisely. Scheduling time requires diligence, but it produces a change in life. Choosing to carve out weekly time is the very best way to build the foundation for a discipleship relationship. It is not easy to set aside a time, but most of the researched cohort models are built off setting aside specific time. In an hour, there can be a personal conversation about the highs and lows of the week, distribution of content to build up, and a conversation about the content. An hour, if well directed, can help each person involved to grow and mature. In this generation, commitment and care is spelled “time.”

A commitment to prioritizing the time set aside is driven by different things. A commitment like the Portland Seminary cohort setting is driven by a grade or degree; being there or not corresponds with a pass or fail. Commitment started by invitation is

powerful because of the intentionality of invitation. People like to be invited in to something special. Priorities made and kept are the glue that holds this time together. On a practical note, though, there are moments when ‘life happens,’ so flexibility is needed, but overall attendance is a requirement.

An example of this is the simple commitment that FiveStarMan requests of men. Will they read the daily email, The Daily Champion? This simple devotion that outlines a proverb of the day is so effective. It is a simple tool that takes a minimal amount of time. It is going to be delivered whether it is read or not, so it is always available. Discipleship for this generation is time-conscious.

### *Engagement*

How does the Bible practically apply to this generation? How does it apply to someone who has labeled themselves a “none”? What about someone who is non-binary? How does it apply to me? Lecturing from the Bible is a thing of past generations, but for this generation, the best conversations happen in a circle setting. The interaction takes time more time than a lecture, but engaging this generation with a challenging way to think is of utmost importance.

Personal opinion is not what the conversation is about, instead the focus should be on how to understand what the Bible is actually communicating. The priority is not to water down or to change the message; it is, however, to present the message in a setting that allows for discussion and understanding. Jesus spent countless hours teaching while living with his disciples and slowly walking through the crowds. These conversations are not always easy, but they shape a person’s faith.

Jesus dissected the law in a way they were familiar with, and he clearly understood it from his training as a rabbi. He would then explain it to them with stories and applications until he was sure they understood. Instead of simply answering their questions, Jesus often asked more questions. Making people think is one of the best ways Jesus taught about the new kingdom. Some things will always be a mystery, like the Trinity or the virgin birth, but Jesus did clarify many things through asking questions.

It takes time and work to bring the translation to this generation. Their language is different than any other generation and they have assigned importance to different things than recent generations. They are adept at self-presentation, which is incredibly important in this selfie-driven society, but not always open to something without substance. Openness to faith instead of just blind adherence to a religion is one of the differences. Finding understanding is part of the process; they are interested in *things spiritual but not religious*.

Doing things just because they have been done in the past is not necessarily enough to justify a tradition to the next generation. Explanation of the *why* is vital. Alpha spends time talking about subjects that may have no easy answer. Catalyst conference asks about real-life issues such as adoption, international water wells, and what Christians should look like within the culture of this next generation. Reggie Dabbs may not be able to change a kid's home environment by speaking at their school, but he can change how they view their own life. Doing things differently fits this generation.

### *Being a Servant*

Jesus gave us the principle that the greatest of all is the servant of all in Mark chapter ten: "Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must

be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.”<sup>92</sup> This concept is imperative to discipleship. In Luke chapter ten, Jesus sends out the seventy-two on the first missions trip and they came back astounded that they were able to do the same things their teacher and mentor was doing.

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”<sup>93</sup>

This generation has a felt need to be involved in serving someone. Opportunities within communities, businesses, and the church abound, but where do they plug in? It is in their DNA to make a difference. They have observed the generations in front of them and have determined it is their job to do something. Being involved physically is incredibly attractive and they don’t mind getting involved financially. They enjoy the aspect of sweat equity into a project. Serving others requires a mindset that is spiritual, not religious, which the next generation has mastered.

This mirrors the example Jesus taught to his disciples. One of the practical results of being spiritual is that social needs are met. Donald Miller, in exploring the effects of salvation and the impact of the Pentecostal church, discovered that social change follows spiritual change in communities.<sup>94</sup> It is a natural outflow of what is happening inwardly to come to the surface in action. The requirement for a person to be involved in the cell

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<sup>92</sup> Mark 10:43-44 (NIV).

<sup>93</sup> Luke 10:17-20 (NIV).

<sup>94</sup> Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 23, 30.

church in Jerusalem/Palestine area is a commitment to social enactment.<sup>95</sup> There is a connection between faith and service.

In Cape Town, South Africa, for example, Hillsong church is leading their disciples to make a difference. The greatest need in South Africa is to have a job. So, what are they trying to do for those who become their disciples? Help them get a job. They call it the ABCs. They want to help their disciples to get A job, then to get a Better job, and finally to find a Career. The ABCs for them is practical application of their faith. Being spiritual leads to impacting places socially.<sup>96</sup>

This requires time, but this generation is willing to donate their time. They are willing to invest in the lives of others. They want to make a difference. They want to change their world, and if time is what it costs, they are all in to do this. Serving the church and serving the community to bring help and hope is a mark of this generation. Former President Barak Obama was the first to tap into this resource. Bernie Sanders affected the election by rallying so many from this generation by listening to their needs and then promoting things that made sense to them. He listened and then acted on their beliefs. He didn't do this through being cool but through tapping in to their conversations. This generation is passionate about being and doing, and listening is the key to getting them involved.

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<sup>95</sup> Per a personal conversation with a forty-one-year missionary to Jerusalem. His name is withheld for security reasons.

<sup>96</sup> This is from time spent with Hillsong Cape Town's executive pastor Lourens Kruger in Cape Town. He gave us an hour and half of his time so we could understand their global footprint.

### *Peer-to-Peer*

Dee Hock believes that in leadership there are four areas where you lead. First, you must lead yourself; second, you lead those who are under you; third, you lead peer-to-peer; and then you have the opportunity to lead those who are in authority over you.<sup>97</sup> Peer-to-peer leadership takes vulnerability and requires listening. Leading peer-to-peer is sometimes challenging for those who are insecure, but it does build abilities to lead others like iron sharpening iron. Michael Hyatt of Leader Box declares that the greatest value of his platform is the peer-to-peer interaction on Facebook. It is where people who have signed up to read books and discuss in a public forum grow from the input. This is based on a global cohort environment.<sup>98</sup>

Peer-to-peer discipleship happens when someone who is becoming a disciple starts to lead others on their own discipleship journey. This happens by invitation, by being involved in a family group setting, or one on one. The pattern of discipleship is personal and is passed on to others because of the effect it has on their life. This can be within an organization or it can be organic, but it happens. The disciples of Jesus moved from the twelve to seventy-two, so the invite culture was evident. The one hundred and twenty on the day of Pentecost was a sign of growth from peer leadership. Peers leading peers means that growth has come out of respect and out of being invested in.

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<sup>97</sup> Dee Hock, *Chaordic Leadership: Birth of the Chaordic Age* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 1999), ix.

<sup>98</sup> Michael Hyatt, LeaderBox.com, accessed October 27, 2017, <https://leaderbox.com/#whats-inside/learningcircle>.

## *Culture*

Culture can be created. Jesus created and cultivated an *invite-culture*. Andrew invited his brother to come meet the messiah. Jesus invited people to come into the culture. John the Baptist affected the culture of the day by cultivating his own culture of “Repent and be baptized.” He had disciples who followed him. Culture affects discipleship.

The *invite-culture* Jesus created allowed people to come to him, even children. (The disciples blew it on this one...they thought Jesus was exclusive instead of inclusive. He taught them a very public lesson about this.) The sick were invited to come and be healed. The lepers invited themselves to come and they were received by Jesus. Four friends crashed a party and lowered their friend down through the roof (They must have expected that the homeowner would be okay with them making themselves at home and tearing the roof off). Jesus took time with people. Everyone was invited into his world and culture, even those who were sinners, needy, unhealthy, and having special needs. Sometime individuals were brought to him for judgment. The culture of healing and life change was one that happened supernaturally by meeting their natural needs. It opened the door for them spiritually to “go and sin no more.”

A culture that is spiritual instead of religious is okay with real “God” questions. “The essential human need might just be proof that God exists. We have cravings for food, sleep and love so perhaps a desire to identify with a higher power is not an accident of our design. That built-in yearning is there because there’s something worth yearning

for.”<sup>99</sup> One of the most basic things that affects culture is the simple question of God’s existence. Being in a growing culture, where exploring these questions leads to supernatural answers, is healthy.

Unfortunately, the culture within the local church can be judgmental and close-minded. Thom and Joani Schultz, in their book *Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore*, explore four reasons why: I feel judged; I don’t want to be lectured; church people are hypocrites; and your God is irrelevant to my life, but I’d like to know there is a God and he cares for me.<sup>100</sup> People want to be reassured that God is real, that he is more than a historical figure, that he is present today and that he is active in the lives of people around them. *UnChristian* shows that the next generation finds most Christians are judgmental, especially concerning sexuality, and their judgment lumps them into the category of religious.<sup>101</sup> With this being the perceived culture, a discipleship culture elevates relationships above religion and brings this generation to spiritual answers. Real relationships create a culture within the local church that builds people individually by investing time with intentionality and authenticity. This process is worth the effort.

### *Supernatural*

The beginning of second-generation discipleship was supernatural. God working supernaturally brought Saul to repentance, Ananias to know to go to Straight Street, and

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<sup>99</sup> Susanna Schrobsdorff, “My Life as a ‘None’ and Other Tales from the Ranks of the Unaffiliated and the Agnostic,” *Time Magazine*, September 26, 2016, accessed November 2, 2016. <http://time.com/4494751/my-life-as-a-none>.

<sup>100</sup> Thom Schultz and Joani Schultz, *Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore: And How Four Acts of Love Will Make Your Church Irresistible* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, Inc, 2013), 23.

<sup>101</sup> Gabe Lyons and Dave Kinnaman, *UnChristian: What A Generation Really Thinks about Christianity and Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 33.



Philip to witness to and baptize the Ethiopian Eunuch. Supernaturally, Peter took the gospel to Cornelius's house. God demonstrated through Jesus their supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. Healings, miracles and many things that were awesome and inspiring is what Jesus did.

Second-generation miracles happened with Peter, who demonstrated miracles even Jesus had not done. His shadow passing over people healed them. Prayer clothes that were anointed were sent to people to be applied on them for healing. People were drawn to salvation by supernatural events. Today, this still happens in the Muslim world. People experience supernatural dreams of Jesus inviting them to come to him and be his disciple. The Holy Spirit works in and through people to bring salvation.

Being filled with the Spirit continues past the book of Acts and affects believers today. Being able to communicate in a spiritual language is of interest to this next generation. They don't want fake, but when they encounter the realness of God's spirit, they are open to it. They are not shut off to things that are "out of their control." They are more open to authentic spirituality than they are to religion. Real versus ritual is one of their defining traits.

### *Principle of Life Change*

Jesus invited people into life change. The organizations examined in section two focus on introducing life change by knowing Jesus. The Bible is the main source for knowing him, and there are many ways to communicate the Bible. Despite different delivery systems, there is one goal in mind: introducing people to Jesus helping them to follow him with their life. Life change is inevitable when salvation occurs. Social change

comes along with this and then future, family, and environment are forever changed. So, how does this practically look for the next generation?

### **Practical Application**

#### *Same Principles, Two Platforms*

For practical purposes, there will be two different examples examined in this section. First, Xcell will describe students in the emerging generation. Second, Ycohort will define the leaders who equip Xcell. The members of Ycohort can vary greatly in age, education, and background. They can be full-time youth pastors, bi-vocational youth pastors, coaches, teachers, or other leaders.

These two groups of people are the focus of this dissertation. To narrow the subject matter just a bit more, the focus will be on the local church. These same principles can apply in other many settings such as FCA, Young Life, any other parachurch organization, etc., but will here be applied to the local church, whether traditional or contemporary and with or without a Sunday school.

#### *New Language*

Language is paramount for this generation. Out-of-date language makes it hard for different generations to communicate effectively. Language shapes everything and how it is managed matters.

The language of discipleship is best kept simple. Jesus used the illustration of making his disciples into “fishers of men.” He would equip them to become effective at

catching other men and women. This “fishing” illustration might get lost on today’s society, but there are biblical words that are still helpful for this generation.

Neighbor is a common word. “Who is my neighbor?” was one of the questions Jesus was asked. The questioning lawyer was trying to figure out or excuse his responsibility. Jesus told the “good Samaritan” story in reply. There was another person who asked Jesus “which was the greatest commandment?” His reply was originally asking back the same question, but the response ended up being “Love the Lord your God with everything,” and then “love your *neighbor* as yourself.” So, this common language is the start for discipleship: *neighbor*.

“Who is my neighbor” is still a great question. Is it the people who take the time to press “like” on a social media page? Or is it someone who I sit next to in class? Is it my co-worker? Loving a neighbor is best accomplished by inviting them to become a friend.

The new language of discipleship for this generation is three-fold: Friends, Family, Faith.

1. Friends: moving from neighbor or acquaintance to friends takes time. Friendship is necessary, but it is not instantaneous; it is developed. In an environment where bullying is a constant threat because of the anonymity of social media, true friendship is priceless.
2. Family: moving from friends to family takes time, trust, and share experiences. Family means knowing everything about someone else and still embracing them. Jesus modeled this with his disciples. He was longsuffering, like family, with Peter and with Thomas. Family is vital to discipleship. Jeanne Mayo, a fifth-

generation youth pastor, addresses it this way: you will never understand the next generation until you view many of them through the lens of someone looking for a father.<sup>102</sup>

3. Faith: having a second family lets the future be bright for everyone spiritually. A second family or a “father” to the fatherless is the goal of the process. What is most transformed by this process of Christianity is the family environment. Family environment is often the great hurdle to living for Christ long-term.

Salvation is still an incredibly important event in a person’s life, but in this generation, it can too often be a “one-off event” instead of a life change. Salvation, which is an inward change, leads to a demonstrated outward sign. Baptism is the recognition of that change and is the part of the process of friends, family, and faith. Who is watching a baptism? Friends and family, who are there to celebrate faith. Making disciples is about this journey called life.

Instead of church language, there must be a shift to relationship language. This generation is looking to belong and to be a part of something spiritual instead of religious. Personal faith development is longer lasting than simple institutional affiliation. Signing a membership card is no longer the hallmark of faith; however, having friends with whom to go on a faith journey is.

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<sup>102</sup> Jeanne Mayo, accessed November 25, 2017, <http://www.youthleaderscoach.com/playbookunlimited/details/549>.

## **My Proposal for Next-Generation Discipleship**

### *Invitation*

Invitation is the key to making disciples. Being known is still an important part of life, even in this day of social media. Making acquaintance with students can be at school, at church, at a ballgame, or anywhere, even on social platforms. The entry point for relationship needs to be in their world. There are many ways to build relationships and they are critical to the process, but it starts with meeting someone. Once there is relationship of any kind, there can be an invitation into a discipleship relationship. Within the local church, there are opportunities to meet the next generation.

Who should be invited into being a disciple? Often in the church charisma and outward performance are the characteristics people look for, but I suggest that a person who is willing to grow and to serve is a better candidate. They might have both of the previous characteristics as well, but servanthood trumps charisma. A genuine relationship with Jesus being their personal savior may happen first, or it might be something that happens because of the invitation. Relationship development is part of this invitation process.

How do you invite the Xcell generation into discipleship? Through the mail may seem to be one of the most archaic ways to deliver the invitation, but for a generation with instant access to everything, think about the impact of receiving something in this way. Receiving “snail” mail at the house or dorm room makes for an incredibly important day. Colleges that educate the next generation send out their school’s acceptance through the mail with a letter or package. Often it has the school’s colors or mascot on it to help them identify with their new institution. Official letters of scholarship or recognition still

come through the mail. So, an invitation sent in the mail with an RSVP return card to confirm their commitment is a great way to engage the Xcell group. On the card are the parameters of how much time and devotion this process will take. The card is to be discussed in person to affirm the acceptance into being a disciple. This process would be considered a formal invitation.

Groupme is a free app and an incredible platform for communication with the Xcell group. This platform allows for informational communication, but it also makes space for great, inclusive conversations. A few hundred comments later, an in-depth conversation has taken place. Joining in is by invitation of anyone. This makes it inclusive and easily manageable.

How to invite in the Ycohort into being disciples? This is done in person, through a phone call or through any social platform, such as Facebook or Twitter. Sending a timely comment or building connection is part of it. How does the next step work? Sending a formal email invitation through Google Calendar allows for a confirmation of time commitment. This electronic confirmation provides reminders and can aid in communication, including delivering a code for Zoom.

Zoom is the platform that best serves this type of discipleship because it is interactive and private. It can be recorded and distributed to those who happen to miss a meeting. It gives multiple levels of access to talk and listen, also the ability to simultaneously message and post information, files, or questions. The expense of this platform is minimal to have complete control over the environment.

### *Permission*

Permission to speak into the life of another person is a privilege. Once permission is granted, the responsibility of the mentor to be aware of the privilege is paramount. Russell Verhey, in his book *The Conversationalist*, comments that not only is it about permission to speak into someone's life but more importantly it is the "opportunity to ask questions that help provide some direction and to unlock the heart of the issue."<sup>103</sup> The emerging generation is open to someone speaking into their life or asking questions if there is substance to the person who is leading. It is not just about opinions, but about truth. Speaking the truth with permission granted brings about life change.

### *Time*

For both Xcell and Ycohort, a commitment of about an hour a week is the best way to develop discipleship. Meeting one on one with students and with leaders provides the best opportunity for making disciples. With a student, there is potential through lunch, activities, service, and other meetings to invest even more time than this, but a minimum for an effective relationship is an hour.

The setting for the Xcell meeting can be with a group of disciples that are being equipped at the same time. However, one-on-one time is vital and can happen through text, phone call, or a "let's get a Coke" meeting. Living life at the school or at locations that are mutually open is the best. The meeting is best held in a circle, not in a lecture setting. Meeting in any setting where the leader is not elevated but on the same level

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<sup>103</sup> Russell Verhey, *The Conversationalist: Building Life-defining Relationships One Conversation at a Time* (Racine, WI: BroadStreet Publishing Group, 2016), 91.

opens the next generation up for conversation. This may seem like a minor detail, but to get conversation started, this is incredibly important. Food is always a great idea and leaving the floor open for conversation, not just instruction, is crucial.

### *Engagement*

Engagement on a deeper level only takes place if that expectation is directly discussed first. In Xcell, one method for making that happen is an idea from Patrick Lencioni, called “getting naked.”<sup>104</sup> This is a practice of each person telling where they are at personally, emotionally, spiritually, and practically. They each get five minutes as they join this discipleship environment to get everyone up to speed where they are at in life. The risk of joining this process is the need for openness and being frank. Being honest is encouraged and this can quickly break the ice of relationship. Emphasizing the confidentiality of this information starts the building of trust.

Engagement for the Ycohort is in the first of six meetings, where each person is asked to give five facts about themselves to break the ice of meeting new people. Where you are in the ministry, do you have a spouse, how long have you been married, and what you hope to get from this cohort are some of the most often answered questions. Facilitating this is vital to the rest of discipleship.

Both Xcell and Ycohort require asking the right questions and moving the whole organization in a positive and building direction. Complete engagement takes discipleship to a deeper place in relationship so life can be lived together. Jesus broke past the surface of his disciples’ lives quickly, as he fully expected them to drop

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<sup>104</sup> Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 37.



everything and follow him. This generation may not drop everything, but there must be a powerfully strong commitment to being involved if this is going to make a difference.

Conversations in these meetings must be engaging on a higher level. “Speaking up”<sup>105</sup> is the method of teaching something to a disciple that is beyond their ability to easily grasp. It is challenging them to think on a higher level. Jesus taught things and his disciples could only understand because the Holy Spirit empowered them to understand. This still happens with disciples today. Elevating the level of thinking of disciples is part of the engagement process. Not just giving the content, not “talking over their heads,” but giving the reasoning behind it and its long-term applications. This gives each student an understanding that is beyond where they are at in life. They will carry this discipleship with them into the next season of their life.

To draw again from the football team for an illustration, Coach Blankenship’s practice is a NCAA college-level practice. It is operated identically to his previous team at TU. There is no break, everything runs on a time clock, music is played at specific times during practice that fits or creates the mood for what is being worked on. It is broadcast over a system built for running the practice. They always end on time. The elevation from an old-school football practice has been part of the leadership shift for Owasso. Has it taken time for the players to adapt? Yes, but it has elevated their way of thinking beyond their years. It changes what they do and what they believe about themselves. It will change the football culture at Owasso from here on.

For the Ycohort, the process of thinking differently changes the perspective of what can be done with students and developing them. Raising their way of perceiving

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<sup>105</sup> This is my definition of this phrase to train leaders effectively.

students, can change everything within their ministry. Just simply being exposed to another way of thinking makes their leadership wider and deeper. Intentionally joining a cohort that will stretch their leadership ability is admirable. Catalyst has been the very best at doing this for the emerging leaders. They come to the table with an elevated perspective and try to draw the whole conference up to their platform level to take a look from a different view.

### *Servanthood*

Serving others is a DNA change of this generation: “I’ll give you everything I’ve got, but I need to know it makes a difference to something bigger than your bottom line,” is their work ethic.<sup>106</sup> They are looking for a cause, not just to give to financially but to actively work to make a difference. According to research presented in Forbes, this generation will “apply their leadership skills by turning their passions into donations for non-profits, their hobbies into meaningful careers.”<sup>107</sup>

A structure to develop and facilitate this idea is imperative. Urban Soul is the title of this part of this structure. Urban Soul was first launched twelve years ago in Dublin, Ireland to give an opportunity for students to serve their own city by making a social impact. After the successful launch in Ireland, it was launched in Oklahoma. Urban Soul has four-legged platform: Addressing the Human Condition, Movement, Community, Involvement. Urban Soul serves those in the community by partnering with a city-based

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<sup>106</sup> Thom S. Rainer and Jess W. Rainer, *The Millennials: Connecting to America’s Largest Generation* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 2.

<sup>107</sup> Mary Meehan, “The Next Generation: What Matters to Gen We,” *Forbes*, August 11, 2016, accessed November 2, 2016, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/marymeehan/2016/08/11/the-next-generation-what-matters-to-gen-we/#38054d4d7350>.

program. In Oklahoma, Owasso Strong Neighborhood Initiative is the organization that has been our partner.<sup>108</sup> Working together has generated a movement of improving the neighborhood in Owasso. This partnership, when introduced to Xcell, was warmly received. Friends bring friends to serve at these events and weekly outreaches. The concept being introduced to Ycohort has been transformational because it gives an idea of an outlet for other leaders in other cities and countries to engage on a high level. Other groups across Oklahoma have accomplished the same movement.

Serving those who are shut in by simply taking care of their lawn and outdoor yard needs allows the elderly stay in their home. The ability and availability of a group of next-generation youth and young adults to do this is readily activated. Cross-generational relationships build the foundation of discipleship.

Modeling this in the country of Ireland has been a global part of this discipleship experiment. Urban Soul launched under a challenge of partnering with Americans who came to Ireland. Ten Americans came, so ten Irishmen joined them to serve Dublin. This has branched into multiple Irish cities and has been transformational for those cities and the leaders who were willing to take this risk.

Catalyst has done this same platform-building with water wells overseas through Charity Water, providing orphan care through Compassion International, and helping local workers laid off in the Atlanta area start a repurposing wood pallets furniture company. All of these have been presented at their conferences to introduce leaders to opportunities to do something practical with their disciples.

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<sup>108</sup> Keep Oklahoma Beautiful, a state and federal agency, has recognized Urban Soul for being the outstanding volunteer community group in the state of Oklahoma.

Serving others is the foundation of discipleship and it what was modeled for the disciples. Instead of arguing who the greatest in the kingdom is, the best thing to do is go get busy serving others. Being the servant of all is the target.

### *Peer to Peer*

One of the exciting things about training young disciples is that they will have natural followers. Younger people are always looking up to young people just a year or two ahead of them. Most often they will listen to and emulate what they do. With the most powerful voice into their lives, these new disciples, when challenged, can translate the truth to the next generation behind them with clarity and passion. This translation addresses the generation gaps that can happen with leaders.

The goal is to make sure what is said is being understood. Words have been assigned new meanings within this generation and having it understood happens by listening to the best translators. Thirty years of being in youth ministry does not equip anyone to be able to speak to the emerging generation but understanding the dynamic of relationships helps make this happen regularly.

In the Xcell group of disciples, speaking to their own peers by inviting them into a disciple relationship is motivating. They recruit their own disciples and teach them the same things that they are being taught on a weekly basis. Calling these groups family groups delineates the intention: creating another family for those who have been found to belong. Friends, family, and faith drives this part of peer-to-peer discipleship.

If a next-generation student will “love their neighbor as themselves,” they will reach out in relationship. When you love your neighbor, there is a great potential that

person will become your friend. Once friends, the relationship is headed toward being family, especially if you are meeting weekly for an hour to build that relationship.

Faith for a lifetime is the purpose. From the beginning of this dissertation, there has been an intention for an individual who does not know Jesus to come to know him. Friends, family, faith is the process. From a neighbor to a friend, from a friend to family, and then to have developed such a strong relationship with Jesus that this faith sticks for eternity. Not every relationship follows this path, but it does more often than not because this generation is so drawn to authentic relationships built on friendship.

Being given permission to recruit and speak into their peers' lives is one of the dynamic principles of this style of next-generation discipleship: intentionally finding someone to take on this journey of faith with you; walking alongside someone who may not know Jesus and helping them understand who he is and what he did for them. Creating this opportunity for a student brings to mind the "10,000-hour rule" by Malcolm Gladwell.<sup>109</sup> His research found that people who start something when they are young, and then they apply it and practice it over and over, they become qualified at a much younger age because they reach 10,000 hours of practice sooner. This same principle applies to this generation as peer-to-peer disciple makers. If this next generation is challenged at a younger age to make disciples, then they start making a huge difference now but also into their long-term future. This approach invites students from this emerging generation to begin their journey of life with discipleship a priority.

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<sup>109</sup> Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008), 39-43.

### *Culture*

The discipleship culture, when created, starts to bring an intriguing level of family. When bullying would naturally take place and instead there is a nurturing relationship, this is confusing to the outside world and to individual students. A discipleship culture makes it easy for others to be welcomed in, no matter their age, their subculture, their interests, their color, or even if they have special needs. Disciple-making transforms how people are viewed. The acceptance level of students for other students once they have been accepted is remarkable.

A culture of friends, family, faith is one that has unity as its core. Acceptance is one of the traits of someone who is in a true discipleship relationship. The fact that relationships are hard and not plentiful is depressing, but to find a place that will accept is enlightening and life-giving. A culture of relationship must be cultivated and must also be maintained.

### *Supernatural*

The Supernatural is still available today.

God still speaks, moves, heals and transforms today. God is still drawing individuals to him personally in America as well as globally. God still causes intersections of people's lives to bring about a better way for them to live. God still does miracles in people's lives so that they know he is real and that he is working in miraculous ways. Part of the supernatural for this generation has to do with their thinking. Believing that they are not locked into the environment that the past generation has created for them and deciding that they will not be like those who have raised them is one

of the differences for this generation. This takes supernatural transformation, but that is completely possible.

### *Life Change*

Life change takes place when the great commission is fulfilled and there is a spiritual change. Spiritual change leads to social change and that is often by applying biblical principles such as turning the other cheek and forgiving those who have hurt us. Life change is when there is a radical shift to love even your enemy and to do go to those who use you. Real life change happens with discipleship. Learning the word, applying the word, practicing the word and then receiving the word's promises to you is how it is possible. It might look impossible to men but with God all things are possible. God still uses men and women in his plan and purpose to develop the next generation. This emerging generation will be disciples and will make a world of difference.

### **Conclusion**

Discipleship for the emerging generation describes the life path I have followed for the past thirty years. Out of this investment in the lives of students and other leaders there has been life change. Strategic, authentic, and intentional discipleship has changed environments, launched new ideas, and produced leaders for the next generation.

Most important is the family culture that has been developed out of this intentional idea. Students who were from broken and confused environments have found another way to do family. A spiritual impact transforms their social world. It doesn't deliver life without persecution or trouble, but it does provide a locked-in faith that is an

unshakable foundation to build upon. Helping to choose solid over sand is what discipleship for the next generation can do.



## SECTION FOUR:

### THE ARTIFACT

The artifact is a twenty-lesson coaching discipleship manual for the next generation. The manual will present life principles that are foundational to being a disciple of Christ. It is a compilation of strategic teachings developed to help make disciples think differently. It is based on faith but strategically integrates both secular and sacred disciplines to help diversify the content and audience. The first ten chapters are lessons that can be used with Xcell students. The second ten chapters are lessons used to train leaders in the Ycohort. In combination with the website cohort sessions, each leader will learn and be able to impart the life principles they have been taught.

Each chapter will present a topic with a story or illustration. A life principle will be established, then questions will be asked, with fill-in-the-blank space to be answered. (In the sample manual, the answers will be included in the spaces. In the final manual, the answers will be available at the end of each chapter.) Scripture and principles will be integrated into the lesson. All twenty chapters will be in this style and used in conjunction with the cohort based on [www.kevinnorwood.com](http://www.kevinnorwood.com).

Pictures will be used throughout the manual. The artifact will be created as a PDF, while the final product would be resized for printing. All of the photography will be owned by this author so that it can be reproduced legally. At the end of the manual there will be credits and sources for material that is used. The graphics and all content will be created and owned so there are no copyright issues.

SECTION FIVE:  
PROPOSAL FOR WEBSITE / MANUAL

**Discipleship for the Next Generation**

Due to the ubiquitous nature of the internet, this coaching resource will be placed on a website, [www.kevinnorwood.com](http://www.kevinnorwood.com). The site is intended for anyone interested in being coached on discipleship. It is a platform for engaging student leaders, pastors and churches, youth pastors, leaders, and anyone else interested in coaching. Word of mouth is the number one way people find this site, but traffic is generated by being at conferences, speaking to youth leaders, having a table at youth workers' conferences, coaching churches, and promotion online on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Advertising the start of a new cohort has been successful in engaging new audiences to be a part of the six-week sessions. It will later be moved to a ten-week session to work with the coaching manual.

How does it work? The website is the entry point to become a part of a coaching cohort. It gives basic information about myself and what I have done over the years of developing discipleship and leadership for the next generation. It has testimonials from other leaders who have been helped by this coaching. Individuals interested in coaching leave a name, email, and phone number so that can be contacted personally. After being contacted personally to engage them, there is an email that is sent that gives the parameters for meeting. The date, time, and the use of Zoom is explained and then a password is given. Part of joining this cohort is the access it gives. My personal cell number and email address for the website is communicated. This will be open for a full

year to give access to coaching and a sounding board, as well as opportunities to join future cohorts.

The use of Google Calendar to remind and to communicate weekly is priority. Zoom is the best platform to do this discipleship on. It has the ability to record, chat, and add new people easily, and its pricing is reasonable for a professional platform. The sessions are one hour long and include two teaching points from me and then a time of questions and answers. It also contains a conversation concerning pressure points that the leaders are facing in their own personal ministry right now. It ends with prayer and encouragement for the next week and any assignment for personal growth. The follow-up is the email that gives access to the recording to anyone who might not have been able to make the time.

During the Zoom cohort meeting time, the manual will be used for the content of the time spent together. First, we will go through a principle for personal growth for the Ycohort leader, then take time to go through a lesson for Xcell. These segments are usually completed in 15-minute segments.

The artifact is designed for these youth leaders who go through and learn these basic principles that affect this next generation. It becomes a template for talks in a family group. Once your disciples start to get to a point of understanding, they can start to teach the same lessons to others, either their peers or those under them. This starts over the process of discipleship.

Invitation is the beginning for your students. They invite others into a family group. (Calling these family groups is the intention of the author.) This creates a second

family that is led by peers and gives a space for them to speak into someone else's life. This model allows for constantly making disciples.

The artifact has spiritual and secular ideas integrated in a way that speaks to the emerging generation in a way they can understand. The purpose of this is to break principles of discipleship down in a way that is relevant beyond a single generation.

With permission granted for a relationship, the conversations can go deeper than just the surface and can impact the environment and personal future for those who subscribe to the teaching.

Remember that the priority is five-fold in making disciples in this emerging generation.

1. Family
2. Authentic
3. Intentional
4. Time
5. Hope

This artifact is about developing family, being authentic and intentional in growing leaders, taking committed weekly time to interact, and creating an atmosphere of hope. This process of discipleship is best facilitated with material that is memorable and that can have a lasting impact.

## SECTION SIX:

### POSTSCRIPT

Thirty years ago, God called me to preach. I personally had other plans, but God confirmed with supernatural signs that he wanted me to preach. I agreed to this calling in Birmingham, England at a Conference on the Holy Spirit. I agreed to go if there would be results. God promised results. Seven years into the preaching journey, God enlightened me that the landscape of the current church was not making disciples but running programs. When I understood what was happening, I shifted everything. Making disciples has been the focus of my ministry for the past twenty-three years. This has not only been a local project, but one that has taken me globally to Ireland and allowed me to implement that same thing in churches there. God has granted favor and has planted me in a fertile field for a long time to reproduce students in the emerging generation to be fully devoted followers of Christ. It is not about me, but it is about following a calling from God and being granted favor, as he has repeatedly sent the most unlikely characters through the door. They have been some of the most passionate, unstoppable individuals and world changers I've met. Their environment changed when they were accepted. When time was spent with them, they started to experience a second family and felt the authentic intentionality of hope and love. This culture has affected hundreds of students and the leaders that have been reproduced globally is the fruit and joy of this labor. With much passion and intentionality, this idea of discipleship has remained the driving force behind everything that I have done. Developing the next generation in their "10,000 hours" in leading, speaking, making disciples, leading worship, in being committed to a social change before they graduate high school, is my passion. I want there to be students

in this emerging generation that have experienced their faith more than they have heard about the faith of others who went before them. I want it to be so ingrained in their DNA that when someone tries to talk them out of their faith, an uprising of experiences pushes that argument to the curb and they stand up and declare that is not the truth. This is with great passion and with great eloquence because they have been “spoken up” to over their developmental years. The encouragement to go after their God-given dreams and ideas, now, during this formative time, is the act of being a “dream-maker” not a dream-killer. I want them to go and make disciples, while developing friends, family, and faith, continuing the mission and fulfilling the great commission.

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# DISCIPLESHIP FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

**engaging the emerging generation**



**Kevin Norwood**

Therefore, Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28:19-20



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1

# Lead Yourself

Take up your cross and follow me



"Everyone is a leader because everyone influences someone"

John Maxwell



Dee Hock, the inventor of Visa, has a unique perspective on leadership. He teaches there are four different areas of life where each individual leads: Yourself, your peers, those who are in authority over you, and your followers. Sometimes the most difficult thing to do in life is to lead yourself. As a matter of fact, spending at least 40% of your time managing yourself is his recommendation.

There are six different areas of life that are important for your attention:

1. Ethics
2. Character
3. Principles
4. Purpose
5. Motivation
6. Conduct





## How do you **LEAD YOURSELF**?

By definition the word **lead** means to "go ahead and lead the way."  
So how do you go ahead and lead the way for yourself?

\_\_\_\_\_ is the first step to being the best you that you can be.  
That sounds kinda crazy, but it is the first step.

\_\_\_\_\_ is the first choice to leading yourself! To have ethics and  
character there must be a disciplined choice to have this trait.

\_\_\_\_\_ is at the heart of principles and purpose. It challenges your  
thinking to a different level because it affects your actions.

\_\_\_\_\_ is what develops the skills of motivation and conduct. It is a  
choice to rise to another level.

Answers: Dedication, Discipline, Desire, Decision



# Take up your cross and follow me!

Jesus Christ

That is a directive for self leadership.  
No one else can do that for you. Just YOU.

## Actions to lead yourself in every day

\_\_\_\_\_about today, food, temptation, forgiveness and hope.

\_\_\_\_\_something to make you better. Take ten minutes and read the Bible/a book.

\_\_\_\_\_because it makes you more selfless and thankful for what you already have.

\_\_\_\_\_about someone other than you and bring encouragement to them today.

\_\_\_\_\_to someone else; it can shape your life more than you know.

If you lead yourself you will have an opportunity  
to lead others, your peers and even those who  
are in authority over you. How does this happen?

Answers: Pray, Read, Give, Think, Listen



The door is open!

It starts with a **choice**.

You **decide** who you are going to be.

Lead yourself and now is the **time**.

**Just do it NOW!**

**NO EXCUSES**

**Own your choices**

**Wise decisions**

**What will you do?**



David was the great example of this principle of leading yourself. When he was alone in the field tending sheep, he developed the skills that he would need in his big moment. Conquering fear, killing the enemy and being disciplined was his practice. He was dedicated to God, he loved him so much that he got offended for him and wanted to defend him. His desire took him to a different level than his brothers. When he made the decision to go into battle with the giant he knew the risk, but he figured out the reward was pretty amazing.

David led \_\_\_\_\_ He stepped up to the challenge  
David led \_\_\_\_\_ He led his brothers and other soldiers  
David led \_\_\_\_\_ His brother's friends and the singing ladies!  
David led \_\_\_\_\_ He was the king and in authority over David.

Lead YOURSELF.

Do you know who you will influence the most if you do this simple principle?

Answers: Himself, His Peers, Others, Saul

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2

## Mindset

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As a person thinks





**"You have a choice, Mindsets are just beliefs!  
They're powerful beliefs, but they're just something  
in your mind, and YOU can change your mind."**

**Carol S. Dweck**

What kind of mindset do you have?

Do you have a fixed mindset or do you have a growth mindset?

This simple question is asked by author Carol S. Dweck.

By her definition:

A \_\_\_\_\_ mindset believes that your qualities are set in stone.

A \_\_\_\_\_ mindset is a belief that you can cultivate more through your efforts.

A person with a fixed mindset creates the feeling of utter failure and paralysis when something goes wrong. They start calling themselves negative names, finding blame and start throwing up their hands.

A person with a growth mindset copes with the same adversity and starts to think, how can I do better next time. Even though they feel the same distress they confront the challenges and keep working at them.



**MINDSET**

Answers: Fixed, Growth

**Failure is a painful experience, but it doesn't define you.**

**Carol S. Dweck**

Have you ever tried to change someone else's mind?  
That seems like a pretty impossible thing to do, but  
YOU can change YOUR mind! Have you discovered that yet?

You are the one person who can change how you think.

How does this happen? Develop a strategy, think differently and then  
act on your new thoughts. Repeat, Renew your mind often.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is viewed differently by the fixed and the growth mind.
  - a. Fixed mindset says if you have to work at something you must not be good at it.
  - b. Growth mindset says even geniuses have to work hard for their achievements.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ is not required, but effort is. It comes down to your mindset. Remember, you have the ability to change your mind.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is not the end of the world. It just means you have discovered one way not to do something. John Maxwell, a leadership guru, says it this way: Fail Forward. Keep trying and working. Never give up!!

What if you need help? Is there a way to think differently?

Maybe it is about being genuine and true.

Answers: Work, Perfection, Failure

**For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.  
Proverbs 23:7 NKJ**

**Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--  
THINK about such THINGS. Phil 4:8 NIV**

Where does your mind go? Proverbs 23:7 is talking about a host who welcomes everyone to eat his food and seems joyful on the outside, but instead he is calculated and resentful on the inside.

### **Acting one way and then getting stuck thinking another way**

What if you feel trapped in your mindset just like that?  
Change how you think. Change what you think on!  
I know that sounds so easy. There is help available for you.  
Everyone needs right thinking, so renew your mind.

Romans 12:2 "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, instead be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good pleasing and perfect will"

Ephesians 4:22-23 "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds. NIV



**Would you give a friend the ability to define you?**

Your mindset affects the words that others speak about you!





**It takes a growth mindset to not let others define you.**

## **Would you give your enemies the power to define you?**

Below is the prison cell of Nelson Mandela on Robben Island. After 27 years in prison, Nelson Mandela was freed in 1990 and negotiated the end of apartheid in South Africa, bringing peace to a racially divided country and leading the fight for human rights around the world. In December of 1992 he and F. W. De Klerk started talks to end apartheid and because of those talks shared the Nobel Peace Prize in December 1993. On April 26, 1994, Mandela was sworn in as the first black president of South Africa. Improving race relations, discouraging blacks from retaliating against the white minority and building a new international image of a united South Africa were central to President Mandela's agenda.\* The natural thing to do would have been to seek revenge. His mindset is what set him apart. He didn't allow others to determine his mindset. He didn't allow his circumstance to dictate his mindset. He made a choice to choose peace and reconciliation instead of what his friends and natural instinct would have called for giving us a true example of a growth mindset conquering a fixed mindset. \*facts from history.com





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3

## React or Respond

Everyone has a choice to make





**Everyone has a choice to make.  
Anytime life happens,  
You can REACT or RESPOND.**

# REACT



It is natural to react! If someone hits you, the natural reaction is to hit back. If someone calls you a name, the natural reaction is to come up with a more powerful name to call them back. Some choose to become nuclear reactors when they have been wronged by someone else. They choose to go on the offensive as a reactor.

What does it take to be a responder?  
First responders are trained so that when they arrive on the scene, they know the right thing to do. They evaluate before they move. They take the time to think before taking action. They will soon be responsible for others who are coming to help. Their response is what SAVES lives instead of losing life. Training is the difference. Can you train yourself to act a certain way? To have a different mindset?

# RESPOND

**Responders are sent first to an emergency  
not reactors, a choice makes the difference.**



When LIFE (FIRE) happens  
**you** have two buckets:  
Which one will you choose?

**YOU**

You have the ability to cause a blaze or put it out.  
Which one will you choose? It is always a choice.  
The results of your choice could be a fight or peace.

**choices**

**choices**

**choices**

How do you make choices?  
What is your process for picking up the right bucket?  
Which inner voice do you listen to? Do you ask Alexa?  
Do you go with the first impulse that you have?  
Do you count to ten before you speak or move?



Reggie Dabbs has been speaking to students in public schools for the past 30 years. Major news media call him the #1 Public School Speaker in America. Reggie was born to an unwed teenager who, at the time, considered abortion as a viable option for solving her “problem.” She remembered her favorite teacher telling the class if they ever needed someone to help to contact her. So she did and gave Reggie to her. Reggie was raised in foster care by his mom’s sophomore English teacher and her husband, the school janitor.

When Reggie speaks to students, he tells them:

**“you can’t change your past  
but you can change your future.”**

No matter what students are facing, they have a choice. When he speaks he often brings up topics like drugs, alcohol, and self harm. By using humor, he is able to present a message of hope. He made a choice to respond to life and what it handed to him instead of reacting like so many other people do to adversity. REACT or RESPOND?

If you \_\_\_\_\_ to life you can make choices that are irrational.

If you \_\_\_\_\_ to life you can make choices that have a future.

Harming \_\_\_\_\_ is never an option.

Letting \_\_\_\_\_ help you is a great life choice.

Answers: React, Respond, Yourself, Someone

**“Today’s generation is facing unparalleled hurts, pressures  
and choices. If we can heal those hurts, help in times of pressure  
and equip students in their choices, we can make a difference”  
Reggie Dabbs**



# Pre-Choice Choices

Making pre-choice choices is the best way to be a responder instead of a reactor.

Pre-Choice Choices?

Determining what you will do in advance by thinking ahead to what could come your way.

what if:

- someone curses at you?

- tempts you to do something illegal?

- bullies you?

- asks you to drink when you're underage?

- asks you to smoke?

- asks you to be sexually active?

- hits you?

What will you do? Can you decide in advance?

Making a pre-choice means you are a responder. You want to determine your future by making choices in advance.

You get to choose what you are going to do in advance.

Making choices beforehand gives you the advantage of going on auto-pilot instead of reacting.

Allowing others to make your life choices by applying pressure is not acceptable. Do not allow someone else to determine your future.

Deciding to be an organ donor by marking it on your driver's license is an example of a pre-choice choice. You can't make that decision in the moment it must be made before hand. Remember Lead YOURSELF!



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4

## The Three C's

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Clear, Concise, and Comprehensive



# Clear

Communication is always a priority. Too often a person can make up their mind, they can choose to respond, but then they have a hard time communicating these pivotal decisions to others. Leadership requires communication. Leading yourself is hard enough, but then developing the skills to communicate to others, your peers and those in authority over you is something else altogether.

What does it mean to be clear?

**Clear: easy to perceive, understand, or interpret; transparent.**

**W**hat does it take to be clear?

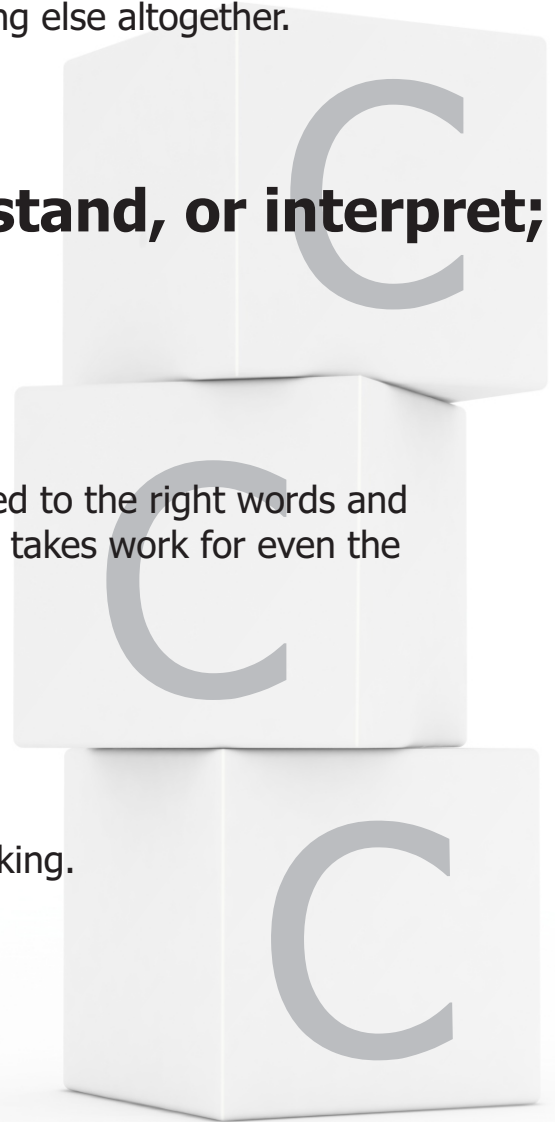
To be 'clear' means that there has been attention payed to the right words and the right way of saying words. Clear is something that takes work for even the most gifted communicators. How to be clear?

\_\_\_\_\_down your speech.  
\_\_\_\_\_each syllable.  
\_\_\_\_\_your diction.

But being clear is more than the practical side of speaking.

Clearly state what you want others to hear.  
Use words that other people understand.  
Expand your vocabulary.

Answers: Slow, Enunciate, Practice



# Concise

So, if you practice being clear, why would you need to be concise?  
Have you ever heard someone speak who never got to the point?  
Being concise is getting to the point, brief, short and sweet.

**Concise: Giving a lot of information clearly,  
and in a few words;  
Brief, but comprehensive.**

It takes work to be concise.

\_\_\_\_\_ you are going to say is an effective practice.  
\_\_\_\_\_ of all superfluous and elaborative words.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (see what I did there?)  
\_\_\_\_\_ what needs to be said without unnecessary words.

**Concise comes from a Latin word that  
means to "Cut down"**

I like apples. That is a concise statement. Direct and to the point.

Answers: Writing Down, Removal, Expressing



# Comprehensive

Have you ever left out a detail or two that really affected what you were telling someone? Like the time or the place, or who you were with? Have you ever gotten in trouble because you were not comprehensive in your communication?

**Comprehensive: Complete; including all, covering everything  
Making sure there is understanding.**

Insurance offers comprehensive coverage. They will pay for damages for your auto caused by an event other than collision, such as fire, theft or vandalism. If you hit an animal or if your car is flooded. This coverage is the best because it applies to most everything. It is inclusive.

Is your communication clear, concise and comprehensive?

What about your story? Are you able to effectively communicate with others?

A communication test:

1. Do people often have a \_\_\_\_\_ look on their face when you talk?
2. Do you ask people if they \_\_\_\_\_ what you are saying?
3. Do you repeat your words so you are truly \_\_\_\_\_?
4. Great communication requires being \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

It is your job to be sure that you are a good communicator. It makes a world of difference if you use the three C's.

Answers: Blank, Understand, Communicating, Clear, Concise, Comprehensive

Being comprehensive takes time and development.





# Owasso Rams



# 6A1 Champs

January 2017, it was announced that Bill Blankenship had accepted the vacant head coaching position at Owasso, a 6A1 program in Owasso, OK. He was a five time state championship winning coach. He had just led Fayetteville High School to the 7A state championship. When he came to Owasso he came with the theme of #riseup.

What he brought to the team was character and a laser-sharp focus on the details of the game. From the very beginning of his time in Owasso he started to lay a foundation of specifics. Character was one of the things that he communicated to his players. Another thing that he made players understand was the purpose of practice. He used the 3 C's.

He was clear. He showed players what he expected. If a drill didn't go like he wanted, he would run it again, as long as it took.

He was concise He and his team of coaches didn't waste words. They were sure of their words and they repeated them over and over again.

And Coach was comprehensive. He brought everything that he had to this team. All of his experience and all of his passion. He was able to communicate it to a group of young men who believed.

Oh, yeah by the way... they won!!!!

## 2017 State Champions

# #RISEUP



## Coach Bill Blankenship



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## Culture

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Some things are worth creating

Rules Culture

Expectation Culture

Guarding the Culture

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6

# Supernatural Encounter

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Book of Acts continued  
God Draws People  
God Uses People  
God Radically Transforms

The logo consists of the lowercase letters 'kn' in a white, sans-serif font, centered within a solid black rectangular box.

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7

## Family Groups

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Peer to Peer Leadership  
Translation  
Equipping Peer to Peer  
Vital Communication

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8

## Questions

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Structured Communication

The Q Project

One Word Questions

Tell Me Five Things

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## Sending Disciples

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Home, Campus, Community, World  
Urban Soul  
Youth Alive/ FCA  
Strong Neighborhood Initiative  
Overseas Impact

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## Attitudes

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Setting the Culture  
Thermometer or Thermostat  
Staying in Neutral  
Worth Having

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Cohort Section

11

# First Gen Discipleship

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Developing a Culture



# Invite Culture

**"What you \_\_\_\_\_ is drawn to you.  
And whatever you \_\_\_\_\_ is repelled away from you. "**  
**Jeanne Mayo**

Culture is something that must be created. It is in the \_\_\_\_\_ used,  
in the \_\_\_\_\_ of voice spoken and in the \_\_\_\_\_ created.

Jesus demonstrated the \_\_\_\_\_ culture. He developed his culture as he started with a formal \_\_\_\_\_. He invited his disciples into more than a \_\_\_\_\_, but into a \_\_\_\_\_ culture that would shape them and then eventually shape the \_\_\_\_\_. Once he invited his disciples to \_\_\_\_\_ their nets, money boxes and their own professions, he promised to help them develop a new \_\_\_\_\_, "becoming fishers of men."

How do you identify who to ask to be your disciple?

Popularity is not the best identifier. Instead, search for someone who is willing to \_\_\_\_\_ others.

How do you invite the emerging generation into being \_\_\_\_\_?\_

1. Formally. In person is one way to make an invitation.
2. Use the mail and send a \_\_\_\_\_ invitation to follow you.  
(Universities acknowledge their new relationship in the mail)
3. Ask them for a \_\_\_\_\_ commitment of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Be involved in their lives on a \_\_\_\_\_ basis outside of your meeting time.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ life together. Be in their life and invite them into yours.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ them and build them up into being great.
7. Live life embracing them through social connections used.

Answers: Embrace, Demean, Language, Tone, Invitation, Meeting, Family, World, Drop, Way, Serve, Disciples, Formal, Weekly, Time, Weekly, Live, Speak-Up

**Setting the culture gives direction and purpose.**

# Trust is the foundation of relationships

## Characteristics of Trust

Trust determines \_\_\_\_\_.

Trust develops \_\_\_\_\_.

Trust builds the future and exposes \_\_\_\_\_.

Trust is rarely \_\_\_\_\_ away and most often requires a deposit of actions.

Trust is built over a \_\_\_\_\_, but can be destroyed in a moment

Giving trust away for \_\_\_\_\_ is the beginning of a strong relationship.

\_\_\_\_\_ is an incredibly powerful item to give away. Respect and trust are two valuable commodities that a leader can give away to those who are following them. No strings attached, just given away for free.

Respect is understood and \_\_\_\_\_ is understood. When you give away respect then expecting it back in return is socially acceptable.

Speaking \_\_\_\_\_ to anyone of the next generation will create a disconnect of \_\_\_\_\_ and create a \_\_\_\_\_ in communication.

The value of respecting someone, even if they are different, is noticed immediately by the next generation. They are looking naturally for those who value them.

Do you set the culture by \_\_\_\_\_ or by \_\_\_\_\_?

How do \_\_\_\_\_ differ from \_\_\_\_\_?

Rules are there to be \_\_\_\_\_, but expectations are there to be \_\_\_\_\_.

Handing trust away for free says that you're \_\_\_\_\_ a lot in return.

Answers: Value, Relationship, Character, Given, Lifetime, Free, Respect, Disrespect, Down, Mistrust, Gap, Expectations, Rules, Rules Expectations, Broken, Met Expecting

## Giving away respect to the next generation is a pathway to relationship.

# Every Story Counts

Birthday:

Once upon a time \_\_\_\_\_ was born on  
\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ who started to record  
my story. I couldn't write so someone else took the pen and started to  
write it for me.

A long time ago...

In the beginning...

Once upon a time...

Every story has a beginning; sometimes the start of a story is happy, sometimes it's scary, and sometimes it's confusing. The truth is, we all have to start somewhere. When you were born you obviously lacked the motor skills to write. Not only that, you also lacked the comprehension to place yourself where you wanted to be in life, such as; where you would grow up, who your parents were, how much money they would make...etc. So, because you were a small and probably very adorable child, someone else started your story. They picked the house and the neighborhood that you would grow up in. They chose the school you went to. They even choose your name. Maybe you were blessed and grew up with their choices there to help you, or maybe you grew up despite their choices fighting for you to fail. The fact is, these choices impacted the course of your life for good or bad. These choices were foundational to the person you have become.

Since I couldn't write, these choices were written in my story for me.

**Handing away trust for free, leads to relationship  
and relationship leads to knowing a person's story**

# Every Story Counts

Read Genesis 1. The word genesis itself means the origin of something. We all have a genesis story, or if you want to feel more like a superhero, we all have a origin story. Think about and reflect on your genesis story in the space provided. What have been the moments that defined who you are? What are the important moments that have made you into the person that you are today?  
My Story Begins:

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Since someone else started your story, what happens when you finally get the pen into your own hands? Think about this for a second...what happens when you hand respect to someone?

When your create a trust culture for a person who is trying to recover from their genesis story, you create a space where they can develop and grow. You are pivotal in them writing a different story when they get the pen.

**Every Story Counts is an interactive workbook for students to discover themselves. It is available @ [www.kevinnorwood.com/everystorycounts](http://www.kevinnorwood.com/everystorycounts)**

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Cohort Section

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Language

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Defining what you are saying

# Language is crucial to communication

After reading many books in my research for creating this discipleship manual, I have discovered that most authors redefine at least one or two words to perfectly fit what they are saying. Leadership for instance, to John Maxwell and Dee Hock are completely different but the same,

John Maxwell: "Leadership is not about titles, flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another."

Dee Hock: "Leadership: Lead yourself, Lead your superiors, lead your peers and free your people to do the same. All else is trivia."

but they both define what that specific word means to them. Discipleship and church language can be filled with assumption as to what it means. Defining what is being said is vital in communication.

What do you mean when you say these words? Let's clarify.  
Give your definition.

Salvation\_\_\_\_\_

Baptism\_\_\_\_\_

Communion\_\_\_\_\_

Disciple\_\_\_\_\_

It's not always easy to clarify what you are "saying, is it?" Can you do it in the space given? Do you need more space?

**What are your most powerful words?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Defining your words brings clarity.**

# Words are powerful, choose yours wisely

## Value of Words

### A leaders most powerful words

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Leaders must be aware of the \_\_power\_\_ of their words. Never casually throw around your most powerful words. Make sure you say them when you mean them and not to ever \_\_manipulate\_\_ or control.

There is a great book called the "One-Minute Manager" by Ken Blanchard that gives three ways to help in setting the culture. It is very focused and is applicable to the emerging generation.

**One minute praising:** Everyone needs affirmation of their accomplishments. Speak it in one minute so that you are accurate and on point.

**One minute goal setting:** help those who are following you to be great at setting new goals. In 250 words or less look to the future and plan.

**One minute redirect:** when you are disappointed in the actions of someone who is following you, give a quick, clear new directive to meet your expectations.

(Blanchard formerly used the word REPRIMAND, but has adapted a more friendly language because it matters so much.)

Answers: I Love You, I am proud of you, Great job, Well done, I'm disappointed, Finish Strong

## Language is crucial to effective communication

# Chief Cultural Engineer

In a discipleship culture, these simple business practices make great sense. Too often making disciples includes a lot of language that is not practical or understood. Jesus practiced clear concise communication. He redirected his disciples when they were off point and praised them when they fully understood where he was leading. He had them set goals into the future and challenged them to be different than those around them. Jesus pressed the existing culture, but also brought clarity to his purpose and to loving other people.

Inviting others into the culture is the beginning practice for all who are going to make disciples.

Equipping them to be fully devoted followers of Christ is the practice that happens daily.

Speaking to those who are following so that they gain understanding and purpose is the role a disciple maker maintains.

## Chief Cultural Engineer.

Jesus was the chief cultural engineer of the new kingdom. You must be the chief cultural engineer with your disciples. Setting the culture requires time and energy, but it builds toward a group of people who can be world changers.

When a group of people pull in tight, working hard and smart together, they create **SYNERGY**. When synergy happens there is an attractiveness to others to want to be a part. Jesus created SYNERGY.

**Synergy: what a group of people create when they pull in tight, work hard and smart together**



# Three Minute Rule

Listening is a difficult trait to develop as a leader because often we are looked to for answers. If it is your tendency to immediately start to formulate an answer, as soon as someone else starts to speak, why don't you make a pre-choice choice to listen first?

**The three minute rule** is this simple principle:

Train yourself to \_\_\_\_\_ back.

Just \_\_\_\_\_ for three minutes.

Don't \_\_\_\_\_.

Don't \_\_\_\_\_ an answer.

Don't try to \_\_\_\_\_ anything, just listen.

(HUSBANDS, this could be the change you need in your marriage!!)

Often, people just need someone to \_\_\_\_\_.

They have thought about the issue repeatedly.

When they are done what if you were to ask:

What do you think you should do about this?

Then sit back and listen.

For three minutes.

Don't interrupt.

Don't formulate an answer

Don't try to solve anything, just listen.

When they are done, your best answer might just be to give them back their best solution. You could be considered a genius when they do what you suggest and attribute it to you.

Answers: Set, Listen, Interrupt, Formulate, Solve, Listen

**The art of listening can be developed**

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Cohort Section

13

# Leaders Communication

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Clear, Concise, Comprehensive

# Communication is a priority

## Principles of Communication: The Three C's to Communication

Clear: easy to perceive, understand or interpret, transparent

Concise: giving a lot of information clearly, in a few words

Comprehensive: complete, including all, covering everything

As a leader, mentor are you being a 3 C's communicator?

Clear: ABC's    Case Study: Hillsong Cape Town

At Hillsong Cape Town they have a clear strategy to meet the felt needs of those who come to them. A job is the number one need among people who live in Cape Town. So if you are a disciple of Hillsong Church you are going into the ABC's. Practical discipleship is that they will help

you to get **A** job. (clothes, shoes and prepare you to interview) Then

they will equip you to get a **B**etter job. (prepare a resume and open doors)

They will connect you with Dave Ramsey's teachings so you can plan

financially and then lead you toward a **C**areer. (become a manager or a leader because you are developing your communication skills)

What is your \_\_\_\_\_ for discipleship?

Can you \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_?

What is your \_\_\_\_\_ for discipleship?

Can you \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_?

Answer: Process, Trust, Process, Purpose, Trust, Purpose

**Clear**  
**Concise**  
**Comprehensive**



# Case Study

## Concise: Case Study Learn to Earn Cape Town

The organization of Learn to Earn in Cape Town takes very seriously the same objective of getting a job. They are very concise: we will teach you woodworking or sewing skills. They see it as a partnership. They don't want to have toxic charity so they charge each student to learn. It costs the student who comes to them and they police their environment. Stealing is not tolerated. It teaches them even if everyone else on a job is stealing it is not their way. Each individual has an ability to do something about their future. They teach each employee life skills and discipline. They do everything that they can to help each individual to be trained but so that they have an investment into their future. When they have completed the course they help them with job placement.

They are concise in what they say and offer. They are going jointly into this adventure. Success of the program is placed on both sides.

Being concise takes work and a determined purpose.

In your leadership, where do you need to \_\_\_\_\_ to be more concise?  
Do you create \_\_\_\_\_ moments within your disciples?  
Being \_\_\_\_\_ with those who follow you is a necessary part of being a disciple maker.

Answer: Do, Toxic, Concise

Cape Town, South Africa



# Principles of Communication

One of the things that can be very \_\_\_\_\_ is communication through email or through text. Have you ever read anything to the worst power? You know what I am talking about: you read something and take offense to it because of the tone that you read it in. It contained something that we reacted to instead of responding. To often we do not practice this simple communication principle:

**Believe the best instead of assuming the worst.**

So when it comes to communication:

**Reserve Correction, Direction and Instruction for an in-person conversation.**

This can happen in person, on the phone ( I know using the phone to actually talk is an amazing function) or on Zoom or some other video platform.

Three "I will" commitments to being better at communication.

I will not read things to the worst \_\_\_\_\_!

I will be a person who will believe the \_\_\_\_\_ instead of assuming the \_\_\_\_\_ about someone else.

I will have the \_\_\_\_\_ conversations!

Answers: Toxic, Power, Best, Worst, Hard

# Being a Next Gen Communicator

Language is so important for a next gen communicator. Being clear in communication to the emerging generation is often defining words. Let's look at two words that are common words but when it comes to being a communicator they are incredibly important.

**Conduit:** is a channel for water or electrical  
\_\_\_\_\_ flows through it.  
\_\_\_\_\_ is the desired result  
\_\_\_\_\_ is the recognizable outcome

So to translate this word to a next generation leader: YOU as Conduit!

God's \_\_\_\_\_ flows through you (supernatural power is available today)  
Connection with \_\_\_\_\_ is always the desired result.  
\_\_\_\_\_ is the recognizable energy when you speak with God's authority

Will you be conduit that God can flow through? Have you made yourself available to be used by God?

**Fresh:** think newly baked bread, fruit, sheets, pillowcase, underwear:  
we \_\_\_\_\_ fresh. We \_\_\_\_\_ fresh! We \_\_\_\_\_ fresh!

The Fabreze affect is to often what communicators in the Google generation bring to those who are their disciples. When do you deliver a God word to those who are following you? Fabreze only covers up what is not fresh. Will you be a Fabreze communicator or will you be fresh?

Bringing a \_\_\_\_\_ word: new, original, authentic. God gives leaders a fresh word when time is spent and listening is a practice.

What is closest to us is our most intimate relationships. Our disciples deserve fresh and that is the nature of the Spirit. A fresh word.

Answers: Power, Connection, Energy, Power, Others, Authority, Like, Love, Need, Fresh.

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Cohort Section

14

## Urban Soul

Serving others





# Urban Soul Ireland

**Urban Soul Ireland started in 2008 by partnering together local communities and volunteers. Urban Soul gathered people who are passionate about social action through projects like area clean up, painting over graffiti, and running community events. The cultural impact was great for a group of Americans who partnered with them to launch this new adventure. It was over July the 4th, so instead of celebrating freedom, time was spent volunteering and started a decade of outreach to impact Oklahoma.**



Urban Soul is a concept of partnership. Who can you partner with to make an impact? Every local community has needs that can be met by those who are looking to serve where they live. It is usually not glamorous and often just requires work, often hard work that no one else really wants to do. So how do you volunteer to partner with your community to make a difference? Usually a phone call or a visit to city hall will open the door.



# Urban Soul America

How does Urban Soul work?

Find a time each week to help others.

Urban Soul takes place during the summer, every Tuesday afternoon from 1-4pm. We organize a group of volunteers to help with the community. They also help to keep members of our "nineties club" (a group of elderly people in our community that would not be able to continue to be independent and live in their own homes if someone didn't take care of their yard) in their homes. Special projects, that are brought to our attention from the church, school or community, are met.

Anyone can start Urban Soul in their area. Find a few days a year and help in preparation for something special that already happens in your community; for example Trail Days, Rattlesnake Festival, Peach Festival, etc.. The list in Oklahoma goes on and on for days. Help with set up, clean up or even volunteer to serve during the event. We have hosted the stage for most of our community event for the last 20 years. Find your place and serve your community.

We have worked with an organization called Owasso Strong Neighborhood Initiative with our friend Jerry Fowler. We started in relationship by painting picnic tables and benches in a neighborhood park. We were willing to show up, paint up and clean up, so they provided the paint, the rollers and the tarps. A partnership was born through that first act of serving and is going strong for 6 years.

Think outside the \_\_\_\_\_ and then \_\_\_\_\_ outside of it and serve others.

We are expert fire hydrant painters and we really can put mulch around a flower bed.

Leaders take this opportunity to \_\_\_\_\_ others to things that you have been taught and may take for granted. Mowing, trimming, sweeping, raking are not standard training for most of this generation. Take your knowledge and pass it on.

Answers: Box, Climb, Introduce

For ideas and thoughts on how to get your own Urban Soul started, check out the link on [www.kevinnorwood.com](http://www.kevinnorwood.com).

# Keep Oklahoma Beautiful

The State of Oklahoma, like most states, has an organization to keep their state beautiful. It is a non-profit organization which is a part of a national network of nearly 1,000 participating organizations. These organizations work together to improve communities through litter prevention, waste reduction and beautification.

What if you were to join with something that is bigger than yourself to make a difference in your community? There are organizations that are outside the church that are looking to do good and to make a difference. What if you were to join with them to bring the influence of your disciples into their culture?

Over the past decade, the actions of a group of student volunteers has been recognized for making a difference in the community and in the state. They have also made an impact on community leaders because they have been given a voice to talk about the reason they do these acts of care.

Have you given your disciples an opportunity to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, to interact and serve their community?

It takes work as a leader to create environments where your disciples can impact and change their world.

This next generation is looking for a hands on \_\_\_\_\_ of serving others.

If it takes time and it takes effort, fantastic. Organize it and they will give their time!

It's the role of the leader to do the behind the scenes work to make all of this seem easy and organized.

Make that \_\_\_\_\_.

Answers: Act, Speak, Experience, Call

# Gathering on Main

Owasso has started to revitalize the downtown area, like many other towns in Oklahoma. One of the ways they have started the revitalization process is to start something called "Gathering On Main" which takes place on the 1st Thursday night of the month from March to October. As part of this night businesses, churches, vendors, small businesses, etc. have the opportunity to set up a booth and promote themselves. We have a stage truck, (We felt like we needed a ministry truck so we asked our church if anyone had one they would like to give to us. What a great story of money following ministry.) that we provide for these events and out of that they gave a booth space. We didn't want to just give away a flyer, tea, or anything that didn't help us connect with people. We wanted to create a way to start into a relationship with people right there on the street. So we started collecting plates and built a **Smash Box**. Have you ever had someone say a word to you that you held on to for too long? Why not write it on a plate, smash the plate, and let it go. Give away those feelings and forgive. As we have this conversation right there on the street, it is so incredible to see adults take a minute to let words go. Smash Box is one of my favorites, but the **One Word Story** is my second. We bought a Polaroid camera. I know it doesn't sound like it goes together, but it does. We tell people we will take your picture and give it to you, but we want to know your one word story. Have you ever tried to tell your whole life story in one word? No, we didn't think so. It makes people think and it leads us to a place to be able to have a conversation right there on the street, about their life and how they are doing. It sounds crazy, I know, but we have had such favor starting authentic relationships. Giant **Jenga** is the last one that we have used. Each participant has to answer the question that is written on each Again to start to a conversation.

Find a way to bring your faith, to your community.

Start a conversation!



Money follows ministry, if you can dream it up  
God can provide it for you.

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Cohort Section

15

# **Lexus Principle**

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**The Golden Rule**

# The Lexus Principle

**Treat Others Like You Would Like to Be Treated**

My wife has owned a Lexus for the past 15 years. We made a decision to have all of our service completed by the dealership because our first car had complete records since it was purchased there new. We started into a relationship with Lexus. Any time her car needed an oil change she took it to them. They made appointments for that and would give a brand new Lexus loaner car to her so that it was convenient. Each time she took it in they would give her a detailed list of what was upcoming for service and what to be looking for in the future of her car. The Lexus Principle was not just the up-front interaction, but the incredible follow through. A day after the service was performed, the service manager called to make sure that she had been treated the Lexus way. Then in a couple of days there would be a letter from the general manager asking about the appointment and how it went, saying if there was any issue please contact him directly at his personal phone number.

The Lexus dealership WANTED us to be repeat customers. They wanted us to feel the effect of being in their FAMILY.

I started taking my Toyota truck there because the service was so outstanding. Then "the incident" happened. On one visit to the dealership for an oil change one of the lot porters backed my truck into a yellow pole. What would happen now? They asked if the truck had been hit before. I answered "yes" (honesty is always the best policy.) Now from the yellow pole the whole side panel had been crunched in. They quickly got the truck into their body shop, repaired, and repainted and we split the deductible. Then came the phone call, how was my experience? Then we received the general managers letter. Even though our relationship had "hit a pole," the same treatment continued.

Would I recommend them to others? Absolutely! Too often in discipleship when "life happens" and there are problems, leaders check out. Don't check out. Instead, step, in and be honest and continue the relationship.

**Treat people like they are valuable**

# Lexus



# Jeep

So what can be learned from the Lexus Principle?

\_\_\_\_\_ others like you would like to be \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ in discipleship builds relationship.

\_\_\_\_\_ for those you serve is vital even if it is done \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ in relationship are going to come. How will you \_\_\_\_\_ them?

Will you handle it with class or will you \_\_\_\_\_ it under the \_\_\_\_\_?

\_\_\_\_\_ keeps character intact. The porter kept his job and I kept my \_\_\_\_\_.

I have recently experienced another dealership that does not have relationship at the forefront of their mind. I have to call back and check on my vehicle. Nothing is offered as a convenience to me and even simply communicating with me where we are at in the process is not their priority. I would not recommend them to anyone.

Why did I go somewhere else?

I now have a Jeep so I thought if I took it to a Jeep dealership it would be the same. Oh how wrong I was in my thinking. How will your disciples find your treatment of them to be when they go somewhere else? Like Lexus or like Jeep? Something to think about in the process of discipleship. How you are treated makes a world of difference.

Answers: Treat, Treated, Follow up, Caring, Systematically, Bumps, Handle, Sweep, Rug, Honestly, Witness

# The Curse of Comparison

Comparing Lexus to Jeep might not be the fairest comparison. They both are dealerships and they both have service department. I can choose them by the service they deliver to me as a consumer. We make those kind of choices every day. Target or Walmart? Chic-fil-a or Canes? McDonald's or Burger King? But there is something about comparing companies and what they deliver that helps us make our daily choices.

Comparing yourself to someone else is very difficult practice to get into. I don't know that I can be someone else but I can be the very best "me" that I can be. What are some of the down sides of trying to compare yourself to other people?

1. What you see on Instagram, Snapchat or Facebook is a snapshot that is glamorous and most of the time is the best of times instead of real life. Real life is not always best captured on social media. The best picture is.
2. What you perceive about someone from afar can be a long ways away from their reality. Get to know someone and learn from them. Instead of comparing yourself to them, what if you invested some time with them and let them help you grow?
3. When we compare often it is not apples to apples or oranges to oranges, often we compare ourselves as a grape to the other person being a watermelon. Kinda like comparing a Jeep to a Lexus, they are meant for different things. They may both be four wheel drive but they can't go to the same places. They ride different down the rode and belong on different roads. Their unique design and purpose makes them best for different drivers.
4. What advantage do I have to try and be someone else? God created each of us unique and able to do what he has placed in us to do. Why don't you be the BEST you that you can be. Develop YOU and your skills and abilities.

# OPO's

What are OPO's?

## Other People's Opinions

Everyone has an \_\_\_\_\_.

**You** have an opinion.

Do you let other people's opinions \_\_\_\_\_ you?

Whose opinion do you let carry \_\_\_\_\_ in your life?

Have you let other people's opinions determine the \_\_\_\_\_ of your life?

Whose opinion?

Usually \_\_\_\_\_ friends opinions are the ones that are listened to the most.

What is the \_\_\_\_\_ of your friends?

Do they have a right to speak into your life?

Are they credible?

First: Other people are **going to speak!**

Second: **Not everyone who speaks** should be given **authority** in your life.

Third: Not **EVERYONE** has a **RIGHT** to speak into your life.

**You** get to **control** who speaks into your life.

Don't be someone else's \_\_\_\_\_.

One last thing on this subject.

**Show me your friends and I'll show you your future.**

"Do not be misled, bad company corrupts good character" 1 Corinthians 15:33

A trusted friend is incredibly \_\_\_\_\_ because when they speak into your life it is with your best interest at heart.

Develop trusted relationships.

Answers: Opinion, Influence, Weight, Outcome, Close, Character, Experiment, Valuable



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Alignment

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The Power of Unity

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# Managing Strategies

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A,B,C Priorities and Delegation

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## Going Wider and Deeper

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Longevity: Three, Seven and Ten Year Markers

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# Developing Excellence

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People, Systems and Yourself



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Family

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The Power of Appointment