

1-1-2018

God With/In: Heal the World. Sing the Good News

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Recommended Citation

Zentz-Alo, Amanda, "God With/In: Heal the World. Sing the Good News" (2018). *Doctor of Ministry*. 242.
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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

GOD WITH/IN
HEAL THE WORLD. SING THE GOOD NEWS

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

FEBRUARY 2018

Portland Seminary
George Fox University
Portland, Oregon

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

DMin Dissertation

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the Dissertation Committee on February 19, 2018
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To Leslie for the invitation to her Confirmation celebration that Sunday morning in the summer of 1996. To Chaplain Mark Radecke and the students who attended Tuesday Night Watch at Susquehanna University in 1996—2000. To all of those who nudged me along the way to the waters of grace in the baptismal font, this crazy beautiful life of faith, and the belief that together we can bring the kingdom of God one step closer each day.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is impossible to adequately thank the dozens of individuals and organizations that made this project, both the written dissertation and the curriculum artifact, possible. Just as healing requires community to be complete, this project was created through the support of a multitude of communities.

My family and friends have stood alongside me through the many difficult nights and long days. I cannot imagine making it through this endeavor without their patient support. In particular I would like to recognize Tristian, Jenn, Kelle, Denise, Mom, Pop, and Laura for your steadfast support and generous abundance of love. I would also like to thank the Board of Connected for their steadfast prayers on my behalf, even when I was absent. These gentlemen are the very expression of grace and love and I am overwhelmed by their kindness.

It is a distinct honor to serve at Central Lutheran Church in Portland, Oregon. This congregation accepted my desire to step into this degree program very early in our relationship together. Their support and belief in my work has served as an inspiration to keep going and not give up. Their steadfastness has shown me the beauty of God's work through the church in the world. The faithfulness of my supportive staff has buoyed me in time of challenge. I give thanks everyday for the blessing of being the Pastor at Central.

To the skaters and many members of the Women's Flat Track Derby Association (WFTDA) Roller Derby community, I pray that this work will honor their gifts to me. I want to thank Biggie and Bait for the foundation of derby they gifted by welcoming me to Skagit Valley Roller Derby. I want to thank my derby wives, Xyphoid Mary and Shell Fire, for their cheerleading and heckling to push me to be my best. To Slow Loris, Tyger

Bomb, Lioness, Knitsugi, Sui Jennaris, Gravitatem Leviosa, Agent Meow, Wrathmatica, Debbie Downedher, Slamrox, Whippet Good, Evil Regal, Riot Gere, Double DeeSaster, Cheery Bomb, and the many derby folks who have shared their hearts, their stories, their trust, and their pain; there are no words to thank them enough.

The cohort members in this program have been an invaluable source of wisdom and courage. I thank them for their laughter, love, and shared joy of learning to preach the story together. Leonard Sweet, Lori Wagner, and David McDonald each deserve recognition for the hours and dedication they have given to this project and its growth. Their gift of time and expertise has offered invaluable perspectives that helped to polish this work. I cannot adequately express my gratitude for their investment in my growth.

Jacob McGarry was an incredible partner in the creation of the video curriculum. His gentle affirmation alongside his coaching questions pulled the Spirit through my words onto his film. As the videographer of the curriculum, he listened to my words and created a visually compelling set of classes that far surpassed my hopes and dreams. This project truly could not have become what it is without the willingness of Westwinds Community Church to send Jacob and his willingness to fly to Oregon for a week of filming. There is no way to adequately express my gratitude.

These acknowledgements would not be complete without recognizing the hard and diligent partnership of my editor, Susan DiPiazza. Her willing heart to challenge my desperate need to use em dashes and ellipses in my writing helped me to move from writing sermons to writing a dissertation. Her excitement and critique of this work both inspires it and makes it better. She is a gifted partner in creation and I am ever thankful

for her patience, wisdom, and countless hours. Her belief in me and the claims that I am making gave me the courage to believe in myself.

Without these individuals, and so many more, this project would not exist. I give thanks for each of these people and communities. I pray that the Spirit will use this writing and this curriculum to the glory of God.

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PREFACE

I would never in a million years have considered myself an evangelist. It was shocking to hear an elder member of my congregation tell her daughter, “Do you know what she does in Roller Derby? It’s like a mission! She’s like a missionary to the derby people!” The word “missionary” is filled with hundreds of years of baggage. Some of it is hopeful, but much of it is filled with descriptions of outside influencers erasing native cultures and ignoring the hearts and desires of the cultures that missionaries have entered. In an era when the effects of colonization are being discussed as problematic and damaging, the baggage that comes with the idea of being a missionary to the derby community has taken years of prayer and studying to reconcile.

This research has given a new framework to understand evangelism as a whole. My hope is that this project can be a strong foundation to a living example of nudging people to experience God in their midst. With illustrations from within the roller derby community, among whom many still hold too much hurt from Christians to form any outright relationship with Jesus, I hope that others who serve the fringes can see the validity and importance of their ministries even as we reclaim the word evangelism from negative associations and return it being experienced as good news.

A dear friend of mine, Dr. Linda Borecki, has accompanied me along this journey. Every time we meet to discuss my dissertation at some point she says, “What you do is point out Jesus to people. That is what you do. You show people Jesus all around them. That’s what you should teach people.” It makes sense when I read, “Nudgers need to worry less about doing evangelism, or getting evangelism done, than

about being with Jesus. Jesus acts on us. You don't need to do anything. Just being around him acts on us. And sets us free, to be.”¹

This research, and this curriculum, is a prayer that somehow we may find ways to live our faith in the world in such a way that healing flourishes and the joy of faith is found by those who seek it.

¹ Leonard Sweet, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010), 135.

ABSTRACT

Historical methods of evangelism are no longer working in North America. As religion declines among younger generations, Christians look at our methods and venture into a new way of living God's good news in the world.

Section One looks at the decline of evangelism's effectiveness in North America. With an eye towards the healing of Jesus, the roots of evangelism are explored. Contrasted with these roots are the techniques that evolved after the legalization of Christianity under Constantine's Empire. A domineering evangelism arrived in North America alongside of Christopher Columbus as a form of "power over" instead of as healing good news. Evangelism had become a bad news tool instead of a good news song.

Section Two discusses two contemporary evangelism strategies; presentational evangelism and conversational evangelism. Each of these utilizes specific techniques to tell the story of Jesus to non-believers in order to elicit a conversion. This section outlines the techniques and recognizes the limitations of these strategies.

Section Three offers the solution for a different evangelism; Nudge Evangelism. The solution lifts up the centrality of healing as a measurement and motivator for new believers. Compared to modern denominational Christianity, flat track roller derby is then highlighted as a group that shows healing and is growing within the same years as the church's decline. Derby growth is especially evident with those under the age of 40, the group that has had the largest decrease in participation in religious life throughout the same years. To return to participating in the good news song, the Christian method of engagement needs to shift. To facilitate the church in making this shift a new curriculum,

“God With/In: Heal the World. Sing the Good News.” has been created to help believers practice singing the good news exactly where they are among people they love.

SECTION 1:

THE PROBLEM

When Jesus' good news song is experienced in a way that conflicts with the heart of the song itself, when it lacks integrity, people walk away and ultimately discount Jesus' life of healing and God's salvation.

Interlude #1

There comes this moment about an hour after someone has met me and we've been having engaging conversation. Often times we're roller skating in circles and I'm skating backwards talking with them and they get this quizzical look in their eyes. "What do you do?" The other skaters in the pack smirk a little and laugh as I fumble for a moment and then out myself. "I'm a pastor." "Oh!" Then there are a few general pathways forward in the conversation at that point. A small percentage of the time it is completely dropped and never comes up again. Some of the time the next twenty to thirty minutes is spent listening as the skater unravels her faith history and then begins to ask questions. The questions are never the same twice and range from angry and pointed to vague and esoteric. Much of the time the conversation makes a natural turn back to skating and everyone moves on. Listening has happened, a new Facebook friend has been made, and a relationship has been formed where our life's songs begin to mingle one with another.

Then there comes a day when something happens. A friend unexpectedly dies or is diagnosed with cancer. A holiday comes up and parents are in from out of town expecting a Christmas Eve worship service. A class assignment digs up questions of theology. That's when it happens. The Facebook Messenger dings and on the other side of the chat window is a derby girl with "Just a quick question – you were the only person I could think of to ask . . ." Slowly, gently, hours or maybe even years later, the opportunity to point to the amazing gift of God's love working in her life opens itself up.

It begins with a murmur, a nudge, a small and non-threatening gesture. Yet, over time, with the help of God, even the smallest seed will grow. The lightest nudge can move mountains. The gentlest humming of the sacred story will blossom into a full chorus.

The Song of Jesus

Pointing to Jesus and how he heals and changes the world is what every Christian is called to do. Whether Christians do it because they feel the need to save souls or if they do it in order to watch others learn that they are saved, loved, and set free for a life of joy and service, the reality is that the Good News of Jesus Christ longs to be sung through the lives of people of faith and others who long to experience it. Unfortunately, evangelism is not doing so great in North America. Leonard Sweet writes,

Evangelism as we know it hasn't worked. Either evangelism is so aggressive you want to get a restraining order, or else evangelism is so restrained you want to call it to order. Our strategies have been spectacularly useless at best,

counterproductive at worst. We have lived through an exodus, but not of the biblical kind.²

Plenty of denominations and groups quote various statistics that show a distinct lack of evangelism happening on a personal level in North America. From Billy Graham's site³ to the Barna Group⁴ to LifeWay research,⁵ all of these groups say that the majority of Christians understand their personal responsibility to "share" the story of Jesus, but the vast majorities of people don't follow through. Few of these statistics seem to have much of the data verifiable with anything beyond conversations and conjecture. However, the general agreement is this: while contemporary Christians believe that the life of Jesus should be shared, far less of them engage in pointing out Jesus in everyday life.

Many of the reports speak of the anxiety of sharing faith. Alvin Reid in his handbook on evangelism posits that perhaps many do not engage in evangelism because of the fear of public speaking, ranked second to the fear of snakes in a Gallup poll.⁶

Yet, what Christians are called to do in life is not to share the faith. What Christians are called to do is to point to Jesus in the God-saturated world around them. Christians are called to live lives so filled with Christ that the good news of God's

² Leonard Sweet, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010), 35.

³ Ross Rhoads, "What is a Witness?," *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association*, June 5, 2006, accessed April 24, 2017, <https://billygraham.org/decision-magazine/june-2006/what-is-a-witness/>.

⁴ "Is Evangelism Going Out of Style?," *Barna Research Releases in Faith & Christianity*, December 17, 2013, accessed April 24, 2017, <https://www.barna.com/research/is-evangelism-going-out-of-style/>.

⁵ Jon D. Wilke, "Churchgoers Believe in Sharing Faith, Most Never Do," *LifeWay*, published 2012, accessed April 24, 2017, <http://www.lifeway.com/article/research-survey-sharing-christ-2012>.

⁶ Alvin Reid, *Sharing Jesus {without freaking out}: Evangelism the Way You Were Born to Do It* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017), 9.

redemption sings out of every action even when they don't say a single word. Christians are called to listen for Jesus and to enter into his song. By turning evangelism into a coercive public speaking assignment Christians have lost the good news of the healing found in Jesus for individuals, communities, and the world. The good news song has been turned into a bad news tool. Now it is time to put down the tool and rediscover the song.

Good News Song

Over and over, a constant refrain flies from the page and echoes into readings and the understanding of the very being of God through Jesus. The refrain comes like a symphony clamoring out through the gospels. Jesus heals. “And the servant was healed in that hour.”⁷ “Her daughter was healed instantly.”⁸ “. . . healed the boy . . .”⁹ “Jesus took him and healed him . . .”¹⁰ “But Jesus said, ‘No more of this!’ And he touched his ear and healed him.”¹¹ Again and again the gospels show that the daily work of Jesus’ ministry was to teach about the kingdom of God, to preach words of hope and peace, and to heal the sick and the lame. Whether it was through exorcism, restoration of sight, healing leprosy, or even bringing people back from death itself; Jesus healed people and restored communities. It was a cornerstone of how he lived out his calling and how God was glorified through his presence on the earth. Healing drew people to Jesus in droves.

⁷ Mt 8:13b NRSV.

⁸ Mt 15:28b NRSV.

⁹ Lk 9:42 NRSV.

¹⁰ Lk 14:4 NRSV.

¹¹ Lk 22:51 NRSV.

People followed him to deserted places, tracked him down across waterways and highways, and tore down the rafters to get to him and his healing. The good news of Jesus entered into the world through his healing hands. As the church grew following the Ascension of Christ, healing continued to be central to bringing new people into the life of faith.

Jesus and Healing

. . . Sometimes it is forgotten that medicine owes its greatest debt not to Hippocrates, but to Jesus. It was the humble Galilean who more than any other figure in history bequeathed to the healing arts their essential meaning and spirit . . . Physicians would do well to remind themselves that without His spirit, medicine degenerates into depersonalized methodology, and its ethical code becomes a mere legal system. Jesus brings to methods and codes the corrective of love without which true healing is rarely actually possible. The spiritual “Father of Medicine” was not Hippocrates of the island of Cos, but Jesus of the town of Nazareth!¹²

It is not an idealistic or a naïve reading that finds in the Gospels of the New Testament a clear message of the healing work of Jesus Christ during his ministry on earth. Careful examinations of the scripture show that each of the Gospel authors spends a strong percentage of their narrative description of Christ’s ministry on his healing work.¹³ While counting the precise number of events becomes difficult and varies from scholar to scholar based upon various definitions,¹⁴ Morton T. Kelsey makes an argument

¹² Jack W. Provonsha, M.D., “The Healing Christ,” *Current Medical Digest* (December 1959): 3, quoted in Morton T. Kelsey, *Healing and Christianity: In Ancient Thought and Modern Times* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 52.

¹³ John Wilkinson, *The Bible and Healing: A Medical and Theological Commentary* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Handsel Press, 1998), 65.

¹⁴ Wilkinson posits “a total of thirty-eight accounts of healing by Jesus recorded in the gospels. Twenty-six of these are concerned with individual sick people . . . and twelve with the healing of groups . . .

that “Nearly one-fifth of the entire Gospels is devoted to Jesus’ healing and the discussions occasioned by it. Except for miracles in general, this is by far the greatest emphasis given to any one kind of experience in the narrative.”¹⁵

While volumes can be written on the argument about the veracity of the miraculous claims in the New Testament and their historical authenticity¹⁶, the pertinent information for the line of inquiry I am following is to recognize that healing is a heartbeat in the center of Jesus’ public ministry. He was someone who offered more than cures for ailments. He was a healer. The scripture tells stories of the gathering of large communities who followed this man for his healing gifts.¹⁷ The story tells of a woman who risks everything, just to touch the garment of Jesus to find her own healing.¹⁸ As much as the modern critique may wish to ignore or discredit or simply explain away the miraculous, the scripture remains as a testament to the holistic healing gifts of God through Jesus.

How did Jesus offer his healing? “His way was to bring people into a faith relationship to God by the various methods of touching, speaking commands, compassion, and forgiveness, so that the power of the living God might break through

.” (Wilkinson, 69.) In his book, Kelsey references verse counts and writes in his notes on page 54, “Out of 3779 verses in the four Gospels, 727 relate specifically to the healing of physical and mental illness and resurrection of the dead. In addition there are 165 verses that deal in general with eternal life, and also 31 general references to miracles that include healing.”

¹⁵ Kelsey, 54.

¹⁶ See Craig S. Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*, vol 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011). This two volume accounting of his research on the experience of miracles, including healings, in both ancient and modern times addresses an amazing amount of the material found in other work on this topic. On pages 764 – 765, he concludes “one should not a priori reject the possibility of eyewitness testimony behind reports of cures in the Gospel and Acts; . . . I would also argue that scholars need not rule out the possibility of divine activity in all such claims. . .”

¹⁷ Mt 12:15-16; Mk 7:31-37; Lk 7:18-23.

¹⁸ Mt 9:20-22; Mk 5:25-34; Lk 8:43-48.

upon them and restore them.”¹⁹ Jesus touched the untouchable. He spent time among the outcasts and those deemed unworthy. He made friends with the friendless and in breaking down these barriers he brought healing with him wherever he went. “The obvious implication of all this is that it is a good thing to heal human beings – important enough so that ritual laws should not stand in the way . . . You will also note that this was independent of whether the man was good or bad, rich or poor. These questions were not found here. Healing, per se, was good.”²⁰ Jesus restored people to wholeness. He restored people to wholeness of body, mind, and community throughout his entire ministry.

The power of Christ’s healing is not only the freedom from an illness or infirmity. Often the power of the healing comes in the restoration of the individual at hand to the life of the community. The gospels show the isolation and the resulting desperation of those who find themselves ill or outcast. A strong example of this is the story of the paralytic in the fifth chapter of John’s gospel.²¹ It is not only that the man has spent thirty-eight years ill that elicits the response in Jesus to approach him.

What a Western reader might interpret as a loss of function, namely lameness, an ancient reader would see as a disvalued state of being . . . Thus, the real problem . . . is not their obvious inability to do something, but their disvalued state . . . In John the disvalued state of paralysis was further complicated by the man’s admission to colossal cultural failure: “Sir, I have no one to put me in to the pool when the water is troubled.” (John 5:7) If his kin have abandoned him, that is shameful. If he has made no friends in a culture where survival depends upon making friends, that is a worse shame. Jesus improves both disvalued states, not only by restoring him to wholeness, but also by becoming his first friend.²²

¹⁹ Kelsey, 87-88.

²⁰ Ibid., 91.

²¹ Jn 5:1-18.

²² John J Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 13.

This man had lost all value in his community. Later in his anthropologic study, Pilch continues:

As a friendless outcast, the man was indeed a sinner, an outsider unattached to a group. He may have been sick, but he was also ill. This means that he may well indeed have had a genuine, physical problem, perhaps even a handicap. But bereft of group-attachment of any kind (neither family nor friends, as the text implies), his life in collectivistic society has lost its meaning. Illness is the loss of meaning in one's life. Healing restores meaning, all the time, infallibly.²³

A central part of the work of Christ was to bring meaning back into the life of God's people. Jesus went to those who had no connections and no community and he wove them back into the fabric of society. He gave them voice and restored them to the greater song of God's people where they could contribute and participate fully in the life that God had intended for them. Jesus healed and he sent his disciples to do the same.²⁴

A clear example of this is the story of the Samaritan Woman²⁵ who ran to tell her town of her experience of the man who "told me everything I have ever done." One of the epitomes of outcast and outsider, this woman found healing in the conversation at the well with Christ. In that moment of being seen and known she ran back to her community and invited them into the same experience. Her own healing evident in her reaction, the Samaritan woman's experience brought her entire community to the feet of Jesus, who stayed among them. First they believed because of the woman's words, and then, as the people experienced Jesus in their midst, they came to believe that Jesus was, indeed, "the Savior of the world."²⁶ Healing had happened, community was restored, the good news

²³ Ibid., 130.

²⁴ Mt 10:1; Lk 10; Mk 6:6b – 13.

²⁵ Jn 4:39.

²⁶ Jn 4:42.

song had been sung, and new voices were added to the chorus. This was how Jesus practiced evangelism. This is how Jesus lived, shared, and embodied the good news.

Yet, when modern North American people think of the word “evangelism” some are more apt to think of street corner preachers proclaiming doom, door knockers interrupting afternoons, and televangelists asking for money than people are to think of Christians who love others within communities and point to the healing acts of Jesus within everyday lives. For those outside of the church, the very people evangelists would most want to speak with, the term can be heard as intrusive, colonial, overbearing, and pretentious.

Those connotations are not where the word began. The origin of the term evangelism holds within it an important concept that is lost when the only focus of evaluation is on “butts and bucks.”²⁷ Worship service attendance and money coming into the offering plate is a poor metric of measuring success of changing hearts and healing communities. The word evangelism comes from the Greek “εὐαγγέλιον” or euaggelion which has been translated as the “good news of the coming Messiah.”²⁸ However, there is another picture and action that can be understood from the word euaggelion that pre-dates Christianity.²⁹ This word is not exclusively about the arrival of our Messiah who died and rose from the dead and brings us salvation. In fact, the historical use of the word gives a connotation of the end of a battle and the victorious reign of God, our King.

²⁷ Tim Stewart, “Nickels and Noses,” *Dictionary of Christianese*, February 15, 2016, accessed April 21, 2017, <http://www.dictionaryofchristianese.com/nickels-and-noses/>.

²⁸ “2098. euaggelion,” *Bible Hub*, accessed April 21, 2017, <http://biblehub.com/greek/2098.htm>.

²⁹ Glen Davis, “Pre-Christian Uses of ‘Gospel,’” *Glen Davis*, February 25, 2010, accessed April 21, 2017, <http://glenandpaula.com/wordpress/archives/2010/02/25/pre-christian-uses-of-gospel>.

Dr. Michael Horton teaches about the word gospel and explains its roots in military history.³⁰ He shares that in times of battle there would be a runner whose responsibility was to carry the news of what was happening on the front lines back to the capital where people were waiting to hear of their fate. Like a newspaper headline announcing victory in Europe on May 8, 1945, the runner would proclaim euaggelion – good news – when the victory had been won. Michael McClymond reiterates this in his writing on the topic:

In its Old Testament sense (as in the Septuagint version of Isaiah 52:7–10) *euaggelizo* evokes a powerful and dramatic image. The city of Jerusalem is at war. The people eagerly await news from the army fighting on their behalf. Sentries stand on the city walls, scanning the horizon for signs of an approaching messenger. At last the long-awaited messenger (the *euaggelistes*) appears on the hills surrounding the city and bears good news. The army has won and their victory is also God's victory: “Your God reigns!” The entire city erupts into celebration.³¹ The word “evangelism,” despite its varied use over time, in its original sense refers to a joyful message of God's gracious and peaceable reign.³²

The runner shouted freedom and hope for those who were living in the shadow of violent death and occupation. Their King had won the battle and would provide for the community safety, healing, and shelter. The good news was not an amorphous opportunity to feel good, increase wealth, or increase social standing. The good news was a real and tangible healing from fear and desperation because the threat of violence, death, and tragedy was removed by a victorious and beneficent ruler. The good news was

³⁰ Michael Horton, “What is the Gospel? by Michael Horton,” (video), published by John Farese, February 15, 2011, accessed April 10, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=caMVMayR690>.

³¹ Note from quoted text: See Gerhard Friedrich, “euaggelizomai . . .,” in Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964) 2:707–737, esp. 708.

³² Michael J McClymond, “Mission and Evangelism,” *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology*: Oxford University Press, December 7, 2010, accessed April 21, 2017, doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195369441.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195369441-e-23.

not the opportunity to have new members to share overwhelming responsibilities or new money to help maintain a building. The good news was the promise of nothing less than the continuation of life itself after a real and present threat of torture, despair, and death. That is the good news that poured out of Mary Magdalene's encounter with Jesus on the first Easter morning. That is the good news Christians are called to sing today in the wider community and in their lives. Jesus has won the greatest battle of all time and through his resurrection and reign communities are healed, pain is relieved, broken relationships can be restored, and the world is set free from sin and doubt and despair. The good news is that death has been conquered by Christ and every human being is loved by a God of grace who poured out his life that the world might see how much stronger love is than violence. This good news changes lives, heals the world, and is the heart of salvation.

In the first centuries of Christianity the good news song of life and hope spread quickly from household to household. The rate of growth, as much as 40% in the first three hundred years,³³ was astonishing for a group that was living under various stages of persecution. The reasons for conversion were as varied in the first centuries as they are now. What stands out about those first centuries is that the story was lived by the community rather than told by professionals trained for the position. McClymond writes, "Witness to Christ was a characteristic of the early Christians' way of life rather than a deliberate, rationalized activity assigned to specialists or plotted out by means of formal

³³ Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (San Francisco: Harper, 1997), 6.

plans and strategies.”³⁴ Simply by living at odds with the surrounding culture, tending to the poor, healing the sick, and refusing to deny their beliefs new members joined the community through their experience of God in their midst. Like Jesus, they followed a path of healing and being a living light of God’s grace, and the good news song grew in strength and power for centuries. But this is not how evangelism continued to be experienced throughout history. Through several key shifts the work of evangelism moved from this good news song sung through a life lived among community to an action shared, spoken, and done to others.

The fourth century saw the first cataclysmic change happen in the faith when Constantine legalized Christianity. As Rodney Clapp states in his book, “Once Christianity was made the official religion of the empire, evangelism became as much a concern of the emperor as of the church. The emperor, seen as ‘imitator of God,’ united in his person both religious and political offices.”³⁵ Beginning at that point the conversion of people into believers was also the conversion of people into citizens of an empire. This alone shifted the role of evangelism from that of a runner singing freedom granted by a loving and loved monarch to that of a controlling empire claiming fealty of conquered subjects.

The next shift worth noting along this line of argument occurred during the 16th century was the Protestant Reformation. So it was in the 1500’s that the Jesuit order of the Roman Catholic Church sent out their members to save the Protestants and win them

³⁴ McClymond,
[http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195369441.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195369441-e-23#ref_oxfordhb-9780195369441-note-586](http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/georgefox.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195369441.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195369441-e-23#ref_oxfordhb-9780195369441-note-586).

³⁵ Rodney Clapp, *A Peculiar People: The Church as Culture in a Post-Christian Society* (Madison, WI: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 159.

back to Catholicism.³⁶ Sent on a mission to save souls back to the church, evangelism moved again from sharing the good news of God's healing with the oppressed to increasing the Christian Empire to eventually saving souls from damnation due to errant theology. These movements have lasted through to the modern age, but with little training, support, or understanding of the consequences of the legacies they carry with them.

The effects of "Constantinian Evangelism," as it is described by Clapp,³⁷ was exemplified by Christopher Columbus who sailed as the Reformation took root.

Columbus wrote of his discovery of the new continent,

I say that if Christendom will find profit among these people, how much more will Spain, to whom the whole country should be subject. Your Highnesses ought not to consent that any stranger should trade here, or put his foot in the country, except Catholic Christians, for this was the beginning and the end of the undertaking; namely, the increase and glory of the Christian religion, and that no one should come to these parts who was not a good Christian.³⁸

The effects of Columbus' journey to increase the empire incurred a price.

Columbus believed that converting the native people would be an easy victory. He writes, "After they understand the advantages, I shall labour to make all these people Christians. They will become so readily, because they have no religion nor idolatry . . ."³⁹ At first the

³⁶ David J. Bosch, *Believing in the Future: Toward a Missiology of Western Culture* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), 29.

³⁷ Clapp, 159.

³⁸ Christopher Columbus and Clements R. Markham, *Journal of Christopher Columbus (During His First Voyage, 1492-93): And Documents Relating to the Voyages of John Cabot and Gaspar Corte Real* (Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2010), https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=CP71189341510001451&context=L&vid=GFOX&search_scope=gfox_alma_su_mmit_primocentral&tab=default_tab&lang=en_USt, accessed April 23, 2017, 91.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

goal was to convert them with love and gentleness, but the use of force was not prohibited. In fact, after it was made clear that some of the indigenous population would not conform to the faith the use of force and punishment in order to bring them under control was promoted over and over again. From the writings of Ramón Pané,⁴⁰ the first friar who accompanied Columbus on his second journey to the Americas, to the writing of Ginés de Sepúlveda, to the writing of Pope Clement VII himself – all promoted the use of force, terror, or punishment in order to bring “salvation” to the barbaric nations and gold and resources to the crown.⁴¹ Luis Rivera quotes Motolinía’s writings, “It is fitting that the holy gospel be preached throughout these lands and those who do not willingly wish to listen to the holy gospel of Jesus Christ, be forced to do so; for here that old proverb is applicable ‘better good by force than bad by one’s will.’”⁴² From the first arrival of Christianity on the shores of the Americas, violence has been linked to Christian conversion. As the empire spread and claimed its subjects Christian faith also spread. Faith and the empire become intrinsically linked to one another and, at their core, were at odds with the healing song of Jesus.

This shift from attracting new Christians by living a life that offers healing through a show of compassion and service to instead using force, coercion, and punishment to create new members of the faith has done Christianity no favors in the

⁴⁰ Ramón Pané, ed. José Juan Arrom, “*Relación Acerca De Las Antigüedades De Los Indios*”: *El Primer Tratado Escrito En América* (México: Siglo XXI Editores, 1974).

⁴¹ Luis N. Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 218-220.

⁴² Rivera, 219. Quoting from Toribio de Benavente known as Motolinía, *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España: Relación de los ritos antiguos, idolatría y sacrificios de los indios de la Nueva España, y de la maravillosa conversión que Dios en ella ha obrado*, Ed. Edmundo O’Gorman (México, D.F.: Porrúa). “Carta a Carlos V”, 203-221.

long run. The shift has given a legacy of violent language, techniques, and justification that trickle into the DNA of North American Christianity leading to the present time and styles of attracting new members.

No longer is the runner returning to communities with good news of hope, healing, and freedom. Instead Christians are engaging in battle with outside communities to save them from beliefs that are deemed inappropriate. These precedents that are unwittingly carried damage the message of Jesus and counter his way of healing and the message of God's salvation.

Bad News Tool

Since the time of Christopher Columbus, mission and evangelism in the Americas have been tied up with the ideas of control and conquest. The inevitable result of this kind of conversion is fear, pain, resentment, frustration, and eventual disconnection. Five hundred years later, at the turn of the twenty-first century, results of this legacy with the steady decrease of participation in Christianity in North America are being identified.⁴³

In May of 2015 the Pew Research Center published a report that confirmed what had already been the hot topic of conversation around the religious water cooler for years. Across the board the number of adults taking part in religious activities had markedly decreased. While the study showed that the United States was projected to continue to be a primarily religious and predominantly Christian nation, it also showed a definitive downward trend in religious participation.

⁴³ Pew Research Center, "America's Changing Religious Landscape," May 12, 2015, accessed September 7, 2015, <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2015/05/RLS-08-26-full-report.pdf>.

But the major new survey of more than 35,000 Americans by the Pew Research Center finds that the percentage of adults (ages 18 and older) who describe themselves as Christians has dropped by nearly eight percentage points in just seven years, from 78.4% in an equally massive Pew Research survey in 2007 to 70.6% in 2014. Over the same period, the percentage of Americans who are religiously unaffiliated – describing themselves as atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular” – has jumped more than six points, from 16.1% to 22.8%.⁴⁴

These statistics are clearly a drop compared to the 40% growth rate experienced in the first centuries of the Christian church.⁴⁵

The five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation and the church hinges at a pivotal time in history.⁴⁶ Now is the time to rediscover the way that Jesus shared the good news of his ministry. A way that re-engages the edges of culture, the outcasts and outsiders. A way that echoes the strategies and lifestyles of the church before Columbus, before the Reformation, before empire, before Constantine. A way that focuses on the healing melody of Jesus’ ministry.

While one could wonder if members of the North American public were simply not interested in belonging to larger organizations, it is interesting to note the incredible surge of participation within alternative community groups within the same years of the Pew Research Center’s study. It is not that people refuse to join into communities. Many North Americans are choosing to not belong to Christian communities.

In his forward to Rowan Williams’ book, Desmond Tutu writes, “Yes, in the midst of the confusion and anxiety and fear, in the time of rabid competitiveness to see

⁴⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁵ Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, 6.

⁴⁶ Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008). In her book, Tickle posits that every 500 years there is a major shift in the religious landscape of Christianity. Now is such a time.

who will own the most, the largest, there is a deep, deep hunger for spiritual things; yes, for God, and we have often let people desperately down through we in the Church offering them less than the best, offering them less than what they really need: God.”⁴⁷

Christianity in North America is experiencing a decrease in participation and belief because the method of sharing the faith that entered our country, particularly as it has evolved over the last 150 years, does not align with the method of welcome embodied by Jesus which is at the heart of the gospel. A desire for integrity paired with skepticism currently rules the discernment of young people in North America. When the way the message is experienced conflicts with the heart of the message itself, when it lacks integrity, people walk away and ultimately discount Jesus’ life of healing and God’s salvation.

Not engaging those who have been harmed, damaged by, frightened of, or are just plain angry at institutional religion with the Good News means not being faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. Perhaps worse, the opportunities for healing, hope, community, and the joy found in knowing and naming the love of God will not reach people who are longing to name that unknown grace in their lives.

⁴⁷ Rowan Williams, *Where God Happens: Discovering Christ in One Another* (Boston, MA: New Seeds, 2005), *viii*. These words were written by Desmond Tutu.

SECTION 2:

OTHER PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Interlude #2

Dust covered my shoes as I hid in the shade inside the ten foot by ten foot booth on the festival grounds. The morning had begun with the giant parade, thousands of people gathered from all over the region to line the streets as dozens of groups marched in rainbow festooned joy. Several dozen Lutherans had attended and I had soaked up the opportunity to skate through the city streets alongside of them, joyfully waving and giving high fives. At the end of the parade I returned to staffing our “Sacred Space” booth; a place where people could come and experience God’s love, a place where they could come and be heard as they shared their stories.

It was a warm year at Portland’s Pride festival a few days after the Pulse Night Club massacre in Orlando, Florida in 2016. The timbre of the festival was slightly different as the community consoled one another and looked for places of hope and healing. The booth was a place of shade, peace, and glitter.

A single skater came by, hot and slightly weary from skating in the parade and then carrying heavy gear around the dusty festival grounds. She asked if she could set her gear down and I responded, “Absolutely, you can store your gear here for a few!” Then another skater arrived. And another. The booth was filled with five or more skaters, all resting from the heat and dust. Names were shared. Laughter at coming to see Pr. FeeNix.

Water was received. Stories about faith connections, and the lack of them, trickled out among them.

In contemporary evangelism, the expected evangelism tract would say to swing into full gear to tell them the story of Jesus and to win them to the faith. But conversion narratives would have had nothing to do with hearing their stories, healing their aching hearts, and giving them water to drink. Evangelism tracts would have had nothing to do with hearing the song of God humming through their lives. Guided and manipulated conversation would not have led to coffee shop meetings, skating confessionals, or yarn shop laughter laced with wedding plans and invitations of accompaniment.

In that booth the good news song hummed and thrummed in the distinct absence of the tools of the past.

Contemporary North American Evangelism Strategies

Solving the problem of the loss of membership in North American Christian churches is not a unique goal. As this challenge has arisen there have been plenty of suggestions on how to revise and revamp membership drives and growth in congregations. The problem with these responses is that they focus on convincing and cajoling people outside of their own communities to join into an established tradition. They continue to believe that evangelism is about telling the good news to other people who have not yet experienced God. They fail to highlight the presence of God already infusing the world outside of established churches and spend far more time talking about their denominational interpretation of God than listening for the healing song of Jesus already at work within communities outside of congregational identification.

This section will examine two other major modern evangelism strategies that are seeking to address the loss of membership in congregations in North America. From the very beginning, the premise of these arguments starts with a problematic belief that God is not already with and among those who are not attending organized congregations. Many contemporary books on evangelism call those outside of organized religion the “lost”⁴⁸ and this terminology perpetuates unhelpful dynamics that are exacerbated by historic baggage attached to evangelism in this country. While the term has a basis in the scriptures,⁴⁹ the cultural background has so shifted from the time of Christ as to create entirely different understandings. By viewing those outside of organized Christianity as lost and in need of saving by Christian hands, there is a clear divide created between an “us” and a “them.” This divide sets up alternative methodologies with a false dichotomy. Viewing entire communities as “other” when there is no “other” in the eyes of Christ starts these theories on an unstable foundation that has begun to erode.

Ron Bennett describes some of the fallout of viewing people as lost in his modern essay on evangelism. He writes that his early evangelism training prepped him to invade “Satan’s territory” in order to battle for the lost souls. He writes, “. . . sometimes we would casually refer to lost people as the enemy whom we were out to capture. The lost

⁴⁸ Alvin Reid, *Evangelism Handbook: Biblical, Spiritual, Intentional, Missional* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2009), 64; David Geisler and Norman Geisler, *Conversational Evangelism: Connecting with People to Share Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2009), 17.

⁴⁹ Luke 19:10, in particular, uses this term to speak of someone coming to faith who was previously “lost.” Many of the other references are more metaphorical, such as the Parable of the Lost Sheep found in Matthew and Luke. In the Priestly Prayer of the Gospel of John we hear Jesus giving thanks that “not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled.” (Jn 17:12) Perhaps the most commonly known reference is the parable of the Prodigal Son which closes chapter 15 with verse 32, “But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.”

were rebels to be conquered.”⁵⁰ Creating an inherent us vs. them dynamic,⁵¹ this concept of evangelism feels more like the invading army has sent their own messenger calling out, “Good news! We have won and you will now live under our control!” A far cry from the freedom and joy called out in Isaiah 52 or lived through the life of the woman of Samaria.

This section will look at the predominate modern North American styles of evangelism; presentational evangelism culminating in confessional prayer and conversational engagement as described by key contemporary evangelists. Each of these propose a solution to the loss of membership in North America, but they inherently fall short because they begin with this false belief that evangelists must bring Jesus to those who are outside of the faith rather than recognizing Jesus is already with and working through everyone.

Presentational Evangelism

Alvin Reid explains the history of presentational evangelism in North America when he writes,

By presentational evangelism I mean an approach that focused on the lowest common denominator (a key attitude in discipleship for decades), teaching the simplest form of something — in this case witnessing — to the largest number of people. From Campus Crusade’s Life courses to the SBC’s Lay Evangelism

⁵⁰ Ron Bennett, “Authentic Church-Based Evangelism in a Relational Age,” in *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns*, edited by D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 280.

⁵¹ Mark Driscoll, *The Radical Reformation: Reaching Out Without Selling Out* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004). To see the inherent effects of this kind of treatment of those outside of the church, Mark Driscoll’s book “The Radical Reformation” insults, berates, discounts, and shames those who do not agree with his theology or belief system. It is precisely that kind of treatment that closes doors to sharing good news.

Schools (1970s), to Evangelism Explosion and Continuing Witness Training, to more recent FAITH evangelism (among others), multitudes of believers have been taught a presentation to share with the lost. And many, many have come to faith through them.⁵²

These programs focus on creating opportunities to make presentations to individuals outside of Christianity. With gospel tracts available⁵³ along with dollar bill sized conversation tip sheets,⁵⁴ these presentations are focused on talking to the outsider and telling them the gospel story. These tools give specific guidelines for telling the story, taking the presenters through various steps often culminating in what is referred to as the “sinner’s prayer.”⁵⁵

Ronald Johnson describes this process in the following manner:

The normal pattern is to first secure a person who will listen to what you say. Sometimes this may be done by church members going door-to-door in a neighborhood during an organized soul-winning visitation night or stopping people on the street during the course of the day or even talking to a person in the seat next to you on an airplane.

Once a person’s attention is secured, then the gospel message or “plan of salvation” is told to the person in a rather matter-of-fact way, often using a memorized presentation or gospel tract or marked New Testament. Finally, the person is asked to make a response to what he has heard, usually in the form of praying a model prayer. Generally, if the person agrees to pray a prayer along

⁵² Alvin Reid, “Gospel Presentations or Conversations?,” *Alvin Reid* (blog), March 12, 2013, accessed October 27, 2017, <http://alvinreid.com/gospel-presentations-or-conversations/>.

⁵³ Evangelism Explosion International offers multiple gospel tracts in various languages at <https://store.evangelismexplosion.org/products.aspx?CategoryID=64>.

⁵⁴ Christian Witnessing offers the “witnessing guide” at <http://www.christianwitnessingtools.com/witnessing-guide--download.html>.

⁵⁵ Paul Harrison Chitwood, “The Sinner’s Prayer: An Historical and Theological Analysis,” PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001, accessed October 30, 2017, <http://faithsaves.net/the-sinners-prayer/>. In his dissertation, Paul Chitwood examines and explores the historical and theological roots of the Sinner’s Prayer. He raises concerns at the method of its use and possible ethical challenges when used as a form of coercion. He voices concerns about the long term efficacy of the prayer and potential pitfalls of resting salvation upon a prayer, instead of the grace of Christ. As the culmination of a method of evangelism, his work brings to light several of the challenges of presentational evangelism.

with the witness, the assumption is made that the listener has professed his faith in Christ.⁵⁶

Christian Witnessing's program offers five steps and a summary to lead someone to belief in Jesus. Christian Witnessing encourages this to be a conversation; however, there are no instructions on how to listen or recognize the actions of God in the other person's life previous to this point. The memorized script leaves little room for direct interaction.⁵⁷ Campus Crusade's 4 Laws have been polished into a clear enough presentation that it is possible for website visitors to read through the material online⁵⁸ and accept Jesus without direct interaction. Follow up pathways are suggested, but the presentation of the material stands alone.

Presentational Evangelism holds fast to the belief that outsiders need to be told the story of Jesus in order to find salvation. Relationships can be viewed as tools to an end, conversations as pathways to a completed task. People outside of the church spend much more time mocking presentational evangelists than giving their words any real attention. The method betrays the message, doors are closed, and people walk away.

Conversational Evangelism

David and Norman Geisler posit that conversations with those outside of the church community are the primary entry points into sharing faith in our modern context. The

⁵⁶ Ronald W. Johnson, *How Will They Hear If We Don't Listen?: The Vital Role of Listening in Preaching and Personal Evangelism* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994). 33.

⁵⁷ "Discussing the Gospel With Your Friends: 5 Talking Points," Christian Witnessing, accessed October 28, 2017, <http://www.christianwitnessingtools.com/make-it-a-conversation-basic-message-expanded.html>.

⁵⁸ Bill Bright, "Would You Like to Know God Personally?," 4Laws.com, accessed October 28, 2017, <http://www.4laws.com/laws/englishkqp/default.htm>.

authors lift up conversations with goals, but are also open to the idea of planting seeds in more casual conversations. The Geislars go so far as to call their new method “conversational pre-evangelism.”⁵⁹ Several times in the book it is admitted that the message of Christianity is perceived in the current culture as arrogant and intolerant.⁶⁰ In order to continue to achieve the mission of conversion the authors admit that previous methods need to be “repackaged to be more effective.”⁶¹ The book recommends the techniques of conversational pre-evangelism, which are defined as “*tilling the soil of people’s minds and hearts to help them be more willing to listen to the truth* (1Corinthians 3:6).”⁶² What the Geislars miss throughout the book is a key component. Room and space is given for conversion to happen through the actions of several evangelists and no longer is the emphasis on immediate results in the form of the sinner’s prayer of presentational evangelism. However, the technique does not instruct evangelists to love the people they are talking to; to see God already at work in the lives of their subject. The authors teach, not to see God through the neighbor, but to listen just enough to formulate an argument to persuade a change in opinions, worldviews, and understandings. Readers are never encouraged to fall in love with the community outside of the church or to see God is already present. Instead, readers are taught to build bridges in order to bring people to Jesus.⁶³ The summary of conversational pre-evangelism work can be found in the book’s Appendices which chart out a pathway to conversion. Each

⁵⁹ Geisler and Geisler, 25.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 21.

⁶¹ Ibid., 25.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 138.

step of the conversations is carefully outlined, not for deep listening, but in order to move the subject to the next step that will culminate in confession. While it appears to be a gentler way to coax someone to accept the good news, it is just one more tool being proposed. The good news song already wrapping the life of the person in discussion is not considered.

Alvin Reid's work also encourages Christian believers to focus on using conversations as the starting point to then present the gospel story. He works to make a clear distinction between making a "presentation" vs engaging in "conversation."⁶⁴ He understands that reaching contemporary non-church attending individuals is well done when beginning from their point of view, but he continues to use language that distinctly keeps those he is reaching out to as outsiders needing to be led to Jesus by someone who already professes belief. "I led a young lady named Allie to Christ. . ."⁶⁵ ". . . I had the honor of leading a lady to Christ whom I met with a friend at a coffee shop."⁶⁶ His handbook and larger theological book may choose to use conversation instead of presentation as a methodology, but their goal remains the same: give specific tools to believers in order to turn the conversation to specific questions and profession of belief in Christ.⁶⁷

Populations who have been harmed by the church see right through to the buried agenda and write off Christianity all the more for the attempted manipulation. Instead of

⁶⁴ Reid, *Sharing Jesus*, 44.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 45.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 42.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 41-42.

hearing the good news song about a God of great love that is already intertwined with their own life's melody, they experience tools being used against them and leave the conversation unconvinced of Jesus' song.

Time for Change

In an essay written in 1968, Reuel Howe advocates for a different style of evangelism that stepped away from the common presentational model and instead encouraged the evangelist to enter into relationship with those outside of the faith. He encourages this new style of evangelist to learn how to read the signs of the times and the people with whom they are speaking. He dares the evangelist to allow ambiguity within the relationship and even entreats them to allow the other person to open the conversation. He encourages ecumenism, and lay involvement. He reminds all who wish to live in this new way that it must be their lives that reflect the gospel within their own communities. "In them must the gospel be embodied; through them God will make his appeal. . ."⁶⁸ The roots of conversational evangelism may find their way back to these kinds of words, but they stop short of Howe's proclamation of embodiment. These words were written almost half a century ago, yet they call to a method of evangelism that hearkens back to Jesus' good news song.

Just as the church grew because of the example of life of the Christians within the first three hundred years, so must modern Christians learn how to embody the faith

⁶⁸ Reuel Howe, "Evangelism," *Pastoral Psychology* 19, no. 6 (1968): 10-15, accessed April 21, 2017, https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN_springer_jour10.1007/BF01816279&context=PC&vid=GFOX&search_scope=gfox_alma_summit_primocentral&tab=default_tab&lang=en_US.

enough that the Gospel might come again to be experienced as deeply good news. It is clear that the history of evangelism is filled with pain and struggle. To ignore that is to ignore one of the reasons why so many are walking away from the church in the modern time. To dismiss this history is to dismiss part of the reason why many members of the church hold such discomfort with the idea of sharing their faith and choose not to do so on a regular basis. If the church is to find a way to join the good news song of Jesus Christ in today's world, there must be a different way than has historically occurred in North America. A new way begins with a simple nudge.⁶⁹ With a nudge, with patience, with time, with trust, and by using the senses and embodying faith modern Christians in North America can find ways to participate in the singing Jesus' Good News song.

⁶⁹ Sweet, *Nudge*.

SECTION 3:

THESIS

Interlude #3

I heard the ping of Facebook Messenger at eleven at night when I was heading into my day off. I was tired and weary from preparing for Holy Week. The ping was from a skater. Someone I had skated with maybe two times in total. She came to the first Easter Vigil Egg Hunt I held at Central three years earlier because I had put the invitation out on the page of the derby community. Her two year old daughter had a milk allergy and I had quickly found her gummy treats to replace the chocolates hidden in her eggs. The next year I implemented a prize table instead of stuffed eggs, just in case she came again, so that there would be plenty of prizes for a three year old who couldn't eat chocolate and might begin remembering her experience of inclusion or exclusion within church walls. It was the only day of the year they stepped in my church, and they came every year for three years. I wasn't expecting to hear from her, but wasn't surprised as the hunt was coming up over the following weekend.

“Hey, do you have a minute?” “Sure, of course!” “We moved to Utah and my daughter is hearing from her friends how fun it is to be Mormon, and I'm really uncomfortable with that. How do I address it?” Shocked and surprised, I shut up and listened.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Ibid., 111.

For the next hour we talked about God, the differences between Christianity and Mormon faith, her admittance that she hadn't really started looking for a church community, and her hopes and fears for her daughter. She told me how her daughter told her friends about "Pr. Manda who wears bunny ears!" I promised her, if her daughter ever wanted to talk to me, we could certainly do a video chat as a family. We joked about raising headstrong girls. She logged off, comforted, consoled, trusting God's presence with her daughter as they negotiated their way in a new world.

Afterwards I sat at my desk, my heart filled and overwhelmed that I got to love these people, even though they were far away. I do not know if they will find a faith community in which to participate. I do not know if they will ever contact me again. I know that we sat together, across the miles, and saw the God-moment through her daughter's eyes who remembered that she was welcomed, loved, and seen as important by God's people at least once in her lifetime. It was a holy nudge. It was deeply Good News.

God With/In

Where can I go from your spirit?
 Or where can I flee from your presence?
 If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
 if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
 If I take the wings of the morning
 and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
 even there your hand shall lead me,
 and your right hand shall hold me fast.⁷¹

⁷¹ Ps 139:7-10, NRSV.

In his book, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There*, Leonard Sweet deftly shifts the perspective of how Christians can look into the world. Changing the focus away from presentation to engagement, Sweet redefines evangelism for the contemporary culture. He uses the term “nudge” for the word evangelism and the term “nudgers” for those pointing to God in the world. Sweet proposes, like the first centuries of Christianity, nudgers are to live life as people of faith knowing that every moment is full of God.⁷² Viewing the world through the eyes of Jesus means seeing God already present throughout the lives of those around you. People are no longer lost. People are no longer “others.” As the psalmist reflects in Psalm 139, God infuses the entire creation and there is nowhere to go where God does not exist. The call is to join in the good news song of God that is in, with, and under every living being. This song calls people to a new life and a new way of being. The goal of Nudge Evangelism is not to persuade others to believe in God. The goal is to revel in revealing the God who's already there.

Nudging occurs through invitation, hope, and healing. A key to being able to offer a nudge is to be in relationship. A Christian who is not in close relationship with the person being nudged is more likely to be pushing, or even launching at a person, rather than joyfully revealing what is already present. Sweet writes:

A nudge happens in proximity. Even the nudges across the Internet or by phone take place in the proximity of relationships. The integrity of a nudge requires that it be welcomed and that it be reciprocal. The purpose of a nudge is to manifest Christ in a moment of mutual knowing, which benefits both the person being

⁷² Leonard Sweet, *Out of the Question... Into the Mystery: Getting Lost in the Godlife Relationship* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2004), 123. “This is how the early Christians dealt with the multiplicity of faiths in the ancient world. They did not blast away at other religions. They simply made the ultimate claim for Jesus as the Son of God with everything that was in them.”

nudged and the nudger. Nudging is not best driven by fear or by some need within the nudger. Nudges are not contrived but are the natural consequence of being with someone in a moment and wishing them to join you in recognizing a God-moment.⁷³

The goal and focus of evangelism changes when Christians shift their understanding from saving people who are lost to revealing the God who is already present. When the goal shifts, people enter into relationships that are authentic and lack agendas. God is recognized everywhere. Evangelism changes from being a tool used to accomplish a task to being a celebration of the salvation received through Jesus Christ. The shift is focus sings the good news song of healing that promises victory over death, sin, and everything that attempts to separate creation from the love of God and new voices are added in every generation.

This shift means that there will not be “winners.” Christians will not “win” people for Christ. Christians will not be “saving” anyone but will instead be messengers, reveling in the good news with those who have already been saved by the one who won the battle over evil centuries ago. Christians will be messengers of the Good News of Jesus Christ to the creation God adores. Christians will celebrate hope among the hopeless and healing among the broken.

The Healing Work of God

As Jesus walked the earth, over and over again people cried out to him for healing. God poured the healing work of Christ into the world through the people, community, and all who came forward and begged for the touch of Jesus. The

⁷³ Sweet, *Nudge*, 29.

communities that held to this healing grew and expanded, bringing life to those who participated. Modern North American culture and church has stepped away from the message of Christ's healing and attempts to explain away the miraculous healings as something unique to the time and space when Jesus walked the earth. Without recognizing the impact that removing healing from the gospel will have, the modern church in North America has stepped away from a key element that gives people the experience of the light of the gospel, faith in God, and whole living. In the fight to cure diseases, healing members and communities receive less and less attention, leaving people seeking to meet this central need of healing and acceptance outside of the Christian tradition. North American Christian faith has lost the core goal of healing the world and living the good news and has become obsessed, instead, with growing its numbers and saving souls from eternal damnation no matter the cost.

Yet the Spirit blows where it will and God's love for this world and its healing is far greater than anything that can be controlled. Indeed, "The whole story of the Bible is God trying to get us to stop self-medicating and submit ourselves for healing."⁷⁴ The story of God is not over.

Throughout North America today there are communities rising up and finding one another that are fulfilling the role of the Christian community. Vibrant with variety and life, these communities are filled with acceptance, welcome, love, support, challenge, and healing. Alternative groups like women's flat track roller derby, CrossFit, and even ultimate Frisbee, are creating spaces where God's kingdom is breaking through. The

⁷⁴ Leonard Sweet, *Me and We: God's New Social Gospel* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 153.

Spirit's work is winding its way through these places and shining spots of light all over the place, opening hearts and creating space for people to experience the good news song of God.

The scriptures show us that God's wish for the world is that it be reconciled and healed.⁷⁵ If the church will not follow the example of Jesus and participate in the healing of the world, the Spirit will find another way among God's people. Believing in God and God's ability to bring healing in the most unexpected ways and places is the embodiment of the good news song and the call for those who would wish to be evangelists.

As explored in the first section of this work, the heartbeat of Jesus' three year public ministry are healing acts; healing acts that become the beginning of evangelism among communities.

Curing & Healing

Ask someone who works in modern medicine if there is a difference between healing and curing and you may be surprised by the answer. A reference to the naiveté of the aspiring medical doctor or first year nurse is referenced, and then stories of a medical system filled with codes and fifteen minute visits can override the conversation.

“Healing” is a term for the uninitiated idealist who has not yet confronted the hard realities of modern medicine in an insurance laden industry. Alternatively, healing is relegated to the “alternative medicine” community and received with various levels of skepticism and fanaticism.

⁷⁵ Jn 3:16-17.

To understand the different connotations of these terms within culture a definition is needed. First, the word “cure” which is what is most often sought for in modern western medicine. When a diagnosis is determined via modern science a treatment is sought that will cure the illness. A spiral fracture of the tibia/fibula can be cured with a surgery that involves titanium plates, rods, and screws. Antibiotics are given to the patient to keep infection at bay and physical therapy is prescribed to rehabilitate atrophied muscles. Within a year the break is declared cured. Pilch, in his writing, states that a cure in Western culture is understood to be “the taking of effective control of a disordered biological and/or psychological process, usually identified as a disease.”⁷⁶ Healing, on the other hand, holds a much more varied definition. Healing is not focused on the singular disease. The entire picture of a life is taken into account and reconciliation and wholeness are sought when healing is the goal. John Wilkinson explains this in his introduction, stating, “If human beings are indivisible entities, as we believe them to be, any disturbance of their health affects them as a whole and if it is to be effective, healing must also extend to the whole of their life and being.”⁷⁷ In the case of a tib/fib spiral fracture, the person with the injury has much more to worry about than the curing of the bones in their body. While bones are mending, even supported by titanium, people still need to make it to work, find food, and care for children and other dependants. Patients will, eventually, face the emotional repercussions of a trauma this substantial. The repercussions may mean a change in activities, plans, passion, and goals. Much of this healing cannot be done in seclusion. Community comes around the patient and helps with

⁷⁶ Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament*, 13.

⁷⁷ Wilkinson, *The Bible and Healing*, 2.

food, transportation, and task completion. Loving community offers spaces of listening for the patient so that the story of the trauma can be told, heard, and honored. A space is created for the injured person to face fears and rebuild courage as they return to the activity that caused the injury or choose to walk away. With loving community, healing comes and the full life that God intended for the individual is, again, embraced.

Church and Healing

In the first centuries, as it grew, the church continued Jesus' ministry of healing people and communities. We read of it throughout Acts as Peter and Paul are both used to heal members of the community around them. (For example, Acts 4:1-5; 5:12-16; 20:7-12.)⁷⁸ History records discussions of healing throughout the years of the early church, and in the discussions of the Church Fathers. Even as the philosophical debates around the separation of body and soul abounded, the early church proclaimed that the body itself and caring for it was an important role as a core tenant of the faith. Indeed, "[the church] continued to see salvation as the redemption of the total man, not just his liberation from the body. . . The value of the body and the saving action of Christ for both body and soul remained a cardinal doctrine of the early church."⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Chris, "Three Examples of Healing in Acts," *BibleGateway Blog*, July 13, 2011, accessed April 25, 2016, <https://www.biblegateway.com/blog/2011/07/three-examples-of-healing-in-acts/>.

⁷⁹ Kelsey, 148.

However, as history continued the belief in miracles from above began to be looked upon with suspicion, and particularly in the Western culture, eventually derision.⁸⁰

When discussing the modern block against the belief of healing, Kelsey writes,

But the real reasons for ignoring the possibility of healing are much deeper . . . Our culture has no place for such experiences. Men feel helpless when confronting them, and theology has no answer. Indeed, Christian thinkers cannot consider experiences of healing today because of the tacit acceptance, philosophically and theologically, of a world view which allows no place for a breakthrough of “divine” power in to the space-time world. Such a breakthrough as healing is simply considered an impossibility.⁸¹

Alongside of this loss of belief in the power of the divine to break into the scientific world has come an increase in autonomy, self-reliance, and a general break down in the community value of experience. Modern North Americans reach out across the internet in mad attempts to connect and find one another, all the while feeling more alone than has been reported in decades. The result of this isolation on physical and mental health across the country has been documented⁸² and continues to receive attention.

Forty-three years ago this trend was already on the radar. Kelsey stated at that time, “. . . today it has become apparent to many people that something is lacking in human life. As more and more persons have sought psychiatric help, with others turning

⁸⁰ In Volume 1 of *Miracles*, Keener comprehensively engages the arguments against miraculous encounters. He spends particular time in Part 2 examining the Enlightenment Period and its effects upon Western understanding. 83-208.

⁸¹ Kelsey, 307-308.

⁸² Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000). A fascinating study of North American culture at the turn of the 21st century, Putnam’s work discusses the difficulties created in our culture due to the loss of connection with community.

to drugs or violence, the awareness has grown that the modern limited view of life cuts man off from something he does need.”⁸³

Just as the paralytic needed more than physical healing,⁸⁴ just as the hemorrhaging woman needed more than for the bleeding to stop,⁸⁵ or the lepers needed their contamination declared clean,⁸⁶ the modern North American culture of suspicion and isolation needs more than just a cure for separation. The culture needs healing. The culture needs the healing of Jesus because through this healing the experience of salvation and the good news song is sung for those who wish to hear.

The Role of Healing and Community

Probably the most important condition the church can provide for healing is the sense of loving community. By this early Christians were known. This sense of belonging, this amazing love, gave the early church so much vitality and made it so much a healing instrument of the Spirit that it became a mark by which Christians could be told from other people. As one French scholar has commented, “If Christians had not had this quality, the world would still be pagan. And the day when this quality is no longer there, the world will be pagan once again.” It is in such fellowship that the relation to God which brings about healing is most often found . . .⁸⁷

When Jesus heals throughout the Gospels, over and over the story of the re-connection to greater communal activity is told. To be healed is to be re-integrated into the functional community and into the Body of Christ. Jesus’ life exemplified this kind of

⁸³ Kelsey, 346.

⁸⁴ Jn 5:1-18.

⁸⁵ Mk 5:25-34.

⁸⁶ Lk 17:11-19.

⁸⁷ Kelsey, 351. Kelsey’s quotation citation: “A. J. Festugière in the *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie* (1961), quoted by E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (1965), p. 138.”

healing. Healing was the first Christian evangelism. The early Christian church modeled it in their work among the sick and impoverished. Indeed, compassion and steadfast work among the sick helped to increase the Early Christian population in the first years of the church.⁸⁸ As Kelsey has pointed out in his quote, many outside of the faith found, not only cures, but healing through the early Christian community and from that healing they experienced faith and salvation. The ones who had been healed joined the movement and the church grew.

An example of the importance of community in healing can be viewed when considering the call of lepers in the gospels to be made clean. Pilch examines the vital importance of the return to community as an understanding of healing in the third chapter of his book. “Exclusion from the community is the chief problem this malady causes. For socio-centric or collectivistic persons (who constitute 80 percent of the contemporary population of the planet and perhaps an even greater percentage in antiquity), this is a major problem.”⁸⁹ Jesus’ healing of the lepers may have had little to do with finding a cure for a skin disease; it had much to do with restoring those who had been removed from loving community back into relationship with other people.

⁸⁸ See the work by Rodney Stark concerning the work of the early Christians among plague victims for more information on this topic. He posits that their increased exposure to the illnesses of the time helped increase their immunity, as well as creating a respect for the Christian God who gave such health to those who adhered to the faith. This brought on many conversions from paganism to Christianity.

⁸⁹ Pilch, 48.

Healing is Salvation

It was never enough for Jesus that someone be simply cured of an illness. “For Jesus, salvation was not victory over one’s enemies or transformation of social structures but healing of mind, body, and spirit; reclamation of relationship; and restoration to community.”⁹⁰ The phenomenon of disconnection from community that plagues North America in the beginning of the 21st century is an issue, not only of isolation and healing. It is an issue of salvation and faith.

In his book, *Me and We: God’s New Social Gospel*, Sweet calls the reader to a world where the obsession of “Me” turns to a restoration of health through the discovery and support of “We.” Restoration of health is not done through the assimilation of individuals, but rather through the true power of God-created community. God-created community does not wipe away individuality, as Jesus deeply recognizes the importance of each created being.⁹¹ Sweet’s writing calls us to recognize God’s desire that people dwell together, in the vast multitude of personalities, desires, beliefs, and experiences that make up a varied population. Sweet calls readers to recognize the deep illnesses infecting society that prohibit people from achieving health, and therefore the life that God intends for the world. Sweet writes, “Terminal illnesses like individualism, racism, consumerism, and environmental degradation bore their way into our being and tear our communities apart.”⁹²

⁹⁰ Sweet, *Me and We*, 12.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 46.

Without strong communities, true healing as offered by Jesus, is hard to come by. North Americans live in a “super-Me, wee-We society”⁹³ chasing for cures and never finding true healing because the key component of community is lacking.

Churches and congregations grow into homogenized groups of people who agree upon action statements and goals, but rarely do the radical work of actually healing. These churches and congregations talk about Jesus, but rarely live the Jesus life.⁹⁴ Where Jesus saw no “other,” Christian communities can be quick to judge, faster to judgment, and fastest to proclaim the necessity of assimilation.⁹⁵ “But Jesus didn’t consider anyone ‘other.’ He didn’t reach out to the outcasts and lepers as others but as brothers and sisters. Jesus never acknowledged a category of Other. Creating a category of Other puts distance between us and others, between us and Jesus, when Jesus wants solidarity . . .”⁹⁶

The words of the French philosopher Festugière about the return of paganism in an age when loving Christian community disappears are coming true in North America at the time of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. In the absence of a church that strives to live the Me/We gospel that Sweet describes, in the absence of healing, in the absence of the good news song, alternative communities rise up to provide the space for the healing work that must be done. Simultaneously, church participation

⁹³ Ibid., 21.

⁹⁴ In an email conversation with Leonard Sweet, he provided the following concise definition of what is meant when referring to the “Jesus Life.” Sweet wrote, “The language of the Scriptures is less Christ being ‘in us’ than our being ‘in Christ.’ To live ‘in Christ’ is to live the Jesus life, to so allow his story to become our story that we become the literal meaning of ‘Christian’—‘little Christs’—and Jesus lives his resurrection life in us and through us.” Leonard Sweet, e-mail message to author, December 27, 2017.

⁹⁵ Sweet, *Me and We*, 29.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 34.

declines as these alternative communities grow in leaps and bounds. The good news song is flourishing and transforming these alternative loving communities, while mainstream North American Christians continue to cling to evangelism tools that are no longer effective. To address the decline of church participation in North America in the twenty-first century Christians must learn how to walk among alternative communities watching for God's song and singing along. This is how we will serve as modern evangelists.

On the Edges

On the edges of North American culture lie those who are not welcome among the mainstream. There is no one single group. Slightly different from the cultural norms, people who are not welcome may be individuals who are LGBTQIA or non-conforming in another way. These individuals may have multi-colored hair, tattoos, and body modifications. They question and they doubt. Many have been told that who they are and what they believe is inherently wrong. Some of these outsiders are homeless. Some are hobos. Some struggle with illness, disease, or addictions. These outsiders are all at the edges of the culture, their behaviors and postures calling out "unclean" to the mainstream. A vocal Christianity, with its focus on purity and adherence to rules, disavows these people in the same way these groups were disavowed when Christ walked the earth. Many have, in response, turned away from Christianity. Lacking an experience of love and welcome from those who follow Jesus, they have turned to paganism, agnosticism, and sometimes atheism. Without the experience of the radical love and welcome that Christ offers, the longing for healing and wholeness pulls outsiders towards

alternative communities. The alternative community that I find myself and my personal ministry serving, outside of the parish, is women's flat track roller derby.

Women's Flat Track Derby Association

The community that gathers around the sport of women's roller derby has experienced tremendous growth from 2003 to 2017. Since the founding of the sport in 2003 it has grown from a single league⁹⁷ based in Austin, Texas to 402 leagues affiliated with the Women's Flat Track Derby Association (WFTDA) alone.⁹⁸ When looking at the growth rate of league affiliations within the WFTDA, it is discovered that it went from a single league in 2003 to 236 leagues in 2013;⁹⁹ roughly doubling the number of participant leagues about every 15 months. While the rate of growth began slowing around 2014, the number above shows that the WFTDA has almost doubled in size again from 2013 levels. This rapid growth in a time traditional organizations are declining is a fascinating trend.

In his book exploring the growth of Christianity in the first centuries, Rodney Stark discusses the traits that send people to new religious groups and gatherings.

⁹⁷ A roller derby league is a local organization made up of regularly practicing skaters and volunteers. They most often organize as a 501(c)3 non-profit. Each league may have several teams. Beginning leagues may apply to become a WFTDA apprentice league when they have 14 regular skaters and hold 2 practices a week. Leagues may also choose to affiliate with United States of America Roller Sports (USARS). These leagues will skate with different rules and share a different insurance group. There are also many unaffiliated leagues around the world, as well as a men's organization and junior level organizations. The WFTDA is the largest and most organized governing structure at this time and, as such, is the basis for the research of this paper.

⁹⁸ Women's Flat Track Derby Association, "Member Leagues," accessed December 26, 2017, <http://wftda.com/leagues>.

⁹⁹ Elizabeth Ashley Thompson, "Bodies as Stories in Women's Flat Track Roller Derby" (MA Thesis, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2013) 10, accessed January 1, 2018, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/fc49/5fa17294d3654354114832d69688d5975260.pdf>.

It is obvious that people do not embrace a new faith if they are content with an older one. New religions must always make their way in the market openings left them by weaknesses in the conventional religion (s) of a society. . . . although sociologists have long believed that people who give their religious affiliation as “none” are primarily secular humanists, considerable recent research shows this not to be the case. Most such people are merely indicating a lack of conviction in a conventional brand of faith, for they are also the group *most* likely to express interest in belief in unconventional mystical, magical, and religious doctrines. For example, “nones” are the group of Americans most willing to accept astrology, yoga, reincarnation, ghosts and the like (Bainbridge and Stark 1980, 1981). Moreover people who report their original religious background as “none” are extremely overrepresented in the ranks of converts to new religious movements (Stark and Bainbridge 1985).¹⁰⁰

Instead of traditional religion, since the birth of modern roller derby at the turn of the 21st century, thousands of women have found themselves claiming “Roller Derby saved my soul!”

When the words “roller derby” are spoken inevitably someone over fifty years old grins, starts throwing elbows around, and talks about Joanie Weston and the Bay Area Bombers. However, these nostalgic memories of roller derby from 1935 – 1973 reflects on a different creation than modern flat-track roller derby which holds such parallels to functional congregational life. The modern WFTDA’s governing philosophy of “by the skaters, for the skaters”¹⁰¹ has created a community of empowerment and healing that

¹⁰⁰ Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 37-38. Referenced citations are: William Sims Bainbridge, and Rodney Stark, “Superstitions: Old and New,” *The Skeptical Inquirer* 4:18-31, 1980.; William Sims Bainbridge, and Rodney Stark, “The Consciousness Reformation Reconsidered,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 20:1-16, 1981.; Rodney Stark, and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

¹⁰¹ Women’s Flat Track Derby Association, “WFTDA Mission Statement,” accessed December 9, 2015, <https://wftda.com/mission>.

lives its motto “Real. Strong. Athletic. Revolutionary.”¹⁰² To understand the difference, one must understand where this community’s story began.

Leo Seltzer and his son, Jerry Seltzer, were the owners and operators of the banked track roller derby exhibitions of the 1930’s through the 1970’s. Created as a form of entertainment, in the Seltzer era, skaters were paid, events of the game were planned, and the goal was to sell seats and entertain audiences. While there is no doubt that 20th century derby was athletic, challenging, and difficult, it was not the grass roots primarily non-profit community that it has become in the 21st century.

Modern flat-track derby was born in the gritty back alley bars of Austin, Texas in 2001.¹⁰³ A group of women came together in those bars and decided to create a new kind of derby that began as exhibition. A group of tattooed, loud mouthed, riotous punk girls gathered together around the well drinks and beer of their local bars and concocted a game on skates that vaguely resembled Seltzer’s banked track legacy. Within a few years disagreements among the skaters and the women running the league brought about a split. 65 out of 80 skaters stepped away from the banked track league and, in 2003, flat-track derby was created by the newly formed Texas Rollergirls Rock-n-Rollerderby (TRG).¹⁰⁴ These women, outside of social norms and mores, took community into their hands and

¹⁰² Women’s Flat Track Derby Association, Tagline, WFTDA Homepage, accessed December 11, 2015, <http://wftda.com/>.

¹⁰³ Margot Atwell, *Derby Life: A Crash Course in the Incredible Sport of Roller Derby* (Brooklyn, NY: Gutpunch Press, 2015), 39.

¹⁰⁴ Krista Lee Goodman, “Roller Derby, From Spectacle to Sport: Moving Past Perceptions,” (MA Thesis, University of Southern California, 2014), 36, accessed January 1, 2018, <http://digitalibrary.usc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15799coll3/id/442938>.

from their strength of spirit created a derby community that was for participants empowering, accepting, healing, and organized around a collective process.

With easy access to a flat-track (compared to a banked one) the sport began to grow in popularity, creating a call for an organizing body that would set rule standards and practices so that interleague competition could be facilitated. In July of 2005 the WFTDA was formed in Chicago, Illinois.¹⁰⁵ Over the next ten years flat track roller derby took off. Aided in 2009 by the film *Whip It*, the surge in membership and new leagues was exponential. When speaking to skaters and volunteers it is neither the rules nor the game structure that calls members and keeps them engaged. What keeps them engaged is the community of acceptance, support, encouragement, and challenge that has created a lifestyle. Many members also articulate some form of healing of spirit, mind, and heart as well as the embodiment of community that compels them to remain and participate.

The modern story of a flat-track skater is one of self-discovery, communal validation, and a calling to action within community. Inevitably, upon finding acceptance and validation these women return to their own communities and tell their stories and bring others back to the track to experience it personally. Women whose choices stand outside of accepted cultural standards step forward and proudly proclaim a community that has welcomed, accepted, and empowered them. Like the Samaritan Woman running from the well back to Sychar, these women proclaim loving acceptance in unexpected places, people listen, and the sport has grown.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 37.

Proof of Healing in Derby

In an international survey conducted in spring of 2016 of 506 participants of the wider roller derby community,¹⁰⁶ 71.86% of respondents did not claim a religious affiliation.¹⁰⁷ Of the 218 responses to the question “If no, what are your primary reasons for not having a religious affiliation?” 22% of respondents referenced hypocrisy, judgment, corruption, and cruelty as reasons why they chose not to participate in organized religion. When asked why they continue to participate in derby, even after physical injury and its time consuming nature, over and over again respondents came back to the people, relationships, and community that they experienced as healing for their body, mind, and spirit.¹⁰⁸

This experience of healing is heard in stories like skater Tess Yinger’s words in the 2014 short film “We are the Wheels of Justice.”

Roller derby has given me so much in terms of confidence. I never felt my body was worthy of space because of how it looked. And, being in roller derby, it’s like the more space you take up the more valuable you are in some aspects. So, I’m learning to own my space and own my body and be proud of that.¹⁰⁹

Hannah Jennings shares her story of battling an eating disorder in the same film. After a tryout she recognized that participating in derby and the disorder could not coexist

¹⁰⁶ “Roller Derby Community Survey: Community, Healing, and Faith” Survey conducted by author, March 13, 2016 – April 11, 2016.

¹⁰⁷ It is of particular interest to note the age range of survey respondents. 57.51 % were between the ages of 18 – 35, a key demographic missing in mainline congregations today.

¹⁰⁸ Respondents who experienced derby to be healing for their body: 70.35%; for their mind: 86.49%; for their spirit: 63.93%.

¹⁰⁹ Allyson Woodard, “We are the Wheels of Justice” (video), posted November, 2015, accessed December 14, 2015, <https://vimeo.com/107804536>.

together, and so she chose derby. “And I’m so utterly thankful that I did, because it’s given me my whole life.”¹¹⁰ It is this kind of healing experience that is an intrinsic part of what shapes the derby community and sends skaters out into social networks eager to invite participation.

It is not only skaters who are impacted by healing and empowering experiences found within roller derby. Just as women brought their families into the early church,¹¹¹ skaters bring their extended kinship groups¹¹² along with them. Keary Ortiz, in a personal interview, spoke of a “year of reckoning” for partners and spouses of new skaters.¹¹³ As the women healed and gained more self-confidence, independence, and ownership of their own space in their first year of participating in the sport, Keary watched as some relationships ended. Other partners, like himself, joined in and found ways to identify their own gifts and skills and ways that they could be used to serve the greater community. He asserts that derby is not just a sport community where fans sit on the sidelines and watch aloof skaters. It is a community that invites unique participation on all levels. Together, using the gifts offered by each person, the community creates change and a better world for those around them.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ For a fascinating conversation about the role of women in the conversion of their families through both higher birth rates as well as conversion of pagan spouses, see Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History*, 95-128.

¹¹² It is possible to see an echo between the strong bond of derby teams and historical Hebrew kinship groups. Howard-Brook writes “This sense of ‘fictive kin’ – people unrelated by blood but bonded by shared stories of origin and lived experiences – was the primary vehicle for maintaining a sense of ‘peoplehood’ among various clans and tribes. . .” Wes Howard-Brook, *The Church Before Christianity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 75.

¹¹³ Keary Ortiz (Agent Meow), interview by author, Portland, Oregon, December 8, 2015.

The alternative community of roller derby is an environment where healing is happening on a regular basis. Even if bodies are literally breaking, the stories pouring out of emotional, mental, and spiritual healing are stunning and are the kind of healing that Jesus calls Christians to offer to the world. Not only are people of faith called to learn how to give CPR to protect and serve the corporeal bodies of our brothers and sisters, Christians are called to restore community relationships and bring restoration to people who feel as if they have no place or purpose within society. Christians are called to live out the “Me/We gospel” and as we do so, as the healing happens, the good news song spreads through each and every nudge.

Understanding the nature of the healing offered through Jesus can help Christians experience the good news song in any space so that God’s grace, which is already active and present, can be experienced. Returning to Bennett’s essay in *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns*, after his description of conquering rebels he writes,

Later I stopped to look at how Jesus described lost people. What I discovered was a whole new way of viewing those outside of Christ. Rather than an enemy to conquer, I began to see them as broken and in need of healing, as captives in need of liberation, and as blind in need of sight . . . (Jesus) referred to them . . . as sick and needing a physician or as sheep needing a shepherd. . . . Rather than creating hostility in me, they create compassion. When someone is sick or lost or blind, I can understand why they act the way they do. Rather than feeling defensive, I feel empathy.¹¹⁴

This shift from the imagery of conquering rebels towards a healing empathy is just the first step on a path back to the heart of the word *euaggelion*. Making this shift is a difficult and potentially painful work to turn away from historic roots so deeply held within North America. This shift requires that Christians see others less as rebels in need

¹¹⁴ Bennett, 280.

of conquering and instead as people who have long for healing and loving community. The shift requires that Christians unlearn the need to persuade unbelievers and instead enter into listening within communities. This shift requires that Christians no longer perceive themselves as invading generals, but rather as members of the chorus of the good news song.

Singing the Good News Song

Sweet writes:

The key to evangelism is to be receivers of others – ushers to the Other, not users of others. In receiving others, we enter into their world of abundant otherness – their experiences, their thought patterns, their stories. In using others, we treat people as objects and hope to get something out of them (a conversion, a donation, their acquiescence to our argument).¹¹⁵

Evangelism for our contemporary culture, Nudge Evangelism as coined by Sweet, is not about memorizing an argument or fine tuning our presentations as discussed in Section 2. Evangelism for our contemporary culture is about encountering people, encouraging healing, and growing community. Nudge Evangelism is about prioritizing relationships that are real, deep, hard, and complex relationships with people outside of our normal communities. Nudging is about giving room for the Holy Spirit to be present in the midst of those relationships. Vastly counter cultural relationships that are forming and building meaningful connections, especially across religious and political divides, continues to become a skill that is fracturing into pieces in our contemporary context.

¹¹⁵ Sweet, *Out of the Question...Into the Mystery*, 125.

Nudging is not about knowing what to do or say, but is much more about trusting the five senses and the grace of God.

No longer telling the story through clever argumentation and step by step brochures means that evangelism begins to happen as it was before the printing press, before colonization, and before Constantine. The good news is sung by living a God-filled life in the midst of a varied and vast culture. The good news is sung by living a life soaked in love. Love for the neighbor. Love for the stranger. Love for the enemy.¹¹⁶ Love for everything created by a God who loves so much that God would come and be a part of this violent and strange world. Nudgers won't get it all right. Nudgers will make mistakes and crack open in their own sin, but when Christians remain focused on loving first, then they become Nudgers. "When love is the motivation for evangelism, *nudging* is love in action. And the cracks in our broken vases are where Jesus leaks out first."¹¹⁷

The first step in evangelism for the modern world is to go where the people outside of the church spend their time. The push to get outside of the church walls is not only popular because churches need more members. The Spirit is calling across a multitude of denominations to follow in the steps of Christ, for Christians to embrace living the Jesus life. While Jesus certainly spent time in the synagogues, much of his ministry was spent on the roads, in community, on mountains, and seas. He no more allowed himself to be boxed in by the walls of the establishment than he allowed the rules to dictate to whom he spoke. Getting out of the church doesn't just mean taking a Bible Study group out to a local pub for a themed Bible and Beer night. Following in the steps

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 137-142.

¹¹⁷ Sweet, *Nudge*, 28.

of Christ, living the Jesus life by becoming a Nudger, means that people will be stepping out of the church community and into the world of those who don't care one bit about mission statements and meeting budgets. This life means going out into the places where the world is hurting, starting to listen to stories of all of the people, and risking a broken heart. Nudging means showing up. It means showing up over and over and over again even when receiving nothing in return. Being a part of this new evangelism means showing up until Nudgers have fallen into God's love for the people that they are standing among; until they cannot help but hear God's song singing through the culture and people far outside of the church walls.

Once a loving community has been established Christians can watch for the presence of God and God's song through the healing that will happen. The healing might be subtle at first. Someone within the loving community will start to hear the words of praise about them (for how can there not be praise of the awesomeness that God has created in someone) and the individual's self-esteem will begin to rise. Perhaps the community's listening ear will help someone develop the strength to reach out to their estranged family members, restoring something that had been broken. Eventually there will be signs of healing everywhere throughout the community. Healing happens wherever Jesus is present. Indeed, "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them."¹¹⁸ The ministry of Jesus was the ministry of a Healer. Inevitably, within a loved and loving community, healing will follow.

¹¹⁸ Mt. 11:5, NRSV.

Once a loving community is built and healing occurs, a critical and crucial factor is established. Trust. Among communities that have been marginalized, outcast, abused, and otherwise harmed by Christians in one form or another, trust is hard won. Trust does not come from winning arguments or from sweet tongued persuasion. Trust comes from showing up and from loving people. Trust comes from participating in the healing of the community. Through all of these actions trust is built and the story of God is illuminated. Like gold leafed figures dancing on the sides of an illuminated manuscript; the time, love, healing, and trust built through living the Jesus life outside of the church walls creates a space where the song of God crescendos into a symphony.

This process of sharing the good news can take years, maybe even a lifetime. But this is the work of the modern evangelist, the modern good news singer. This Jesus life is the work of nudging: show up, shut up, listen, love, heal, celebrate, and sing. God is in the midst of each of those moments, spoken or unspoken, bidden or unbidden.

The question then is whether or not this is enough? If those who experience God in this manner never publicly proclaim Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, has this been successful evangelism in our contemporary culture?

Are the hallmarks of the kingdom present? Is there good news for the poor, the disabled, the disadvantaged? Where are the proud being humbled and the humbled things being treasured? The Beatitudes may be signs to watch for.

Where are people who realize their neediness?

Where are people mourning?

Where are people who are stung by injustice?

Where are the pure of heart, who are often taken advantage of?

Where are people losing themselves in the pursuit of peace?¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Sweet, *Nudge*, 83.

When these hallmarks are present, when the kingdom of God is breaking through, then is that not the good news song? When people hear that they are free from bondage and begin to live their own lives loving their neighbor as themselves without fear, fully healed and offering healing this is the kingdom of God coming into reality on earth.

SECTION 4:

ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION

The curriculum for this dissertation, “God With/In: Heal the World. Sing the Good News.” was a product of an invitation. Throughout my research I was planning on creating some kind of book for the derby community or an online forum where stories could be shared. However, as my research progressed it became clear that the message I found was less for those outside of the church and more for Christians already on the inside. As I conferred with our Lead Mentor, Leonard Sweet, he suggested that I consider creating a practical curriculum to accompany his book, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who’s Already There*.

Once clear I was writing a curriculum for those who were church members it was time to determine the method of the message. As someone who is comfortable being in front of a camera, with the encouragement of my cohort members, I chose to move forward with a video curriculum hosted on my website, Jesus Take My Wheels.

Each of these videos is contained in two and a half to five minutes of time with a core message and task for viewers. It is possible for the curriculum to be used purely through the videos. The core information, task, and next steps are all contained within each video segment. However, to go deeper there is a full website with questions, supplemental reading, challenges, and an invitation to participate in online conversation through a Facebook group. When participants choose to dig deeper into the curriculum they will find a rich opportunity to further explore the idea of Nudge Evangelism.

While the curriculum covers the core concepts of Sweet's book, it also highlights the research shown throughout this dissertation. With videos on getting out of the church and into the world, healing, and the pivotal concept that an evangelist must first be a trusted member of a community in order to be the most effective at sharing good news, these videos set the groundwork before the curriculum jumps into the work around the 5 senses.

In order to enhance retention there are also game based quizzes incorporated into each segment of the curriculum. These quizzes serve to engage the online users while reinforcing the key concepts of each lesson. The curriculum also includes an evaluation at the culmination of the videos which allows for a participant to enter their email for long term follow up. As part of this process a final quiz will be sent to determine long term retention of key concepts. This will allow the curriculum to be assessed for effectiveness as well as to be edited or supplemented as needed in the future.

SECTION 5:

ARTIFACT SPECIFICATION

Main Goals

The main goals for the Track 02 Artifact are:

- To create engaging videos that spark conversation and interest in Evangelism
- To give live concrete examples of what it means to live out this method
- To create engaging additional questions/resources on the webpage that compliment the video, are accessible, and logical

Video Objectives

Each video for the curriculum has a title and clear messaging objective. For the purpose of evaluation, these have been included to further explain the main goals of the artifact.

Video 1, Introduction: Evangelism in North America is no longer functioning in the way that it has historically. It is time for a new kind of evangelism for a new time.

Video 2, Euaggelion: The goal is to relate the story of “*euaggelion*.” An emphasis is placed on the necessity of participation within the community of interest. This form of evangelism will “work among” as opposed to “go to” specified communities.

Video 3, Get Out of the Church: Modern evangelism is not about waiting for people to arrive at a church. In order to do this work, Christians must build relationships

with people who are not currently a part of a Christian community. Christians must get out of the church.

Video 4, Nudge: Nudge Evangelism is not about saving people or telling the story. Nudge Evangelism is about living the Jesus life everywhere and every day. Nudge Evangelism is about being a part of the healing of the world.

Video 5, Healing: This video focuses on the centrality of healing in the work of Christ. Healing restores a person to community and wholeness, not just a cured body. This is a critical understanding in how Christians are to engage with people within communities.

Video 6, Listen: Listening to one another and listening for God is the first tangible step in Nudge Evangelism. This video introduces the 90/10 rule for one to one engagement.

Video 7, Taste: Using the sense of taste to experience God is the next sense. This video encourages learning more about people through shared meals and curiosity.

Video 8, Sight: Understanding that Jesus lives on the edges of cultures, this session focuses on watching for God in everyone.

Video 9, Touch: A delicate balance, this video encourages safe and consensual touch as a way of experiencing the presence of God among trusted groups.

Video 10, Smell: One of the most powerful senses for triggering memory, smell is explored as a way of remembering or noticing God's presence throughout our lives.

Video 11, Next Steps: A summary video to encourage continued work at this form of embodied evangelism. This page also includes an evaluation.

How Will You Test a “Beta-Version” of the Artifact and Assess its Success?

The web links will be sent out to five diverse individuals to ask them to preview the materials. These individuals span from experienced clergy to lay member to participants in the Portland Seminary DMin program. If this curriculum can appeal across the breadth of these settings I will consider it successful.

How Will You Measure the Success of Your Artifact?

Success of the Artifact will be measured in number of hits/views as tracked through Squarespace metrics, quiz responses, and evaluations submitted.

How Will You Adequately Maintain the Finished Product Over the Long-Haul (of its life)?

This site will be maintained for a minimum of two years after publication by maintaining the registry. Engagement will continue on the Facebook Community page as long as it remains viable. The long term evaluation and feedback will also be maintained for a minimum of two years.

Audience**Who is the Primary Intended Audience/User of Your Completed Artifact?**

The primary audience for this artifact is members of Christian denominations who are looking to reach outside of their walls and find authentic ways of embodying evangelism in North America in our current context.

What Do You Want the Audience/User to Do/Think/Experience After Encountering Your Artifact?

I want them to feel encouraged and excited to live a Jesus life in public. I want them to understand that evangelism is about living the good news of God's healing and love through a life of love and grace wherever they find themselves. I want them to see God saturating their world and their communities so that they can nudge others to experience God through joyful example.

What Task Will Your Audience/User be Trying to Accomplish Wherein Your Artifact Might be Utilized?

Users will be seeking to learn how to share the love of Jesus in their midst.

Artifact Scope and Content

Define the Scope of Your Artifact. What Will be the Technical and Content Parameters for your Artifact?

The artifact consists of 11 videos between two and one half and five minutes apiece. These videos are accompanied by questions, exercises, and resources for individuals or communities to dig deeper into the topic. The materials are available on my website, www.takemywheels.org.

How Will the Content of Your Artifact be Organized?

The content is organized in 11 sections with the video content being the driving content. The questions and exercises suggested give opportunities for further engagement, including an online community group for mutual support and accountability.

What Special Technical or Functional Requirements are Needed?

Successfully completing this project required skills in Web design, video production, curriculum creation, and graphic design.

Budget

What is the Entire Budget (line-item) for the Artifact?

\$288.00	Annual hosting and domain registration (two years)
\$400	Interview incidentals, including meals, coffee, etc
\$260	Vimeo hosting (one year)
\$1000	Travel, lodging, meals, and stipend for video producer
\$1948	Total Budget

What Hardware and Software May be Required to Complete the Artifact?

To complete the project a computer with internet access to Squarespace's online web design tools are needed. Video recording and editing programs were utilized by the producer. Vimeo serves as a host for the videos during the initial phases and YouTube will be used as the final platform host.

Outsourcing Fees?

The video producer was generously supported by Westwinds Church.

Ongoing Personnel/Administrative Support Costs?

Annual registration and subscription to Squarespace = \$144.00 per year for a minimum of two years

Promotion

How Will You Market or Make Available Your Artifact to Your Intended Audience/Users?

Initial marketing will be through word of mouth and social media outlets.

What is Your Overall Marketing Strategy?

Personal invitation, word of mouth, social media sharing, and a presentation at the annual Byberg Preaching Conference in Seaside, Oregon in January of 2018.

Standards of Publication

What are the “Standards of Publication” Particular to the Chosen Media Genre?

Web design is a constantly changing format. However, there are accepted standards. A logo in the top left of the webpage, main navigation on the top right, and a clear value statement close to the top of the home page are common enough standards to bear usage. Commonly accepted practices include the use a dynamic design for use across multiple devices, social media connections in the footer, and calls to action.¹²⁰

What is the Rationale for Your Choices?

Modern websites offer gathering spaces for worldwide communities with video components becoming an increasing core expectation of the genre. The possibilities of a dynamic website are endless. If the resource takes off there is potential for vibrant blogs,

¹²⁰ Andy Crestodina, “Web Design Standards: 10 Best Practices on the Top 50 Websites,” *Orbit Media Solutions*, accessed December 16, 2016, <https://www.orbitmedia.com/blog/web-design-standards/>.

community interaction, podcasts, and other connectivity. As web design is something I have done on the side for over 14 years, this is a format I am excited to work with and know that I can accomplish.

Action Plan

Identifying the Various Components of the Track 02 Artifact

Components:

Videos, Website Development, Content creation/writing, Publication, Publicity

Identifying the Technical Skills Required to Complete the Artifact.

Web Development, Graphic Design, Video creation, Story writing, Publicity planning.

At this time I am comfortable with my abilities in web and graphic design. I will need to work on my interviewing and story writing skills in order to present the first hand information that I receive in an effective and honest manner. I also need to work on creating a realistic and effective publicity campaign for the website.

Developing a Timeline

The videos for the curriculum were filmed in early November 2017. www.takemywheels.org has been live in its Beta phase since September 2016 using the Story Lectionary section of the site to encourage traffic. The curriculum programming is taking place through winter of 2017. In January 2018 I will be presenting on this topic at the Byberg Preaching Conference. The curriculum, upon final approval, will go live to the public in Spring of 2018.

SECTION 6:

POSTSCRIPT

Summary

This project began with a very different question. Upon skating with a start up roller derby league in Northern Washington, Skagit Valley Roller Derby, the parallels with congregational structures were obvious and everywhere throughout the community's functionality. Like an eager mission plant congregation, the league members banded together with incredibly tight bonds and deep relationships. The difference from what I saw in the church was that these people were all the missing generation in mainstream protestant denominations in North America.

Fierce and strong, vibrant and passionate, these young skaters were pouring their time and finances into this league in a way that I had never seen happen within that age bracket, especially not in a congregational setting. The theory that xennials¹²¹ and millennials didn't care, couldn't commit, and wouldn't stick through something that didn't give them immediate affirmation was proven deeply wrong through this lived experience. The resulting question shifted from "Why don't my peers care about church?" to "What is derby providing that the church doesn't?"

¹²¹ "Words We're Watching: 'Xennial'," Merriam-Webster, accessed January 8, 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/words-were-watching-xennial>. A term that is coming into more usage, xennial refers to individuals born between 1977-1983. They are recognized as those who had analog childhoods and experienced the transition to a digital age in early adulthood.

Throughout the years of this research multiple lines of query cropped up in response to that core question, several of which will be addressed as potential research options in the conclusion. The response to the question that became researchable, able to be articulated, and addressable was identified in the second year of research. “When Jesus’ good news song is experienced in a way that conflicts with the heart of the song itself, when it lacks integrity, people walk away and ultimately discount Jesus’ life of healing and God’s salvation.” The solution to this problem is to find a way for the message of the gospel to be experienced in a way that maintains integrity with the core of Jesus’ ministry.

During the research that followed, Sweet’s *Nudge* became the core text of the response to this problem. How the problem evolved and the historical roots of evangelism was fascinating and heartbreaking, but Sweet’s book turned the focus from the past to the future and offered a foundation for a way forward that concurred with the researched conclusions. In a conversation with him to express gratitude for the book, the suggestion was made to consider creating a practical curriculum to support and further embody the ideas in *Nudge*. It is from this conversation that the artifact concept originated. While the inspiration for the research had come from the derby community, this curriculum would be an offering to the wider Christian community in North America.

Analysis

Curriculums can take many forms, from printed materials to online community groups. However, teaching Nudge Evangelism as a unique technique felt best served by creating a video curriculum that could live online and inspire community interaction.

Historical methods of evangelism, such as those addressed in Section Two of the written statement, could be well served with documents that taught argumentation and offered examples of gospel tracts. However, an embodied evangelism style needed an embodied curriculum. A series of 10 – 12 short videos accompanied by questions that could be engaged individually or as a group were planned as a website offering. Through voice and motion, eye contact and image, this curriculum was designed to engage learners as they seek to engage the world around them.

With the assistance of Jacob McGarry, a videographer from Westwinds Community Church in Michigan, the videos were planned and filmed in the cities of Milwaukie, Portland, and Cannon Beach, Oregon in early November of 2017. Created in a contemporary style with movement, vibrant colors, and action these two and a half to five minute videos each present a core nugget of information for each of the 11 classes. Videos one through five offer a foundation from the research included in the written statement of this dissertation. After this foundation the curriculum shifts to follow alongside of the sensory based chapters of *Nudge*. Clear next steps are provided to students so that the theoretical words become lived reality and practice.

The hosting website for the curriculum was created utilizing the assets offered by the company Squarespace. With clean video integration, excellent navigation programming, and attractive aesthetics that can be easily changed and updated to follow the trends in web design, the website was created in a manner that will allow for smooth functionality and use.

Upon completion of the curriculum it was reviewed by three individuals prior to submission; an online curriculum creator, an ordained clergy person, and a lay leader.

Each of these individuals offered a positive response and critical feedback that engaged both the content and the design of the site. With their feedback, the questions were sharpened, the website streamlined, and overall encouragement was received that the material is engaging and helpful in understanding and growing a sense of modern evangelism.

Conclusion

This process has been challenging, delightful, excruciating, liberating, and fascinating all in one. One of the major lessons discovered is that there tends to be far more fish in a research pond than initially expected and each of them can be shiny and distracting. Some of the lines of research and curiosity that sparkled in that pond will be listed out in this conclusion with the hope that someday they may be pursued with passion and vigor by another scholar. In the meantime, the culmination of this specific research has created an offering for Christians in North America that is different than what can be found on the shelves of local Christian Bookstores or even online at Amazon.

One of the powerful discoveries during this process was the recognition that, in popular Christian non-fiction on the topic of evangelism, there are very few female authors who are being published or promoted. Whether women are writing on different topics or if publishers are not choosing to publish or market what women are offering, the lack of women's voice in this arena was striking. This discrepancy would be a fascinating research subject given the extraordinary work of women in nurturing and growing the church throughout the centuries.

*Additional lines of inquiry***Section One**

There is always more to be explored in the demographics and movements of social structures. It would be fascinating to watch the trends in generational participation in religious traditions in North America to see if the Pew Research predictions based upon their findings are accurate. This would be particularly interesting if there is a major shift in understanding what it is to be a church over the next few years. The current political climate and the polarization of progressive and conservative Christianity may spur on fascinating trends within the next decade, regardless of evangelism techniques.

Jesus' ministry of healing is another treasure trove of research opportunities. Both Rodney Stark and Craig Keener's work offer a solid foundation to leap from in terms of research lines. From Stark it is possible to dive into the role of both healing and women in Pre-Constantinian Christianity, both of which are utterly fascinating and filled with research potential. Keener's works offer a look at modern North American blocks at recognizing the power and mystery of miracles. Research comparing the acceptance of miracles and the growth of faith in developing nations as compared to North America could produce powerful products and prophetic words.

Continued research in the effects of Christopher Columbus and Ramón Pené's initial arrival to North America alongside of contemporary research on the effects of colonization could offer insights to contemporary Christians. As awareness of the atrocities of colonization become more mainstream, the ways in which it influenced the history of Christianity in the United States could be helpful to those seeking to understand the results of the Pew Research Institute. This line of inquiry could be

expanded to look at global ramifications of a “conquering” style of evangelism. To that end, specific research on evangelistic patterns throughout the world and the centuries are not included in this dissertation and offer many opportunities.

Section Two

In order to maintain a manageable scope of research, the alternative methods of evangelism in this section were confined to the United States within the last century. Digging deeper and wider into the history of evangelism throughout the world offers a plethora of research opportunities. How did evangelism change immediately upon the legalization of Christianity under Constantine? How was evangelism understood in the birth of Celtic Christianity? How often has force been utilized as the conversion method throughout history in various cultures and contexts? What are retention rates for those who have accepted faith via the Sinner’s Prayer at impromptu events? How does the understanding of baptism influence evangelism techniques in various denominations? What core theological doctrines might be used to predict which evangelism strategies are most often used by various denominations in various settings? Each of these questions, and many others, could be excellent jumping points for another scholar fascinated by the connections of culture, belief, and evangelism.

Section Three

The quote by Festugière in Section Three¹²² is one of the most intriguing claims found in the various research books for this project. To claim that paganism would rise should the loving nature of Christians no longer be evident is powerful in our current

¹²² See page 40.

climate. An additional line of inquiry would be to see if there is a correlation between the decline in trust of Christianity by xennial and millennial populations and an increase in their participation in “pagan” traditions. If a correlation was discovered the ramifications and results of that research could offer tremendous insights for working with these generations in the years to come.

There is much to research regarding the culture of roller derby. With an increase in published articles about the growth of alternative community spaces, this community should not be overlooked. Scholars interested in the role of women in the Early Church could find a powerful foil in the women of the roller derby community in the current time period. Church history can offer many warnings to the young derby movement, just as the derby movement has much to show the contemporary church about how to welcome and build up people in the current context. From a systems perspective, there are rich research lines available in comparing congregational systems and reactions alongside of derby leagues. Some of these lines of research may be more befitting to scholars in sociology than religion, but nonetheless they are clearly waiting to be more effectively explored.

Final Reflections

At the end of hard work there are often more unanswered questions than there are answers. This has proven to be true in the endeavor of this research and the creation of the curriculum. The most challenging aspect of this was to choose a singular topic and then to make a strong and clear claim. It is with gratitude for all participated that this dissertation is submitted and offered into the world. May it serve as an affirmation for a person seeking affirmation, a challenge for someone seeking challenge, and a nudge for a child of God curious and hopeful that a loving God of healing is already with them.

APPENDIX A:

ARTIFACT

“God With/In: Heal the World. Sing the Good News.” Curriculum

Initial Homepage for the Curriculum

Screenshot



God With/In Heal the World. Sing the Good News.

More than any other action in his ministry, Jesus healed. He healed anyone. He ignored social constructs and defied conventions. He healed people back into community, and he healed communities back into life. That healing drew people to Jesus, and eventually to the early church.

Over time the focus shifted. The church became an institution. Eventually it traveled across an ocean and landed on the shores of North America. The concern on the hearts of those arriving was not the healing of communities, it was conversion at all costs and this legacy created a branch of evangelism that is withering.

500 years after the arrival of Christianity on the shores of North America, 500 years after the Reformation that scattered Christians along denominational lines, it is time to return to the healing of Jesus and the way that he welcomed and called people into faith.

This curriculum examines the roots of evangelism and gives concrete tools for people of faith to learn how to step into communities that they love to be a healing presence and a singer of the good news song. This understanding of evangelism is not about saving souls (Jesus took care of that a while ago). This is about living a God soaked life among God's people and nudging others to do the same.

FULL CONTENT WILL BE AVAILABLE PUBLICLY, SPRING 2018!

Page Transcript

More than any other action in his ministry, Jesus healed. He healed anyone. He ignored social constructs and defied conventions. He healed people back into community, and he healed communities back into life. That healing drew people to Jesus, and eventually to the early church.

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TAKE THE FIRST STEP¹²³

¹²³ <http://takemywheels.org/godwithincurriculum>



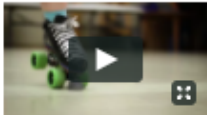
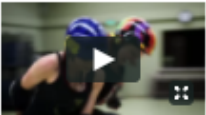







Curriculum Overview Page

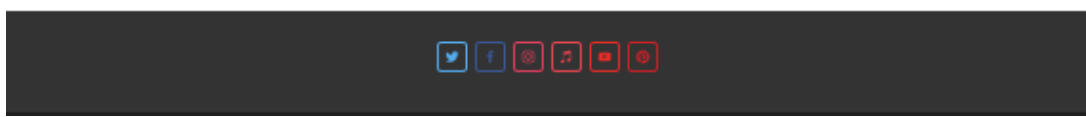
Screenshot



God With/In: Heal the World. Sing the Good News.

This 11 video curriculum can be used on your own or in a small group setting. The videos offer the core of each lesson. For each video, go in depth for guided reflection questions, to read more background research, and connect with others. It is recommended that the book *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There* be used in conjunction with this curriculum, particularly during the sensory videos.

 <p>1:INTRODUCTION Go in Depth</p>	 <p>2:EUAGGELION Go in Depth</p>	 <p>3:GET OUT OF THE CHURCH Go in Depth</p>	 <p>4:NUDGE Go in Depth</p>
 <p>5:HEALING Go in Depth</p>	 <p>6:LISTEN Go in Depth</p>	 <p>7:TASTE Go in Depth</p>	 <p>8:SIGHT Go in Depth</p>
 <p>9:TOUCH Go in Depth</p>	 <p>10:SMELL Go in Depth</p>	 <p>11:NEXT STEPS Go in Depth</p>	<p>THANK YOU! See the team behind the curriculum!</p>



Page Transcript

This 11 video [curriculum](#)¹²⁴ can be used on your own or in a small group setting. The videos offer the core of each lesson. For each video, go in depth for guided reflection questions, to read more background research, and [connect with others](#).¹²⁵ It is recommended that the book [Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There](#)¹²⁶ be used in conjunction with this curriculum, particularly during the sensory videos.

1. Introduction	Go in Depth
2. Euaggelion	Go in Depth
3. Get Out of the Church	Go in Depth
4. Nudge	Go in Depth
5. Healing	Go in Depth
6. Listen	Go in Depth
7. Taste	Go in Depth
8. Sight	Go in Depth
9. Touch	Go in Depth
10. Smell	Go in Depth
11. Next Steps	Go in Depth
Thank you	See the team behind the Curriculum

¹²⁴ <http://takemywheels.org/introduction>

¹²⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1755640504509337/>

¹²⁶ <https://www.amazon.com/Nudge-Awakening-Other-Already-There/dp/1434764745>

Video 1: Introduction

Screenshot

JESUS TAKE MY WHEELS
HOME ABOUT GOD WITH/IN **GOD'S PIVOT**

God With/In Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

EUAGGELION

GET OUT OF THE CHURCH

NUDGE

HEALING

LISTEN

TASTE

SIGHT

TOUCH

SMELL

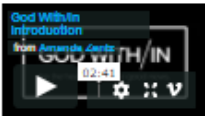
NEXT STEPS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Introduction



WELCOME: STEP ONE



I am excited to help you learn about evangelism in North America in the 21st Century. Together we will sing the amazing Good News Song of Christ in this world. Get ready for tools for evangelism in the modern century in the modern place. Step one: watch the video. Then dig in below.



Each lesson will include a series of reflection questions. These questions can be encountered on your own, for example as a journal or prayer prompt, or can be used in a small group setting. If you are talking in a small group, you are encouraged to familiarize yourself with these guidelines for *Respectful Communication and Mutual Invitation*. These tools can enhance the trust and participation of many individuals.

STEP 2: REFLECT

How did you learn about your faith? Who taught you about Jesus?

When was the first time you were invited to participate in a faith event? (For example worship, service project, or other event hosted by a Christian congregation.) How did it feel to be invited in this way?

What is your own history with sharing your faith with others? What did you enjoy about that experience? What was challenging for you?

Who do you spend your time with? Make a list of all of the communities where you currently spend your time. (Example: *Card groups, sports leagues, co-ops, play groups, volunteer organizations, etc.*)

What excites you about this program? What makes you nervous?

What do you hope to achieve from participating in God With/In?

DEEPER READING

Read more about North America's changing religious landscape by visiting the Pew Research Center and spending time in their reports.

Initial report, May, 2015: *America's Changing Religious Landscape*

Interactive report of data from the Religion Landscape Study

You can also read reflections on evangelism from the research conducted by the Barna Group, "Is Evangelism Going Out Of Style?"

NEXT STEPS

This research and curriculum was influenced by Leonard Sweet's book, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There*. This book is strongly recommended as a supplemental text to this curriculum.

To engage in online community and conversations come and join the God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group.

CC

Evangelists nudge people to life. Evangelists nudge people to take deep breaths.
Evangelists blow breath into people.

— Leonard Sweet, *Nudge*, pg. 55

REVIEW GAME!

NEXT CLASS: EUAGGELION



Video Transcript

I'm Amanda Zentz-Alo and I'm so excited to help you learn more about what it means to do evangelism in North America in the 21st Century. There's so much to learn about how we can step into this world to see God everywhere that we are. To listen to God through the voices of everyone around us. To taste God in the amazing flavors that come into our lives. To touch the hands of God in the people that we meet and to hear the whisper of the Holy Spirit, God's voice, singing in the song around us. Working together we will continue to find a way to spread the amazing Good News Song of Christ's salvation in this world.

I am so excited to give you tools for evangelism in the modern century in the modern place. Evangelism in North America has taken lots of different routes; been done in lots of different ways. You may have experience with using tracts or pieces of information or memorized a speech or story in order to share God's story with people around you. This is different. This is more about living your life, being among people, and finding ways to give a gentle nudge towards God.

We're not going to be telling anyone anything. We're not going to be saving anyone. We will be seeing God everywhere and helping others to do the same thing. We will be loving God's people right where they are.

One of the key understandings of this style of evangelism is to understand that your job is to be a part of a community; to be with and among and a trusted companion on the journey. To be a part of communities that are a part of healing. Jesus did nothing more than healing in his ministry. That's how he walked into relationship with people. That's how he stepped into this world and called people to him. That's what he gave our

world in his love on the cross. So our goal is to be that healing presence. To take on that part of Jesus' ministry in the Body of Christ and learn how to step into communities and be the healing and share the good news.

Webpage materials

Each lesson will include a series of reflection questions. These questions can be encountered on your own, for example as a journal or prayer prompt, or can be used in a small group setting. If you are talking in a small group, you are encouraged to familiarize yourself with these guidelines for [Respectful Communication](#)¹²⁷ and [Mutual Invitation](#).¹²⁸ These tools can enhance the trust and participation of many individuals.

Step 2: Reflect

How did you learn about your faith? Who taught you about Jesus?

When was the first time you were invited to participate in a faith event? (For example worship, service project, or other event hosted by a Christian congregation.)

How did it feel to be invited in that way?

What is your own history with sharing your faith with others? What did you enjoy about that experience? What was challenging for you?

Who do you spend your time with? Make a list of all of the communities where you currently spend your time. (Examples: Card groups, sports leagues, co-ops, play groups, volunteer organizations, etc.)

What excites you about this program? What makes you nervous?

¹²⁷ <http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/respectful-communication-guidelines/>

¹²⁸ <http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/mutual-invitation/>

What do you hope to achieve from participating in God With/In?

Deeper Reading

Read more about North America's changing religious landscape by visiting the [Pew Research Center](#)¹²⁹ and spending time in their reports.

Initial report, May, 2015: [America's Changing Religious Landscape](#)¹³⁰

[Interactive report of data from the Religious Landscape Study](#)¹³¹

You can also read reflections on evangelism from the research conducted by the Barna Group, "[Is Evangelism Going Out Of Style?](#)"¹³²

Next Steps

This research and curriculum was influenced by [Leonard Sweet's](#)¹³³ book, [Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There](#).¹³⁴ This book is strongly recommended as a supplemental text to this curriculum.

To engage in online community and conversation come and join the [God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group](#).¹³⁵

¹²⁹ www.pewforum.org

¹³⁰ <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>

¹³¹ <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>

¹³² <https://www.barna.com/research/is-evangelism-going-out-of-style/>

¹³³ <https://leonardsweet.com/>

¹³⁴ <https://www.amazon.com/Nudge-Awakening-Other-Already-There/dp/1434764745>

¹³⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1755640504509337/>

Quote Graphic

“Evangelists nudge people to life. Evangelists nudge people to take deep breaths. Evangelists blow breath into people.” — Leonard Sweet, *Nudge*, pg 33

Video 2: Euaggelion

Screenshot

JESUS TAKE MY WHEELS

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God With/In Curriculum

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Euaggelion




EUAGGELION: STEP ONE



To get us started we need to take a look at God's intention for an evangelist. How are we supposed to go out there and sing this good news song?

Scripture Reference: Isaiah 52:7-10



Don't forget, if you are talking in a small group, you are encouraged to familiarize yourself with these guidelines for *Respectful Communication and Mutual Invitation*.

STEP 2: REFLECT

What part of this story surprised you?

How does knowing this story change your understanding of evangelists?

Who are the people in your life that you trust and believe when they share news with you? How have you built the relationship with this person (or people)? How long have you known them? What is it about them that allows you to trust their words?

What events have built trust in your relationships? What does that look like for you?

NEXT STEP

GO AND LEARN TO BE TRUSTED.

Trust is something that comes over time and cannot be forced. As you intentionally pay attention to trust building in your relationships, be aware of what it takes to earn your trust and ask others what they need from you to be able to return that trust. Take notes and practice.

DEEPER READING

To hear more reflections on this story, check out this 5 minute video by Dr. Michael Horton or this hour long lecture Dr. Horton presented in 2012.

Christianity arrived in North America alongside of Columbus. Sadly he came as someone outside of the community who had not built trust but instead sought to convert. The conquistador's mentality seeped into North American Christianity. To learn more check out Luis Rivera's book or research Columbus' journals or those of Ramon Pared, the priest who accompanied his journeys. Do note that these journals can be violent and graphic in nature.

DEEPER QUESTIONS:

What is the best part about the good news of Jesus for you?


What effects do you think colonization has had on how we experience evangelism in North America?

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Come and join the conversation! God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group.

REVIEW GAME!

NEXT CLASS: GET OUT OF THE CHURCH



Video Transcript

To get us started we need to take a look at God's intention for an evangelist. How are we supposed to go out there and sing this good news song?

In Isaiah there's a story, the city is under attack. The sentinels are standing on the walls waiting to hear what has happened. They're close enough to the front lines that this word that is going to come to them tells them whether they are going to be safe and get to have an amazing party or whether they need to pack up and run before the enemy shows up to kill them all.

Off in the distance, a runner is seen coming towards the city. And shouting from that runner is the word, Euaggelion. Good news! Our king has won. We are not going to die. No one is going to be harmed. Now is the time to throw the party! We have been saved. This is the evangelist.

So what's true about this evangelist? The people in the city already know this person. The voice is known, the body posture, the way that they run. From a distance they are already going to know that this is someone that they can trust, someone they know, someone whom they love. This person's message is going to be good news because they know each other already. This is critical to understand God's intention for a modern evangelist.

What's exactly the good news this runner is bringing, other than they have won the war? Well, the people are free from imminent death. The people are free from slavery. The people are free from having to watch other people that they love suffer. The people are free from the effects of war.

We learn from this story that we have a lot of work to do before we get to be an evangelist in a community. We need to be known. We need to have solid relationships. We need to be trusted so that our voice can be heard and known by the people that we are speaking to.

Your next step is to go and learn to be trusted. We've got information and techniques on how to do it. It's going to be up to you to follow through.

Webpage Materials

Don't forget, if you are talking in a small group, you are encouraged to familiarize yourself with these guidelines for [Respectful Communication](#)¹³⁶ and [Mutual Invitation](#).¹³⁷

Step 2: Reflect

What part of this story surprised you?

How does knowing this story change your understanding of evangelism?

Who are the people in your life that you trust and believe when they share news with you? How have you built the relationship with this person (or people)? How long have you known them? What is it about them that allows you to trust their words?

What events have built trust in your relationships? What does that look like for you?

Next Step: Go and Learn to be Trusted

Trust is something that comes over time and cannot be forced. As you intentionally pay attention to trust building in your relationships, be aware of what it

¹³⁶ <http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/respectful-communication-guidelines/>

¹³⁷ <http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/mutual-invitation/>

takes to earn your trust and ask others what they need from you to be able to return that trust. Take notes and practice.

Deeper Reading

To hear more reflections on this story, check out this [three minute video](#)¹³⁸ by Dr. Michael Horton or this [hour long lecture](#)¹³⁹ Dr. Horton presented in 2012.

Christianity arrived in North America alongside of Columbus. Sadly he came as someone outside of the community who had not built trust but instead sought to convert. The conqueror's mentality seeped into North American Christianity. To learn more check out [Luis Rivera's book](#)¹⁴⁰ or research Columbus' journals or those of Ramón Pané, the priest who accompanied his journeys. Do note that these journals can be violent and graphic in nature.

Deeper Questions

What is the best part about the good news of Jesus for you?

What effects do you think colonization has had on how we experience evangelism in North America?

Community Conversation

Come and join the conversation! [God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group](#).¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=caMVMayR690&feature=youtu.be>

¹³⁹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LlkWLK_4oK0&feature=youtu.be

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.amazon.com/Violent-Evangelism-Political-Religious-Conquest/dp/0664253679>

¹⁴¹ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1755640504509337/>

Video 3: Get out of the Church

Screenshot

JESUS TAKE MY WHEELS

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God With/In Curriculum

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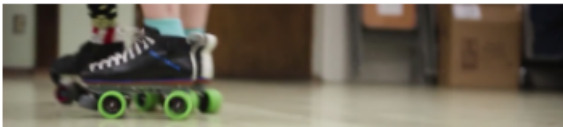
TOUCH

SMELL

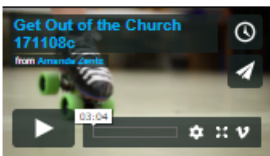
NEXT STEPS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS


Get Out of the Church



GET OUT OF THE CHURCH: STEP ONE



Studies show that, after someone has been a Christian for some time, they no longer have many friends who are not Christian. It's time to get out of the Church.



STEP 2: REFLECT

How long have you been a Christian?

How many non-Christian friends do you have?

How many activities do you regularly participate in that are not connected to your profession or your congregation?

What do you notice about the community that you have developed? How could you expand it?

What communities fascinate you? (Sometimes this means it's kind of scary and exciting to think about them all at once, especially before you try it.) Skydiving? Fiber spinning? Drag racing? Community book groups? Challenge yourself to write down 30 or more groups/activities that you are curious about. No censoring! You are making zero commitments right now, just brainstorming. The higher you go in number, the farther out of your comfort zone you'll go, so don't give up at 10!

DEEPER READING

Our next lesson introduces Leonard Sweet's book, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There*. To take this curriculum to the next level, pick up your copy before you move on to the next video. Take a look at the thumbprint on the cover. What do you see? What do you think it means? Open up the book and explore.

NEXT STEP

FIND A COMMUNITY AND GO TO IT.

This is your chance to narrow down that list of 30+ groups/activities. Choose one that you can reliably attend in the next week or two and make a commitment to yourself to go and check it out.

This doesn't mean you're buying your skating gear this week! It can mean that you're going to a game, showing up at a meeting, or taking a tour of the gym. Take one small step.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Have you picked out where you're going? Share your excitement with others and let us support you and celebrate your success! God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group.

REVIEW GAME!

NEXT CLASS: NUDGE

Video Transcript

If you're going to share the gospel, you have to have someone to share it to. It's time to get out of the church.

Research shows us that after a few years of being a Christian, many Christians no longer have any non-Christian friends. Take a moment and think about your friend list. How many are people of faith, and how many aren't? If you've been a Christian for some time, then this is your challenge. How do you meet people who are not people of faith? Where do you find them? Where are they?

The challenge is to find a community that you are curious about. That you're excited to learn about the people; the people who intrigue you, who inspire you and make you want to know more about them and that peak your curiosity. When you go to those communities and start hanging out you'll find the people who aren't of faith and that gives you the opportunity to start watching for God; to start listening, to start tasting, to start seeing, and to start touching in new and awesome ways.

The community that intrigues me is the world of flat track roller derby. The women there are strong and powerful; empowering of one another and overall trying to make one another into more amazing people. I couldn't think of a better community to spend my off time with than that crew. What I was amazed to find once I started spending time there was how much of God I saw present and how much that community lived out the amazing way that I want my church to be. The amazing way that I think God wants all of us to live. In a way that is mutually beneficial and building up a way, a way that is healing, a way that drives us to serve one another and reach and accomplish incredible goals that we set.

So what's your passion? Maybe it's a sport, like roller derby, or maybe a work out place like Crossfit. Maybe it's a craft or some other kind of hobby. It doesn't always have to be physical, but there's going to be a community attached to it. Think of those people, think of those places, and then get ready to go to them.

Your next step is to find a community and go to it. It might take one or two tries to find the right community but you're going to find it. And in that community you will find that person that you are drawn to. Spend some time, be curious. Be excited. Because people will love that you want to know them. You will be so excited how fun this is and how amazing it is to know and be known by other people.

Webpage Materials

No header materials.

Step 2: Reflect

How long have you been a Christian?

How many non-Christian friends do you have?

How many activities do you regularly participate in that are not connected to your profession or your congregation?

What do you notice about the community that you have developed? How could you expand it?

What communities fascinate you? (Sometimes this means it's kind of scary and exciting to think about them all at once, especially before you try it.) Skydiving? Fiber spinning? Drag racing? Community book groups? Challenge yourself to write down 30 or more groups/activities that you are curious about. No censoring! You are making zero

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Deeper Reading

Our next lesson introduces [Leonard Sweet's](#)¹⁴² book, [Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There](#).¹⁴³ To take this curriculum to the next level, pick up your copy before you move on to the next video. Take a look at the thumbprint on the cover. What do you see? What do you think it means? Open up the book and explore.

Next Step: Find a Community and Go To It.

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This doesn't mean you're buying your skating gear this week! It can mean that you're going to a game, showing up at a meeting, or taking a tour of the gym. Take one small step.

Community Conversation

Have you picked out where you're going? Share your excitement with others and let us support you and celebrate your success! [God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group](#).¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² <https://leonardsweet.com/>

¹⁴³ <https://www.amazon.com/Nudge-Awakening-Other-Already-There/dp/1434764745>

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1755640504509337/>

Video 4: Nudge

Screenshot

JESUS TAKE MY WHEELS HOME ABOUT GOD WITH/IN **GOD'S PIVOT**

God With/In Curriculum

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- GET OUT OF THE CHURCH
- NUDGE**
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Nudge



NUDGE: STEP ONE



Nudge Evangelism is not about telling the story. It's not about presenting it to anyone. Nudge Evangelism is about living the story. Every day, all day, wherever we are. It means embodying the gospel story. It means being a part of the healing, love of Jesus Christ in this world.



STEP 2: REFLECT

What have you learned about evangelism in past classes at church?

Nudge Evangelism removes us from the driver's seat. How do you feel about that?

How does it feel to remove creating the "niche and noise" from the metrics that measure successful evangelism?

What about this style of evangelism is exciting to you?

DEEPER READING

It's time to officially open up Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There. For deeper reading to understand these ideas, read through Part 1 of the book. This foundation of understanding the deep presence of God and our role in awakening one another to that presence will give a theological foundation for the ministry work ahead.

“There is no understanding without standing under. Nudge is not talking or talking God to people. Nudge is helping people speak for themselves after they realize they've been spoken to . . . Nudgers help others to listen to their lives and to hear, see, taste, touch, and smell the sacredness of their own journeys. Nudgers help others "hear into speech" so that they can "speak for themselves." Most importantly, nudgers never speak until they've been spoken to.

— Leonard Sweet, Nudge, pp. 120

NEXT STEP: FIVE MINUTES IN PRAYER

Take a moment of reflection. Has anyone ever asked you about your faith life? What made them curious? Was it because of what you said, or who you are?

Hasn't had that experience yet? It's ok!

Either way, sit a timer and spend 5 minutes. You can give thanks or ask for help. You can let your mind wander to that new community you're exploring or communities you have known for a long time. Simply be intentional and let your heart sit with this new idea.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Curious what others think about this? God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group.

REVIEW GAME **NEXT CLASS: HEALING**

Twitter Facebook Instagram YouTube

Video Transcript

Traditional evangelism styles aren't working the same way anymore. At least not here. It's time for a new kind of evangelism. It's time to Nudge.

I became curious when I noticed that my community of flat track roller derby is growing in leaps and bounds and at the same time church is shrinking. My mentor, Len Sweet, pointed me towards his book Nudge and it gave words to things that I had already experienced as true. That stepping out and telling people what they should and shouldn't do isn't working. But when I go out into the community and just live the God life, sing the God song with everything I'm worth? Then? People become curious and I see God everywhere. And then? Things happen.

People show up and the church starts to grow.

Nudge Evangelism is not about telling the story. It's not about presenting it to anyone. Nudge Evangelism is about living the story. Every day, all day, wherever we are. It means embodying the gospel story. It means being a part of the healing force of Jesus Christ in this world.

Nudge Evangelism is not about helping people be converted to Christ. Nudge evangelism is about seeing Christ everywhere that we are and helping others to embody that. Always. Bidden or unbidden, God is always present. And in Nudge Evangelism the idea is to live in that presence, fully, with every sense in our body, and in every way. When we do this we don't get measurements in nickels and dimes or in our numbers. When we do this our measurement of success comes in the amount of healing that is happening in our communities. It comes in the amount of community that is forming and how people are spending time together. It comes when people feel less alone, less

frightened, more hopeful, and free! (*People are*) free to live the life that God has created them to live in joy and in hope and in astonishing embodiment of the promises that we have been given.

As you invest in your communities, as you gain trust and learn how to love each other, one of the first overt ways that you're going to know whether or not this kind of evangelism is going anywhere is that you'll start to get some questions. People will ask you about your faith practice. They'll ask you questions about what you believe.

Now it might be that they're picking on you. They might send it to you like a razz, or they might really just want to pick an argument. Remember that your call is to listen. Listen to their curiosity. They're not asking questions of you for your answers. They're asking questions for themselves and for their own heart about God. Keep it focused on them and keep pointing out that God is already in their lives. Maybe not in obvious ways like, "Well, I see God in your life because . . ." but more along the lines of "What do you think the Divine is doing in your life?" "Where do you see God?" And turn it back. You know, Jesus always did that. Jesus answered questions with questions all the time. So when that starts happening, do the same. Bring those questions out and let that curiosity flourish. Don't give clean answers because that shuts people down. Just feed that curiosity. Keep nudging.

Your next step is to think back on your life, reflect back. When was the time that someone asked you a question or was curious about your faith life, not because of what you said, but because of who you are. Think back to that and then, set a timer. Spend five minutes in prayer reflecting and giving thanks for that experience and for God's wisdom and guidance to show you how to handle that the next time it happens. If you can't think

of that opportunity then spend that prayer time asking the Holy Spirit to give you the courage to live your life in this way that this is going to happen and open your ears and your heart to hearing those curious questions and being able to respond to them with loving curiosity yourself.

Webpage Materials

No header materials.

Step 2: Reflect

What have you learned about evangelism in past classes at church?

Nudge Evangelism removes us from the driver's seat. How do you feel about this?

How does it feel to remove counting the "nickels and noses" from the metrics that measure successful evangelism?

What about this style of evangelism is exciting to you?

Deeper Reading

It's time to officially open up [Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There](#).¹⁴⁵ For deeper reading to understand these ideas, read through Part I of the book. This foundation of understanding the deep presence of God and our role in awakening one another to that presence will give a theological foundation for the sensory work ahead.

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.amazon.com/Nudge-Awakening-Other-Already-There/dp/1434764745>

Quote Graphic

There is no understanding without standing under. Nudge is not taking or talking God to people. Nudge is helping people speak for themselves after they realize they've been spoken to . . . Nudgers help other to listen to their lives and to hear, see, taste, touch, and smell the sacredness of their own journeys. Nudgers help others “hear into speech” so that they can “speak for themselves.” Most importantly, nudgers never speak until they've been spoken to.

— Leonard Sweet, *Nudge*, pg 120

Next Step: Five Minutes in Prayer

Take a moment of reflection. Has anyone ever asked you about your faith life? What made them curious? Was it because of what you said, or who you are?

Haven't had that experience yet? It's ok!

Either way, set a timer and spend five minutes. You can give thanks or ask for help. You can let your mind wander to that new community you're exploring or communities you have known for a long time. Simply be intentional and let your heart sit with this new idea.

Community Conversation

Curious what others think about this? [God With/In Curriculum Community](#)

[Facebook Group](#).¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1755640504509337/>

Video 5: Healing

Screenshot

JESUS TAKE MY WHEELS
HOME ABOUT GOD WITH/IN GOD'S PIVOT

God With/In Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

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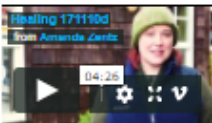
NEXT STEPS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Healing

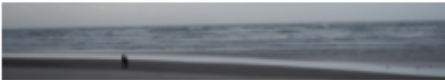


HEALING: STEP ONE



More than any other action Jesus always healed. Healing is not about just removing an ailment, it's not about just finding a cure for what ails you. Healing is about full restoration. Restoration to body health, but also spirit and communal health.

Scripture Reference: John 5:1-18



«

Probably the most important condition the church can provide for healing is the sense of loving community. By this early Christians were known. This sense of belonging, this amazing love, gave the early church so much vitality and made it so much a healing instrument of the Spirit that it became a mark by which Christians could be told from other people. As one French scholar has commented, "If Christians had not had this quality, the world would still be pagan. And the day when this quality is no longer there, the world will be pagan once again." It is in such fellowship that the relation to God which brings about healing is most often found . . .

— A. J. Festingier

STEP 2: REFLECT

Read the quote above.

How does your faith community offer and extend belonging and love to those who are not yet a part of the group?

How have you experienced healing in your own life?

NEXT STEP

SPEND TIME WITH YOUR FAVORITE GOSPEL.

The first four books of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) each tell the story of Jesus' life in a slightly different way. If you don't know which is your favorite, yet, just choose one of the four randomly! You will find healing in each one. Choose a few chapters to read through and write down the following:

- book, chapter, and verse of the healing
- who/who was healed
- how the community was involved.

You don't have to stop at just 2 chapters! You can read all the way through, if you like! (Tip: Mark is the shortest of the four.)

Set a timer for 7 minutes and let yourself pray/ponder/walk and reflect on this understanding of Jesus' healing ministry.

DEEPER READING

There are several amazing books about Jesus and healing. I highly recommend the following:

Healing & Christianity: A Classic Study by Marston Kelso

Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology by John J. Pich

Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts by Craig S. Keener

There are several articles about how young North Americans, particularly those in the millennial generation, are experiencing Christianity. Here are three articles from recent years that present the experience of millennials. As you read, note how each of these articles talk about the importance of love and community belonging which is the root of healing.

The Real Reason I Don't Go To Your Church

Dear Church, Here's Why People Are Really Leaving You

12 Reasons Millennials are OVER Church

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Found a favorite story? Come and share it with others! God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group.

REVIEW GAME!

NEXT CLASS: LISTEN

Video Transcript

Jesus always entered into communities with healing. This is what we are called to do as well and that is what we are going to learn about now.

More than any other action, Jesus always healed. When he came into contact with people whether they were a part of his community or whether they were completely unacceptable and even untouchable, Jesus would offer, or at least give, healing. It's important to understand that when it came to things like healing the leper or returning someone from being blind to having sight, Jesus always connected them back to community when they were done being healed.

Healing is not about just removing an ailment, it's not about just finding a cure for what ails you. Healing is about full restoration; restoration to body health, but also spirit and communal health.

There's a man alongside of the pool, can't find his way into the pool. This isn't just an issue of healing, it's not only because he is paralyzed that he can't make it into the pool. It's also because in a society that is driven by having a friend group and having a kinship group this man has none. (*This man*) has no one who can pick him up and move him into the pool before the waters have calmed themselves.

His healing is not just that he needs to be returned to the ability to move. His healing is that he needs a friend. Jesus becomes that friend and steps into his world and into his life. (*Jesus*) tells him to pick up his mat and walk and suddenly it is not just that he is walking but it's that he has a relationship with someone else again. He's restored to his community. He has been healed.

Our call is to do what Jesus did, to be mini-Christ in this world so that means that we are a healing presence. When we are a healing presence the same thing that happened to Jesus happens with us. The community grows. The early church grew because people saw the early Christians healing other people. They were the ones who went into the plague infested areas. They were the ones who stepped forward into the world when there was healing work to be done. And when people saw that happening, they wanted to be a part of it. They came and they joined and they served and they offered healing to the world.

That is why we do what we do. We walk into this world, we sing this good news song of healing and promise and hope, freedom from death and sin and people come because that's what they want and need to hear. Don't be afraid. Trust that this is truly good news for God's people and for God's world. We are healers in the name of Christ.

Your next step is to spend a little time with your favorite gospel. Flip through a couple of chapters and mark down each story that you find where Jesus has given healing. Check out where the community has been involved in that situation and how that person reacted. Spend 2 minutes in prayer, contemplation, pondering, walking, whatever works for you. Thinking about how you have received healing through community connection, through faith, through hope. Ponder the ways in which you can offer that to someone else or that you already have been offering that to someone else. Keep in mind as you're doing this that is very different than our normal cultural standards. So, if it feels awkward, if it feels hard that's totally OK. You're not doing it wrong; you're not making a mistake. It's going to be a challenge. It's worth it, so keep pushing through the discomfort and keep looking for that healing.

Website Materials

No header materials.

Quote Graphic

Probably the most important condition the church can provide for healing is the sense of loving community. By this early Christians were known. This sense of belonging, this amazing love, gave the early church so much vitality and made it so much a healing instrument of the Spirit that it became a mark by which Christians could be told from other people. As one French scholar has commented, “If Christians had not had this quality, the world would still be pagan. And the day when this quality is no longer there, the world will be pagan once again.” It is in such fellowship that the relation to God which brings about healing is most often found . . .

— A. J. Festugière

Step 2: Reflect

Read the quote above.

How does your faith community offer and extend belonging and love to those who are not yet a part of the group?

How have you experienced healing in your own life?

Next Step: Spend Time With Your Favorite Gospel.

The first four books of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) each tell the story of Jesus' life in a slightly different way. If you don't know which is your favorite, yet, just choose one of the four randomly! You will find healing in each one. Choose a few chapters to read through and write down the following:

- book, chapter, and verse of the healing
- what/who was healed
- how the community was involved.

You don't have to stop at just two chapters! You can read all the way through, if you like! (Tip: Mark is the shortest of the four.)

Set a timer for two minutes and let yourself pray/ponder/walk and reflect on this understanding of Jesus' healing ministry.

Deeper Reading

There are several amazing books about Jesus and healing. I highly recommend the following:

[Healing & Christianity: A Classic Study](#)¹⁴⁷ by Morton Kelsey

[Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean](#)

[Anthropology](#)¹⁴⁸ by John J. Pilch

[Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts](#)¹⁴⁹ by Craig S. Keener

There are several articles about how young North Americans, particularly those in the millennial generation, are experiencing Christianity. Here are three articles from recent years that present the experience of millennials. As you read, note how each of these articles talk about the importance of love and community belonging which is the root of healing.

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.amazon.com/Healing-Christianity-Morton-Kelsey/dp/080662776X>

¹⁴⁸ <http://fortresspress.com/product/healing-new-testament-insights-medical-and-mediterranean-anthropology>

¹⁴⁹ <https://www.amazon.com/Miracles-Credibility-New-Testament-Accounts/dp/0801039525>

[The Real Reason I Don't Go To Your Church](#)¹⁵⁰

[Dear Church, Here's Why People Are Really Leaving You](#)¹⁵¹

[12 Reasons Millennials are OVER Church](#)¹⁵²

Community Conversation

Found a favorite story? Come and share it with others! [God With/In Curriculum](#)

[Community Facebook Group](#).¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ <http://chriskratzer.com/the-real-reason-i-dont-go-to-your-church/>

¹⁵¹ <https://tosavealife.com/inspiration/dear-church-heres-why-people-are-really-leaving-you/>

¹⁵² <https://tosavealife.com/faith/12-reasons-millennials-church/>

¹⁵³ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1755640504509337/>

Video 6: Listen

Screenshot

JESUS TAKE MY WHEELS
HOME ABOUT GOD WITH/IN GOD'S PIVOT

God With/In Curriculum

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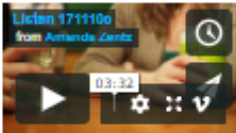


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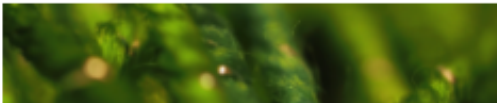
The words “I hear you” have magical healing properties: “Listen, that you may live.” Listening heals the soul.

— Leonard Sweet, *Nudge*, pg. 114

LISTEN: STEP ONE



You've found your community. You've found a person you're curious and excited to get to know. Now it's time to engage your senses, all five of them. The first one are your ears. It's time to shut up and listen.



STEP 2: REFLECT

Recall a time when you felt deeply heard. What was it about the other person's actions that helped you to know that they were listening?

DEEPER READING

In the sensory classes, we will be referencing, “Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who’s Already There” as we live out this style of Discipleship. To read more about this, read Chapter 4: Pause: Use Your Ears.

NUDGE HIGHLIGHT:

Page 156 - 157: “When your song is right, your crowd is captive. But there are two kinds of captivity depending on the singer: those who sing a song that points to their voice and virtues, and those who get out of the way and let the music sing, who let the song flow and glow . . . Nudgers sing others to healing and wholeness. Nudgers sing from to one another.”

What kind of singer have you been in your life? How can you become someone who lets the song lead the way instead of the voice?

What can it mean to sing others to healing and wholeness? What can it mean to your life to sing from to one another?

NEXT STEP

PRACTICE THE 90/10 RULE.

Invite someone to join you for a beverage in a public, low pressure place. Plan on a one hour meeting, one to one. Let them know that you simply want to know more about them.

Key tip: No agenda! This is not a date. This is not a recruitment visit. This is not a networking meeting or a chance to set up for a product pitch. You are only there to get to know this person. Here are a few starter questions if you're feeling stuck!

What is bringing you joy in your life right now?
 What do you like to do in your free time? What are your hobbies?
 What are you excited about this month?

Remember, your goal is to only talk 10 percent of the time! I love that!

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

If you're looking to brainstorm more questions, come on over to the God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group. We would love to share ideas.

REVIEW GAME!

NEXT CLASS: TASTE

Video Transcript

You've found your community. You've found a person you're curious and excited to get to know. Now it's time to engage your senses, all five of them, in how to work with this person; how to be excited with this person, and how to experience God with this person. To engage the good news you're going to use all 5 of your senses. The first one are your ears. It's time to shut up and listen.

The key to listening it to actually be listening. You're not looking to choose what you're hearing and project your own interpretation on something. You're not listening in order to form an argument with the person and you're not listening in order to make your next point the most valid or move them along in the conversation. You are listening to listen. Hear their story. Hear their life, learn what they love, learn who they are. You are listening to hear their heart with your heart.

That is the kind of listening that we're working on. It's hard. It's not easy. It's certainly counter cultural. That's the heart of what we're going for here; the opportunity to learn with one another and to learn alongside one another and to see God in that process.

How do you do that? Well, first of all, I'll be honest, it takes a lot of practice. This is not a trait that we are accustomed to using in our culture and within our society right now. We are accustomed to forming argumentation. We're accustomed to making sure our opinions are heard. So this one's going to take a lot of practice. The best way to practice this is to set up a coffee or a tea with someone, a one-to-one meeting and then do your best to be silent 90% of the time while they talk the rest of the time. You can ask a question here or there, but mostly your job is just to listen.

When you do talk reflect back what they're saying to you. Genuinely interact with it. Be caring. Be loving. Let your heart be seen. You'll find the conversation is easier, faster, and more delightful than you might think it is. If you're really lost in a moment and you don't know what you're supposed to say. Think about what they have just told you and reflect it back to them. Say, "So what I hear you saying is that you're really excited about x, y, or z." or "I hear that you're really having a hard time right now is that accurate?" Do that kind of piece that invites them back into conversation and back into sharing with you again. That active listening is going to be an amazing tool for you as you continue to practice how to be a good listener.

Find their passion. Discover what it is that they really love to talk about and let them totally geek out on it for a while. Not only are you going to see their eyes light up and their face just fill with joy, you're going to feel the same thing and get more curious, ask more questions. There's nothing more exciting than finding out what someone loves.

Your next step is to practice the 90/10 rule. 90% listening, 10% talking. Find someone and go out, have a beer, have tea, have coffee, some kind of beverage together. Enjoy the time together. Remember this is a joyful thing to get to do. Go out, be curious, and have fun.

Website Materials

No header materials.

Quote Graphic

The words "I hear you" have magical healing properties: "Listen, that you may live." Listening heals the soul.

— Leonard Sweet, *Nudge*, pg 114

Step 2: Reflect

Recall a time when you felt deeply heard. What was it about the other person's actions that helped you to know that they were listening?

Deeper Reading

In the sensory classes, we will be referencing ["Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There"](#)¹⁵⁴ as we live out this style of Evangelism. To read more about this, read Chapter 4: Pause: Use Your Ears.

Nudge Highlight

Page 156 - 157: "When your song is right, your crowd is captive. But there are two kinds of captivity depending on the singer: those who sing a song that points to their voice and virtuoso, and those who get out of the way and let the music sing, who let the song flow and glow . . . Nudgers sing others to healing and wholeness. Nudgers sing Jesus to one another."

What kind of singer have you been in your life? How can you become someone who lets the song lead the way instead of the voice?

What can it mean to sing others to healing and wholeness? What can it mean to your life to sing Jesus to one another?

Next Step: Practice the 90/10 Rule

Invite someone to join you for a beverage in a public, low pressure place. Plan on a one hour meeting, one to one. Let them know that you simply want to know more about them.

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.amazon.com/Nudge-Awakening-Other-Already-There/dp/1434764745>

Key tips: No agendas! This is not a date. This is not a recruitment visit. This is not a networking meeting or a chance to set up for a product pitch. You are only there to get to know this person. Here are a few starter questions if you're feeling stuck!

What is bringing you joy in your life right now? What do you like to do in your free time? What are your hobbies? What are you excited about this month? Remember, your goal is to only talk 10 percent of the time! Have fun!

Community Conversation

If you're looking to brainstorm more questions, come on over to the [God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group](#).¹⁵⁵ We would love to share ideas.

¹⁵⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1755640504509337/>

Video 7: Taste

Screenshot

JESUS TAKE MY WHEELS
HOME ABOUT GOD WITH/IN **GOD'S PIVOT**

God With/In Curriculum

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TASTE: STEP ONE

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if you've got it, write it below.

[Watch Video](#)

It's time to learn about the next sense. It's time to learn how to reach people through their taste buds.

The sense of taste is a powerful, strong, and visceral experience. Don't discuss it.



(Note that for some people taste can be a deep challenge. Many people in our country struggle with disordered eating or have homes where meal time was not always a loving experience. If you are talking about this in a group setting, remember these Respectful Communication Guidelines and engage in the opportunity to listen to those around you.)

STEP 2: REFLECT

What are the table traditions of your family?

What is your favorite spice or family recipe?

What stories do these tastes conjure up for you?

Does your faith community practice the holy meal? (Eucharist, Lord's Supper, Communion)

How often do you receive? What other tastes make you think of God?

DEEPER READING

In each sensory class we will be referencing, "Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There." This class, take a bite out of Chapter 5: Presence: Taste.

NUDGE HIGHLIGHT:

Page 196: "Of the three main roles Jesus performed -- preacher, teacher, healer -- the role of healer is most important for evangelism in the twenty-first century. . . . Nudgers will lay bare a menagerie of options of what healthy life looks like."

What healthy taste choices are you making for yourself and for those you feel that are inspired by your faith?

NEXT STEP

PLAN A MEAL.

First, plan a meal that brings you joy. It's hard to recognize joy in others when we don't experience it ourselves. Make the time to taste something truly wonderful and think about why this experience is a gift for you.

Next, plan a meal for someone else! It can be in your home or it can be at a restaurant. The key is to pay attention to what brings them joy. Let yourself be curious and ask questions. Learn more about this person. As you doing this, notice how the joy you share is a rich blessing from God.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Accountability helps in all step into new habits and take on new challenges. Come on over to the God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group and share your meal plans and recipes! (You can also reflect more on how successful your 90/10 conversation was.)

REVIEW GAMES

NEXT CLASS: SIGHT

Video Transcript

It's time to learn about the next sense. It's time to learn how to reach people through their taste buds.

We all know that most of us love food. Especially things like amazing donuts.

Jesus spent a lot of time eating with people. In fact we hear in our scripture, "Taste and see that God is good." Let's think about it, all that feasting? God is so good.

You can engage your sense of taste in a lot of ways in which you experience God. Whether it's a favorite spice or a favorite meal, what are they ways in which you feel love by eating food? What is your favorite flavor? What are your favorite memories around food? Does your family have a secret recipe that you don't give out to anyone else but, when you taste it you know that's your mama's gravy!

All of these things are part of what you need to learn about the people in the community that you are loving. What kind of tastes speak to them? What kind of bread? What kind of gravy? What kind of drink or beverage is going to speak to them?

Tables in our culture are important and incredible gifts. We're called around our table in our families. We're called around our table in our worship spaces. We gather around tables when we have things to discuss or things to celebrate.

What kind of table can you create to welcome people to come together? What kind of table can you set to have a place for healing and wholeness? What kind of food can you feed to people to give them courage and strength for the work that they have ahead of them.

The sense of taste is a powerful, strong, and visceral experience. Don't discount it in your work.

Now what if you're not someone who does a lot of cooking? Or, like me, does not have the hosting skills of the amazing people in my family? Well, stick with the basics. Meet someone at their favorite spot, either their favorite place to eat or for their favorite beverage. Keep it simple. Now, if you have the gift of hospitality, if you are an amazing chef or an amazing cook, then use your curiosity to find out about their favorite dishes, their favorite tastes. What's their favorite spice? What does it taste like? Is there a particular version of that spice that really gets them excited? *(These are)* things that you can learn about a person and then learn the stories behind it.

One of my favorite flavors is cardamom. I had never experienced cardamom until I was in a congregation that served cardamom bread around the holidays. It wasn't just receiving that cardamom bread and the flavor of that amazing unique spice. It was the love that was poured into that bread that was left on my desk that was so beautiful and such an act of grace.

So, learn about people. Figure out what they like to taste and figure out how to use that to get closer and to love someone. Jesus had everyone eating food not just so that they could go out and do the work but so that they could be nurtured and comforted so that they could be held and know of one another. They shared meals together.

The food that we eat is also a sign of our culture. How we eat it, where we eat it, what kind of position we're sitting when we eat it. All of those pieces are part of who we are and whose we are. Your next step is to plan a meal. Plan a meal that makes you happy, so you know what that feels like. And then, plan a meal with someone else in mind. If you have the skills, go to town. Pull out all the stops and make it a feast. If you're more like me, well, plan to take the person you love to the local cider company

and get their favorite food there. Whatever it is, plan a meal to bring joy for someone. If you don't know what would bring them joy yet, ask them what would. That's your next step! So, go out, eat, be merry, and remember – this is fun!

Website Materials

(Note that for some people taste can be a deep challenge. Many people in our country struggle with disordered eating or have homes where meal time was not always a loving experience. If you are talking about this in a group setting, remember those [Respectful Communication Guidelines](#)¹⁵⁶ and engage in the opportunity to listen to those around you.)

Step 2: Reflect

What are the table traditions of your family?

What is your favorite spice or family recipe? What stories do these tastes conjure up for you?

Does your faith community practice the holy meal? (Eucharist, Lord's Supper, Communion) How often do you receive? What other tastes make you think of God?

Deeper Reading

In each sensory class we will be referencing "[Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There.](#)"¹⁵⁷ This class, take a bite out of Chapter 5: Presence: Taste.

¹⁵⁶ <http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/respectful-communication-guidelines/>

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.amazon.com/Nudge-Awakening-Other-Already-There/dp/1434764745>

Nudge Highlight

Page 196: "Of the three main roles Jesus performed—preacher, teacher, healer—the role of healer is most important for evangelism in the twenty-first century . . .

Nudgers will lay bare a smorgasbord of options of what healthy life looks like."

What healthy taste choices are you making for yourself and for those you feed that are inspired by your faith?

Next Step: Plan a Meal

First, plan a meal that brings you joy. It's hard to recognize joy in others when we don't experience it ourselves. Make the time to taste something truly wonderful and think about why this experience is a gift for you.

Next, plan a meal for someone else! It can be in your home or it can be at a restaurant. The key is to pay attention to what brings them joy. Let yourself be curious and ask questions. Learn more about this person. As your doing this, notice how the joy your share is a rich blessing from God.

Community Conversation

Accountability helps us all step into new habits and take on new challenges. Come on over to the [God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1755640504509337/)¹⁵⁸ and share your meal plans and recipes! (You can also reflect more on how successful your 90/10 conversation was.)

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1755640504509337/>

Video 8: Sight

Screenshot

JESUS TAKE MY WHEELS

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SIGHT: STEP ONE

One of the keys of this style of evangelism is learning how to use our own eyes to be able to see things that are around us.

God is always found on the edges. And as we look to the edges of our culture.

STEP 2: REFLECT

When have you felt like you were out on the edges of society/culture?

What edge places draw your curiosity and intrigue?

Where do you find yourself the most likely to indulge in judging people on the edges? Explore these assumptions and challenge yourself to see these groups through Jesus' eyes. (Remember, whenever we draw a line between "us" and "them," Jesus is inevitably standing on the other side of that line!)

NEXT STEP

PRACTICE.

Go somewhere you do not expect to see God. For some folks that will be the grocery store, for others a tattoo parlor, for someone else perhaps it's the local bar or shopping mall. Figure out where you, honestly, least expect to easily find sightings of God. Then go there. Spend time watching for God through kind words, laughter, joy, generosity. Remember that others are also watching you, so be ready to smile, tip generously, and be a part of God's presence in that place.

DEEPER READING

In each unitary class we will be referencing "Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There." Take a peek at Chapter 6: Picture: Use Your Eyes.

NUDGE HIGHLIGHTS:

Page 213 -214: "Don't expect God's presence to be most visible at the center or the obvious... Jesus was most at home on the fringe then, and now Jesus was seen as an antithetical layperson by the religious establishment."

Page 225: "It's so hard for people to hear 'God loves you so much' when the church loves so little... Who is the worst person you know? Think about it for a minute... Can you see Jesus in them?"

DEEPER QUESTIONS:

Read through the story of the Samaritan Woman who meets Jesus at the well. (John 4:1-42)

In what ways is this woman a member of the fringe? How is Jesus ignoring religious establishment by speaking to her?

What do you think Jesus' eyes saw in this woman?

Did you know that this woman is known as St. Photini in the Orthodox church? Learn more of her story here.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Opening our eyes to see the world in a new way is an amazing skill to practice. Share the surprising places that you have seen God in the God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group.

[REVIEW GAME!](#)

[NEXT CLASS: TOUCH](#)

Video Transcript

One of the keys is learning how to use our own eyes to be able to see things that are around us. That is our next step in this style of evangelism.

When you're out in the world we're not going out in order to tell people, "Look, see, there's God." We are going out in to the world to look and see if we can see God. To look for God on the edges, because God is always found on the edges. Jesus didn't stay in the cool and the elite sections of the area. Jesus went to the edges to find out what was coming. To see what he could learn; to find people to love and to find people that needed healing. And so, we look to the edges of our culture. We look to those places that are a little edgy, a little different. We look outside of our comfortable bubbles to be able to see where God is active, to see what is going on and to learn. What are the values? What are the things that are getting people excited? We begin to see things when we practice looking. And, remember, it's not just that we're looking to be able to see god places, but people will begin to see God in you. That's what brought people to the early church. People saw them, they saw them living their life of love and healing and they saw their actions in the world. The places on the culture edges? The Christians would go there and people would see them and then they would come to believe.

Your next step is to practice. To go out into the world, to into those places where you do not expect to see God anywhere and start looking. Watch for where God is present and spend some time there. Be surprised by it. Let yourself experience that surprise and see what you learn about yourself in the process. Remember, while you're there, other people will be seeing you. So keep working on building that trust and building that love for everyone around you.

Website Materials

No header materials.

Step 2: Reflect

When have you felt like you were out on the edges of society/culture?

What edgy places draw your curiosity and intrigue?

Where do you find yourself the most likely to indulge in judging people on the edges? Explore those assumptions and challenge yourself to see those groups through Jesus' eyes. (Remember, whenever we draw a line between "us" and "them," Jesus is inevitably standing on the other side of that line!)

Next Step: Practice.

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Deeper Reading

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Nudge Highlights

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Page 225: "It's so hard for people to hear 'God loves you so much' when the church loves so little . . . Who is the worst person you know? Think about it for a minute . . . Can you see Jesus in them?"

Deeper Questions

Read through the story of the Samaritan Woman who meets Jesus at the well.

[\(John 4:1-42\)](#)¹⁶⁰

In what ways is this woman a member of the fringe? How is Jesus ignoring religious establishment by speaking to her?

What do you think Jesus' eyes saw in this woman?

Did you know that this woman is known as St. Photini in the Orthodox church?

Learn more of her story [here](#).¹⁶¹

Community Conversation

Opening our eyes to see the world in a new way is an amazing skill to practice.

Share the surprising places that you have seen God in the [God With/In Curriculum](#)

[Community Facebook Group](#).¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ <http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=380244781>

¹⁶¹ <http://antiochian.org/st-photini-samaritan-woman>

¹⁶² <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1755640504509337/>

Video 9: Touch

Screenshot

JESUS TAKE MY WHEELS
HOME ABOUT GOD WITH/IN GOD'S PIVOT

God With/In Curriculum

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TOUCH: STEP ONE


Password Required

If you've got it, enter it below.

Watch Video

The next sense we're going to talk about is touch. How we touch the world and how we experience God through that touch.

One of the things that we are called to do as people of faith is to learn how to provide that safe, soft, gentle touch in a contextual way with and among one another.



This is another one of these topics that may bring up big conversations. Be sure to mind these *Respectful Communication Guidelines* if you're in a group and remember when practicing mutual invitation that you can always pass if you have been invited to speak.

STEP 2: REFLECT

Take a moment and think about the last time you received a safe hug. Who was it from? How long ago was it? How often do you receive touch?

From whom do you most often welcome touch? (Spouse? Friend? Pet?)

Do you hold hands with others when you pray with and for them? This may be one place where you could offer touch to someone that you know.

NEXT STEP

MORE PRACTICES

Like taste, this is something you need to start knowing where you are personally comfortable, or not. Discuss your comfort level with touching others and receiving touch. Then intentionally practice using that safe level of touch with others. As always, it is critical that you receive consent from others, so communicate and let this grow over time. Start with high fives and fist bumps before you move on to embracing someone in their time of need.

DEEPER READING

Touch is a challenge in our current world, so take the time to read "Bridge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There" Chapter 7: Pivotal: Touch.

NUDGE HIGHLIGHT:

Page 243: "For Jesus, to carry the holy was to reach out and touch, not the cherubim and seraphim, but the castaways and sinners. Jesus was always reaching out to touch the unreachable, and the unreachable were always reaching out to touch him. Before healing a leper, Jesus reached out his hand and touched him. (Matthew 8:3; Mark 1:41) Before bringing the daughter of Jairus back to life, he took her hand and said, "Little girl, get up!" (Mark 5:41, NRSV) Before Lazarus could walk after Jesus raised him from the dead, Jesus made his disciples touch him. (John 11:44)"

DEEPER QUESTION:

Ponder back to healing moments again. Notice how touch is commonly a significant action when healing occurs. Have you ever experienced touch in healing?

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Sometimes it is helpful to share ideas on challenging topics. Come over to the God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group to talk about this class's activities.

REVIEW GAME

NEXT CLASS: SMELL

Video Transcript

The next sense we're going to talk about is touch. How we touch the world and how we experience God through that touch.

Our culture has a hard time with touch. We are increasingly avoidant of it because we don't want to get into trouble. And so we find that lots of people are actually what is called touch-starved. People aren't touched enough. They don't have opportunities to be hugged or to feel soft things or even to have their hand held. It's particularly hard for the elderly and others who are in places where they're kind of stuck. I know people turn to things like beautiful fiber – things that are soft to touch, things that are gentle, things that are beautiful to look at but also have an incredible gentleness.

One of the things that we are called to do as people of faith is to learn how to provide that safe, soft, gentle touch in a consensual way with and among one another. Now, in the communities that you have found yourself hopefully you've been building up that trust. You've been creating those relationships that, you can figure out whether or not touch is a safe thing to add on yet. When you do add touch it creates another level of trust, of sharing, of hope, of healing.

Jesus didn't just heal the lepers; Jesus touched the untouchable lepers. That's what we're called to do as well. Start with a high five, or a fist bump. Start with shaking a hand during the passing of the peace.

One of the things we sometimes don't think about is that Jesus actually showed up in a body. And Jesus cared enough to have a body that it really mattered. Being a person of faith is not this out of body experience where we don't need to take care of ourselves; where we don't need to pay attention to the needs of our actual physical structure. Jesus

was a human being, fully bodied, fully enfleshed. Jesus came back to life fully bodied, fully enfleshed. This matters. This matters to our understanding of God and it matters to our understanding of our salvation. So, when we ignore our bodies, when we ignore that, we lose a piece of this great message.

Your next step is to think about where you're already comfortable with touch and maybe where you need a little work. So, if high fives are totally cool with you, maybe work on a cool new handshake. Expand that out. All of these things are great places and great steps for you to take. Go out there, in that community, and practice.

Website Materials

This is another one of those topics that may bring up big conversations. Be sure to mind those [Respectful Communication Guidelines](#)¹⁶³ if you're in a group and remember that when practicing [mutual invitation](#)¹⁶⁴ you can always pass if you have been invited to speak.

Step 2: Reflect

Take a moment and think about the last time you received a safe hug. Who was it from? How long ago was it? How often do you receive touch?

From whom do you most often welcome touch? (Spouse? Friend? Pet?)

Do you hold hands with others when you pray with and for them? This may be one place where you could offer touch to someone that you know.

¹⁶³ <http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/respectful-communication-guidelines/>

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/mutual-invitation/>

Next Step: More Practice!

Like taste, this is something you need to start knowing where you are personally comfortable, or not. Discern your comfort level with touching others and receiving touch. Then intentionally practice using that safe level of touch with others. As always, it is critical that you receive consent from others, so communicate and let this grow over time. Start with high fives and fist bumps before you move on to embracing someone in their time of need.

Deeper Reading

Touch is a challenge in our current world, so take the time to read "[Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There](#)"¹⁶⁵ Chapter 7: Ponder: Touch.

Nudge Highlight

Page 243: "For Jesus, to carry the holy was to reach out and touch, not the cherubim and seraphim, but the castaways and sinners. Jesus was always reaching out to touch the untouchables, and the untouchables were always reaching out to touch him. Before healing a leper, Jesus reached out his hand and touched him. ([Matthew 8:3](#),¹⁶⁶ [Mark 1:41](#)¹⁶⁷) Before bringing the daughter of Jarius back to life, he took her hand

¹⁶⁵ <https://www.amazon.com/Nudge-Awakening-Other-Already-There/dp/1434764745>

¹⁶⁶ <http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=380246259>

¹⁶⁷ <http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=380246316>

and said, 'Little girl, get up!' ([Mark 5:41](#)¹⁶⁸, *NRSV*) Before Lazarus could walk after Jesus raised him from the dead, Jesus made his disciples touch him. ([John 11:44](#)¹⁶⁹)"

Deeper Question

Ponder back to healing moments again. Notice how touch is commonly a significant action when healing occurs. Have you ever experienced touch as healing?

Community Conversation

Sometimes it is helpful to share ideas on challenging topics. Come over to the [God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group](#)¹⁷⁰ to talk about this class's activities.

¹⁶⁸ <http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=380246373>

¹⁶⁹ <http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=380246426>

¹⁷⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1755640504509337/>

Video 10: Smell

Screenshot

JESUS TAKE MY WHEELS
HOME ABOUT GOD WITH/IN GOD'S PIVOT

God With/In Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

EUAGGELION

GET OUT OF THE CHURCH

NUDGE

HEALING

LISTEN

TASTE

SIGHT

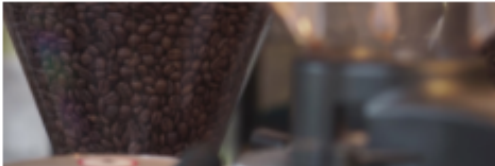
TOUCH

SMELL

NEXT STEPS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

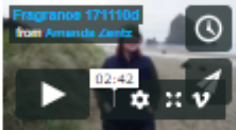
Smell




SMELL: STEP ONE

Fragrance 171110d from [Aromas de Costa](#)

02:42



Our sense of smell keys us into time and place, it refreshes our memories, it plays with our brains in awesome ways. So why wouldn't you use the sense of smell in order to help people recognize God in their midst?



STEP 2: REFLECT

Make a list

- 5 favorite smells
- 4 odious fragrances
- 3 laugh-inducing odors
- 2 grass-inspiring bouquets
- 1 cherished nostalgic aroma
- What emotions do each of these smells produce?
- What memories do they inspire?

What smells immediately came to mind during this video? What fragrances are deeply tied into your memories?

NEXT STEP

TAKE TIME TO SMELL

Slow down and smell the roses! Or anything, really. Be intentional and make the time to identify 5 unique fragrances that you experience. Notice what memories they bring up for you and how strongly you experience any emotions connected with those memories. Next, ask someone close to you about their favorite fragrance and the memories that go along with it.

DEEPER READING

You've made it to the final chapter of "Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There." Read more about the power of your nose in Chapter 8: Pretime: Use Your Nose.

NUDGE HIGHLIGHT:

Page 254: "The apostle Paul once wrote that you and I are to be the fragrance that triggers memories of Christ, the essence of Jesus. 'We are to God the aroma of Christ.' (2 Corinthians 2:15-17) So what does Jesus smell like?"

DEEPER QUESTION:

What are the smells that you associate with Jesus? Perhaps it's the smell of your Grandmother's perfume. Or slightly musky carpets. Or freshly burning incense. Or benzoin. Or perhaps the smell of Jesus for you is well-worn roller derby gear, or good Texas BBQ. What could Jesus smell like if we didn't expect him to only exist in church buildings?

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Come and share your list over in the God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group.

REVIEW GAME!

FINAL CLASS: NEXT STEPS

Video Transcript

Now we're going to talk about the most powerful senses for memory: that is your sense of smell.

Your sense of smell is an ability to key in to memories far beyond what we necessarily always think about. You can remember memories based on smell for 5, 10, even 15 years. Think about the smell of your mother's kitchen. Or maybe you're someone whose grandfather smoked a tobacco pipe. Remember what that smelled like? Or maybe you can think of it this way. Have you ever walked into a closet of a friend, looking at their clothes, and just the smell of their clothes you remember so many beautiful things.

Our sense of smell keys us into time and place, it refreshes our memories, it plays with our brains in awesome ways. So why wouldn't you use the sense of smell in order to help people recognize God in their midst.

You hear about people selling houses who bake cookies in the house right before someone shows up. Well, think about what it is that makes you remember God's love for you. What are the fragrances that you associate with that? Is it walking along the ocean? What is it that captures your memory?

When we think about the fragrances that call us back to these kinds of memories, what are the ones that specifically remind you of God? Maybe it's incense on a Sunday service. Or maybe it's something simpler. Maybe it's the smell of someone making you French toast in the morning that helps you to know that you are loved. What speaks to you?

Once you know the fragrances that speak to you, you can start to be curious about which fragrances speak to other people. What helps them to experience God in their daily lives attached to the sense of smell.

When you know those things, when you've learned that about someone, then you can help them experience that more frequently. Not in a way to try and help them see God more frequently, but just because you love them and you want them to see God all around them.

Your next step today is to recognize 5 fragrances that you experience and the memories that they trigger and ask one other person if they have a fragrance that they've smelled that brings up a memory for them.

Website Material

No header materials.

Step 2: Reflect

Make a list!

- 5 favorite smells
- 4 odious fragrances
- 3 laugh inducing odors
- 2 groan inspiring bouquets
- 1 cherished nostalgic aroma

What emotions do each of these smells produce?

What memories do they inspire?

What smells immediately came to mind during this video? What fragrances are deeply tied into your memories?

Next Step: Take Time to Smell

Slow down and smell the roses! Or anything, really. Be intentional and make the time to identify five unique fragrances that you experience. Notice what memories they bring up for you and how strongly you experience any emotions connected with those memories. Next, ask someone close to you about their favorite fragrance and the memories that go along with it.

Deeper Reading

You've made it to the final chapter of ["Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There."](#)¹⁷¹ Read more about the power of your nose in Chapter 8:

Promise: Use Your Nose.

Nudge Highlight

Page 251: "The apostle Paul once wrote that you and I are to be the fragrance that triggers memories of Christ, the essence of Jesus. 'We are to God the aroma of Christ.' ([2 Corinthians 2:15-17](#))¹⁷²)

So what does Jesus smell like?"

Deeper Question

What are the smells that you associate with Jesus? Perhaps it's the smell of your Grandmother's purse? Or slightly musty carpet? Or freshly burning incense? Beeswax? Or perhaps the smell of Jesus for you is well used roller derby gear, or good Texas BBQ. What could Jesus smell like if we didn't expect him to only exist in church buildings?

¹⁷¹ <https://www.amazon.com/Nudge-Awakening-Other-Already-There/dp/1434764745>

¹⁷² <http://bible.oremus.org/?q|=380247332>

Community Conversation

Come and share your lists over in the [God With/In Curriculum Community](#)

[Facebook Group](#).¹⁷³

¹⁷³ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1755640504509337/>

Video 11: Next Steps

Screenshot

JESUS TAKE MY WHEELS
HOME ABOUT GOD WITH/IN **GOD'S PIVOT**

God With/In Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

EUAGGELION

GET OUT OF THE CHURCH

NUDGE

HEALING

LISTEN

TASTE

SIGHT

TOUCH

SMELL

NEXT STEPS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Next Steps

GOD WITH/IN

be the healing, sing the good news.


NEXT STEPS

Password Required
If you've got it, enter it below.

Watch Video

You have been incredibly courageous to try this new way of doing Discipleship in North America.

As you continue to do this work remember, this is challenging. This is hard. This is our call for our lives and it's not something that is going to automatically bring you quick results.



STEP 2: REFLECT

Look back over this curriculum. What has been the most challenging part of this journey for you?

What exercises were particularly helpful for you?

What has felt incredibly natural for you? How can you build from this?

Upon reflection, can you locate a Nudge moment? How can you celebrate that?

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Please stay connected with the larger community. Together we can learn more about healing God's world and singing the good news. Your experiences are a helpful part of the greater conversation. You are welcome to continue to participate in the God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group.

NEXT STEP

DON'T GIVE UP

Trying something new is challenging. Re-imagining how we interact as people of faith with the world around us will not necessarily happen overnight. It is important to remember that this will take time. Your "results" will be hard to quantify and sometimes even harder to see. When you catch the glimpse of a God moment, savor it. Rejoice. Write it down to remind yourself. And just keep going.

DEEPER REFLECTIONS

I am very interested to hear about your experience of this curriculum. Please take a few moments and fill out this evaluation.

«

Evangelists always nudge . . . Their attitude is less "Look at what you're doing! What are you thinking?" than "Look at what God is already doing in you!"

Nudgers give attendance more than they take attendance or count attendance. They less tack people in than nudge them out of their sleeping quarters to awaken to more interesting, more humorous, more unique ways of being. Nudgers leave more tracks than tracks.

— Leonard Sweet, *Nudge*, pp. 31

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Video Transcript

You have been incredibly courageous to try this new way of doing Evangelism in North America. You have learned about the difference between curing and healing someone. You've learned about the connection to community. You have had the opportunity to hear that story about that runner who is a part of a community, a known and trusted entity who brought good news of hope and healing. This has been the work that you have been doing. And, it's not been easy. It's not always something that comes naturally. All five senses have been working in tandem to get you immersed into this community experience. And you're probably, whether you believe it or not, finding yourself having more fun and being more natural about your faith in public places now than you have been before.

As you continue to do this work, remember, this is challenging. This is hard. This is our call for our lives and it's not something that is going to automatically bring you quick results. This is not a six week fitness program where you can check your measurements and see it's working. This is a lifetime way of witnessing to the love of God in our life. You're going to have ups and downs, peaks and valleys. Keep going. Come back to this and review the material that is here. Do some of the exercises again. And go out fresh. Pay attention to the things that feel really natural and really comfortable and build on those. Trust that the Holy Spirit has given you gifts to use for this kind of work, to use for his kind of witness and let yourself find the joy in that.

In those areas that are harder, more challenging, just keep trying things. Throw the spaghetti at the wall and see what sticks. And don't be too hard on yourself when half the spaghetti falls on the floor. It's really OK. Remember, God is the one who has done

this work. God has saved us. This is just our opportunity to make sure that others know it. God loves when you try. God loves when you try big and awesome things happen and God loves it when you try small and beautiful small moments nudge someone into seeing and hearing God in the world all around. This is our call to sing this good news song in the world.

Website Materials

No header materials.

Step 2: Reflect

Look back over this curriculum. What has been the most challenging part of this journey for you?

What exercises were particularly helpful for you?

What has felt incredibly natural for you? How can you build from this?

Upon reflection, can you locate a Nudge moment? How can you celebrate that?

Next Step: Don't Give Up.

Trying something new is challenging. Re-imagining how we interact as people of faith with the world around us will not necessarily happen overnight. It is important to remember that this will take time. Your "results" will be hard to quantify and sometimes even harder to see. When you catch the glimpse of a God moment, savor it. Rejoice. Write it down to remind yourself. And just keep going.

Quote Graphic

Evangelists always nudge . . . Their attitude is less “Look at what you’re doing! What are you thinking?” than “Look at what God is already doing in you!” Nudgers give

attendance more than they take attendance or count attendance. They less tuck people in than rustle them out of their sleeping quarters to awaken to more interesting, more humorous, more unique ways of being. Nudgers leave more tracks than tracts.

— Leonard Sweet, *Nudge*, pg 31

Deeper Reflections

I am very interested to hear about your experience of this curriculum. Please take a few moments and fill out [this evaluation](#)¹⁷⁴.

Community Conversation

Please stay connected with the larger community. Together we can learn more about healing God's world and singing the good news. Your experiences are a helpful part of the greater conversation. You are welcome to continue to participate in the [God With/In Curriculum Community Facebook Group](#).¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfQiT8Z1RyPmm52fVVBHz92IyPlmdtHcuu7o1YOk3ywGmymHA/viewform>

¹⁷⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1755640504509337/>

Acknowledgments

Screenshot



God With/In Curriculum

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SMELL

NEXT STEPS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Acknowledgments

This Curriculum was produced with the help of amazing and gracious individuals. A special thank you to everyone involved in making this happen.



Jacob McGarry, Videographer of Westwinds Church



Pr. Amanda Zentz-Alo, Author & Presenter



Thank you to everyone who graciously participated in the filming: Amy, Dawn, Talia, Beth, Martin, Tristian, Chloe, Jacob, Jac, and Heather.



With gratitude to the businesses who welcomed us: Twisted Yarn Shop, Missionary Chocolates, Voodoo Doughnuts, Insomnia Coffee at Cannon Beach, Portland Cider Company Clackamas Taproom & Cidery, Movie Madness, Milwaukie Lutheran Church, Central Lutheran Church, and Townshend's Teahouse on Alberta.



Curriculum filmed in the cities of Portland, Milwaukie, & Cannon Beach, Oregon in November, 2017.

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¹⁷⁶ <http://westwinds.org/>

¹⁷⁷ <http://shop.twistedyarnshop.com/>

¹⁷⁸ <http://missionarychocolates.com/>

¹⁷⁹ <https://www.voodoodoughnut.com/>

¹⁸⁰ <http://insomniacoffee.co/>

¹⁸¹ <https://www.portlandcider.com/home>

¹⁸² <http://moviemadnessvideo.com/>

¹⁸³ <http://www.milwaukielutheran.org/>

¹⁸⁴ <http://www.centralportland.org/>

¹⁸⁵ <http://www.townshendstea.com/>

APPENDIX B:

FILM RELEASE SAMPLES

Location Release Form

I, the undersigned hereby grant permission to _____ the right to enter and remain upon _____ (the Property), which shall include not only real property but any fixtures, equipment or other personal property thereat or thereon, located at _____, with personnel and equipment (including without limitations, props, temporary sets, lighting, camera and special effects equipment) for the purpose of photographing scenes and making recordings of said Property in connection with the production of a digital media curriculum on the following date(s): _____.

This permission includes the right to take motion pictures, videotapes, still photographs and/or sound recordings on and of any and all portions of the Property and all names associated there with or which appear in, on or about the Property.

I certify that I have the full right and authority to enter into this agreement and grant the rights herein granted, and that the consent or permission of no other person, firm, or entity is necessary in order to enable you to exercise or enjoy the rights herein granted.

ACCEPTED & AGREED TO:

NAME (please print) _____

ADDRESS _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

Talent Consent and Release Form

Location: _____

Production Company: _____

Project Title: _____

I have participated as indicated on the above motion picture (the "Picture"). In consideration of my appearance in the Picture, and without any further consideration from you, I hereby grant permission to you to utilize my appearance in connection with the Picture in any and all manner and media and all rights of every kind and character whatsoever in perpetuity in and to my performance, appearance, name and/or voice and the results and proceeds thereof (the "Performance") in connection with the Picture, and I hereby authorize Production Company to photograph and record (on film, digital, video, tape, or otherwise), the Performance; to edit same at its discretion and to include it with the performance of others and with sound effects, special effects and music; to incorporate same into the Picture or other program or not; to use and to license others to use such recordings and photographs in any manner or media whatsoever, including without limitation unrestricted use for purposes of publicity, advertising and sales promotion; and to use my name, likeness, voice, biographic or other information concerning me in connection with the Picture, commercial tie-ups, merchandising, and for any other purpose. I further acknowledge that Production Company owns all rights to the results and proceeds of my services rendered in connection herewith.

I agree that my participation in the Picture may be edited in your sole discretion. I consent to use of my name, likeness, voice and biographical material about me in connection with Picture publicity and related institutional promotional purposes. I

expressly release you, your agents, employees, licensees and assigns from and against any and all claims which I have or may have for invasion of privacy, defamation or any other cause of action arising out of production, distribution, broadcast or exhibition of the Picture.

Talent Signature _____

Print name _____

Phone _____

Date _____

IF TALENT IS UNDER 18:

I represent that **I am a parent (guardian)** of the minor who has signed the above release and I hereby agree that we shall both be bound thereby.

Date _____

Signature _____

Print name _____

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